

A RESEARCH REPORT ON

# MEDIA & THE NEPALI PUBLIC

Survey Assessments of Media Capacity, Credibility and Literacy

2012

Media Foundation- Nepal

With Support from Government of Japan through  
SPCBN/UNDP and in collaboration with UNESCO



# MEDIA



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A field staff explaining the survey questionnaire to a respondent at Narabasti 3 village of Bara, June 2012.

Photo by Laxmi Kharel

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## ACRONYMS

AAVAS	Academy of Audio-Visual Arts & Science	MBMC	Madan Bhandari Memorial College
ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulation	MC	Martin Chautari
ACORAB	Association of Community Radio Broadcasters	MDC	Master in Development Communication
AFMD	African Forum for Media Development	MDI	Media Development Indicators
AJF	Asian Journalism Forum	MF-N	Media Foundation-Nepal
AMIC	Asian Media Information and Communication Center	MMCJ	Master in Mass Communication & Journalism
ANIJ	Association of Nepal Indigenous Journalists	MMT	Master in Media Technology
BAN	Broadcasting Association Nepal	MoIC	Ministry of Information and Communications
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	MP	Media Point
BMCJ	Bachelor in Mass Communication & Journalism	MSI	Media Services International
BMS	Bachelor in Media Studies	NBA	National Broadcasting Act
BMT	Bachelor in Media Technology	NBPS	Nepal Batabaran Patrakar Samuha
CRSC	Community Radio Support Center	NEFEJ	Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists
DANIDA	Danish International Development Cooperation	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
DFID	Department for International Development	NIC	National Information Commission
DOI	Department of Information	NPC	National Planning Commission
EA Nepal	Equal Access Nepal	NPI	Nepal Press Institute
EC	European Commission	NTA	Nepal Telecom Authority
FGD	Focus Group Discussion	NTV	Nepal Television
FM	Frequency Modulation	PCL	Proficiency Certificate Level
FNJ	Federation of Nepali Journalists	PCN	Press Council Nepal
GoJ	Government of Japan	RMRCs	Regional Media Resource Center
GoN	Government of Nepal	PoU	Pokhara University
HS	Hatemalo Sanchar	PU	Purvanchal University
ICFJ	International Center for Journalists	RSS	Rastriya Samachar Samiti (National News Agency)
ICIMOD	The International Center for Integrated Mountain Development	RTI	Right to Information
ICT	Information and Communications Technology	SAFMA	South Asian Free Media Association
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University	SC	Shepherd College
IJA	International Journalism Associations	SLC	School Leaving Certificate
IMMC	Indian Institute of Mass Communication	SMS	Short Message System
IMS/Denmark	International Media Support, Denmark	SNV	Netherlands Development Organization in Nepal
INSEC	Informal Services Sector	SPCBN	Support to Participatory Constitution Building in Nepal
IPDC	International Program for the Development of Communication	SS	Sancharika Samuha
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency	TMG	Tamang Communication Group
JMC	Jagaran Media Center	ToR	Terms of Reference
KCC	Kantipur City College	TU	Tribhuvan University
CIJ	Center for Investigative Journalism	UK	United KingdomUNDP- United Nations Development Program
KU	Kathmandu University	UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization
M Phil	Master of Philosophy	WWJ	Working Women's Journalists Group
MA	Master of Arts	WN	Worldview Nepal

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report primarily showcases findings of survey assessments that Media Foundation undertook in partnership with UNDP, the government of Japan and UNESCO. The Journalists' Survey and the Public Opinion Survey were conducted during June-July, 2012. The surveys' overall goal was to assess the media environment of Nepal with the immediate objective to identify priorities in the area of media capacity development.

**Survey of journalists:** The survey found that women journalists comprise a small segment of the total respondents. Most of the Nepali journalists are young; more than half of them are between 19 and 30 years old. Majority of journalists, almost 70%, are from the Brahmin/Chhetri background, followed by those from Newari, Madhesi/terai or janajati background. Close to one-third of journalists are from the urban Kathmandu Valley.

In regards to professional issues, journalists agree that Code violation has frequently plagued their profession, and lack of awareness about ethics is the main reason behind this. Major challenges identified are partisan image of media professionals, lack of security assurances from state, partisan media houses, and individual media worker's lack of technological resources and training.

On credibility, majority of journalists see the media and their content generally trustworthy. However, many tend to see them as partisan. Poor language and presentation style are acknowledged as partially responsible for hampering credibility. Journalists are satisfied with their coverage on contemporary issues like peace, democracy, constitution-making, governance, national politics, etc. but the public response is somewhat critical.

On the capacity measures, journalists appeared somewhat dissatisfied with the available training, curriculum, instruction and practical opportunities such as in-house training and internships. The public also suggest that journalists get more such opportunities.

The highly felt training needs of journalists include developing story ideas, followed by information gathering and writing news stories, and locating source. Both advanced and proficiency-level as well as basic-level trainings are on demand to upgrade their professional capacities. In terms of resourcefulness, time-management, ICT skills, followed by special language skills and multi-media are among the most commonly cited needs of journalists. Many journalists prefer practical, hands-on mode of instruction. Journalists feel that new media has helped them by enhancing access to subject matter, and by helping contact the sources and to interact with them. Although many journalists rely on the Internet for information and news, more than half of those surveyed said they do not have access to new media.

Majority of journalists are affiliated with one or the other professional association or organization. Many believe such affiliation has helped in their networking efforts. Personal beliefs or principles were most often cited as the reasons for journalists' political affiliation, but most of the journalists think such affiliation does not help in their professional capabilities. Journalists believe extra income from vocations other than their regular work in journalism has helped in their journalistic pursuit. Journalists tend to have somewhat mixed views about their satisfaction with achievement in the profession; with over 40% saying they are somewhat dissatisfied.

More than half the respondents (53.2%) report they do not have access to new media. Oddly enough, four-fifths of those surveyed say they could handle new media tools efficiently, for professional work. Using new media tools, online searching, video-conferencing, creating web pages or personal blogs are among the most cited new media learning interests of journalists.

**Public opinion survey:** Majority of the media-consuming public is comprised of young people, almost half of them in the age group 19 to 30 years. Almost half comprise the public from Brahmin/Chhetri background, followed by people from the terai/Madhesi communities, or janajatis, and Newars. Most of the public respondents came from Kathmandu Valley, and terai districts of Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, followed by Morang and Sunsari. Married respondents outnumbered the unmarried. There were fewer members of the public with higher academic degrees compared to the journalists that were surveyed. Most of our public respondents worked in the education sector, followed by business/ industry.

The survey suggests that more than one-third of the public has no idea what topics the Nepali media cover; another one-third believes current affairs are the most frequently covered. Similarly, more than one-third of the public is not sure about the most needed topic to be covered by the media. Unlike the journalists who saw media role more in generating awareness on development issues, the public emphasizes journalists' role more in generating awareness on health, education, economy and the environment.

A majority of the public concurs with the journalists in stressing that journalists should be loyal to the general public. More than two-thirds of the public believes that there is no dearth of skilled journalists in Nepal; a majority of the public saw the role of the press in the country's transition to federalism, believed journalists have less political affiliation today, journalism content is getting better now; and that media are contributing to exposing cases of corruption, and there is more freedom today, etc. Although the public had high perception of journalists' work as a watchdog, or as a catalyst for social harmony, more than half of those surveyed did not believe Nepali media was neutral.

Most of the public relied on the radio for information and news, followed by friends and family members, and TV. The public is divided in their channel preferences, with most opting for local FM stations, the national radio, and newspapers. Almost one-third of the surveyed public believed Nepali media presented news on public interest, followed by those who thought it encouraged citizen participation. The public generally does not believe that media houses encourage citizen engagement or participation. The public trusts TV journalists, followed by journalists of the daily newspapers and radio in that order.

The public is not sure about their trust on journalists by their location or base, nor are they sure of them by the topics they cover. The public trusts journalists working with government media more than those working with the private media, or community media.

In terms of their access to media, most members of the public ranked the radio first, followed by TV, newspapers and the Internet. Almost half of the respondents (46.91%) reported it has the skills to use mobile phone, read newspapers, create web page, play video games, etc. with more than one-third respondents saying they cannot chat online. More than two-thirds reported they only scan their media and rarely analyzed the context of information given in them. A majority of the public surveyed had not produced a variety of written or audio-visual material, wrote to newspapers or called a TV or radio station, etc.

*SECTION I:*  
**Introduction**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nepal's media landscape, both in terms of the number of media outlets and media practitioners, has altered enormously in recent years. Citizens' access to media is also expanding at a breathtaking pace. Print outlets and electronic media channels both continue to multiply. FM radio stations are now broadcasting programs out of remote districts and villages. While this quantitative growth continues, attention has now shifted to the questions of quality and credibility of Nepal's media. Today, citizens, who comprise majority of the users of media, have also become an indispensable component of media policy and research.

However, lacking systematic studies integrating policies, professional practices and audience attributes or habits, few generalizations can be made about the actual state of Nepali media today. The field looks cluttered and chaotic. The lack or paucity of empirical data and timely assessments of the media landscape have burdened the work of identifying priorities and the needed interventions in the capacity development of this sector. As a result, existing capacity building efforts such as training programs for journalists remain haphazard, pointing to need for training materials, toolkits, or standardized manuals.

Most existing assessments of Nepali media are built on historical overviews, document analysis, baseline surveys, anecdotal observations, reflective/reactive criticism, etc. Systematic surveys representative of the national sample have rarely been undertaken in the area of media, and a survey of similar scope and approach incorporating the perceptions and views of the general public specifically towards the media remains non-existent. The last systematic, comprehensive survey of the public regarding their views on Nepali media, carried out purely in the interest of the public, for example, was undertaken way back in 1993 (IIDS, 1996). Other few surveys of media representative of the national population since then have mostly been proprietorial focused primarily on serving the interests of private companies, institutions, and markets.

Mapping the existing media landscape requires not only a review of past research works but also integrating contemporary perspectives on the nature and state of Nepali media, from both the press and the public, two of the key elements of any democracy. Inputs from the stakeholders and citizens themselves promise a more substantive basis to prioritize media development in the country.

Against this backdrop, these survey assessments and public opinion poll carried out with support from UNDP-Nepal, the Government of Japan and UNESCO, sought to assess the media environment of Nepal in order to identify priorities for future activities, specifically in the area of capacity development.

The surveys were conducted during the months of June and July, 2012. While survey results can be generalized to the target population, they typically exclude individual experiences that are outside of the questionnaire. In consideration of this and related limitations of survey research, Media Foundation- Nepal (MF-N), going beyond the Terms of Reference (TOR), conducted a series of focus group discussions with a broad cross-section of stakeholders. The FGDs covered interrelated themes like media capacity, credibility, literacy, inclusion, and public perceptions. Altogether six FGDs were held, participated in by professionals and the general public. Besides, this report also draws on the results from loose network discussions conducted by SPCBN/UNDP. Thus, the report integrated both quantitative and qualitative approaches (for details on research approach, see Section III: Methods).

We believe that this study holds out greater significance and value at this time of enormous professional renewal and change in the midst of a transforming media landscape and transitional national politics. No substantive reference work has been built on any quantitative; disaggregate assessment of a national sample of journalists and general people. Institutionally, MF-N sees a convergence of interest with the project partners in doing the surveys and in capacity enhancement of media professionals.

We hope this study serves as a snapshot of the contemporary narrative of media development in Nepal, offering a sound basis to gauge where we stand today and where we are headed.

This report is organized in eight sections. Section I (Introduction) offers a brief introduction to the study report. Section II (The Media Landscape) reviews the media environment of Nepal in historical terms, its current situation, media laws and their implication to media, capacity development, media credibility and media literacy. Section III (Methods) spells out the objectives, the research design, process, data collection, analysis and limitations. Section IV (Journalists' Survey) and Section V (Public Opinion Survey) analyze data along variables such as demographics, professionalism, media credibility, capacity and literacy. Section VI (SMS Poll) analyzes media credibility data obtained in the form of text messages via respondents' mobile phones. Section VIII (Focus Group Discussions) analyzes the qualitative input gleaned from stakeholders. Finally, Section VIII (Conclusions and Recommendations) highlights the key findings, compares perspectives of journalists with the perspectives of the public, and make recommendations for action.

*SECTION II:*  
**The Media Landscape**

**2. THE NEPALI MEDIA LANDSCAPE**

This section is built on desk review of past literature and it attempts to map the media landscape of Nepal. Media in this document broadly refers to channels and platforms that carry news and public information. The following pages highlight the country's media environment in historical terms, its current situation, impact on political and social aspects, media laws and their implications for media, capacity development, media credibility, and media literacy.

## 2.1 Historical context

The institutional history of Nepali journalism has largely been defined by the types of political systems the country adopted over the years. In writing the early history of the Nepali press, the newspaper historian Grishma Bahadur Devkota (1967) documented many cases of struggle between the press and the government, citing repressive press laws and painting a gloomy media environment. The installation of the first printing press in the year 1851, the publication of *Sudha Sagar* magazine in 1889, the beginning of the Gorkhapatra newspaper in 1901 or the fall of the Ranas and the advent of democracy in 1950 hold equal significance in marking the beginning of new era in print media (Adhikari, 2003, p. 1).

The first electronic mass media, Radio Nepal, was established in 1951. The decade after the fall of the Ranas represented a transitional democracy, ultimately subverted by the partyless Panchayat system in 1960 that ruled the nation for 30 years with a repressive press system. The restoration of democracy in 1990 opened the door, finally, to a liberal environment enabling an upsurge in the number of independent media outlets.

Before 1990, only a limited dailies, weeklies and fortnightly papers based on mission-journalism existed. There were also a couple of broadsheet dailies operated by the government, such as *Gorkhapatra* and *The Rising Nepal*. Similarly, the government-controlled Nepal Television, established in 1985, and the Radio Nepal were the only electronic media in the country. The publication of *Kantipur* and *The Kathmandu Post* broadsheet dailies from the private sector, in 1993, began, in a sense, a tradition of independent and professional journalism (Humagain et al, 2007, p. 2).

Internet was introduced in the country in 1993, and a newspaper's print edition was first available online in 1995. It started off as shovelware when in 1995 *The Kathmandu Post* put online its print content. Other early birds were himalmag.com (1997) and nepalnews.com (1998). The latter was the first news-only portal launched by Merchantile Communication, a private IT company (Shah, 2010). Initially, the website served to host digital versions of several print newspapers. News portals of most "legacy" media houses, such as kantipuronline.com (2000), thehimalayantimes.com (2001), gorkhapatra.org.np (2002), newsofnepal.com (2003) began as electronic platforms of their print content. Only gradually did some of these sites start to publish web exclusive content as well.

However, the history of Nepali new media in terms of electronic communication and news goes farther than 1995 and beyond the geographic bounds of Nepal. The Nepal Digest, an electronic newsletter was launched in 1992 in the USA. Newslookmag.com (now nepalmonitor.com) began in 1999 in North America as Nepal's first "complete online newsmagazine". The Washington DC-based Nepalipost.com was created in 2001 (Sharma, 2007).

Throughout the period leading up to the 1990s, Nepali media remained characterized by political control, repression of press freedom, and official propaganda. Most publications were proprietorial, functioning under limited freedom, and operated by crusading journalists. A section of the feeble private press, represented mostly by party-affiliated weekly newspapers, championed the adversarial role of journalism, speaking on behalf of a multi-party system and democratic rule. Although they were influential among sections of political and urban elites, they had very little role in mass public opinion formation in the country. The official laws and regulations on media were aimed at curtailing or completely denying the freedoms enjoyed by the press in developed democracies.

The political reforms of the 1990s, as well as rising literacy rates, entrepreneurship, and the adoption of new media technologies, among other factors, finally led the way to the growth of Nepali media.

## **2.2 Current situation**

### **2.2.1 Print media**

Print media mainly caters to the urban, educated people. There are more than 14 broadsheet dailies, including two government-owned, most concentrated in the capital city, and about two dozen weekly tabloid newspapers. In addition to Nepali, Nepal has newspapers and magazines published in languages such as English, Newari, Hindi, Maithili, and Tharu.

The growth in the number of daily newspapers is obvious, especially when compared to the figures from 1989-1990. The total newspapers registered till mid-July 1990 were 481, of which 62 were dailies, one bi-weekly, 370 weeklies and 48 fortnightly (PCN, 2006/07). Today, the total number of dailies, weeklies, and periodicals is 636 (PCN, 2011), among which 20 are printed in regional, indigenous languages.

From the technological perspective also, there seems to have been a great leap over the years. An overwhelming majority of newspapers published in the country have adopted modern, offset press and the use of traditional 'letter press' declining fast. According to Press Council Nepal (PCN, n.d.), out of 89 daily newspapers nationwide, 81 use offset printing technology, whereas only eight rely on letter press. Similarly, among 381 weeklies, 313 use offset press, and 68 of them print on letter press.

Several national publications now reach a wider population. For example, regional simultaneous editions of *Kantipur* and *The Kathmandu Post* are published from Biratnagar, Nepalgunj, and Chitwan and these cater to the readers in the region. *Nagarik* now publishes supplemental regional editions, *Nagarik Purbeli* and *Nagarik Paschimeli*. No doubt, today, newspapers reach audiences faster, but lacking hard data, readership growth rate remains unclear.

Apparently, Nepali print media have made leaps and bounds over the years in their geographic reach covering larger populations. However, total combined circulation figures for newspapers are not available, and estimates range between a few hundred thousand.

### **2.2.2 Radio**

Radio is the most popular form of media in Nepal. In the post-1990 scenario, radio broadcasting has witnessed remarkable progress. The introduction of National Broadcasting Act in the year 2049 BS (1993) and the National Broadcasting Regulations in 2052 BS (1995) paved the way for the establishment of independent radios and televisions. The licensing to Radio Sagarmatha in 1997 marked the beginning of the independent radios in a society where the state-owned Radio Nepal was the only radio outlet in the country.

The state-owned Radio Nepal's coverage extends to over 85 of the population (*Republica*, 2012). The frequency modulation (FM) community-based broadcasting has a wide coverage across the country, a pioneer in South Asia. Local broadcasting is becoming very popular because of its immediacy and the speed of information and news. There are today over 327 local FM radio stations operating across the country, and according to the latest figures released by Ministry of Information and Communications (MOIC) on July 17, 2012, a total of 476 FM radio stations had acquired broadcasting licenses (MOIC, 2012a; 2012b).

Due to ambiguities in definitions, it is not clear how many of these are truly "community radio" stations. As of July 2012, the Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (ACORAB) had 191 radio stations as its members. A vast majority these stations, 77% to be precise, were owned by non-governmental organizations. The rest were owned by cooperatives (23%), and local government (1%). The highest concentration of community radio stations was in mid-western development region (32%), and the least concentration was in the far-western region (6%).

### **2.2.3 Television**

In the post-1990 phase, the number of television stations has gone up. Television is becoming popular in urban and semi-urban areas. The first private channel began in 2003, some 18 years after the establishment of government owned Nepal Television. By early 2012, there were 14 stations in operation, although 39 TV stations had acquired broadcasting license (MOIC, 2012c). Most of the stations are based in the capital city of Kathmandu. Two are terrestrial and others satellite channels. A few local channels are being installed in the regional towns.

