

Nepal - Media Landscape

Author(s): Ujjwal Acharya

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Overview

Nepal's media landscape is characterised by two important factors. First, the high number of radio stations that are spread across the country at a local level and have a greater reach to the overall population. As media researcher Badri Paudyal

noted in the 2013 article *Radio Broadcasting: Access and Functioning*, the overall radio service in Nepal is established as a strong, popular and credible medium of information with a large following of listeners. In 2008, in an article titled *Radio and the Recent Political Changes in Nepal*, media commentator Pratyoush Onta cites radio's large coverage, citizens' access to radio, and the plurality in terms of language of broadcast as the main reasons for the popularity of radio as a mass media.

Second, the mainstream newspapers that are mostly centered in the Kathmandu Valley, a combination of three administrative districts with the capital, Kathmandu, and have greater impact at the political level. The mainstream print newspapers are the agenda setters in Nepal. The overall print circulation is low because of the difficult geographical terrain, the high recurring costs for both publishers and readers, and the adult literacy rate at only around 60 percent of the population. Newspapers are mainly sold in the Kathmandu Valley and cities, thus having a greater impact on political and policy issues. The overall readership and the number of print newspapers are rising, however these are competing for advertisements in a small, fragile economy for their revenues; many of them are also not profitable. The annual advertising market is estimated to be approximately 40m euro. There are muted accusations that media owners continue to lose money on newspapers to gain political or economic benefits in their other interests.

However, the growing number of television stations and the digital news outlets are all set to change the dynamics of the media landscape in Nepal. More than a hundred television channels have received licenses for operation in a country of 29 million people. Although Nepal lacks reliable data on television viewership, many believe that televisions, especially the primetime news bulletins, have a large audience, yet they only receive around 20 percent of total advertising expenditures. Most of the television stations focus on news-based programming as they are relatively cheaper and easier to produce in the studio.

Digital news outlets have received a lot of attention lately. The Internet penetration has increased dramatically in recent years, and the online news consumption has seen a similar rise because of the popularity of social media and the availability of cheaper Chinese or Indian smartphones. In recent years, some senior and well known editors have invested in digital media outlets which has increased the impact of those media among political and social elites.

Nepal's media history is largely built upon partisan newspapers. Until 1990, Nepal was ruled by a monarch and the press was divided into two lines: those supportive of the monarchy and those supporting banned political parties in their struggle for democracy. After the establishment of democracy, the constitutional right of press freedom set the foundation for the emergence of professional media. As of today, while all of the daily newspapers, except state-owned ones, function as professional media after the advent of democracy, the majority of weekly newspapers remain fiercely partisan, supporting one or other political party, or even groups within a political party. Most of the weekly newspapers, which receive very little advertising and are very low in circulation, are either directly funded by the political leaders, or are operated by owners having political ambitions, or supported by rich allies of a political party or group.

The daily newspapers and televisions are not party press, however the political parallelism is clearly visible. They reflect competing political ideologies and opinions despite most of them not having direct structural or ownership connection with political entities. In an ideal situation, this could mean diversity in contents, however, in Nepal's case, such political reflection doesn't necessarily mean diversity in contents, but rather lack in professionalism in the contents of media. Political interest groups own the majority of local radio stations and digital news outlets.

Journalism was considered a volunteer profession until the emergence of big media houses after 1990, which led to the development of media commercialisation. Many young people with a journalism degree entered media looking at it as a career rather than just a writing hobby. This created an heterogeneous mixture in the journalistic community, with senior journalists carrying political ideologies, and younger generations largely following journalistic principles. However the political

transition and turmoil in Nepal for the last two and a half decades have forced everyone to become political, and journalists are not exceptions. The majority of journalists are members of journalist unions which are formed as wings of political parties and their affiliation is often reflected in the contents they produce.

The state is a prime player in Nepal's media landscape. It owns a major publication house – the Gorkhapatra Corporation that publishes two dailies and magazines; the national television network with three channels – *Nepal Television*, *NTV Plus* and *NTV News*; the national shortwave radio with regional broadcasts and an FM radio; as well as a news-only agency, the *National News Agency* (RSS). There is a long-going effort to incorporate radio and television into the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), but it remains only in the policy documents.