There were 744 licensed cable operators and 91 foreign channels accessible for downlink (MOIC, 2012d). Of the total cable operators, only 156 had paid their royalty at least once since registration, which suggests that active cable operators are few.

No authentic figures are available for television coverage, although estimates range between 50 and 60% of households. The signal of Nepal Television covers more than 50 countries and it reaches 72% of the country's population" (NTV, nd). During the past few years, NTV has significantly increased its accessibility in the length and breadth of the country. It has strengthened its technological capacity, and is now airing programs through terrestrial, satellite and digital networking.

With the entry of Direct-to-Home (DTH) TV providers in 2010, access to TV viewing is likely to increase significantly.

### **2.2.3 New media**

The use of tools, products or services of communication other than traditional media, such as television and newspapers, has widely increased in the past several years. These new media can be web-based or applications-based, and may include things such as portable technology (mobile telephony, Skype, net-books, media tablets, etc), electronic communication (SMS, e-mail, blogs, news sites, podcasts, wikis, social, networks, etc), presentation tools or multi-media (PowerPoint, SlideRocket, PhotoShop, iMovie, Google Docs, etc), online games etc.

Internet was introduced in Nepal in 1993. In 2012, there were 46 ISPs (Internet service providers), 13 rural VSAT and 6 rural internet service providers who were given government licenses in the country (NTA, 2012; 1.4). In mid-April 2012, the total Internet penetration in the country, in terms of tele-density, was 17.53% (NTA, May 2012). Limited Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) and wireless technologies were available in rural areas, and the government offers incentives to ISPs seeking licenses to operate in the rural areas. Across the country, there were 44 government established telecenters, which also offered Internet services.

Telephony is a rapidly expanding sector. Mobile phone penetration in mid-2012 was 54.46% (NTA, May 2012) as compared to 8% in 2007. As a result of the reforms in the telecom sector, the state-owned Nepal Telecom lost its monopoly in 2004. Two other private service providers, United Telecom Ltd and Spice Nepal (NCell) Pvt Ltd entered the market. By October 2010 mobile penetration in Nepal had reached around 30%, with mobile subscriber numbers having increased tenfold in just three years. Smart phone use was on the rise. There was little growth in the 3% fixed-line penetration. The average time to a telephone booth for a rural household was calculated as 2 hours and 13 minutes, and rural mobile population coverage was only 2% (ITU, 2008).

The use of web-based communication platforms like online chats, or Skype is also gradually increasing among net-savvy populations, especially in urban centers. With increased penetration of mobile phones, text-messaging or SMS communication is becoming popular.

Social media networks like Facebook and Twitter are also becoming popular among the youth and urban populations. There were 1.45 million Facebook users by June 2012 (Mahato, 2012). Apparently, the number of blogs and micro-blogs by individuals and professionals has gone up drastically. Among the educated, the use of presentation tools and multi-media is growing. However, no authentic, updated data is available on the number or nature of the blogs, or the level of the use of many of these new media tools and platforms that are in process of constant change.

Online journalism, another facet of new media, has seen a huge surge in recent years. Although exact figures are not available, most traditional publications or broadcast outlet have an online presence. There are scores of online newsportals, which include those operated from outside the country by members of the expanding diaspora community. The interactive features of these sites have enabled readers and users to directly post their comments and feedback making participation and engagement a reality. However, critics have pointed out that the Nepali news websites are poor in their usability features. They are still represented online by rather cumbersome, confusing portals (Cooper, 2012).

In recent years, social media practices, like blogging have become more common within the realm of journalism. Blogging involves writing for a blog, an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and hyperlinks or interactive features. According to a recent survey of social media use among journalists, nearly half of the 192 respondents (45.3%) said they maintain a personal blog (CMR Nepal, 2012). The earliest Nepali blogs, such as blog.com.np, were started by journalists. Following the royal coup in February 2005, when the regime engaged on systematic clampdown on media, blogs suddenly became popular. They were able to circumvent censorship and inform the world about events in Nepal (Sharrock, 2007). Individual-initiated or donor-funded experimental citizen journalism websites have also appeared in recent times.

Empirical data on blogging, online or social media, their numbers, nature of content and resources remains sparse. There are no specific legal frameworks or an official agency to oversee new media, and major media houses lack social media policies and some have even banned the use of such media during office hours. Yet, many news organizations have joined social networking sites, and often social media initiatives have been spearheaded by individual journalists. The CMR Nepal survey (2012) showed that 39.6% of journalists surveyed used Twitter and almost everyone, 97% to be precise, used Facebook.

Blogs or other forms of social media remain in an adolescent phase, confined to urbanites and professionals. Nonetheless, despite questions raised about their journalistic merit, of the top ten visited news sites of Nepal in May 2012, majority were non-legacy, blog-style news portals, according to Alexa, a portal that crawls and analyzes traffic to individual websites.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Alexa.com ranked the Nepali news websites in this order: ekantipur.com, nagariknews.com, onlinekhabar.com, mysansar.com, thehimalayantimes.com, myrepublica.com, cybersansar.com, nepalnews.com, aakarpost.com, unn.com.np (ranking record from May 22, 2012).

## **2.2.4 Journalists across channels**

### **2.2.4.1 Profile in numbers**

As Nepal's media landscape has expanded, so has the number of journalists in the country. Although it is estimated that there are today around 10,000 journalists in Nepal, these figures have not been verified. Usually, membership records of professional associations and groups of journalists do offer some insights into their profiles. However, many such organizations do maintain updated lists, and some shy away from sharing them publicly.

So far, the most comprehensive membership list is available with Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), the umbrella organizations of news professionals. According to FNJ, its total membership in 2012 stood at 8,013, including 382 institutional members called "associate organizations" (FNJ, 2012). It must be noted that not all journalists working in Nepal have received membership of the FNJ. Yet, it maintains a list that appears the most representative of journalists in the country.

No authentic figures are available on journalists working for specific media channels. Estimates for print journalists run into the thousands. The Nepal Photojournalists' Association alone has 184 as members (NPJA, 2012) and many photojournalists remain unlisted. Likewise, according to professional groups, there are several thousand radio journalists in the country today. In contrast, estimates for television or online journalists hover around a few hundreds.<sup>2</sup> Among these, many journalists work across platforms or in multiple channels.

### **2.2.4.2 Work base**

The Kathmandu Valley continues to hold the largest concentration of journalists nationwide. Almost all of nationally influential print and electronic media in Nepal are produced in Kathmandu. While regional newspapers are also published in different cities, the number of journalists working for these outlets is comparatively low. Region-wise, the FNJ figures show that there were 1,067 members in Eastern Region, 1,285 in Central Region, 1,123 in Western Region, 993 in Midwestern Region, 496 in Farwestern Region, and 1,168 in the Kathmandu Valley (FNJ, 2012).

Despite concentration in Kathmandu, the rise of regional media has improved the scope for local or regional media. Journalists can be found today even in the most remote parts of the country largely due to proliferation of FM radio stations. Region-wise, the distribution remains uneven. According to data from ACORAB, the highest concentration of community radio stations in 2012 was in mid-western development region (32%), and the least concentration was in the far-western region (6%). Nonetheless, the dominance of the Kathmandu Valley, is

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<sup>2</sup> Personal interviews with members of FNJ, ACORAB, Television Journalists' Association (TJA), and Online Media Association (ONA), June & July 2012.

dwindling. For example, critics have observed that "some of the most remarkable examples of these new media [that grew in the post-1990 Nepal] are the community television, radio, and newspapers produced in the town of Tansen, where they thrive far from the political hub of the state in the Kathmandu Valley" (Wilmore, 2008). In addition, for many individual journalists with access to new media technologies, barriers like geography or regions have ceased to exist. This is particularly true in the case of online journalists.

#### **2.2.4.3 Newsroom diversity**

Data on newsroom diversity is sketchy. In a 2001 survey of 956 editorial media workers from 73 publishing houses outside the Kathmandu Valley, 17.15% were found to be from the indigenous nationalities whereas the representation of Dalit was only 1.78%. Within nationalities too, the Newars had a lead with 5.1%. Females constituted 5.33% (Parajuli and Gautam, 2008). Exact, updated figures on women journalists in Nepal are not available. Estimates range between 10 to 15% of the around 10,000 journalists in the country (Dhungel, 2012).

In the 2001 survey, of the 693 editorial media persons from a total of 41 publishing houses within the Kathmandu Valley, 21.5% represented enlisted nationalities whereas the dalit representation was 1.58%. Within indigenous nationalities, the Newars comprised 13.4% whereas Rai, Limbu and Tamang shared 5.08%. Similarly, females constituted 4.4% (Parajuli and Gautam, 2008, p. 126-27). This suggests ethnic representation in media is not quite balanced.

#### **2.2.4.4 Gender**

Women work for media houses as journalists, freelance writers/columnists and occasional contributors. As for the ratio of female participation in media, a survey in 2001 indicated that of 956 editorial media workers from 73 publishing houses outside the Kathmandu Valley, females constitute only 5.33%. Likewise, of the 693 editorial media persons from a total of 41 publishing houses within the Kathmandu Valley, females constitute only 4.4% (Parajuli and Gautam, 2008, 126-27).

More recent estimates range between 10 to 15% of the approximate 10,000 journalists in the country (Dhungel, 2012). According to the Department of Information (DoI), the total number of women receiving press accreditation cards by mid-July 2012 was 1,138 (*Republica*, 2012).

#### **2.2.4.5 Language**

While Nepali is the predominant language among newspapers in Nepal, English has also gained considerable readership among the educated population. Besides, few other languages such as Newari, Maithili and Bhojpuri have also significant readership. Hindi also enjoys readership among a section of the public. About 20 indigenous language newspapers are published in the country (PCN, 2011).

In recent times, the growth of media programs or content in mother tongues as well as access to such programs has improved the options for media users. Analysts have observed that listeners have developed intimacy with local FM stations that broadcast programs and news in

the local languages, and they have started embracing such radio "as their own" (Gaire, 2008, p. 117).

## 2.3 Media impact on political and social realms

Traditionally, the role of media in a democracy is broadly seen in light of the media's need to reflect diversity, serve as a forum of dialogue among various actors of the society, hold the government and rulers accountable, and to inform, educate and entertain the public (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007; MDI UNESCO/IPDC, 2008). Moreover, it's the media role to engage the public in the important issues of their communities and the nation so that their needs are prioritized and their voices are heard by policy makers and those in the power. In a transitional, post-conflict society like Nepal, media is also expected to play the role of consensus and peace builder.

In developing countries, writes Chan (2001), the media represent resources that can be mobilized to demote or promote democracy. Media serve democracy if they can help spread democratic ideals, reflect the voices of contending parties, provide the public with quality and relevant information, articulate the social choices, and facilitate public deliberation. Failing all these functions, he further adds, democracy will be undermined (Chan, 2001, p. 108).

Critics have observed that seminar proceedings, official compilations and secondary source data on the extent of media access and content have increased (Yadav 2001). Few empirical studies exist that seek to explain the impact of Nepali media in political or social aspects. Anecdotal observations, case studies, and commentaries abound. Nonetheless, the "assumed" impact can be broadly described in the following way with some key examples:

### 2.3.1 Political impact

- **Political rights and freedoms:** Historically, Nepali media have played an active role in advocating for political rights and freedoms. However, lacking empirical data on the causal effect of media on these issues, the extent of impact remains to be explored systematically. Based on the historical evidence of media advocating these issues, and championing them, often side by side with politicians, it is safe to say they have played a catalyst role.
- **Good governance:** It focuses on state accountability toward citizens. Studies around the world have shown correlation between good governance and media, with some researchers suggesting strong links between the two, and others less stronger links (Myers, 2012). In the case of Nepal, Yadav (2001) notes that the crucial information flow through media can promote freedom of expression and play the 'watch dog' role to remind government of its public accountability and welfare which eventually leads to good governance. He observes that non-uniform and unequal access to information of governmental activities and national policy affairs directly concerned to public has been the main hindrances to good governance.

- **Democratic transition:** Again, the role of Nepali media in democratic transition has been widely hailed. For example, it has been credited for its catalytic role in the people's movements of 1990 and 2006. Scholars like Sharrock (2007) have analyzed the role of new media in such movements. Sharma (2001) observed, Nepali media is in a state of transition and continues to struggle to define its role in multi-party democracy. He credits the media as having played significant role in the process of political acculturation, enriching the unique Nepali political culture and values. Yet it remains effectively under the control of either the government or political parties (Sharma, 2001, p. 47).
- **Fighting corruption and transparency:** Examples of media uncovering cases of corruption and official malfeasance are not rare in the country. A 2010-2012 survey of six South Asian countries published by Transparency International (TA), the anti-corruption organization, found that in Nepal the media is the most trusted institution in the fight against corruption. In the rest of South Asia, it's either the government leaders or "nobody" (TA, 2012, 16, quoted in Nepal Monitor). The Nepali media in 2011 resorted to legal tools, such as Right to Information (RTI) legislation, to disclose a probe-panel's report on forged VAT bills (Kafle, 2012).
- **Consensus and peace building:** Media's role has been acknowledged in promoting reconciliation and reducing tension, restoring confidence and peace, especially in post-conflict situations. Normatively, the media's emphasis is laid on mediating the peace process truthfully and objectively, building trust among political parties, restoring dignity of conflict victims and delivering justice to them, peacefully resolving all outstanding issues, building a society that abides by the laws and shuns all forms of violence, etc. However, there is paucity of empirical data on the impact of Nepali media in these themes and studies on the topic have often been prescriptive (Bhattarai, 2005; Gurung 2004). A study in 2011, which analyzed several Nepali national dailies (Adhikari et al, 2011) found sketchy coverage of peace, suggesting a limited role played by media by way of representation.
- **Consolidating nationalism:** In developing countries like Nepal, facing internal crisis, experiencing rapid social transformation, or facing external threat, media serves to consolidate nationalism by extolling and emphasizing the importance of the glories of national heroes, unearthing the values of national icons, stressing national unity through rituals of national anniversaries (CK Lal, 2010, 108).

### **2.3.2 Social impact**

- **Media impact on audience:** Surveys have consistently shown media impacts audience perceptions of issues (Ramaprasad and Kelly, 2003, Banjade, 2007), but most studies in the context of Nepal have focused on evaluating media impact assessments of particular programs undertaken by public institutions, NGOs, and INGOs (MS Nepal, 2005, BBC WST, 2008; Nilesen, 2008, New Era, 2009; Banjade 2007). In recent years, some researchers have observed that the rapidly segmenting media environment has nurtured distinct consumer

perceptions, such as of body image and gender identities, among the young middle-class Nepalis (Liechty, 2006).

- **Plurality and diversity:** In the post-1990 era, especially since the country transitioned toward a federal set-up, media discourse on languages, marginal groups, minorities, ethnicities, etc have thrived considerably. However, most such discourses are normative in nature.
- **Awareness on health, education, the economy, development process:** Studies taken from the perspective of social marketing or behavioral change communication identify significant impact of media on public awareness on contemporary issues like health, education, environment, etc. For example, for a radio listener in Siktahan, Rupandehi, the local radio broadcasting in the local language was useful in the way it helped to educate people and raised their awareness. The radio taught a pregnant woman a lot during her days of pregnancy (Lalwati Chaudhari qtd. in Gaire, 117-118). However, it is only through targeted; well-executed media campaigns (Noar, 2006) that such impact may be possible. Such campaigns may target specific segments of the population, such as children, the poor, and the elderly.
- **Advocacy relating to social ills:** Over the years, Nepali media have exposed many cases of superstition, social discriminations, exclusion, etc. Their actual role in effecting social change and reform is yet to be empirically examined.
- **Grassroots awareness:** The growth and expansion of community radio stations across the country and remote districts and villages has raised media's potential to create mass awareness about social issues and problems, and thus effect change. These radio stations, by serving as forums of public debate and deliberation, could play important role in shaping public perspectives on contemporary issues, and their shared agenda of social and economic development.
- **Specialized journalism:** Some form of media impact on social aspects could also be assumed by the fact that today the country has many media or journalism-related organizations devoted to social change in sectors ranging from education to health, environment, human rights, and indigenous issues.

## 2.4 Media laws and their implications on media

Legal framework and their uniform and neutral enforcement offer an enabling environment for media development. Nepal has several policies, laws and regulations formulated in view of the expanding media sector. Legal reforms have ensured freedom of expression and the press, which has further helped in the growth of the sector. The following are the key legal aspects that have implications for Nepali media:

- **Protection of freedom of press and expression:** The Constitution of the Kingdom of 1990 and the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 provide for freedom of the press and expression. Subsequent laws, regulations and policies (such as Press and Publication Act 1991; Press and Publication Rules 1992; Information & Communication Policy, 1992; Long Term Policy of Information and Communication Sector, 2003) provide for such rights, although some provisions restricted publications of certain size or shape, specified qualification of journalists and prohibited foreign investment. Today, Nepal has a fairly liberal legal environment today in freedom of expression and press.
- **Access to information:** The Right to Information Act 2007, and the Right to Information Rules 2009 are in effect; however, their application has not been equal to all sectors. Its enforcement remains a problem. For example, in July 2011, the Freedom Forum filed an RTI application at the Finance Ministry requesting the release the value-added tax (VAT) evasion study report-2067 BS. The ministry released a copy of the report only after three months, following the verdict of the National Information Commission (NIC).
- **Legal respect for editorial independence:** The state has, through the Press and Publication Act, 2048 (1991) generally respected this provision. However, leaders, political actors and other interest groups occasionally intimidate media on certain issues, forcing media outlets to self-censor coverage of some topics and issues.
- **Legal provisions to protect journalists, sources and its enforcement in practice:** Legal provisions exist to protect working journalists (Working Journalists Act 1993, Working Journalists Regulation 1995) but their implementation has been lukewarm. No laws exist requiring journalists to disclose their sources; however there are cases in which official institutions, for example the Supreme Court, have sought disclosure of sources on stories related to Chief Justice. For example, in February 2011, the apex court asked Sagarmatha TV to reveal sources used in a story about the property disclosure by the Chief Justice (Bhattarai, 2011).
- **No warranted restrictions by the state on the media:** Provisions on the accreditation of media exist, and journalists are not licensed. However, sometimes there are calls to set up some sort of criteria to restrict certain journalists and media from doing certain tasks, for example requiring certain level of education to become a journalist. Broadcast media regulations (National Broadcasting Act 1993 and National Broadcasting Regulation 1995) govern both radio and televisions, with provisions to promote linguistic diversity, maintain social harmony, promote freedom of information as well as right to information, and to make broadcasting sector more reliable, effective and strong. It makes it mandatory to seek license from the state and restricts certain advertisements. The interim constitution restricts freedom of expression on the grounds such as sovereignty and integrity of Nepal, social and ethnic harmony, defamation, contempt of court, incitement to an offense, and acts contrary to public decency or morality. The Broadcasting Act (1993) fails to classify

broadcasters (public, community, commercial etc.). It lacks a provision for the independence of the regulator.

- **Defamation laws:** Defamation Act 1959 does not specifically distinguish between civil and criminal aspects of defamation. The rules on remedies and whether public bodies can bring defamation cases are vague. The Act has no separate provisions for libel and slander.
- **Sensitive issues:** Provisions exist in various laws or regulations. National security, foreign affairs/"friendly nations", hate speech, privacy, contempt of court, obscenity, etc. are defined broadly in some cases. For example, classification of official documents, and official attempts to control information on Tibet/China issues, access to Internet pornography, and the attempts to police social media, blogs or micro blogs.
- **No prior censorship:** There are legal provisions for no prior censorship. However, self-censorship remains widespread. There have been attempts on the lives of journalists. Threats on journalists are widely reported, and intimidation is common. This is in addition to corporate pressures in the interest of political ideologies, ad revenues or commercial benefits.
- **Net neutrality:** Cyberlaws specifically relating to online news are not available in Nepal. Occasionally, there are reports of government trying to restrict online content or websites, especially social networking sites. The Electronic Transaction Act 2008 and its regulations, generally known as cyber regulations, relate to some aspects of Internet laws, and its provisions on online news remain vague, and media is defined broadly. The Act does not address the issue of jurisdiction adequately.

Many of the legal provisions are conducive to media development. However, few are enforced or implemented uniformly or consistently, and awareness about these laws and their implications for media is limited to few media houses or professionals. Expansive definitions of "sensitive" information by "classifying" a vast body of official information as well as the government efforts to frame legislation on the Internet domain were apparent in the past year. Literature shows gaps in laws regarding media ownership, contempt of court, privacy, etc.

The laws actual implications depend on specific issues and contexts. Literature shows that media regulations are formulated with some intentions. One argument is that they make media plural in terms of content and ownership. Next argument is that they help in enforcing media ethics (Franklin, Bob et al., 2005). Other literature defines their implications in different ways. It argues they not only safeguard democracy and protect society, but also promote state's interests (Hutchinson, 1999).

#### **2.4.1 Media ethics**

Laws serve as formal provisions of the state. They remain incomplete without the consideration of ethics. Unlike other professionals, journalists in a democracy are not licensed and they are

usually governed under limited legal restrictions. They remain guided by their own informal means of self-regulatory principles or code of ethics internalized in their professional tasks.

Media ethics is a broad term which deals with behaviors and moral dilemma of media practitioners. It guides journalists in making decisions regarding conflict of interest, and physical or emotional harms as a result of their work. The Code of Journalistic Ethics 2003 (amended in 2008), jointly prepared by Press Council Nepal (PCN), the quasi-governmental statutory body, and the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) emphasizes that journalists and media institutions shall perform the following duties:

1. Protection and promotion of press freedom;
2. Respect for humanitarianism, human rights and international relations;
3. Safeguard and enforce the right to information;
4. Imparting true and factual information;
5. Editorial freedom and accountability;
6. Respect for right to privacy;
7. Professionalism of a high order;
8. Decent behavior;
9. Readiness to rectify errors;
10. Social responsibility, and
11. Respect mutual relations

The Code stipulates that journalists and media institutions shall not carry out the following acts:

1. Not undermine national integrity
2. Not adversely affect social justice or goodwill
3. Not disclose confidential sources of news
4. Not use news material for fulfillment of personal interests
5. No discrimination based on social, ethnic, cultural grounds
6. Do not penalize the victims
7. Non disclosure of the identity of victims
8. Not encourage violence, terrorism and crime
9. Not publish or broadcast scenes of nudity or pictures in a manner that spreads hatred, fear and provocation
10. Not mention the name of a person not related to the event
11. Not distort facts
12. Not present advertisement as news
13. Not re-use without citing the source
14. No improper relations with news sources

There are few other codes of ethics prepared by other media groups. In 2007 ACORAB developed a code of conduct for community radio stations. The code recognizes “fundamental human rights, freedom of expression, good governance, plural culture and neutrality” and interest of Nepal and the community. Many of the points echo themes found in the code developed by PCN/FNJ. In addition, the ACORAB code emphasizes advocating democracy,

quality, inclusion, transparency, social justice, rule of law, promoting local content according to local need and empowering the community.

The PCN adjudicates complaints filed against the press for violation of professional code of ethics. It records cases of violation on a regular basis. Journalists are free to choose not to abide by any specific code of ethics. A systematic media accountability system has not yet evolved in the country. The debate generally revolves around code of conduct, but without much attention to internal accountability measures like ombudsperson, letters of editors, etc.

## 2.5 Media credibility

Accuracy, balance and credibility (ABC) are often cited as journalism’s cardinal principles. Media credibility is usually defined as perceptions of a news channel’s believability. It involves “judgments made by a perceiver (e.g., a message recipient) concerning the believability of a communicator” (O’Keefe, 1990, 130-131). However, a more inclusive approach is to make distinction between source credibility, message credibility, medium credibility (Mertzger et al, 2003).

Since the 1950s, many experimental investigation and surveys have been conducted to assess media credibility. Most scales of media credibility emphasize similar elements and measure more or less similar items. Scales are developed to meet particular research needs.

**Table 1: Examples of media credibility measures**

Source	Credibility Measures/Elements
<b>Infante (1980)</b>	Trustworthiness (honest-dishonest, trustworthy-untrustworthy, and sincere-insincere), expertise (skilled-unskilled, qualified-unqualified, and informed-uninformed), and dynamism (bold-timid, active-passive, and aggressive-meek)
<b>Rimmer and Weaver (1987)</b>	Trustworthiness, fairness, bias, completeness, respect for privacy, representation of individual interests, accuracy, concern for community well-being, separation of fact and opinion, concern for public interest, factual foundations of information published, and qualifications of reporters were used among the credibility measures
<b>Meyer (1988)</b>	Credibility index for newspaper believability comprising five dimensions: fairness, bias, completeness, accuracy, and trustworthiness.
<b>Wanta and Hu (1994)</b>	Used believability and affiliation indices to evaluate media credibility. The believability index was built around media manipulation of public opinion, getting facts straight, dealing fairly with all sides of an issue, and separation of fact from opinion. Affiliation was measured with concern for community well being, watching out for reader interests, and concern for public welfare.
<b>Johnson and Kaye (1998, 2000)</b>	Believability, fairness, accuracy, and depth of information.
<b>Ognianova (1998)</b>	Sundar (1996): believability, fairness, accuracy, and depth of information, sensationalism Identified items for online news story credibility: factual/opinionated, unfair/fair, accurate/inaccurate, untrustworthy/trustworthy, balanced/unbalanced, biased/unbiased, reliable/unreliable, thorough/not thorough, and informative/not informative.
<b>Flanagin and Metzger (2000)</b>	Studied credibility of Internet information in terms of five items used in traditional media research: believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias, and completeness.

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<b>Johnson and Fahmy (2009)</b>	Credibility: believability; fairness; accuracy; depth of information; trustworthiness and expertise Reliance: level of attention paid to medium in the past few days; assessment of the level of reliance the medium for information.
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Some research findings also suggest that credibility of a medium or source of information is strongly associated with reliance on a medium or source of information (Johnson and Kaye, 2004). **Trust** in media is closely related with credibility.

UNESCO/IPDC, (2008), seeks to measure the level of public trust and confidence in media by taking into consideration the following themes:

- perception that the media reports on issues of real concern to people
- satisfaction with the balance of local and national news and information
- perception that journalists and media organizations have integrity and are not corrupt
- perception that news reporting is fair and impartial
- a high level of citizen participation in media: the level of participation of audiences in talk-back programs, space devoted to readers' comments in newspapers, etc.

With the advent of new media, and the renewed interest in quality of media content, literature on media credibility is being synthesized in recent times. The journal *American Behavioral Scientist*, for example, devoted one of its entire issues on presenting an "up-to-date research on media credibility". It identified key audience-based variables that may have a bearing on the way audiences evaluate media credibility: political ideology, trust in government, news consumption, perceived expertise, branding, media exposure, media reliance, and personal religiosity (Golan, 2010, 3)

With the advent of new media, researchers have recognized new challenges measuring credibility. The following categories are suggested by Metzger (2007, p. 2079) for the assessment of Internet-based information:

- accuracy- the degree to which a Web site is free from errors, whether the information can be verified offline, and the reliability of the information on the site
- authority- site may be assessed by noting who authored the site and whether contact information is provided for that person or organization, what the author's credentials, qualifications, and affiliations are, and whether the Web site is recommended by a trusted source
- objectivity- involves identifying the purpose of the site and whether the information provided is fact or opinion, which also includes understanding whether there might be commercial intent or a conflict of interest on the part of the source, as well as the nature of relationships between linked information sources (e.g., the meaning of "sponsored links" on a Google search output page)
- currency-- refers to whether the information is up to date., and
- coverage or scope- refers to the comprehensiveness or depth of the information provided on the site. These recommendations require a range of activities on the part of users, from

simple visual inspection of a Web site to more laborious information verification and triangulation efforts

Mehrabi, Hassan & Ali (2009) offer an eight-item credibility scale to measure contents carried in Television and the Internet. The scale sees whether the content is clear, balanced, complete (telling the whole story), accurate, believable, trustworthy, fair and timely.

In America, most national surveys, for reasons of limitations in the questionnaire and other constraints, often measure it in terms of “believability.” For example, the Pew Research Center’s surveys assess credibility simply in terms of audience perceptions of “believability” of media channels or programs.

### **2.5.1 Media credibility in Nepal**

In Nepal, media credibility is often cited in popular literature as a major issue in the profession; however no systematic studies have been undertaken in this area. Existing surveys barely address topics like media credibility. Some of these surveys assess credibility in terms of "trust" on media (MS 2005; BBC WST, 2008), or "reliability" (MS Nepal, 2005) of media as a source of information, and others measure media’s potential for social inclusion and political engagement (BBC WST, 2008).

Generally, literature on media credibility in Nepal shows problems related with source and message credibility. Analysts have lamented that Nepali media suffers in credibility. For example, Kharel (2010 & 2012) has cited several factors such as partisanship, overt commercialization, suspect editorial independence, "envelope" journalism, unverified information, dubious ownership, anonymous or unidentified sources, among others, affecting Nepali media credibility.

Cases of disinformation, sensationalism, and plagiarism, which are not uncommon in Nepali media landscape, may also affect media credibility or reliability. For instance, the highly publicized story (from April 2011) about Anuja Baniya, a girl who falsely claimed she had returned Rs 9.1 million she found in a bus to the rightful owner, or the case of Aashih Luitel (early 2012), a *Kantipur* reporter who was found by the newspaper's own investigation panel to have plagiarized several of his columns, serve as classic text-book examples of potentially declining media credibility in Nepal.

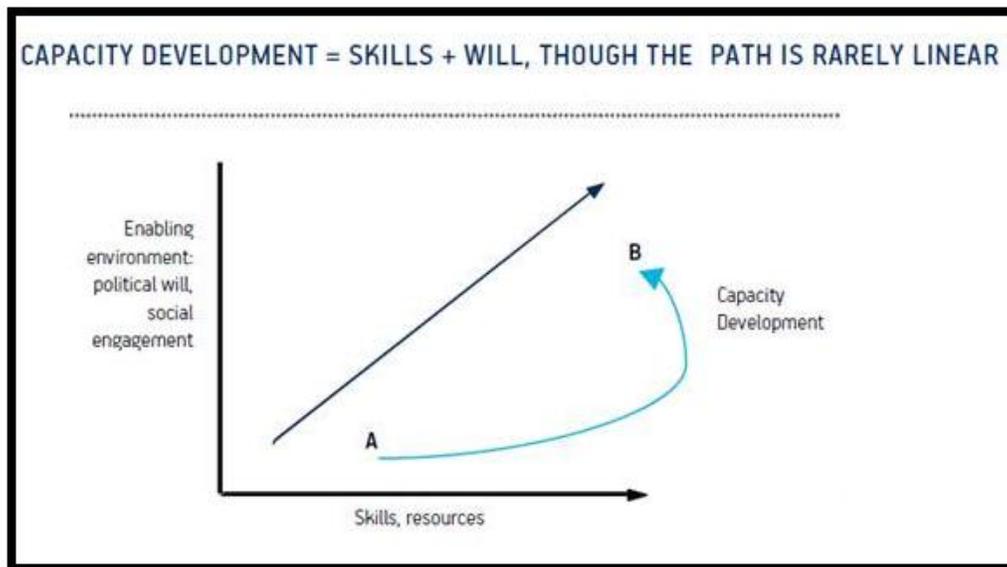
However, when it comes to public perceptions of the media overall, people hold Nepali media in high esteem. The Himalmedia Public Opinion Survey 2012 found that a majority of respondents have a high perception of their media. This is consistent with past public views. A total of 87% of 3,210 respondents said they trust the media more than the courts, government and other public institutions.

## 2.6 Capacity development

Capacity development is a broad concept that refers to “the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully” (OECD/DAC, 2006, p. 12). Nelson and Susman-Peña (2011, 14) describe media capacity development in the following way:

For the media, the enabling environment consists of not only the political will to build an open society and rigorous independent media institutions, but more specific laws on free speech, broadcasting regulations, and other such measures. In well-functioning media systems, supportive behaviors include a strong demand from the public for high-quality information, commitment by media to providing truthful, transparently verified information, a strong drive to defend the public interest, and social tolerance for a diversity of views (Nelson and Susman-Peña (2011, p. 14).

Figure 1: Capacity development model



*Nelson and Susman-Peña (2011)*

Nelson and Susman-Peña (2011) link capacity development to active local (beneficiary) participation. They alert the "effective capacity building efforts require an approach that is country-led and driven by local people who are determined to make change happen in their local environment, rather than simply offering supply-driven training programs and technical assistance" (p. 14).

Media capacity development has been explained by various scholars and institutions in various ways. Yet the gist of them all revolves around similar issues: training, fellowships, awards, exchange programs, formal education, mentorship, incentives, infrastructure, management, monitoring, opportunities for collaboration and association, etc.

The African Forum for Media Development (2008, 13) outlines the following five dimensions of capacity (or lack of capacity):

1. professional capacity related to training, general professionalism, ethics, the practice of journalism as a profession;
2. lack of capacity within media organizations themselves in terms of financial management, managerial capacity, lack of capital;
3. lack of capacity in media support organizations with respect to training, capacity to advocate for the media, monitoring issues;
4. weak infrastructure to support development of media infrastructure; and
5. media content - especially in areas of development, specialized reporting, etc.

UNESCO's framework on the concept emphasizes a holistic journalism training and education, as laid out in its model curricula for journalism education aimed at offering opportunities to acquire knowledge on specialized topics as well as technical and professional skills. In addition, it emphasizes infrastructure, working with other professionals and members of the community. According to UNESCO, the key indicators of media capacities testify that:

- Journalists can access training appropriate to their needs
- Media managers, including business managers, can access training appropriate to their needs
- Training equips media professionals to understand democracy and development
- Academic courses are accessible to a wide variety of students
- Academic courses equip students with skills and knowledge related to democratic development
- Media workers have the right to join independent trade unions and exercise this right
- Trade unions and professional associations provide advocacy on behalf of the profession
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) monitor the media systematically
- CSOs provide direct advocacy on issues of freedom of expression
- CSOs help communities access information and get their voices heard

UNDP (Jennifer Colville, ed. 2008) defines capacity development as the process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. It outlines five steps of the capacity development process, as enumerated below:

1. Engage stakeholders on capacity development;
2. Assess capacity assets and needs;
3. Formulate a capacity development response;
4. Implement a capacity development response; and
5. Evaluate capacity development.

Capacity building, as apparent in the conceptual frameworks earlier involve training, fellowships, infrastructure and resources, commitment to high professional standards, specialization, collaboration with others, etc.

### **2.6.1 Nepali experience**

For decades, Nepali media and journalists performed under conditions of meager resources, restricted professional freedoms; with limited skills, education or training, and scarce opportunities for professional collaboration or association. Many journalists learnt their craft by trial and error, and it was only in late 1950s that some pioneers in the profession had the first opportunities to go abroad for training (Adhikari, 2010). Until the 1980s, Nepali journalists had to travel to India China, the former USSR, the UK, Pakistan, Germany, etc. to obtain training. Academically, the introduction of journalism education in Tribhuvan University in 1976 marked the beginning of a new era in the capacity development of Nepali media. In professional training, it was the establishment of Nepal Press Institute (NPI) in 1985 that opened the door for training opportunities at home (Adhikari, 2010).

The country witnessed massive growth in the media sector in the post-1990s era, and as a result, options for journalism training within the country gradually improved.

### **2.6.2 Capacity development opportunities for journalists in the media houses and awards, fellowships and trainings**

Research materials available in the area of capacity development opportunities for journalists within the Nepali media houses are sketchy at best. Records are often not maintained and even when they are, access to these materials is not easy. A reviewer for this study approached several of the leading media houses for information on the number of trainees, duration of training and the topics (Adhikari, 2012). He found that few organizations maintain any records.

Despite a few private media organizations making huge profit, the concept of in-house training is almost non-existent. The editors of the major media houses say that the newsroom is itself a place for training and the cub reporters will get on-the-job training. The media organizations don't seem keen on imparting training partly due to the ad hoc nature of media and the expenditure involved. The owners seem reluctant to invest in in-house training because they fear journalists are more likely to leave the institution for training opens up better job prospects (Adhikari, 2012).

Nonetheless, a few media houses do offer some types of capacity development programs. For example, *Kantipur* journalists are occasionally offered awards and incentives, so do some other broadcast media. The editor of *Kantipur* says that they have offered regional workshops for district reporters, and have occasionally provided cash incentives and refresher training to their staff members. However, he notes that a proper way of training is still necessary. He observes that the leadership at *Kantipur* is thinking of establishing a separate training wing within our company (Schoenhofer, 2012).

Some media houses including *Gorkhapatra* provide short term refresher training programs to their journalists occasionally. Regular in-house training does not exist. Mentorship, though not formally institutionalized in the Nepali culture, manifests in the form of “brotherly”, “elderly” or “teacherly” counsels and support to journalists by another professional or peer group member.

In terms of infrastructure, most journalists within the major media houses have access to resources, ICT, libraries and other such informational materials, including personal computers (in some cases; an increasing trend), Many young journalists increasingly appear new media savvy. In terms of professional membership and organizing, most news institutions have in-house branches of the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) and some are also associated with one of the politically leaning trade associations.

There are several journalism awards, established in the name of institutions or individuals, and some by professional associations. For example, FNJ, Press Council Nepal, Sancharika Samuha, Reporters' Club, as well as NGOs and government agencies have instituted journalism awards on various themes ranging from education to environment, health, and development. Several such awards originate in the districts too. However, no updated, integrated literature is available on the range of awards available today.

A few fellowships on reporting are offered by NPI, Center for Investigative Journalism (CIJ), Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ), etc. Some journalism research fellowships or grants are offered by Martin Chautari, SNV, Social Science Baha, etc.

## **2.6.3 Academic curricula**

### **2.6.3.1 Overview of journalism training curriculum at Universities**

Media/Journalism developed as an academic discipline in Nepal nearly four decades ago with the inclusion of journalism as an optional course by Tribhuvan University at its Proficiency Certificate (Intermediate; currently known as 10+2) Level in 1976. With opportunities for choices between professional courses offered by different universities and education boards, the discipline is now one of the most sought-after fields under Humanities and Social Sciences.