The state is also the regulator requiring all print newspapers to register before publication, all radios and televisions to acquire a license to broadcast, and of late, all digital news outlets to enlist. An example of the intervention by the government is the issuance of the Online Media Operation Directives by the Ministry of Information and Communication (MoIC) that requires digital news outlets to enlist and empowers a state agency with arbitrary powers to supervise those outlets. The PCN, although an autonomous body on paper, is funded by the government which also appoints its members, thus making it more of a state agency. The PCN has issued the Code of Ethics for Journalists jointly with the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), which is an umbrella union of all journalists in the country, and solely enforces it. During the time of elections, the Election Commission and the PCN monitor media to ensure equal airtime to all political parties, limit political advertisements on media, and prohibit dissemination of pre-election survey results.

The government is also a major funder of the media. Its Public Welfare Advertising (PWA) scheme, managed by the Department of Information (DoI), is a major advertising revenue for small media outlets. The €2m scheme benefits qualifying print media and radio stations. The amount of PWA for any media depends upon the rating of the media done by the PCN. The PCN also manages the government-funded Media Development Fund to support development of small media outlets outside the Kathmandu Valley and Journalists Welfare Fund.

Media

Print

Nepal's newspapers have a history of over a hundred years but the first private commercial daily newspaper began publishing in 1993. Since then, the circulation of newspapers has increased, contrarily to many developed countries where the publishing industry has experienced a slowdown in sales because of the emergence of Internet. Nepal's digital media market is yet to be matured to have that kind of impact and due to growing literacy rate, infrastructural development making distribution of newspaper easy, and information hunger among citizens, newspapers should see a steady rise in sales for at least a few more years.

Since there is no reliable data from the publishers and the audit bureau of circulation is absent, it is hard to put circulation and sales in numbers. Nepal's largest daily newspaper, *Kantipur*, claims a daily circulation of 360,000 copies, whereas its sister publication, the English-language daily *The Kathmandu Post*, claims a daily circulation of 82,000. Other media houses claim their circulation of Nepali-language dailies at up to 200,000 per day. Publishers often exaggerate their claimed circulation. The top circulating dailies are generally oriented towards the centre of the political spectrum, but no newspapers in Nepal publicly declare their political leaning.

According to an audience survey conducted by Sharecast Initiatives in 2017, only around 40 percent of the population read newspapers. *Kantipur's* readership is more than half of it, whereas *Annapurna Post*, *Gorkhapatra* and *Nagarik* are behind by a huge margin taking between 4 percent and 7 percent of the readership.

In a 2013 article, *Understanding Advertising and Public Relations: Effects on News Media*, media researcher Ujjwal Prajapati wrote that the print media still are the biggest media sector in generating advertisements revenue, covering up to 47 percent of shares. In term of economic power, the most important media companies are: the Kantipur Media Group with 36 percent of all print advertising revenues; Asia-Pacific Communication Associates Nepal Pvt Ltd whose advertising data is not available, state-owned Gorkhapatra Corporation with 13 percent; and Nepal Republic Media with 10 percent print advertising share in 2011.

The print media published by each of these publication houses are outlined below:

- Kantipur Media Group: *Kantipur* (daily), *The Kathmandu Post* (English language daily), *Nepal* (weekly magazine), *Saptahik* (weekly tabloid) and *Nari* (monthly specialised magazine).
- Nepal Republic Media Private Limited: *Nagarik* (daily), *Republica* (English language daily), *Sukhrabar* (weekly tabloid) and *Pariwar* (monthly specialised magazine).
- Gorkhapatra Corporation: *Gorkhapatra* (weekly), *The Rising Nepal* (English language daily), *Madupark*, *Muna* and *Yuvamanch* (monthly specialised magazines).
- Nepal News Network (3NI) Private Limited: *Annapurna Post* (Nepali language daily), and *Annapurna Express* (English language weekly tabloid).

All of the above media houses, except state-owned Gorkhapatra Corporation, have cross-media ownership. Kantipur Media Group also owns a radio station, a popular television channel and a subsidiary, Kantipur Digital Corp, that has investment in technology companies and runs all digital news operation of the publication; Nepal Republic Media owns a radio station; whereas 3NI owns a radio station and a television channel.