The following are the university programs timelines:

#### *Major university programs*

- 1976. Proficiency Certificate Level, with Journalism as an optional subject, Tribhuvan University
- 1986. Bachelor Level (two years), with Journalism as one of the two optional/elective subjects, Tribhuvan University
- 1997. Higher Secondary (+2), inclusion of Journalism and Mass Communication as one of the optional subjects
- 2001. Masters in Journalism and Mass Communication, Tribhuvan University
- 2001. Inclusion of Journalism as an optional subject in Grade IX and X
- 2001. Masters in Mass Communication and Journalism, Purvanchal University

- 2002, Bachelor in Media Technology, Purvanchal University
- 2002, Bachelor in Mass Communication and Journalism, Purvanchal University
- 2003. Master in Development Communication, Purvanchal University
- 2006. Bachelor in Media Studies, Kathmandu University
- 2010. Master in Media Technology, Purvanchal University

### *Distance Education*

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)

- Postgraduate in Journalism and Mass Communication, starting from 2002 in Nepal, one and half year.

### *Allied/Elective courses taught in different universities (Kafle, 2009)*

- Journalism Studies, Media Studies, (MA /M Phil in English) Pokhara University
- Development Communication (Masters in Development Studies, Kathmandu University)
- Introductory Journalism and Mass Communication (Bachelor in Fine Arts, Kathmandu University)
- Writing for Mass Media (B.Ed English, TU)
- Researches on Print Media in MA (Nepali), MA (English), TU

**Table 2: Nature of University-wise academic programs**

SN	Inst/Univ.	Levels	Name of program	Duration	Remarks
1		Master	MA in Journalism and Mass Comm.	2 years	Specialization
2	TU	Bachelor	BA (with Journalism Mass Communication)	3 years	Specialization Optional
3		Intermediate Levels	IA (with Journalism and Mass Communication)	2 years	Specialization optional
4	Purbanchal University	Masters	Master in Mass Comm. and Journalism	2 years 4 semesters	Specialization
5		Masters	Master in Media Technology	2 years 4 semesters	Specialization
6		Masters	Master in Development Communication	2 years 4 semesters	Specialization
7		Bachelor	Bachelor in Media Technology	3 years 6 semesters	Specialization
8		Bachelor	Bachelor in Mass Comm. and Journalism	3 yrs. 6 semesters	Specialization
9	KU	Undergraduate	Bachelor in Media Studies	4 years 8 semesters	Specialization
10	HSEB	Intermediate	Mass Communication Journalism (+2)	2 years	Optional
11	GoN Board	SLC	Journalism- Part 1 and 2		Optional

(Pant, 2009; Adhikary & Pant, 2011)

### *Inter-/Multi-disciplinarity*

Today media education has become eclectic with a closer orientation to multiple areas of humanities and social sciences. The academic programs integrate as many areas as come under

the rubrics of journalism, communication, cultural studies and language proficiency including hands-on exposure in the existing and emerging media technologies.

The courses seem to have been constructed to encompass a wide range of subjects from such core vocational areas like computer technology, new media technology, print technology, television journalism, radio journalism, print journalism, photojournalism, reporting, advertising and public relations to the foundational/allied fields of studies as language, literature, history, geography, economics, political science, law, ethics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, human rights, globalization, entrepreneurship, public policy, information management, tourism and sports among others.

The universities have equally placed emphasis on orientation to researches and project works apart from a mandatory internship for industrial exposure.

### **2.6.3.2 Curricular targets and objectives**

#### *Master level curricula*

The Master's level curricula of Tribhuvan University (TU) and Purvanchal University (PU) have some common objectives such as cultivating “adequate advanced knowledge and in-depth study,” guiding students “on an intellectual level ... to meet new and broader challenges ... of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” disseminating “comprehensive in-depth academic knowledge,” and preparing students for “multidimensional aspects.”

Thus the foci of the TU curriculum have been four major areas: study of theories and practices, meeting twenty-first century needs, mastering media tools and technology and intercultural communication, and media education and thesis writing (TU, 2009). Also the curricular thrust of TU syllabuses may be summarized in such general terms as “to produce academically and professionally sound manpower which Nepali media landscape is eyeing for,” documented as one of its institutional goals by Madan Bhandari Memorial College (MBMC), the only affiliate college in Kathmandu that runs TU’s Master program in Journalism and Mass Communication.

PU’s Master's level curricula can be inferred to have identical emphases as TU’s. The official website of Kantipur City College (KCC), which runs PU’s Master's in Mass Communication and Journalism (MMCJ), declares the program as “an offer for students who want to earn a university degree with professional expertise and academic command in mass communication and journalism.” MMCJ objectives, according to the same site, involve such aspects as clarifying media-related theoretical concepts, imparting orientation to mass communication research, providing knowledge and experience for leadership, developing skills in information and communication technologies, building up formal trainings as a journalist and media executive, and providing foundation for further education beyond Master's degree.

Master's in Media Technology (MMT) of PU appears slightly more cognizant of the need to equip its graduates with hard technical skills. It has the objectives to impart students with skills and knowledge in “technical areas of communication” specific for organizational issues or challenges, to train with “solutions to media communication related problems” and to help “adapt and integrate new skills as technologies change,” apart from the thrust for teaching project managements, research skills, and creativity.

Overall, as the official statement of Shepherd College (SC), Kathmadu, the only center to run the MMT program under PU, goes, the program vies for “a quality mass communication education ...to meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities offered in 21<sup>st</sup> century.” This statement comes with the similar promise of meeting “new and broader challenges ... of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” as stated in the TU curriculum.

PU’s Master's in Development Communication (MDC) acknowledges the need of interdisciplinary orientation to development communication graduates. Apart from the promise to impart adequate knowledge in traditional media and journalism, it extends to correlate folk media and development ventures and includes issues concerning South and South-East Asia, discourse on the third world, and the role of NGOs and civil society among others.

In a nutshell, the curricula of the TU and PU involve claims of intellectual growth, knowhow of information communication technologies, research orientation, attention to market needs and, above all, preparation for meeting the twenty first century global challenges. With this, Nepali journalism and media programs appear to give the impression of being diverse yet inclusive in nature.

The institutions of higher education in journalism and media appear to have different claims based on difference in the nature of ownership. The public and community centers like TU and MBMC focus largely on the strength of curriculum and its wider implications. The private institutions, on the other hand, present assertions transcending the scope of curricula. These range from the claims of prominence in merit, national/international recognition, excellence in human resource and physical infrastructures to their commitment to the service of nation, and upliftment of the underprivileged.

#### *Bachelor Level curricula*

TU places Bachelor's Level syllabi in Journalism and Mass Communications as one of the two major optional subjects. The objectives are naturally indicative of the University’s goal for a sufficient tertiary level generalistic orientation to the fields of journalism and mass communication. The objectives include four major themes such as appreciation and discussion of the importance of studying journalism and communication, application of mass communication principles in practical fields; acquisition of insights into the history, laws and ethical issues of media; and identifying major trends in national and global media (TU Syllabus, 2009).

TU naturally has the largest number of students pursuing Bachelor studies with Journalism and Mass Communication as a major. Combining both constituent and affiliated centers, it has about forty colleges (Pant, 2009) offering journalism and mass communication. The total number of students taking up journalism is virtually unrecorded for immediate reference.

### *Bachelor's in Media Studies*

The Bachelor's in Media Studies (BMS) in Kathmandu University (KU) is the only four-year program in Nepal with an interdisciplinary orientation and also a provision for specialization in the final year. KU's official website mentions its main objective to be "to produce media professionals to fulfill the increasing demands of skilled and trained human resources in media organizations and media support services, and also to meet the requirements of educational institutions, development agencies and other service sectors." Besides gaining knowledge and skills in the areas of journalism, media and communication, students of BMS will "develop a strong base of communication skills, media literacy and an ability to carry out project works independently." The program also aims to provide students with "extensive exposure on research, production and practice of media" in order to ultimately reduce prevalent tension of claim for precedence between professors and professionals by developing in graduates the qualities of both (Kafle, 2009, 16-17).

Bachelor's in Mass Communication and Journalism in Purvanchal University aims to produce graduates of interdisciplinary orientations. It includes a number of other subjects beyond the core areas of journalism and mass communication. One important aspect of this program is a substantial concentration on teaching of core literature in English. Subjects like human rights, conflict and judicial systems give the program an interdisciplinary form.

PU's Bachelor's in Technology (BMT) places emphasis on information technology next to the core areas of journalism, media and communication. In addition, the Media program allows substantial amount of training in English language. Its main objective appears to be the preparation of technologically sound media professionals with adequate training on creativity and communication skills.

Thus, a cursory look at the objectives and syllabuses of different university curricula shows that Nepal's overall Bachelor level education in journalism, media and communication is geared largely towards preparing graduates with high professional exposure. Since most of these programs and colleges are based in Kathmandu, students naturally benefit from the proximity to industries, practitioners and educators of the mainstream.

### *Admission and graduates*

TU receives the highest number of students in the Master's level. The number of intakes in the last three years in RR Campus is 120 in 2009, 120 in 2010 and 83 in 2011. College authorities believe the number 83 does not signify the dwindling of admission for any other reasons than

the Campus's policy to limit the number of students (Kafle, 2012). MBMC has received 11 students (7 males and 4 females) in the Masters' level in 2011. This makes 93 students as the total admission size in the TU system alone. CJMC reports the admission of 15 students to MMCJ in 2011. The total number of females in its total intake is 40% (Kafle, 2012).

Though the status of yearly admission in TU's Bachelor's level remains unclear in lack of collective records, it can be safely said, it has the largest number of entrants every year. Last three years' record in MBMC indicates a consistent admission (36 in 2009, 41 in 2010 and 39 in 2011) with larger number of females; 67 against 49 males (Kafle, 2012).

When approached, the TU system could not provide the figures on the exact number of media graduates (Kafle, 2012). The trend of admission in the last three years still indicates its being the university to produce highest number of Master's degree holders in Journalism and mass communication. The PU brings out graduates from its three programs. For example, CJMC records a total of about 198 graduates (155 males, 43 females) through its last eleven batches.

### *Placements*

There is limited account of where the graduates go to work. TU has remained silent (or indifferent) about where its graduates land. The Principal of MBMC at least states having "plenty of instances to offer" about the products of his college "demonstrating a high level of quality and strengths in the field of media research and media practice" (Kafle 2012). The KCC has not officially published any data of the placement of its graduates.

Shepherd College has also not publicized data on its graduates' statuses. The CJMC has had a clear track of the status of more than a hundred of its graduates. Its official website shows that 18 of the graduates are presently employed in various UN Agencies, INGOs and NGOs; 46 in different TV stations/channels of Nepal, 33 in print media, 10 in radio, 2 in photography and 1 in online media (Kafle, 2012).

KU has produced 27 graduates from the first two batches. A number of them have joined national print outlets including *The Nepali Times* (4 females), *Republica* (1), *Nagarik* (2), and *The Himalayan Times* (3) among others. Others are pursuing graduate studies in other disciplines or freelancing in photography, documentary or film making (Kafle, 2012).

There have been limited attempts at researching and analyzing the structure and efficacy of the curricula in journalism, communication and media in Nepal. In what is available so far, the practice has been to outline the trend of education, especially in view of the types and contents of curricula in different universities, and the limitations in infrastructures in human resources.

### **2.6.4 Capacity development by NGOs**

Training is the key and often the only element in capacity development undertaken by NGOs. Today, a number of private organizations and NGOs are involved in training journalists. Nepal

Press Institute (NPI), Media Point, Academy of Audio-Visual Arts & Science (AAVAS) and Center for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) are some of them. Some of the organizations run regular training programs while others conduct trainings occasionally.

**Table 3: Journalism/media training institutions**

SN.	Name	Subject area	Target participants	Required academic qualification
1.	AAVAS	Camera handling, visual editing, TV program production, radio technician, TV/radio presentation	Open to all	NA
2.	ACORAB	Radio management, basic radio journalism, technician, in house over all radio training, attachment training	Working journalists & employees with minimum 2 years experience in radio	NA
3.	ANIJ	Adibasi movement and basic journalism	Adibasi/Janajati, preference to working journalists	Priority to IA level but not compulsory
4.	Antenna Foundation	Radio technician, program production, station management	Radio producer for projects; open to all for other basic radio training	NA
5.	Asmita	Gender issues	Male and female journalists and activists	NA
6.	BASC, Nepalgunj	Basic journalism/ Anchoring	Children and youth	NA
7.	BBC World Service Trust	Radio technician, program production	Technician, working journalist, station	NA
8.	Bikalpa the Option	Basic radio journalism and anchoring	Open to all	NA
9.	CIJ	Investigative jour. & feature writing	Working journalists	10+2 or IA
10.	Communication Corner	Radio program production, community broadcasting	Radio producer, community mobilizers	NA
11.	CRSC, NEFEJ	Radio technician, production and management	Technician, working journalist and station manager	NA
12.	EJG	Education reporting	Journalists working on education beat	NA
13.	Equal Access	Radio program production	Program producers	NA
14.	FMDC	Human rights, peace building and social justice, conservation and environment	Working journalists in far western region	NA
15.	FNJ	Organizational development and leadership, professional security	Members of executive committee and general members of FNJ	NA
16.	Freedom Forum	Legal issue, media law	Journalists working on law beat or having law background	NA
17.	INSEC	Human rights	Journalists, human rights activists	NA
18.	Jagaran Media Center	Dalit issue, basic journalism	People from Dalit community, working Dalit journalists, but some time also targeted to non Dalits	Generally SLC but not compulsory
19.	Mahila Sanchar Samuha, Nepalgunj	Basic journalism and feature writing	Fresh women, female journalists	SLC
20.	Media Foundation	Specialized topics in journalism, media research, methods	Journalists, professionals	NA
21.	Media Point	Basic and advance	Open to all	SLC
22.	Media's Collection	Basic radio journalism and anchoring	Open to all	NA
23.	Naya Sansar, Itahari	Basic journalism and radio anchoring	Open to all	NA
24.	NEFEJ	Environment reporting, photography	Journalists working on environment beat	NA
25.	NMDC	Health and basic journalism	Journalists working on health beat	NA
26.	NPI and its RMRCs	Basic and advance journalism Training	Basic training open to all; specialized and advance training for specific others	10+2 or IA for 10-month basic, SLC for 3-month basic; NA for advanced
27.	On Air Media Pvt. Ltd.	Radio/TV journalism, program production, presentation, radio technician	Open to all	NA
28.	Sancharika Samuha	Basic journalism and feature writing	Female working journalists	IA

Nepal				
29.	SEJON	Economic and business reporting	Journalists working on economic beat	NA
30.	Vision Nepal, Rupendehi	Basic journalism	Terai Dalit	NA
31.	WWJ	Blog, photography, creative writing	Working women journalists	NA

(Parajuli, 2009; updated and adapted)

With the growth and expansion of radio since the mid-1990s a number of training institutions have been providing short-term and long-term training programs on reporting, editing, anchoring, program production for radio. The NPI offers regular 10-month diploma course, and has in the last 27 years produced hundreds of graduates. In Kathmandu alone NPI has produced, on an average, 20 graduates a year, that by mid-2012 came to be some 550 trained journalists. Its regional centers in Biratnagar, Nepalgunj and Butwal each produce 20 graduates a year. The Media Point, which started a 10-month training course, boasts 215 graduates. National Media Development Center has trained 1,218 in its short-term journalism courses (NMDC, 2012). Other organizations such as Sanacharika Samuha, Education Journalists Group and the Communication Corner are also organizing programs to train journalists.

Some cause-oriented media development or advocacy organizations or associations like Asmita, Active Women Journalist Group, Hatemalo Sanchar, Jagaran Media Center, Association of Nepal Indigenous Journalists, Tamang Communication Group also offer short term training to journalists on specialty topics like women, children, Dalits, and indigenous causes. Nepal Batabaran Patrakar Samuha provides training on environmental and community radio issues.

Some NGOs including Martin Chautari, RIMAKE Nepal, INSEC, New Era, and Netherland Development Organization provide fellowships for journalists and journalism students. Nepal Press Council also awards certain number of fellowships each year. Press Council Nepal (PCN) and some news organizations like Kantipur Publications also offer fellowships.

Although Nepal does not have an institutionalized culture of professional apprenticeship, several media outlets offer internship opportunities to young and aspiring journalists or journalism students.

Despite the emphasis on training by professionals, training remains "a subject which has so far been neglected by academics and other researchers" (Parajuli et al, 2009, vi). In the study conducted by Martin Chautari, Parajuli et al (2009) examined institutions involved in media training (both in the Kathmandu Valley and in the districts), training curricula, trainers, trainees, as well as the financial aspects of the training business. The recommendations made by Parajuli et al (2009, 42-49) emphasized on the need for the following, which still remain relevant:

- a more rigorous selection process, maintaining data on trainees, inclusive enrolment, training module, practical focus, specialized training, training for trainers, strong monitoring and evaluation, need-based and decentralized training opportunities, among others
- in-house training, investing training, clear policies for selecting news staff for training opportunities, hiring trained staff
- help the media institutions with competent, trained human resources, financially support institutions involved in regular media training, invest in the capacity enhancement of

journalists' involved in the public-sector media to make them competitive with other private media

- commitment on the part of FNJ to training in a long-term basis, professionally, play an intermediary role between its members and training providing institutions, district chapters should offer timely information of training opportunities
- senior journalists should keep themselves abreast of the new developments that are taking place and be competitive, journalists must get involved and try to hone their skills, conduct research, keep in touch with their trainers even after the completion of the trainings, choose professional institutions that deliver quality
- for the next 2-3 years, conduct basic journalism training in non-academic setting in major urban or non-urban areas, support to training organizations in curricula development, equipment, etc; support for television journalism. Also, conduct such training for underrepresented in Nepali media, as well as advanced training in non-university setting, advanced subject-specific reporting training, support for infrastructure, curricula development, and collaboration between journalism training institutions and academic research institutions

### **2.6.5 Overview of other capacity development initiatives**

Diplomatic missions are other sources of support for the training and professional growth of media workers. American, British, Indian, Norwegian and other embassies have been providing fellowships to Nepali journalists. They conduct short term training on a range of topics. Some aid agencies have supported efforts in institutional capacity building of media groups or educational institutions and well as collaborated with local partners.<sup>3</sup>

**2.6.5.1 Training:** Nepali journalists have received training from the Radio Netherlands, Indian Institute for Mass Communication (India), Germany, Japan, France, Denmark, USA, Pakistan, and many other countries, although the details on the types of programs and the number of Nepali participants are not available in one place. The IIMC has so far trained some 66 journalists in New Delhi since it started offering courses in development Journalism, since 1979.

The World Press Institute (WPI), USA, has been offering 3 months courses and 2 Nepali journalists have been trained so far. Similarly, Nepal-based INGOs (including ICIMOD, SAP Nepal, SNV, JICA, and many others have offered training opportunities for Nepali journalists. Diplomatic missions based in Nepal (USA, UK, Denmark—DANIDA, UK, India-- IIMC, Japan, others) have also supported organizations and events to train journalists. Asia Journalism Fellowship and Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Singapore, have offered 3-month course to three Nepali journalists.

**2.6.5.2 Media development:** INGOs are also playing a role in the overall media development, support for infrastructure, logistics, programming, and funds. The Danish International

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<sup>3</sup> This overview is based on review of sketchy data, and interviews with stakeholders. Hence, this is not exhaustive.

Development Agency (DANIDA) of Denmark, the BBC World Trust, and PANOS South Asia, also provide support to various components of media development.

UN Agencies like UNESCO, UNDP, OHCHR have done some work in the area of Nepali media development. UNESCO also offers awards for journalists and funds for capacity development efforts in the field of media on a regular basis.

**2.6.5.3 Fellowship/exchange:** Limited journalism or media fellowships are offered in Nepal (ex. NPI, CIJ, Martin Chautari, Social Science Baha, etc).

Noted among the international fellowships are Alfred Friendly Press Fellowships, USA, which have trained 7 Nepali journalists since 1983 in their 6 months courses. Dag Hammarskjold Journalism Fellowship, United Nations, has been around since 1962, offering 2 months of visits and interactions. Six Nepali journalists have benefited from the fellowship program. International John S. Knight Fellowship, USA, has been offering the Knight Fellowship since 1966 of 9 months. Nieman Fellowship, Harvard University has been around since 1951 offering 10 months courses (Adhikari, 2012).

**2.6.5.4 Role of Professional Associations:** Professional groups such as IFEX, CPJ, RSF, ICFJ, AMARC, Thompson Foundation, AMIC, IMS, Article19, International Journalism Associations, Asian Journalism Forum, South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA), and several others are also involved in capacity development of journalists by supporting their training and research needs through collaborative efforts. The International Media Mission to Nepal (IMMN) that has visited the country several times, especially during difficulties faced by the press, serves as another relevant example of collaboration, partnership and support (Adhikari, 2012).

## 2.7 Media literacy

Media literacy is broadly defined as access to media, critical understanding of media, and communicative abilities. The first is considered as personal media competency and the latter social media competencies. Wilson et al (2011, 18) suggest a unified notion embodying elements of information literacy and media literacy. Accordingly, information literacy constitutes the abilities to do the following:

- Define and articulate information needs
- Locate and access information
- Assess information
- Organize information
- Make ethical use of information
- Communicate information
- Use ICT skills for information processing

Likewise, media literacy comprises the abilities to:

- Understand the role and functions of media in democratic societies
- Understand the conditions under which media can fulfill their functions
- Critically evaluate media content in the light of media functions
- Engage with media for self-expression and democratic participation
- Review skills (including ICTs) needed to produce user-generated content

Martens (2010) conducted a thorough meta-analysis of 165 “scholarly manuscripts” on media literacy in English. He identifies three key elements that pinpoint on ability to "analyze, evaluate and produce."

### **2.7.1 The European Charter definition of media literacy**

An expert group from the European Commission defined media literacy as the ability to "access, analyze and evaluate the power of images, sounds and messages which we are now being confronted with on a daily basis, and [which] are an important part of our contemporary culture" (EC, 2011, 19). In addition, it is also an ability "to communicate competently in media available on a personal basis." Media literacy relates to all media, including television and film, radio and recorded music, print media, the Internet and other new digital communication technologies.

The expert group observed that media literacy serves to create awareness of varied media messages, recognize how the media filter their perceptions and beliefs, shape popular culture and influence personal choices. It helps empower citizens with critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills.

The European Charter of Media Literacy synthesized extensive literature on media literacy (EC, 2010, 20-21) and it is characterized as “consistent with key definitions of media literacy”. It concludes that media literacy is the ability to do the following:

1. Use media technologies effectively to access, store, retrieve and share content to meet their individual and community needs and interests;
2. Gain access to and make informed choices about a wide range of media forms and content from different cultural and institutional sources;
3. Understand how and why media content is produced;
4. Analyze critically the techniques, languages and conventions used by the media and the messages they convey;
5. Use media creatively to express and communicate ideas, information and opinions;
6. Identify and avoid or challenge media content and services that may be unsolicited, offensive or harmful; and
7. Make effective use of media in the exercise of their democratic rights and civil responsibilities.

Test items in media literacy (EC, 2010, 6-7) could involve three areas, namely, use of skill for application of media; critical understanding and communicative abilities.

### ***Use skills***

- Reading books (print or e-book);
- Reading newspapers (print or online);
- Playing computer or video games;
- Going to the cinema;
- Using the Internet;
- Sending e-mails with attached files;
- Using the Internet to make telephone calls;
- Using peer-to-peer file sharing;
- Creating a web page;

### ***Critical understanding***

- Trust of information that is presented by different media sources (newspapers, television, radio, Internet);
- Awareness of information that is presented by different media sources (different television channels, different news programs, different search engines);
- Awareness of the influence of advertising;
- Knowledge of media regulations;
- Ability to identify options for gathering information;
- Skills in critically evaluating the credibility of information;
- Comparison of information across sources;
- Skills in managing privacy and protecting self from unwanted messages.

### ***Communicative abilities***

- Content creation across a variety of media, including written texts, video, audio, and visual;
- Engagement with public debate (commenting on a blog post, writing a letter to a newspaper editor, posting a blog);
- Social networking online (whether privately or professionally);
- Collaborating online on a joint project (including contributing to a wiki).

Yet, in general, the measure of media literacy starts with media access, the availability of media tools or technologies, for these are the basic conditions for people to get familiar with media, gain the know-hows, understand them critically, and use them in to practice.

### **2.7.2 Nepal's case**

Existing surveys in Nepal have not addressed media literacy, although some of these surveys asked audience about their access to media, and some inquired about the nature of their reliance on a particular channel. No doubt, with the growth and expansion of media in the country, access is increasing (for example, an estimated 80% radio penetration, and 54.46% mobile penetration), suggesting that the basic conditions for media literacy are being set up.

Analysts and critics have emphasized importance of media literacy in Nepal in terms of access, knowledge of media and their functions, analytical skills (Lohani, Subedi, Rana and Khanal; preface: 1995), active citizenry, awareness of the manipulative, negative powers of media, (Aryal, 2009); distinguishing between accuracy and inaccuracy (Kharel, 2012), etc. Literature, bulk of it comprised of analysis, essays and reflective articles, is replete with references to media literacy, emphasizing its need in contemporary Nepal.

### **19 Years Ago: public perceptions of Nepali media**

One of the earliest systematic and public-focused surveys on media in Nepal was conducted in 1993. In that survey undertaken by the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), 1,321 respondents had participated. The survey, which asked 29 different questions concerning media and public perceptions about its roles and performance, sought to generate data on the media use behavior of the Nepali public. The respondents came from 15 districts of the country. The study also included a mini survey where 34 journalists responded to 10 questions regarding their personal profile and professional status.

The survey's questions revolved around concepts like professional freedom, work experience, job satisfaction, job preference, training and exposure, as well as capacity development, among others. It did not, however, concern with the role and status of media institutions.

The IIDS survey results showed that the number of trained journalists was only around 30% in 1993. Although more than 75 percent of the respondent journalists reported positively to having had some kind of foreign exposure, 38% of respondents still preferred trainings from the private sector.

Journalism was not a full-time, or the sole profession for all the participating journalists. Figures showed that 21% of them worked elsewhere, beside their media, for supplementary earning. Ironically, however, while 53% said they were satisfied with their job, only slightly more than one third considered their job as the "preferred" one.

The larger IIDS survey gauged public opinion on media and the contemporary media problems as well as reform initiatives including the scope of introducing Right to Information law. On a question regarding the role of public in public opinion formation, 53% of the respondents answered "yes", although in a discussion output the figure contradicted, with only 38% asserting such a role.

The survey also overviewed the prevailing libel laws, the Public Offence and Punishment Act 2027, issues on protection of confidential sources, government's fixing of minimum qualification for a journalist, impartiality of Press Council Nepal and its jurisdiction to work as newspapers' audit bureau of circulation. Other concerns of the IIDS survey included "Congressization" of official media, scope for private news agencies, ownership policies, Working Journalist Act, watching the watchdog (media monitoring), right to privacy, Code of Conduct, taste and decency decisions, foreign investment/ involvement in media, and public advertising incentives.

Several survey questions concerned status of women in regards to media and its coverage. Regarding gender issues and the coverage on women, ethnicity and the oppressed, the survey indicated that only little and far-from- satisfactory coverage was in place. The public Professionalism was lacking even in the state-owned media outlets, according to the 1993 IIDS survey.

*Mass Media and Democratization, Country Study on Nepal.* 1996. Kathmandu: Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS).

## 2.8 Surveys on media, journalists and the public

Although household surveys undertaken on official initiatives in health and other demographic sectors have been around for many decades, there is generally a paucity of surveys focusing on professional groups and the general public with regard to specialized topics like media. Key highlights are as follows:

- Examples of early surveys conducted around the 1980s and 1990s focused exclusively on broadcast access, radio listenership, audience preferences, attitudes etc.
- Given the wider reach of the radio, its immediacy and ubiquity, there has been more interest in assessing its assumed impact on the audience.
- Proprietorial/in-house surveys have been a regular feature of stations like Radio Nepal, the country's premier broadcaster. It has been conducting periodic in-house audience surveys to find out patterns of listenership and effectiveness of the programs since several decades. This trend is apparent in some local FM radio stations (MS Nepal, 2005).
- Most other surveys are conducted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These all focus on radio audiences, their preferences, tastes, attitudes and beliefs (EA Nepal, 2007-2008; BBC WST, 2008; New Era, 2009; Nileson, 2008). These studies, though they allow for the analysis of the general media consumption habits and patterns, are carried mainly with the purpose of evaluating media impact assessments of particular programs undertaken by the related NGOs. Some are market-oriented and have little focus on professional development of journalists or media as a whole.
- The few available academic surveys concern journalists' roles (Ramaprasad and Kelly, 2003), and local FM radio listenership (Banjade, 2007).
- Apart from Ramaprasad and Kelly (2003), there are a few other surveys that focus on journalists (including those in the print media). These offer some insight into the demographics and professional practices of the less-privileged media workers living outside the valley (MSI, 2060) and journalists from the marginalized and the Dalit communities (Parajuli & Gautam, 2008).
- Existing surveys have not addressed topics like journalists' capacity development, although one survey (IIDS, 1996) conducted in 1993 covered some core themes of the topic. Surveys specifically on media literacy, or media credibility are rare, some of those available measure credibility in terms of trust or reliability. Some of these surveys assess trust on media (MS 2005; BBC WST, 2008), and reliability (MS Nepal 2005) of media as a source of information, and others measure media's potential for social inclusion and political engagement (BBC WST, 2008).
- A thread of literature focuses on survey methods in the Nepali context. For example, errors in survey data due to linguistic and conceptual unintelligibility, recall problems, respondents' reluctance to give correct information (sensitivity and privacy topic, fear for negative consequences and desire for benefit, contextual bias such as the wish to project desired public image, and respondent's motivation), and interviewer error (Campbell & Stone, 2010)

**Table 4: Mapping Literature on credibility, capacity and literacy**

Study	Demography	Affiliation	Topic/Issue	Key pointer in literature
Survey of Journalists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Level of Education</li> <li>• Academic background</li> <li>• Level of income</li> <li>• Experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media outlet</li> <li>• Beat</li> <li>• Political ideology</li> <li>• Religion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges journalists face</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental/societal level (general lack of enabling environments)</li> <li>• Organizational (constraints)</li> <li>• Individual (limitations, flaws)</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training they participated in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inequitable, exclusion Opportunities gradually growing</li> <li>• Mostly basic courses, workshops, seminars</li> <li>• Few specialized ones</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity development needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lopsided</li> <li>• Emphasis mainly on training</li> <li>• Specialization needed</li> <li>• Strengthening the fast diversifying academic programs and curricula</li> <li>• Too many needs at various levels</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their perception of media credibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed- positive and negative</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggestions to improve the overall perceptions of Nepali journalism/media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professionalism, ethics, financial independence, security, etc</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training they participated in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data scattered</li> <li>• Limited opportunities for most of the journalists</li> </ul>
Public survey/Poll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Level of education</li> <li>• Education background (subject)</li> <li>• Ethnicity</li> <li>• Region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profession</li> <li>• Political ideology</li> <li>• Religion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View toward Nepali media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality not encouraging</li> <li>• Quantity impressive (radio, new media)</li> <li>• Profit-driven, sensational, partisan</li> <li>• Old stereotypes of journalists persist</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Media as a credible source of information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anecdotal observations point to their unreliable attributes; no systematic studies</li> <li>• Empirical literature mostly on lack of accuracy, distortion, etc</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level of reliability of Nepali media as a source of information (topics such as constitution making, national politics, good governance, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some studies, content-focused</li> <li>• Systematic surveys lacking</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen's media literacy (assess)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive programs lacking</li> <li>• No culture, institutions</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their level of media literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largely unknown,</li> <li>• Anecdotal examples</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What media they use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly radio</li> <li>• Some surveys relate to audience use, preferences</li> <li>• Radio most studied</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often do they use them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobile devices (new media) more in use</li> <li>• Increasing local FM radio listenership</li> <li>• No meaningful, disaggregated data</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do they use them (info, knowledge, understanding, entertainment, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usual references to entertainment, education, information</li> <li>• Perspectives of the audience/public themselves largely missing</li> </ul>

Source: Based on literature and desk review.

- Experts, analyst and commentators appear persistent in their emphasis on the need to undertake more substantive audience surveys rather than merely focus on content analyses. Limitations in resources, unresolved methodological issues like low response rates, self-selection, access, etc are cited as some of the problems in conducting surveys.
- Lacking systematic and accurate surveys, most of the literature on Nepali media appear speculative and the available data on media outlets, journalists and their perspectives or needs remain mostly estimates. A truly national survey of Nepali journalists as well as of the public focusing on their perceptions and perspectives of media is visibly lacking.

## 2.9 Challenges and opportunities for the media

The growth of media in Nepal, especially local broadcast media, has been described as impressive and its implications for a meaningful and relevant communication as well as local participations have been positive. Increasing new media penetration, media access and technological advancement and the entry of more educated journalists in the profession are encouraging signs of the development of media and the professional growth opportunities for journalists. However, there are concerns that the quantitative gain does not balance well with the overall quality of the media.

Literature suggests the following (both macro and micro-level factors) as the main impediments to the professional growth of media and the journalists:

- *Social and environmental factors*  
Despite media penetration and its increased influence on the society as a whole, there is no clear articulation or appreciation of the role of media or journalists in a democratic society. It is not clear how journalists' convention stereotypes of sensationalists, intruders and charlatans have affected their work and their impact on society. Moreover, lacking a long history of press freedom, journalists and media houses continue to be targets of violent and disgruntled groups and non-state actors. Popular literature continues to paint the media sector as a less desirable profession although the achievements gained in the profession in recent years, some maintain, have helped to foster some measure of respectability of the sector. With rising literacy rates and expanding media, Nepali society certainly looks to be headed for better prospects.
- *Legal factors*  
The legal reforms in the area of press freedom, Right to Information, minimum wage to journalists, etc have helped to create conducive environment for plurality and diversity of media. However, little progress has been achieved in enforcing those laws and in some respects ambiguities in laws and their enforcement has fostered an environment of self-censorship. Moreover, substantive legal reforms in the area of public broadcasting, community media, new media, etc have yet to take place.

- *Organizational factors*

There are many issues at the organizational level. Spatial concentration of media in Kathmandu (almost all of nationally influential print and electronic media in Nepal is produced in the capital city), partisan bias, excessive commercial interests, lack of transparency in ownership, low pay to journalists, inadequate resources, lack of newsroom and content diversity, poor representation or coverage of women and minorities, inadequate progress of the language (mother-tongue) press, etc are recurrent themes in literature.

In terms of technology, media houses have not exploited the full potential of new media yet. Many websites still do shovelware, and many of these are designed poorly. No social media policies have been devised by the media houses institutionally. Individual journalists are spearheading new media adoption and innovation.

- *Individual factors*

Individual journalists' attributes, characters, values, interests and motivations also play a role in their professional standing and their capacities. While a thread of literature does pay attention to the gradually improving image of journalists as respectable professionals, majority of the research and analysis continues to focus on portraying journalists as lacking in proper skills, professional ethics (self-regulation), fairness, impartiality, accountability and quality work. Most journalists still lack advanced academic degrees in the discipline, on-job training and other professional opportunities like fellowships, and most lack the basic technical and financial resources to multi-task in a profession that is witnessing rapid change mainly due to technological breakthroughs and social and political transformation. Many journalists practice the craft by trial and error, work on multiple beats, even when they don't possess specialized knowledge and skills to cover emerging topics that are increasingly complex and that range from climate change to business, to IT to inclusion and elections, post-conflict situation.

## **2.10 Summary of key issues**

Briefly, the following key points could be emphasized that appear outstanding in this review of literature:

- Systematic surveys of journalists and public perceptions of media regarding capacity development or credibility remain virtually non-existent in Nepal. A few surveys have measured elements of trust and reliability.
- Capacity development should go beyond training to focus more on specialization, and strengthening academic programs and curricula as well as fostering collaboration and improving access to resources.
- Existing surveys generally have assessed media literacy conditions in terms of access and use. They indicate radio as the most accessed medium. National survey data on other

elements of media literacy such as critical ability for media evaluation and production are not available.

- While Nepal is witnessing rapid political and social transformation, conventional negative stereotypes of journalists associated with political partisanship, lack of neutrality, fairness, and professional competence remain the most dominant challenge.
- Comparing journalists own views about their professional needs with public perceptions of media's role in a democracy could help identify the priorities for media development in Nepal.
- Literature suggests capacity building efforts and debates surrounding it often focus on basic or proficiency level training programs and, and not much attention has been paid to standardized training courses or other capacity development initiatives such as technical or hands-on opportunities, specialization, infrastructure, professional collaboration, etc.
- Formal education in journalism or media topics is gradually gaining popularity, and, Nepali journalism and media programs appear to give the impression of being diverse yet inclusive in nature. However, there is little information available on the scope and impact of these programs on the professional growth of their graduates.
- Analysts have emphasized the importance of media literacy in Nepal for its power to educate and empower the public so that they could be discerning media users and enlightened citizens. However, there is dearth of empirical data on the existing state of media literacy in the country.

*SECTION III:*  
**Methods**

## **3. METHODS**

### **3.1 Background**

As the preceding section showed, it is hard to make any concrete generalizations about the level of media credibility, media capacity or media literacy in Nepal although these factors have often been emphasized as necessary in a democratic society. Questions also remain about the current profile of journalists or audience, their attributes and attitudes, amid a fast-changing media landscape. Moreover, the paucity of empirical data on the actual perceptions of journalists as well as those of the public has hampered efforts to identify the priorities for media development in the country.

This chapter lays down the objectives of this study, describes the research design, explicates research process, and discusses the limitations. Here "media" broadly refer to news outlets, news organizations, and channels of communication. "Journalists" include news workers, but not excluding editors, photographers, cartoonists, columnists, etc.

### **3.2 Research objectives**

The overall goal of the survey assessments was to assess the media environment of Nepal in order to identify priorities for future activities in the area of capacity development. The research was conducted with the following specific objectives:

1. To identify Nepali journalists' attributes, their professional challenges, perceptions of media credibility, and capacity development needs;
2. To solicit journalists' suggestions on improving the overall quality of the profession;
3. To explore public views towards media and journalists as credible sources of information; and level of reliability of media as sources of information on contemporary issues; and
4. To find out the level of the public's media literacy.