According to the Press Council of Nepal, there are 3,865 registered newspapers across the country with 655 dailies, 30 bi-weeklies, 2,778 weeklies and 402 fortnightlies. Among them, 1,640 are registered in the Kathmandu Valley. But not all of those registered newspapers are published. The state cannot un-register any newspaper because of the law and the number keeps on increasing. Among the registered newspapers, less than one-fourth or 863 were published last year and only 607 of them were regularly published all issues.

In total, 189 newspapers are published every day in Nepal but only the top few mainstream Nepali-language newspapers published in the capital Kathmandu have agenda-setting strength. Those media usually have correspondents all over the country and are printed in multiple locations for easy and quick distribution in main cities. Recently, many of them have started publishing provincial editions but the editions are still managed by the newsrooms in Kathmandu. Many of the dailies are regional or local, not having the national-wide distribution, and are thus weak in their coverage, revenue and impact.

Compared to daily newspapers, weekly newspapers are highly political in their contents and mostly read by political activists for understanding their party's stances and opinions. However, two weekly newsmagazines – *Nepal* and *Himal*, are commercial publications that are popular and are agenda setters. The most popular and highest circulated weeklies in Nepal are tabloids targeting young readers, with contents focusing on sex, gossip, entertainment and sports. These include *Saptahik* and *Sukrabar*, claimed circulation of both standing at around 200,000 copies per issue. There are no freesheets published in Nepal.

Radio

State-owned *Radio Nepal* enjoyed the monopoly in the market from its establishment in 1951 to 1997. During that period, it set up broadcasting centres in all five development regions and was reaching almost the entire population through its short and medium waves. The monopoly was broken in May 1997 when the first independent radio station – *Radio Sagarmatha* – began operation as a community FM radio run by the Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ). It heralded a new beginning in Nepal's media landscape paving ways for other community and private FM radio stations.

In the two decades after the first independent radio station was established, the Ministry of Information and Communication (MoIC) has granted licenses to 736 FM radio stations. Forty-eight of them are centered in the Kathmandu Valley and others are spread across the nation. According to Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB), at least 314 of those radio stations are community radio stations.

The community radios have been crucial in social transformation helping disadvantaged communities through information, education and empowerment. Since the cost of radio operations is low and people do not have recurring costs to listen to radio, which is also a viable medium for illiterate people, radio is considered the most impactful and accessible media in Nepal. The role that the community radios have played has received praises from all over the country. In August 2017, during his inaugural speech, Vice President Nanda Kishore Pun said: "The community radios are the voices of people... the focus of community radios is to provide the accurate and credible news to rural communities."

The Sharecast Initiative's 2016 survey shows that 59 percent of households own radio sets whereas 98 percent of households own mobile phones. The mobile phones are important radio-listening devices as 69 percent of those listening to radio listen to it on mobile phones. More than half of the population listens to radio every day. The advertising revenue share of radios in 2011 was around 17 percent of the total advertising budget, however the data do not take into account local advertisements that the radio stations collect themselves at the local level.

Another important aspect of radios in Nepal is that private radio stations are allowed to broadcast news and news-based programmes. Nepal is the only country in the South Asia region that allows the private radio stations to broadcast news.

Poudyal in 2013 noted that the involvement of political and various other interest groups in operation, programming of radio stations from backyards, unhealthy competition, and lack of professionalism on news, programmes, sponsorships and advertisements are pushing the independent radios to compromise with the professional qualities and ethics of journalism.

Another unusual aspect of Nepal's radios is the self-created syndication in the news broadcasting. Dominant FM stations such as *Nepal FM*, *Ujyaalo*, *Nepalbani* and *ACORAB* have created alliances or networks of radio stations for sharing news content. In his 2017 article *Cancer of Media Concentration*, Prof P. Kharel noted that such practice undermines the role of media as the fourth state. He wrote: "If two or three radio networks in the Kathmandu Valley produce news and current affairs programmes that are broadcast on most of the radio stations at least during prime time, this constitutes a form of concentration not heard of in other democracies."

Other major players except state-owned *Radio Nepal* include *Radio Kantipur* and *Image FM*. *Radio Kantipur* of Nepal's biggest media house Kantipur Media Group claims to reach 75 percent of the population by setting up 8 separate radio stations all over Nepal that relay all programming from the Kathmandu station. *Image FM* has 7 such stations all over Nepal while minor players include *Capital FM*, which has 3 stations in three major cities.