The focus of the research remained on identifying journalists' capacity development needs and priorities as well as public perceptions of media.

### **3.3 Research design**

A multi-method approach was used for data collection. The research design comprised of the following:

- literature and desk review;
- a general survey of journalists;
- a comprehensive public opinion survey;
- an SMS opinion poll to supplement public opinion survey; and
- Focus group /loose network discussions

#### **3.3.1 Literature and desk review**

As specified in the terms of reference (TOR) by SPCBN/UNDP, the commissioning party, the first phase of the work involved reviewing past literature on media development in Nepal, particularly relating to capacity developing efforts. The researchers reviewed a number of documents that included books, research reports and journal articles. The research, through reviewing past literature, became familiar with the research topic, and it proved valuable in the development of instruments and in implementing the survey assessments.

### 3.3.2 Survey of journalists

The survey was conducted between May 15 and June, 5, 2012.

#### 3.3.2.1 Sample selection

A combination of sampling methods was used. Samples from the readily available membership list of FNJ were obtained for each cluster to reach all the "accessible population" of journalists. Via a multi-stage stratified selection procedure and quota sampling, target respondents were distributed proportionally by media channels, sex and ethnicity.

**Clusters:** Ten clusters were developed to select the sample population of journalists from across the mountain, hill and terai regions of Nepal. Since journalists population in the districts remains uneven, clustering improved chances of reaching the required respondents for the survey. The unit of analysis was an individual journalist.

**Geographical coverage distribution:** The clusters covered 30 districts (about 40% of total 75 districts), including those from the Kathmandu Valley, the mountains, hills and terai.

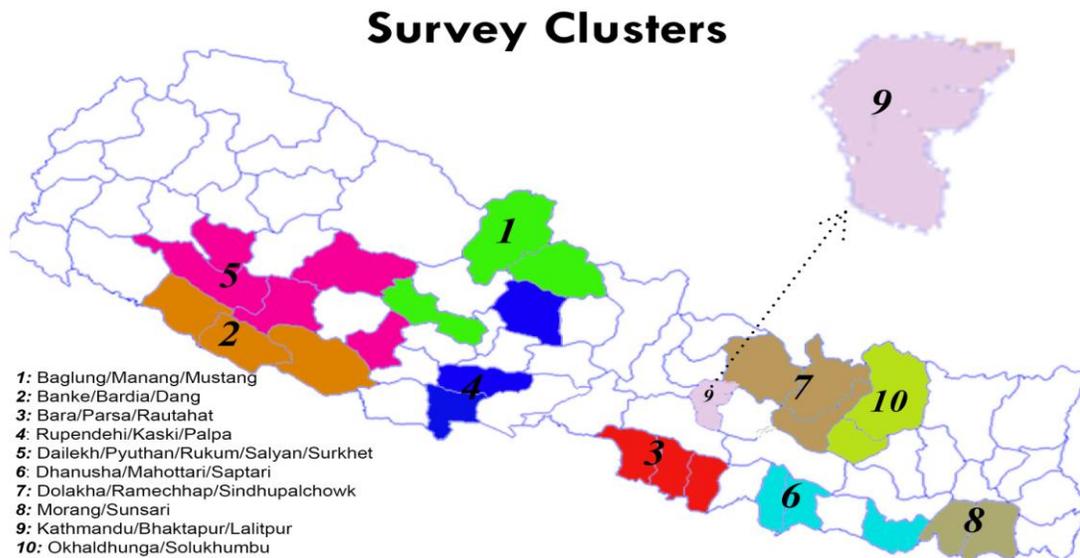


Figure 2: Cluster map for journalists' and public opinion surveys, June-July 2012.

**Sample frame:** The list of journalists received from the Federation Nepali Journalists provided the main basis for developing the overall sample frame and cluster-wise types and sizes of the actual sample. Local lists and lists from other organizations, such as Sancharika Samuha, were obtained to select working journalists, often with the help of field workers, who were journalists themselves, and to decide the mode to deliver the questionnaire. Considering the plan to deliver questionnaire via print and online forms, preference was given to include journalists whose names, emails and telephone numbers were available. The actual list contained 1,073 names, which would be 30 % of journalists listed in the selected clusters according to the FNJ membership of 8,000 in 2011.

Table 5: Area-wise breakdown of sample journalists in percentages ( $N=1,073$ )

Selected clusters <sup>4</sup>	Place of residence <sup>5</sup>	# journalists available in selected clusters (from FNJ*)	# respondents drawn in the survey sample from journalists available in cluster	sampled percentage (%) of journalists available in cluster	actual coverage target (in approx. % of sample)
Baglung	R	104	31	30	2
Banke	SU	406	122	30	10
Bara	SU	265	80	30	8
Dailekh	R	252	75	30	7
Dhanusha	SU	272	82	30	8
Dolakha	R	188	56	30	5
Kathmandu	U	1168	350	30	35
Morang	U	301	90	30	9
Rupandehi	SU	572	172	30	14
Okhaldhunga	R	49	15	30	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>3577</b>	<b>1073</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>4</sup> Cluster abbreviations: Baglung= Baglung, Manang and Mustang cluster, Banke= Banke, Bardiya and Dang cluster, Bara= Bara, Prasa, Rautahat cluster, Kathmandu= Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur cluster, Rupandehi= Rupandehi, Kaski, Palpa cluster, Dailekh= Dailekh, Surkhet, Rukum cluster, Dhanusha= Dhanusa, Mahottari and Saptari cluster, Dolakha= Dolakha, Ramechhap and Sindhupalchowk cluster, Morang= Morang and Sunsari cluster, and Okhaldhunga= Okhaldhunga and Solukhumbu cluster

<sup>5</sup> Place of residence abbreviations: U= Urban, SU= Semi-urban, R= Rural, categorized on the basis of industrial base, infrastructure, transportation convenience etc, with their increased levels corresponding to urban residences.

**Respondents:** The actual target, however, was to reach at least 800 bona-fide respondents in the sampled clusters, approximately 10% of the total FNJ membership. Minor adjustments in the actual sample sizes were anticipated in some clusters to make the participation in the survey inclusive as well as representative in terms of gender, ethnicity, and outlet, etc. The extra 200 members in the sample frame allowed some leverage for the enumerators to consider inclusive representation, to try to include at least 10% of women, dalit, Madhesi and marginalized communities, as a major criterion in distributing the instruments. The other 73 members of the sample population were not expected to be available during the actual field work.

**Respondent coverage:** More than 1000 (30 % of journalists from the selected areas according to the list of FNJ membership, 2011) were selected from the sample clusters. The breakdown for respondent coverage follows.

**Respondent distribution:** Efforts were made to make the sample reflect the proportionality of journalists among print (daily, weekly, magazine) and electronic (radio, television, online) journalists.

**Mode of form distribution:** This assessment was done in person as well as through web-based interfaces, by mobilizing local journalists and journalist networks in rural and urban locations, as well as from both print and broadcast backgrounds.

**Instrument:** The survey questions were developed on the basis of the literature review and in consultation with the project partners, and a wider spectrum of stakeholders, representing media industry, and the academia. The instrument sought to identify key characteristics, behaviors, preferences, attitudes, beliefs or opinions, and expectations, etc. of respondents on issues relating to media or journalism. Questions asked respondents their academic background, professional experience, beat/specialty, challenges they faced, trainings they participated in, capacity development need, their perception of media credibility and their suggestions to improve the overall perception of journalism and media.

### **3.3.3 Survey of the public opinion**

The survey was conducted between June 25 and July 20, 2012.

#### **3.3.3.1 Sample selection**

No complete or accurate list of all journalists in Nepal. Interviewing journalists all over Nepal would be time-consuming and not cost-effective. Simple random sampling was not possible because not every journalist was listed in FNJ membership list, so a multi-stage selection procedure and quota sampling, stratified by outlets, ethnicities, sex and education, was used.

**Sample frame:** A general survey was undertaken to gauge the views of a randomly sampled Nepali public ( $N=2,418$ ) from the clusters covering the journalists' survey.

The 2001 census of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) provided the main basis to select the sample frame for the public survey. Cluster-wise types and sizes of the actual sample were developed to make the participation in the survey proportional to the composition of the population that actually lived in those clusters. Significant efforts were made to include all types of people in the survey, by developing guidelines for the enumerators to help those volunteering to fill out the forms, especially from the marginalized groups and communities. Although online forms were available for people in the clusters to fill, preference was given to print copies so they could be taken to rural areas.

**Respondents:** The administrative target was set to distribute forms to 2418 people drawn proportionally from the clusters. The actual target, however, was a little lower at 2000.

**Respondent coverage and distribution:** The main sample frame had two types of numbers, covering the main ethnicities and others, for all the ten clusters. They were as follows.

Table 6: Area-wise breakdown of sample public ( $N=2,418$ )

Clusters	Place of residence <sup>6</sup>	Inclusive sample (all major ethnicities)	Other groups
Baglung	R	51	12
Banke	SU	185	84
Bara	SU	152	216
Dailekh	R	213	81
Dhanusha	SU	123	28
Dolakha	R	161	227
Kathmandu	U	121	35
Morang	U	300	56
Rupandehi	SU	124	192
Okhaldhunga	R	33	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>1463</b>	<b>955</b>

**Mode of form distribution:** This assessment was done in person as well as through web-based interfaces, by mobilizing the experienced enumerators and networks in rural and urban locations. The surveys were conducted in person, via email as well as online.

**Instrument:** The survey questions were developed on the basis of the literature review and in consultation with a wider spectrum of stakeholders, including the members of the public.

The survey instrument spoke to key indicators/attributes of media users and their perceptions of media's credibility and reliability in communicating important contemporary topics such as

<sup>6</sup> Place of residence abbreviations: U= Urban, SU= Semi-urban, R= Rural, categorized on the basis of industrial base, infrastructure, transportation convenience etc, with their increased levels corresponding to urban residences.

national politics, constitution-making, and good governance. It was based on relevant literature in the field and was framed in a way to help assess citizens' media literacy.

### **3.3.4 SMS survey**

To complement the two general surveys, of the journalists and of the public, an SMS poll asking linkage questions about media and content credibility was designed and administered among a list of randomly generated mobile numbers, some of them purchased from suppliers and others generated from the same clusters as in the previous surveys. The target was to seek SMS responses from individuals by their choice to participate.

Automated systems of registry were developed for all the three surveys. To spread the word out, an advertisement inviting people to respond via SMS was placed in a leading newspaper, and links were shared online, and in social media networks.

For the first five days, the SMS response rate was about 100 responses a day. A total of 739 responses were received.

## **3.4 Research process**

**Literature review and instruments:** Reviewers were assigned to examine related literature on capacity building efforts, and contemporary opportunities in this area. Based on reviews, survey instruments were designed to cover demographics, professionalism and other core conceptual categories. The instruments evolved through a broad-based collaborative process with stakeholder participation.

**Pre- test:** Both instruments were pre-tested among potential respondents. The journalists' questionnaire was distributed to 50 respondents (4.65% of the 1,073 targetted sample). The survey forms were further refined based on their feedback on the ease of filling them, clarity of the questions, and the time taken. Similarly, a cross-section of the public filled 100 (4.13% of the 2,418 targetted sample) forms, giving their comments and suggestions for improvement. This helped clarify the focus of the study and devise a strategy to deploy the survey. The major milestone was to develop a robust survey instrument.

**Survey deployment and field work:** Survey protocols were developed in collaboration with the core survey and research team members and orientation sessions held with the enumerators in Kathmandu for some clusters. For others, guidelines were shared by emails, phone calls and via field visits.

The survey of journalists went smoothly whereas there were several issues with the public survey that needed to be resolved. Unlike the survey of journalists, several hundred more print forms were distributed among rural households and among the illiterate population across the clusters.

The timing of the survey soliciting public views of the media and journalists coincided with the rice planting season during the peak of the monsoon. This hampered mobility of field staff, and affected the planned timeline. Completed paper forms arrived late from two clusters, Banke and Solukhumbu.

In Banke, the enumerator, who had accomplished his task with ease during the journalist survey, reported difficulty in getting the members of the public to fill out the forms. Worse still, he had to accompany a patient to India during the public survey. This delayed the dispatch of the filled out print forms, which arrived in Kathmandu on July 31.

Field staff in Solukhumbu reported two weeks of disruption in the Internet connectivity, leading to the delay in his work. Monsoon caused flights cancellations and print forms arrived late from there. Dhanusha cluster also saw some disruption in the collection of the survey forms owing to a health emergency issue involving the field staff.

These field conditions were beyond immediate corrections right when the survey was underway.

Survey team leaders visited Pokhara, Dhanusha and Dolakha clusters to address issues and to ensure greater participation of the sampled population.

**Data entry:** A custom online database was created specifically for the purpose of this survey. At the center, data entry personnel were trained to enter the print responses received from the field into a local server that synched with the online database.

Related staff had the password to a user interface from which they constantly monitored the data.

**Data processing:** Data processing began as soon as the field surveys were launched. Several user interfaces were created to keep tab on the quality of the data coming in to the database. As anticipated, there were several issues to be resolved throughout the process, concerning limitations of Nepali unicode, the primary language of instruments and database. It turned out to be a rather arduous and time-consuming task. The data were exported to excel worksheets, cleaned up, and analyzed.

### **3.5 Data scrutiny and analysis**

The data were transferred from the database to Excel sheets for analysis. Invalid responses, such as too few responses on the web based forms and unreadable answers in the print forms, were sorted out.

The work on data processing and analysis was carried out in a deliberative manner with the involvement of research, data and analyst teams. Analysis mostly focused on descriptive

statistical assessment of survey responses. The clean data were stored in tabular forms in percentages. The major themes of the study guided the interpretation of the data.

Data validation was undertaken by setting up a special desk to call several respondents from the sample to verify if they had actually filled the forms.

### **3.6 Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

Apart from the surveys, the project conducted a series of focus group discussions involving the cross-sections of stakeholders. Focus group discussions (FGDs), as method of research, involve a small group of homogenous people who meet to discuss topics and help identify important issues. The distinguishing feature of focus groups is the "use of interaction as part of the research data" (Kitzinger, 1994, p. 104). Six FGDs were held throughout the months of April-July, 2012. The FGDs were helpful to elicit varied contextual information, including inputs from the lived experiences of different stakeholders.

### **3.7 Limitations**

Surveys, because they are a set of predetermined questions, leave gaps between possible responses. The study design allowed qualitative inputs from FGDs and helped to complement the quantitative data.

The ToR had laid down the objectives and procedures to meet them. In implementing the actual survey assessments, 10 clusters with 31 districts were created. While these clusters fairly cover the regional and demographic diversity of the country, they may not be fully representative of the nation as a whole.

In the absence of widely agreed definitions of the core concepts like "credibility", and "capacity", the research team needed to make choices, in consultation with the stakeholders and partners, which will undoubtedly examine the categories in rather narrow sense. However, external validation by way of participatory approach seeking inputs on instruments as well as FGDs for the refinement of these categories served the rigor of the research process.

Some of the individual questions received fewer responses than others, thereby limiting the comparative analysis and generalizability of results (for non-response rates, please refer to Appendices I & II). The data generated from self-reporting by respondents from different demographic backgrounds could also have added to the risks of data being limited in their value for generalization.

In surveys, researchers cannot completely rule out the possibility of fake or fictional interviews. Data validation was carried out by way of calling a sample of respondents who had filled the forms. Data validation was undertaken by setting up a special desk to call several respondents from the sample to verify if they had actually filled the forms.

Moreover, the time constraints, imposed by the necessity to plan and implement the deadlines, were another obvious limitation. Ethical considerations offered freedom to respondents to skip certain questions, potentially contributing to abrupt termination of the process.

*SECTION IV:*  
**Survey of Journalists**

## 4. JOURNALISTS' SURVEY RESULTS

Male representation was high across urban (75.08%), semi-urban (87.76%) and rural (81.89%) clusters. Females comprised more in percentage terms in urban (24.91%), rural (18.10%) and semi-urban (12.23%) clusters in that order.

The urban cluster, which included Kathmandu valley and Morang/Sunsari, had males (75.08%) and females (24.91%), the semi-urban cluster, which included Dhanusa, Bara, Butwal, Banke, had males (87.76%) and females (12.23%). The rural cluster, which included Dolakha, Okhaldhunga, Baglung, and Dailekh, were represented by males (81.89%) and females (18.10%). Cluster-wise, women were the most represented in urban Kathmandu (26.72%) and the least represented in rural Baglung (7.69%).

Journalists working for radio were concentrated in the semi-urban cluster (51.45%), followed equally (24.27%) in urban and rural clusters. The journalists of national dailies were concentrated in the urban cluster (51.98%) followed by semi-urban (36.75%) and rural (11.25%). Respondents working for weeklies and periodicals were similar in percentages for urban (34.24%) and semi-urban (38.35%) clusters, whereas they were fewer in the rural (27.39%) cluster. More television journalists were from semi-urban cluster (48.71%), than from urban (39.74%) and rural (11.53%) clusters.

Online media had heavy concentration in the urban (68.18%) cluster, followed by semi-urban (22.72%) and rural (9.09%) clusters. News agency journalists were mostly from semi-urban (50%) cluster, with urban and rural clusters having the same size (25%).

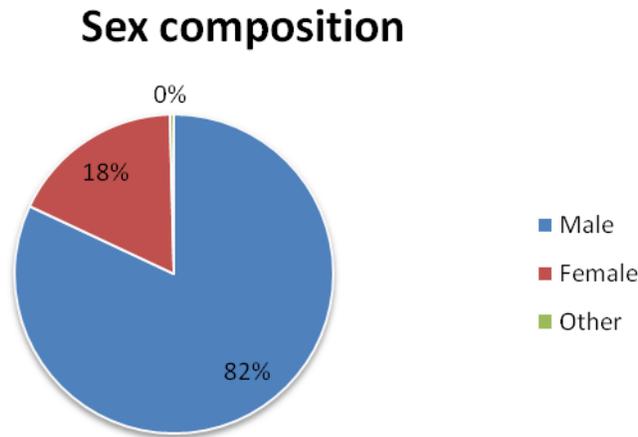
Males and females across urban and semi-urban clusters stressed the need of training on story idea development, whereas rural males emphasized news writing training. Other areas of training in demand were news gathering, finding sources and editing. Respondents across all clusters emphasized journalism proficiency and advanced training methods as necessary for them. Journalism basics, specific topic or genre were the next in demand among the techniques. Journalists across all clusters emphasized training on time management, critical thinking and ICT skills. Journalists, except rural females, emphasized hands-on training and lecture as the preferred modes of instruction. While some respondents preferred interaction and distance learning, rural females did not choose any training.

Most journalists, across cluster and sex, stated their preference for advanced level training. Preliminary (up to 1 month) and proficiency (between 1 and 3 months) and basic (between 1 and 3 months) were also in demand in that order.

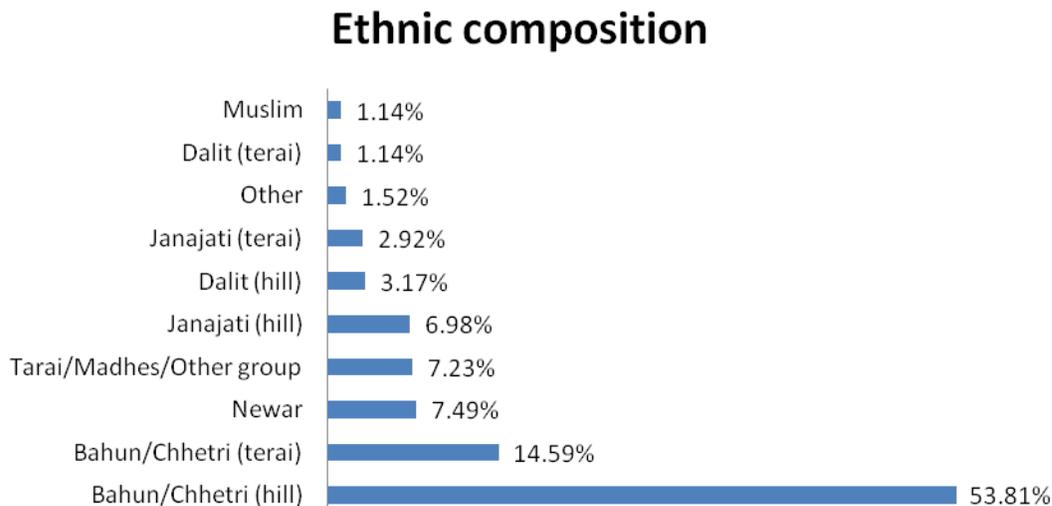
The following pages provide a descriptive statistics on the results of the survey of journalists, organized under key themes like demographics, professionalism, credibility, capacity, and media literacy. The findings are presented in bar graphs and pie charts.

## 4.1 Demographics

**4.1.1 Sex:** Among the respondents, 17.64% were females and 81.97% were males. The large difference in percentage between the two sexes is reflective of the existing male-female ratio in the profession. A very small portion of the respondents, 0.39%, were from the "Other" category, which included people from the third-gender community.

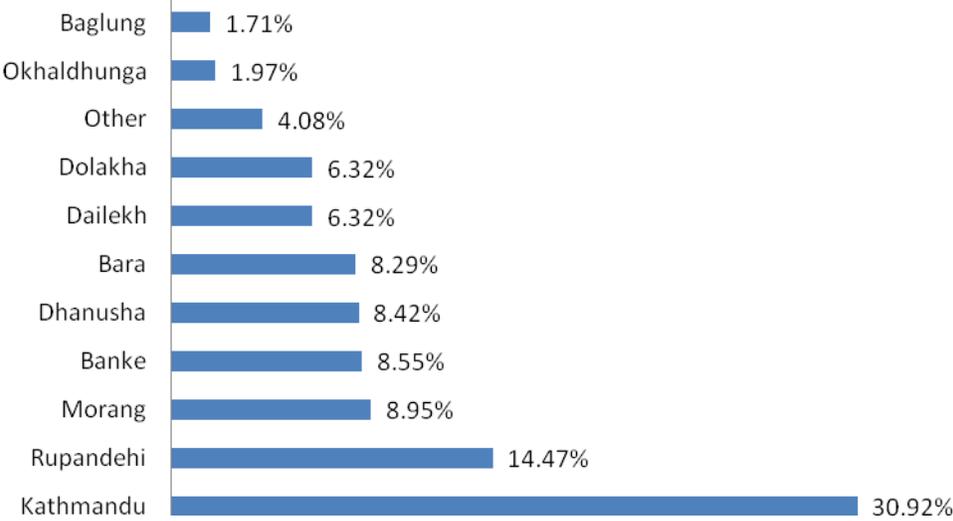


**4.1.2 Age:** Among the age groups, a majority of respondents (35.71%) were between the age of 25 and 30 years. The respondents from the age groups 19-24 yrs, 31-36 yrs and 37-42 yrs are 22.72%, 21.47% and 12.86% of the respondents, respectively. Among the minorities were journalists of more advanced age: 43-48 years (2.50%), 49-54 years (2.50%), 55-64 years (1.25%), below 18 years (0.62%), and above 65 years (0.37%).



**4.1.3 Ethnicity:** In terms of ethnicity, journalists from the Bahun/Chhetri (hills) background comprised the majority of respondents (53.81%). Separately, there were 14.59% respondents from the Bahun/Chhetri (terai) background. Newar journalists include 7.49% of the respondents, whereas Terai/Madhes/other group comprised 7.23% of the total respondents. Respondents from the Janajati (hill) background (6.98%), Dalit (hill) background (3.17%), and Janajati (terai) background (2.92%) were followed by journalists from the Dalit (terai) background and Muslim background each comprising 1.14% of total respondents.

### Survey clusters



**4.1.4 Cluster:** Among the ten clusters, most of the respondents (30.92%) were from the Kathmandu Valley, followed by Nawalparasi (14.47%). There were 8.95% respondents from Biratnagar cluster. Banke (8.55%), Dhanusha (8.42%), Dhanusha (8.42%), Bara (8.29%) have almost equal number of respondents. Similarly, Dailekh (6.32%), and Dolakha had the same number (6.32%) of respondents. Okhaldhunga (1.97%) and Baglung (1.71%) had the least number of respondents.

**4.1.5 Education level:** A majority of those surveyed had a higher academic degree. Half of the respondents (49.69%) had Bachelor’s degree and a little over a quarter (26.47%) of respondents had Master's degree. Those who had 10+2 or proficiency level education comprised 21.08% of the respondents. Only 2.01% of the respondents had passed School Leaving Certificate (SLC) exam. Those who had acquired "self-education", "grade ten" or "other educational level" cumulatively comprised less than 1% of the respondents.

**4.1.6 Major study area:** A vast majority, three-fourth of the total respondents (69.20%), came from the "humanities and social sciences" (arts) academic background whereas the least number (0.46%) of those surveyed had "medicine" as their major study area. The second largest group of respondents (19.73%) came from "management" (commerce) discipline. A small

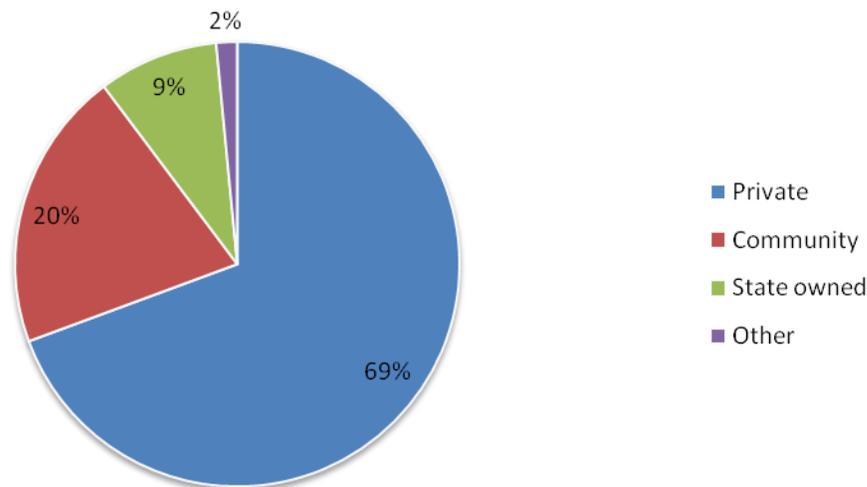
segment of respondents included journalists who had "law" (2.73%), "science and technology" (2.12%), and "engineering" (1.06%) as their main academic background.

**4.1.7 Marital status:** Most of the respondents (65.75%) respondents were married, and 32.38% were unmarried. A very few of the respondents were divorced (0.63%) or single (0.50%). Of the total, a small number of respondents (0.75%) said they 'don't want to mention' their marital status.

## 4.2 Professional issues

**4.2.1 Media platforms respondents work for:** Journalists working for daily newspapers comprised the majority of respondents (42.47%) followed by those working for the radio (29.27%), television (10.96%), weekly newspapers or periodicals (10.83%). A small number of respondents (3.24%) worked for online media, with a smaller number working for "other" various media (1.99%) and news agencies (1.25%).

### Ownership of outlets



**4.2.2 Ownership type of media outlets respondents work for:** Most respondents worked for private media. Three-fourth of the respondents (69.30%) said they work for daily newspapers, while 20% reported they work for community media (which include radio stations owned by cooperatives and non-profit organizations). Close to 9% of respondents disclosed that they were associated with the government-owned media, while 1.52% respondents said they work for "other" forms of media.

**4.2.3 Nature of employment:** A vast majority of respondents (78.39%) said they work full-time while 14.32% respondents said they work as part-time journalist. Among those surveyed, 0.88%

of respondents were columnists, and 5.78% were freelancers/writers and the rest (0.63%) described the nature of their work as "other".

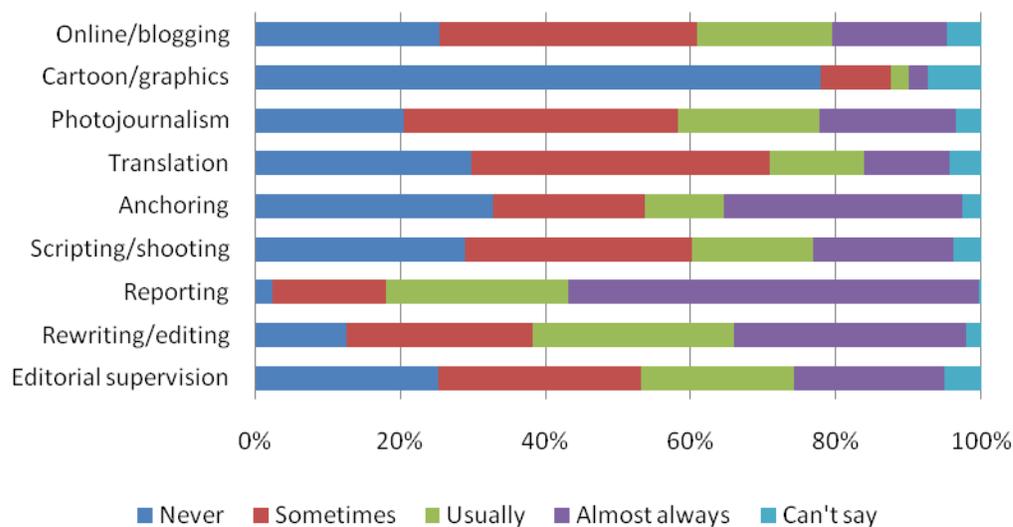
**4.2.4 Work experience:** More than half of the respondents had 2 to 10 years of work experience. Among those surveyed, 32.17% had worked for 6-10 years while 25.69% of total respondents have working experience of 2-5 years. Similarly, 19.08% had worked for 11-15 years, and 9.10% of respondents had worked for 11-15 years. About 1.25% of respondents had worked for less than 1 year.

**4.2.5 Income from Journalism:** The largest group of respondents (33.12%) said they earn between NRs. 6001 and 10,000 a month, followed by 22.80% of respondents who reported they earn NRs. 12,000-15,000, and 21.54% of respondents who disclosed they earn NRs. 3000 to 6,000. There were 8.31% of respondents who made less than NRs. 3,000 a month. A small percentage of the respondents (5.67%) reported earning between NRs. 25,001-50,000 and an even smaller percentage (0.63%) said they earn more than NRs. 50,001 a month. About 7.93% respondents did not want to mention their income scale.

**4.2.6 Journalistic tasks:** When the sample respondents were asked whether they do the task of 'editorial supervision', 20.77% of them responded that they do such work almost always while 25.32% said they never get involved in editorial supervision.

Regarding the 'rewriting/editing' type of task, 31.88% were found to be doing almost always while 12.58% never did such work.

### Frequency of journalism tasks



#### **a. Reporting**

When asked about how often they do 'reporting', more than half the respondents (56.35%) said they do it almost always while 2.43% said that they never do reporting.

#### **b. Scripting/shooting**

Under 'scripting/shooting' category of work, 31.26% responded that they sometimes do such task, 16.70% were found to be usually doing such task while 28.91% said they never do such type of work.

#### **c. Anchoring**

Majority of respondents said they do "anchoring". About 32.81% responded they usually do anchoring while the same number of respondents (32.81%) said they do anchoring task almost always.

#### **d. Translation**

Regarding the 'translation' work, 41% respondents were found to be doing translation only sometimes while 29.84% responded that they never do translation. Only 11.66% reported doing it almost always.

#### **e. Photojournalism**

When inquired about 'photojournalism', only 18.87% respondents were found to be doing photojournalism almost always while 20.15% said they never do it.

#### **f. Cartoons or graphics**

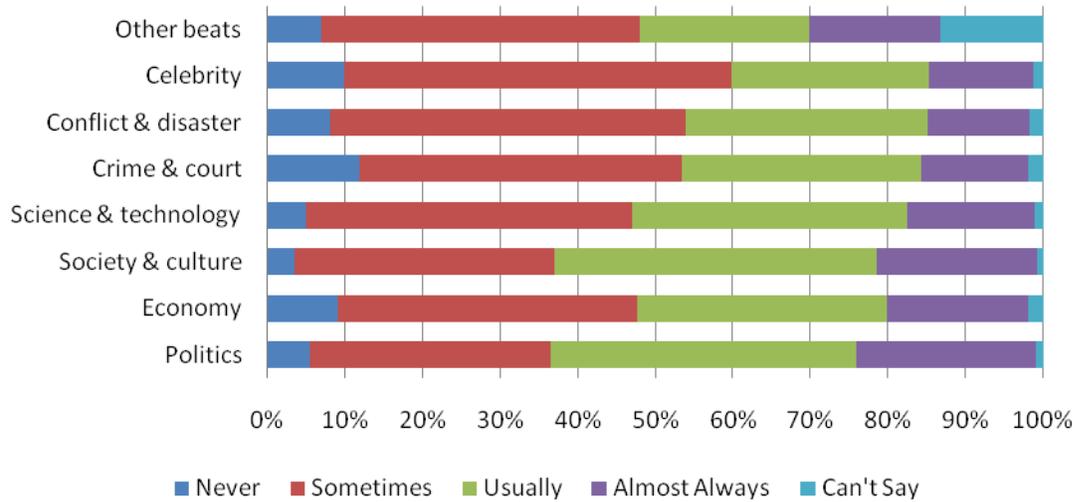
When asked about their involvement in the creation of cartoons or graphics for editorial content, 77.84% of the respondents said they never do such work while only 2.70% respondents agreed that they do such work almost always.

#### **g. Blogging or online**

When asked whether they blog or do online posting, only 15.84% were found to be doing such task almost always while 25.51% said they never do blogging or online posting.

**4.2.7 Reporting different beats:** The priorities over reporting different beats differ among the journalists surveyed, and only a small percentage of respondents said they never reported any beat.

## Beat reporting



### a. Political

When asked about the 'political' beat, only 23.28% responded that they cover the political beat almost always while only 5.40% respondent said they never cover political beat. 39.29% respondents said that they usually cover political beat.

### b. Economy

Similarly, when they were asked about reporting the 'economy' beat, 23.28% said they almost always cover that beat and 39.29% said they usually cover that beat while 5.40% respondents suggested they never report on that particular beat.

### c. Science and technology

Only 16.45% journalists were found to be covering 'science and technology' beat almost always while 4.91% never reported that. A larger portion of the respondents (35.47%) said that they usually reports on that particular beat.

### d. Court/crime

In 'crime/court' beat too, similar results were found. For instance, only 13.79% respondents reported that they cover the crime/court beat almost always.

### e. Disaster, crises, conflict, and traumatic situations

Disaster, trauma, etc: In terms of reporting 'disaster', 13.20% journalists were found to be covering it almost always while 8.05% never covered the beat. A larger portion i.e. 31.10% of the respondents said they cover disaster beat usually.

### f. Celebrity, lifestyle, arts and media, sports, etc

Similar, to those reporting crime/court or disaster, 13.48% journalists said that they cover celebrity beat almost always. About 9.78% respondents said they never cover the beat. Half of the respondents (50%) were found to be covering celebrity beat sometimes only.

Regarding beats in 'other' category, 6.85% respondents were found to be never covering them while only 16.89% respondents covered them almost always.

**4.2.8 Role of journalists:** Almost one third of the journalists agreed that the role of the journalist should be creating awareness on developmental issues, 23.30% said that a journalist should reflect the country's plurality and diversity in their work, 10.68% agreed that journalist should serve as a forum for dialogue, 15.53% respondents said that journalists should hold the government and rulers to be accountable and 13.59% journalists said that the most important role of journalist is to inform, educate and entertain the public.

A very low percentage of the respondents (1.94%) said that journalists should engage the public in the important issues of the day to bring about positive changes in their lives while 0.97% of said that journalists should advocate against social ills like superstitions and discrimination.

**4.2.9 Code violation:** When asked about the most common types of violation of code of conduct by journalists, respondents varied in their opinion. About 27.63% said that journalists seek or take economic benefits from writing news while 22.37% respondents that journalists disclose identity of subjects at risk or victims without their consent. Similarly, 17.11% respondents cited that journalists investigate private lives of public figure while 11.84% said that journalists violate confidentiality of news sources.

Also, 5.26% suggested that journalists intrude in the private lives of people, including of children, 1.32% believed that journalist publish materials that undermine national interest while the same number of respondents i.e. 1.32% said that journalists use anonymous sources in a story even without special circumstance. Also, 6.58% of the respondents agreed that journalists publish indecent or gory pictures, 5.26% said that journalists do not disclose their identity as news professionals while reporting, and 1.32% said that journalists use materials from sources without attribution.

**4.2.10 Hurdles to following ethical practice:** When asked what might be the key hindrances in maintaining adherence to Code of Conduct in Nepali journalism, respondents differed in their views. More than half (52.63%) of the sampled respondents believed that lack of awareness about ethics is the main reason while 30.26% cited 'undermining of norms and values for personal benefit'.

Cross- tab

About 9.21% pointed out 'unhealthy competition for scoop', 1.32% referred to 'lack of personal integrity and honesty', and the remaining 1.32% said that 'lack of reaction from the concerned sectors, institutions or persons against the wrongs done by journalists' as the main hurdle in following ethical practice.

**4.2.11 Social challenges:** When asked to choose options on the most serious social challenges for Nepali journalists, majority of respondents (67.53%) said that the 'the politically partisan image of journalists' while 16.88% cited the 'image of journalists as being after sensation'. About 5.19% cited 'corrupt image of journalists in society' and 5.19% referred to 'threat to press freedom by non state parties'.

About 3.90% of respondents cited the 'perception that there are too many news outlets or media in the country' and 1.30% referred to the 'perception that journalists are not responsible towards people and society' as the most serious social challenge for journalists.

**4.2.12 State-level challenges:** Regarding the most serious challenge to journalists at the level of state or the law, a whopping 80.72% named "inadequate security to journalists from the state", 13.25% referred to 'little progress in implementing press-friendly laws', 4.82% respondents cited 'inadequate legal reforms'. A small percentage (1.20%) of respondents said 'lack of transparency on the part of stakeholders' as the most serious state challenge for journalists.