Television

Similar to radio, state-owned *Nepal Television* enjoyed complete monopoly from 1984 until private television stations started broadcasting in 2003. *Channel Nepal* started as the first satellite television channel of Nepal, *Kantipur TV* and *Image Channel* began broadcasting in 2003 as terrestrial television channels.

As of 2017, the government has awarded licenses to 117 television channels. Among those 71 are cable television channels broadcasting only via cable, whereas three channels are distributed through Direct-To-Home (DTH) system and four are digital terrestrial. Among all those licensed channels, 42 are based in the Kathmandu Valley.

Sharecast Initiative's 2017 survey shows that 72 percent households in Nepal own a TV set and nearly 60 percent of people watch television every day. The advertising revenue share of televisions was around 20 percent in 2011. The state-owned *Nepal Television* is still the most popular with 38 percent viewership share, while *Kantipur TV* enjoys 27 percent viewership share. Other television stations receive minor shares, with *Avenues* – the third most popular channel – getting around 8 percent viewership share. *AP1 HD*, Nepal's first High Definition channel, is the new player in the market and has gained popularity bringing in an international franchise program – *Nepal Idol*.

Digital Media

The digital media landscape of Nepal consists of four distinct types of news websites. The first are digital versions of the printed newspapers or radios or televisions which archive and distribute the content from those outlets on the Internet. The second type are online news portals of the newspapers or radio or television stations which utilise the resources of the media to run the online news outlets. The third are independent news portals which just have digital outlets; and fourth, which is rare in other countries, are a considerable number of news websites run by Nepalis living abroad.

Nepal's media began the adoption of Internet technology early. *The Kathmandu Post*, which went online on September 1996, was the first newspaper in South Asia to have Internet presence. However, since then the development of digital media outlets has been slow, only picking up speed in the last few years.

The Department of Information (DoI) has a voluntary register of the digital media outlets, which are otherwise not regulated by media laws. By the end of 2017, the list consisted of 976 websites. No Nepali digital outlets use paywall or subscription systems and are offered free of cost with revenue coming in from advertising. The majority of newspapers offer epapers – digital copies of the newspapers – on their websites for free. The advertising revenue share of the digital platforms is not available but advertising agencies claim that it has increased significantly in the last few years.

According to the Nepal Telecommunications Authority (NTA), Internet penetration stands at 65 percent of the population and around 98 percent users access Internet using mobile phones. For many users, Internet is equivalent to Facebook and thus the majority of them access news on digital news outlets news through social media.

Popular and impactful digital media outlets include *Ekantipur* and *Nagariknews* – the online portals of popular daily newspapers; and independent news portals such as *Onlinekhabar*, *Setopati*, *Ratopati*, *Bahrakhari*, and *Deshsanchar*. Many

digital media outlets also have free mobile apps for browsing contents. Some of these popular independent news portal are owned by well-known editors who have switched from newspapers to digital; and because their opinions matter among the elites, the impact of digital media is increasing and they are slowly gaining space as agenda setters.

Social Networks

Internet has grown multiple folds in recent years in Nepal – in terms of penetration, speed and cost effectiveness. Data from the Nepal Telecommunication Authority (NTA) shows that Internet penetration in 2017 was 65 percent of the population. The number of Facebook users from Nepal stands around 10 million making it not only the most popular social media but also a very important source of information for the public. Twitter has an estimated user base of two million but it has high impact, as the social and political elites as well as celebrities are increasingly using Twitter as a medium to express themselves.

More than half of the traffic of news portals is referred by social media and a very popular mobile app called *Hamropatro*. *Hamropatro* is a calendar app that is a must-have app for those using the Nepali calendar system called *Bikram Sambat (BS)*. From a nifty small utility app, it grew into a full-fledged general app for everything, including push notification of important news from various digital outlets. Search engines are a minor player for Nepali news sites as referrals from search engines are very low.

Nepal's media use social media – especially Facebook and Twitter – to attract people to their contents whereas television channels use YouTube to share contents. The YouTube partnership program has become a source of revenues for many publishers especially those focusing on entertainment and music. No data is available on Internet advertising revenues but there were reports claiming that candidates of the 2017 General Election in Nepal spent close to €2.5m for advertising in social media (mostly Facebook), targeting youth voters from urban areas.

According to a 2017 survey by the Center for Media Research Nepal, more than three-quarters of Twitter users use Twitter to access news and information; up to 81 percent of them believe that Twitter is a strong medium of communication.

Opinion Makers

Blogs had glorious days in Nepal in 2005 when a coup by the then King Gyanendra Shah led to a censorship in media, and blogs became the main source of information about political happenings. However, the media fought back to regain its independence within a few weeks, and blogging fell off the limelight as the social media emerged as a powerful tool of expressing opinions by citizens.

The most popular blog – *mysansar* – is run by journalist Umesh Shrestha as a personal blog where he divulges into wide types of contents including political opinions. Among other popular bloggers are Lex Limbu, Aakar Anil, KP Dhungana, Ashesh Shrestha and Rabi Raj Baral.

Many Nepalis have taken Facebook and Twitter to express their opinions. Journalists are among the heaviest users of social media as they use them for expressing themselves, sharing information, sourcing information and promoting contents. A 2011 survey by the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) found that more than 90 percent of journalists use social media.

Sources

Newspapers

- [Annapurna Post daily](#)
- [Gorkhapatra daily](#)

- [Himal weekly](#)
- [Kantipur daily](#)
- [Nagarik daily](#)
- [Naya Patrika daily](#)
- [Nepal weekly](#)
- [Republica daily](#)
- [The Himalayan Times daily](#)
- [The Kathmandu Post daily](#)
- [The Rising Nepal daily](#)

Publishers

- [Gorkhapatra Corporation](#)
- [Kantipur Media Group \(KMG\)](#)
- [Nepal News Network \(3NI\) Private Limited](#)
- [Nepal Republic Media Private Limited](#)

Radio

- [Capital FM](#)
- [Image FM](#)
- [Nepal FM](#)
- [Radio Kantipur](#)
- [Radio Nepal](#)
- [Radio Sagarmatha](#)
- [Ujyaalo Radio](#)

Television

- [ABC News](#)
- [AP1 HD](#)
- [Avenues TV](#)
- [Himalaya TV](#)
- [Image Channel](#)
- [Kantipur TV](#)
- [Mountain TV](#)
- [Nepal Television](#)
- [News24 Nepal](#)
- [NTV News](#)
- [NTV Plus](#)
- [Sagarmatha TV](#)
- [TV Today](#)

Digital Media

- [12khari](#)
- [Bizmandu](#)

- [Deshsanchar](#)
- [Hamrakura](#)
- [Lokaantar](#)
- [Nepalkhabar](#)
- [Nepallive](#)
- [Onlinekhabar](#)
- [Ratopati](#)
- [Setopati](#)
- [Thahakhabar](#)

Opinion makers

- [Mysansar](#)

Organisations

Trade Unions

The Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) is the umbrella organisation of all journalists in Nepal. It's not a trade union in the strictest sense as it is not registered as a trade union, but it is a powerful organisation, given that almost all journalists are its members – more than 13,000 across Nepal, and has local units in 73 among 77 administrative districts and unit committees in major media houses. The FNJ brings together journalists from all political affiliation and represents journalists in various state mechanisms for media and journalists including the Press Council Nepal.

Kantipur Television, the largest private television network, has its own union – the *Kantipur Television Karmachari Sangh* (Kantipur Television Employee Association), which is the first independent trade union within a private media house. A few other private media houses including *Image Channel* and *Annapura Post* daily had trade unions, which are mostly inactive due to a failure to renew registrations. It was established in 2007. All state-owned media – *Nepal Television*, *Radio Nepal*, *Gorkhaptra Corporation* and *National News Agency* have their own trade unions.

The Nepal Press Union (NPU) is registered as a trade union but its members are journalists affiliated with Nepali Congress, a major right-wing party. It has membership and units across the nation. The Union of Media Employees Nepal was registered as a trade union of cross media employees in 2011 but hasn't been active.

Journalist Associations

Nepal has several journalist associations which are registered as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). *Sancharika Samuha* (Group of Women Communicators, SAS), established in 1996, is the largest organisation of women journalists with the objective of promoting a healthier and gender-sensitive media. The SAS conducts research, advocacy and capacity building works; and runs feature service, radio and television programmes and a news website. Another similar but smaller association for women journalists is the Working Women Journalists (WWJ). They both have membership and units across Nepal.

There are several journalist associations with links to political parties. Most of them function as sister organisations of the linked political party. Major among them are the Press Chautari Nepal, which is linked to the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist); and the Press Centre Nepal, which is linked to the Unified Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).

There are also journalist associations for journalists of similar social identities, and works for the welfare of journalists from their social identities. The Federation of Nepalese Indigenous Journalists (FONIJ), which aims to consolidate all Nepali indigenous nationalities journalists and has 45 district chapters and eight member organisations.

There are also specialised journalist associations such as the Nepal Forum of Environmental journalists, the Society of Economic Journalists - Nepal, the Online Journalists Association, the Nepal Sports Journalists Forum and the Film Critics Society of Nepal. These associations are based in Kathmandu.

News Agencies

The National News Agency (RSS) is the only news agency in Nepal and is owned by the state. It was formed in 1963 under an act merging two privately owned news agencies. The RSS has a nationwide network of journalists and its subscribers are local media houses. Except their own bulletins, the RSS also has arrangements for exchange of news with the Associated Press (AP), *Agence France Presse* (AFP), Xinhua, Kyodo, Press Trust of India and Associated Press of Pakistan; and acts as local reseller of those agencies. Being state-owned, its contents reflect a biasness.

Audience measurement organisations

In May 1993, ORG-MARG began its Nepal operations as a market research company which also conducted household surveys for media audience. The name was changed into Nielsen Nepal in 2002 and since 2003 it conducted a 'syndicated media survey' among audiences in urban areas all over Nepal, first monthly and later half-yearly. The survey was discontinued in 2012 due to lack of financial viability.

In 2013, a new non-for-profit distributing company, Sharecast Initiative Nepal, came into existence with the objective of focusing primarily on audience data for content distribution and sustainable local media. Sharecast conducted a basic media survey in 2014 and 2016; it is planning a broader audience survey in 2018. Sharecast also conducts a household survey of the sampled population all across the country.

Sources

Trade unions

- [Federation of Nepali Journalists](#) (FNJ)

Political journalist organisations / unions

- [Nepal Press Union](#) (NPU)

Regional / community journalist organisations / unions

- [Federation of National Indigenous Journalists](#) (FONIJ)
- [Madheshi Journalists Association](#)
- [Sancharika Samuha](#) (SAS)
- [Working Women Journalists](#) (WWJ)

News agencies

- [National News Agency](#) (RSS)

Policies

Media legislation

Nepal's media are governed by a set of laws, and their regulations. The main media laws are the Press and Publication Act 1992, the National Broadcasting Act 1993, and the Working Journalists Act 1995. The Press and Publication Act 1992 regulates the print media whereas the National Broadcasting Act is for radio and television. The Working Journalists Act is for the welfare and rights of the journalists employed in media houses regarding their benefits.

There is no law governing the digital media platforms so the Ministry of Information and Communication introduced the Online Media Operation Directives 2017. But it has been controversial with media rights organisations rejecting it for its restrictive provisions, but nonetheless the government continues its effort to implement it. The state, as stated earlier, plays an intervening role with such directives. The earlier version of the directives, which was approved by the government but not implemented because of the protests by the stakeholders, included the provisions to censor or shut-down online media for their contents, which was against the democratic values and the constitutional norms.

There is an ongoing effort to replace those media laws by the government, which formed a committee to draft a single integrated mass media law. It is still in its infancy and shall take a few years to be introduced. Along with it, the government has long been doing homework to convert state-owned broadcasting corporations into the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), and a draft law is ready for stakeholder discussion on it. Community radios are also governed by the same laws and regulations of commercial radios. There is a longstanding demand for separate regulations for community radios that are not profit-oriented and serving the communities, but no such regulations are in sight yet.

In the past, the Supreme Court has played a crucial role, mainly in favour of media freedom. For example, when in 2005 the government banned all news and current affairs programmes on the radio, the Court issued an interim order asking the government not to obstruct news broadcasts on FM radios, saying it's not only the right of the radios but also the responsibility of the radios to inform the public. The Constitutional Bench within the Supreme Court will be important in the next few years during the implementation of the new constitution.

The 2015 Constitution of Nepal, promulgated on September 20, 2015 by the Constituent Assembly, in its Preamble expresses 'commitment to create the bases of socialism by adopting democratic norms and values, including... complete press freedom'. While the Constitution is explicit in mentioning the rights – including the fundamental rights affecting the press freedom – the restrictions of the rights are vague in wording and open for misinterpretation. The restrictions, as well as provisions for state of emergency, also do not match the international standards, and leaves open space for wrong actions by

the state.

The state-owned media are established and governed by their own acts or regulations.

Accountability systems

The media accountability system is very weak in Nepal. The self-regulation system for media works only when the accountability system is owned by the industry – either through representation or shared framework and widely accepted procedures, but this is not the case in Nepal. The Press Council Nepal, which has the responsibility of receiving press complaints, is largely ignored by the media houses for its political composition and government appointment of its members. The Press Council Nepal received 55 complaints regarding media contents in 2016 and was able to solve 25 of them the same year. It also employs a monitoring system on media contents and issuing concerns and warnings when necessary.

No Nepali media has an internal complaint system or Ombudsman. There is also no press complaint commission constituted by any group of publishers as is the case in some countries in the region like Sri Lanka.

Regulatory authorities

The Mass Media Policy 2017 envisions an independent Mass Communication Authority to oversee the entire media sector – print press, radio, television and digital media. However, there is not a law yet to formalise it and the new integrated mass media law on the offing will create it. In absence of such an authority, various aspects of media are overseen by various different government agencies.

The Department of Information (DoI) acts as the office of the Press Registrar and registers newspapers and enlists online media; distributes Public Welfare Advertising to newspapers, televisions and radio; and issues press accreditation of journalists. The Ministry of Information and Communication (MoIC) oversees issuing and renewing licenses of radios and televisions.

Sources

Laws, Regulations and Institutions

- [Department of Information](#)
- [Ministry of Information and Communication](#)
- [Press Council Nepal](#)

Education

Universities and schools

Journalism education is an optional subject in the school system of Nepal. Students in their 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th year of basic education can choose to study journalism as an optional subject.

Three universities in Nepal run academic courses on mass communication and journalism. The Tribhuvan University (TU),

Nepal's oldest and biggest university, started journalism education in 1976. The following universities runs academic courses on journalism:

Tribhuvan University

- Department of Journalism and Mass Communication: Bachelor in Arts (Mass Communication and Journalism); Master in Journalism and Mass Communication; Masters in Philosophy (Journalism).
- The Office of the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities: Doctor of Philosophy (Journalism).

Purbanchal University

- Master in Mass Communication & Journalism; Master in Development Communication; Master in Media Technology; Bachelor in Mass Communication and Journalism; and Bachelor in Media Technology.

Kathmandu University

- School of Arts: Bachelor in Media Studies.

Professional development

The Nepal Press Institute (NPI) is a non-governmental journalist training institution. It was established in 1984 and runs a 10-month journalism training course for aspiring journalists. It also runs a one-month writing and interviewing skills course in its Regional Media Resource Centres in Biratnagar, eastern Nepal and Nepalgunj, western Nepal.

Many institutions, such as the Centre for Investigative Journalism and the *Sancharika Samuha* (Group of Women Communicators) run short-term journalism courses but they are not regular and their availability depends upon the funding by the donor agencies.

Sources

Universities

- [Kathmandu University](#)
- [Purbanchal University](#)
- [Tribhuvan University](#)

Training institutes

- [Nepal Press Institute](#)

Conclusions

Conclusion

The Nepali media landscape is a vibrant and diverse environment which will grow in next few years. Today it is distinguished by some main features. Its high political contents in newspapers and televisions and their higher impact on policy makers. The mainstream newspapers and televisions are centred around the capital city, and their contents are dominated by politics.

The reach of radio stations is very high among the public and they are allowed to broadcast news and current affairs programs. But their impact is not high in policy making, thus they operate mainly as local radios impacting the grassroots population. The growing impact of the digital media platforms is evident. Digital media platforms are growing and slowly attracting the advertisements. The Nepali media landscape is a vibrant and diverse environment which will grow in next few years.

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