**4.2.13 Organization challenges:** Among the most serious challenges to journalists at the organizational level, the most often cited were 'media houses inclining towards a party' (46.05%), 'concentration of media houses in capital' (15.79%), 'unsatisfactory media house management' (11.84%), 'unsatisfactory pay and perks' to journalists (9.21%).

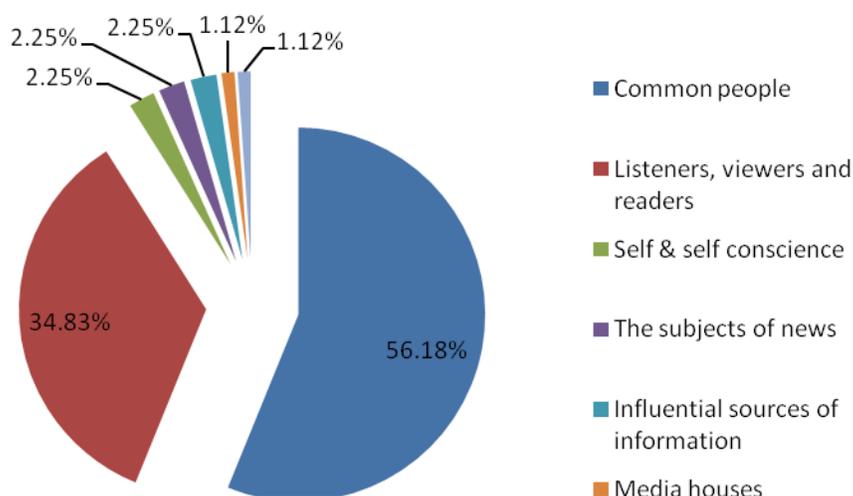
Similarly, 5.26% respondents pointed out 'management interference in editorial work' as the most serious challenge, and 3.95% cited 'investors using media as a tool to promote other businesses'. There were equal number of respondents who referred to 'too much profit orientation of media houses' (2.63%) and 'illegal or non-transparent sources of investment in media' (2.63%).

About 1.32% pointed out 'little commitment to public interest information' while the same number of respondents (1.32%) cited 'weak coordination between reporting and news desk' as the most serious organizational challenge for journalists.

**4.2.14 Individual Challenges:** Respondents have different views regarding the most serious challenges to journalists at the individual level. 'Lack of technological resources and training' (42.67%), 'lack of journalism education and training' (16.00%), 'lack of skill to use new media technology' (13.33%) were among those frequently cited, followed by 'lack of skill to covering special topics' (9.33%), 'lack of continued and adequate professional commitment' (4%), 'presence of political bias (4%)'.

About 2.67% cited 'journalists' tendency to hold themselves above rules and regulations', and an equal percentage of respondents (2.67%) referred to 'lack of proper institutional guidance or support to journalists' as serious individual challenges. A small percentage cited 'Lack of attention towards Journalists' Code of Conduct' (1.33%) and 'lack of respect for factual accuracy, truthfulness, fairness and balance in reporting' (1.33%) as such challenges.

## Loyalty of journalists



**4.2.15 Loyalty:** Responding to the question which among a set of options should journalists be more responsible towards, majority of respondents (56.18%) chose 'the public in general'. Another larger chunk of respondents (34.83%) selected 'the audience/readers'. Those who said 'one's own conscience' (2.25%), 'the people one covers' (2.25%), 'the influential sources of information' (2.25%) were among the minority. In addition, very few respondents i.e. 1.12% said journalists should be loyal to 'media houses', and another 1.12% said they should be loyal to 'editors or colleagues in media'.

## 4.3 Media credibility

### 4.3.1 Reliance on media for types of information

When asked how often respondents rely on various channels of communication or media for their daily news, majority of respondents said they rely almost always on mobile, followed by those who said they rely on Internet, television, newspapers, radio, and friends, family members and colleagues, in that order.

#### a. Mobile

Journalists were using mobile for their daily news, with 42.78% saying they almost always rely on it, 31.44% frequently did, 22.51% sometimes, 2.58% never and less than 1 % were not sure if they did.

#### b. Internet

About 39.67% of the respondents said they almost always relied on the Internet for daily news, 33.83% said they relied frequently and 22.50% said they sometimes did. About 3.33%

said they never relied on the Internet for their daily news while less than 1% of respondents were not sure if they did. The survey was conducted online with paper option too for rural areas.

**c. TV**

About 36.72 of respondents almost always relied on television for their daily news and 27.24% relied on it never. Only 4.48% relied frequently and 1.21% sometimes. Those who were not sure if they relied on TV for news were 30.30%.

**d. Newspaper or magazine**

Most respondents (31.67 %) said they sometimes relied on newspapers or magazines for their news. Some 33.73 % relied frequently and 29.43% almost always relied on them. There were 3.96% respondents who never relied on newspaper and magazine for daily news. Again, 1.20 % respondents were not sure if they relied at all.

**e. Radio**

About 34.99% respondents relied on radio sometimes, 33.96% frequently, and 25.56 % almost always on the radio for daily news. Those who said they never relied on radio for their news comprised 3.95% and a small percentage (1.54%) could not say if they relied at all.

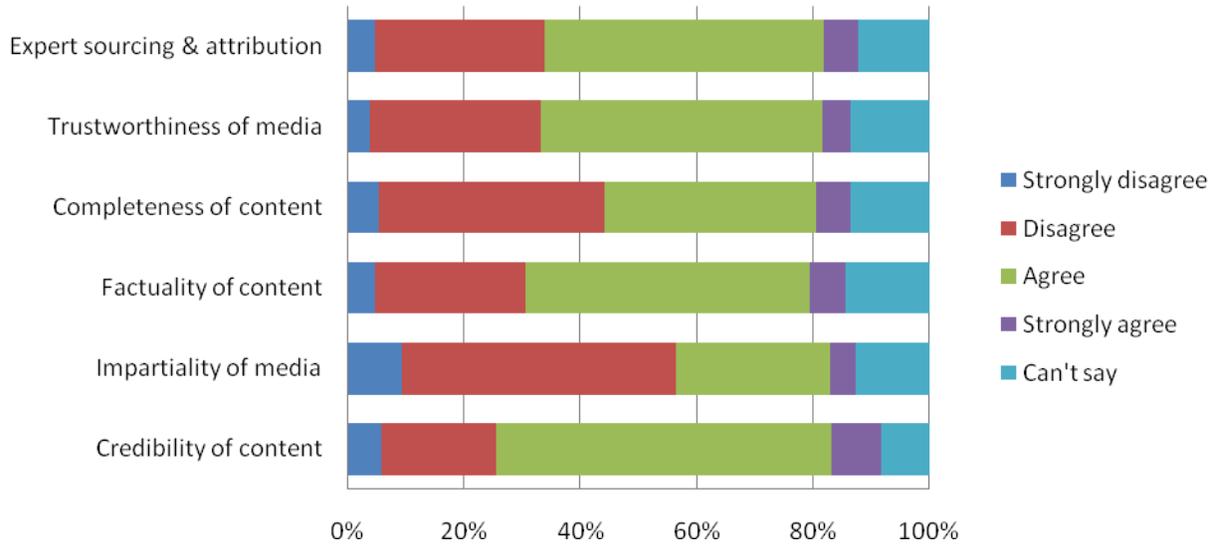
**f. Friends, family members and colleagues**

A majority of respondents (57.86%) said they sometimes relied on friends, family members and colleagues for their daily news. About 19.41% frequently relied, 12.38% almost always relied, and 9.06% never relied on them. A tiny segment of 1.29 % respondents were not sure if they did.

**4.3.2 Statement of agreement on the trust factors**

Majority of respondents responded favorably on the trust factors regarding that Nepali media or their content.

## Perception of trust factors



### a. Credibility of content

Majority of respondents (57.62%) agreed what they read, heard and saw in the Nepali media were credible, 8.51% strongly agreed and 8.35% were not sure if they did. Some 19.90% disagreed with the statement and 5.62% said they strongly disagreed that they read, heard or saw credible things in Nepali media.

### b. Impartiality of media

On the question about impartiality of the media, 47.12% disagreed Nepali media were impartial, with 9.23% showing strong disagreement with the statement. About 26.52% agreed about the media being impartial and 4.45% showed strong agreement to the statement. Some 13% respondents were not sure about whether the Nepali media were impartial.

### c. Factuality of content

Almost 49% respondents agreed on the media being factual, with 6.06% showing strong agreement. Those showing disagreement made up 25.93% and strong disagreement 4.55%. Some 15% were not sure.

### d. Completeness of content

Some 39% respondents disagreed that the media gave complete information with 5.16% showing stronger disagreement. Those who agreed accounted 36.32% and 6.02% showed stronger disagreement. Again, some 14% were not sure if the media stories were complete.

### e. Trustworthiness of media

Respondents generally agreed that the media were trustworthy, with 48.45% agreeing to the statement about their trust in the media. Some 4.83 % showed strong agreement. Those disagreeing with the statement accounted for 29.31% and showing disagreement 3.79%.

#### **f. Facts and expert sourcing and attribution in content**

Some 48.01% journalists agreed on the question of journalistic attribution, 5.87% said they strongly agreed, 29.19 % said they disagreed and 4.66% said they strongly disagreed with the statement. Some 12.26% were not sure.

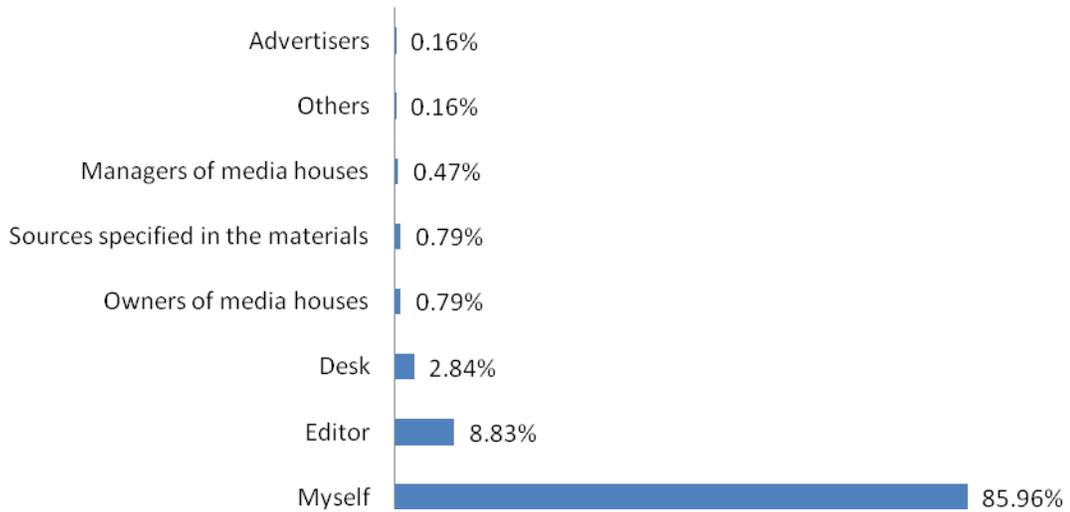
**4.3.3 Verification process:** To the question "normally, what processes do you follow when preparing print or broadcast materials", a large majority of the respondents (78.72) said they check facts and quotes while 15.96% reported they do further background research for context. There were a few respondents who said they 'get suggestions from seniors to prepare materials' (3.19%), 'my supervisor or editor copy-edits or rewrites' materials (1.06%) and 'experts review the materials' (1.06%). None of the respondents mentioned that 'sometimes host-verify the content with the concerned people who are covered'.

**4.3.4 Trust factors.** When asked what factors affected the credibility of Nepali media the most, a large percentage of respondents (42.03%) cited 'mediocre language presentation and style', while 26.09% said the reason was not verifying facts properly. About 14.49% pointed out the use of materials without historical, economic context. There were 4.35% respondents who said distortion of facts was affecting Nepali credibility the most while 4.35% saw 'presenting news with personal prejudices', and 2.90% pointed out 'using unidentified sources too often' as the factors affecting the credibility of media.

Factors less often cited included indifference towards publishing or broadcasting corrections (1.45%), lack of research on topics covered (1.45%), sensationalization of events or issues (1.45%), exaggeration of facts, events or issues (1.45%), and indifference towards readers' or audience feedback (1.45%).

**4.3.5 Responsibility for content produced:** To the question "who do you think is most responsible for the news content you have produced", an overwhelming 85.96% of respondents said they were themselves responsible for the content they produce.

## Responsibility for the content

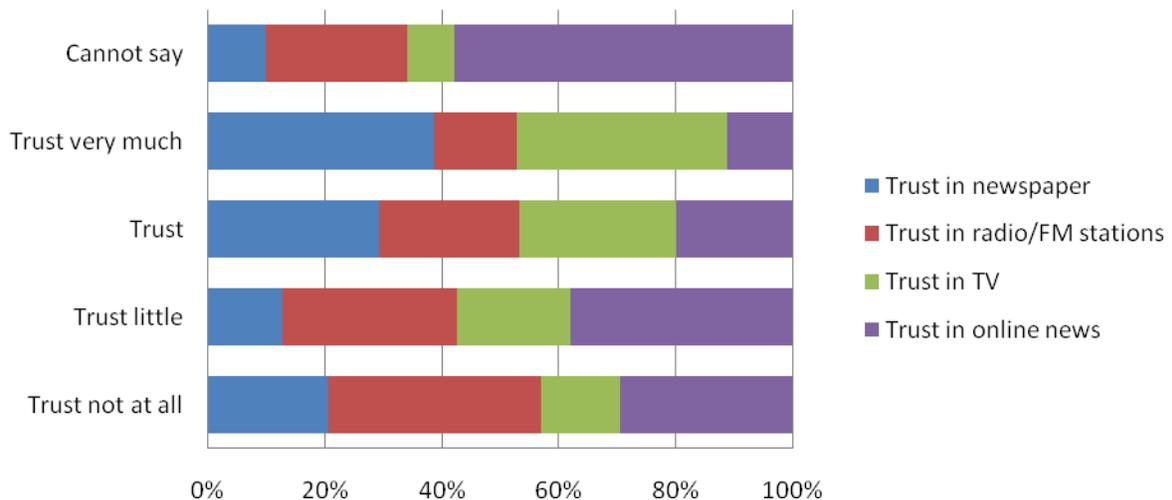


There were a few respondents who said the editor (8.83%), the editorial or news desk (2.84%), the sources used to write the news (0.79%), the owners of media houses (0.79%), the managers of media houses (0.47%), advertisers (0.16%), and others (0.16%) as responsible.

### 4.3.6 Trust in media-specific information and analyses

To the question 'what extent do you trust the information or analyses presented in the following media in Nepal' respondents generally trusted all media for such information. However, more respondents trusted information and analyses in newspapers, television, or radio than online news.

## Journalists' trust in outlets



#### a. Information and analyses in newspapers

A whopping 71.36% trusted information and analyses in newspapers, 12.32% trusted them very much, 13.76% trusted a little, 1.76% did not trust at all and 0.80% were not sure.

#### b. Information and analyses in radio

About 58.11% respondents trusted such content on the radio, 4.47% trusted them very much, 32.28% trusted them a little, 3.15% did not trust them at all and 1.99% could not trust.

#### c. Information and analyses in TV

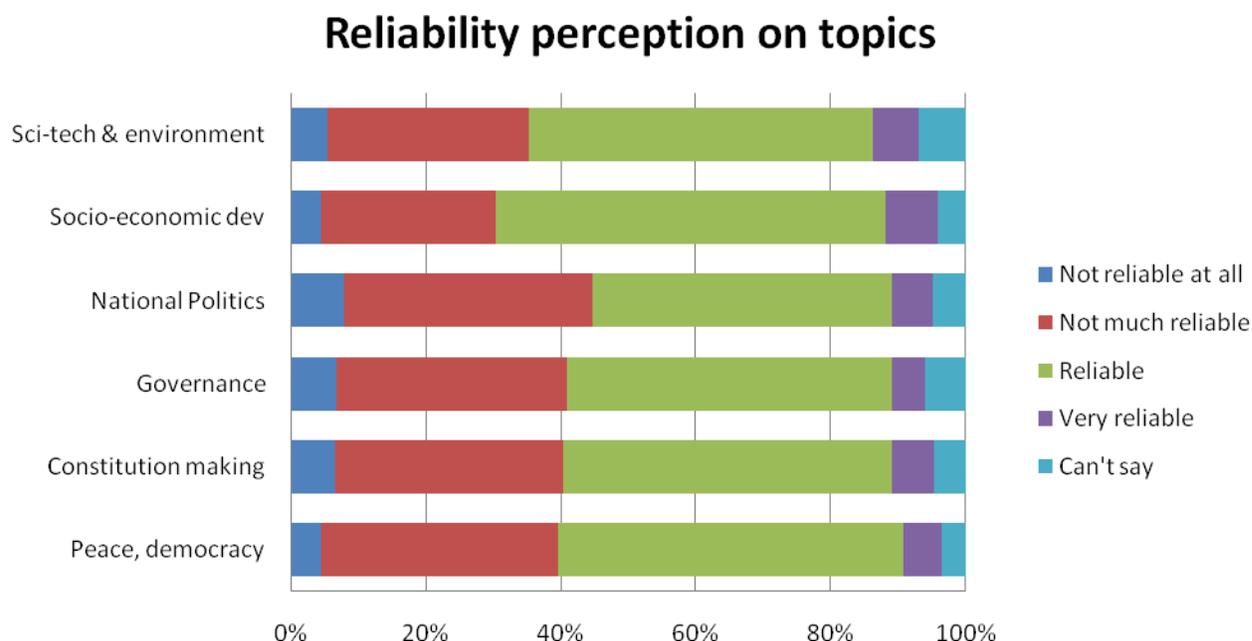
About 65.67% respondents trusted materials on TV, 11.44% trusted them very much, 21.06% trusted them a little, 1.16% did not trust at all and 0.66% could not trust.

#### d. Information and analyses in on the Internet

About 48.14% trusted online news, 3.56% trusted it very much, 41.02 trusted little, 2.54% did not trust at all, and 4.75% could not trust.

#### 4.3.7 Journalists' trust in topics covered

Respondents were asked about their overall perceptions on the reliability of the coverage of Nepali media on contemporary topics of public interest. Generally, respondents had a favorable view of coverage on such topics.



#### a. Peace and democratic process

About 51.08% found the coverage of peace, democracy reliable, 5.66% found it very reliable, 35.11 somewhat not reliable, 4.49% not reliable at all and 3.66 % could not say.

**b. Constitution-making (state restructuring, form of government, citizens' rights, social inclusion, etc)**

About 48.54 % found coverage constitution-making reliable. Some 6.37% found it very reliable. About 33.91% said it was somewhat not reliable. There were 6.54% respondents who said the coverage was not reliable at all while 4.65% responded with "can't say".

**c. Governance**

Respondents found coverage on governance reliable (47.99%). About 4.89% found it very reliable while 34.21% found it somewhat not reliable. A few of them (6.81%) said coverage was not reliable at all, and 6.11% could not tell.

**d. National politics**

**Many respondents** (44.46%) found coverage on national politics reliable, 6.06% of them saying it was very reliable. There were 36.68% who believed it was somewhat not reliable. About 7.96% said it was not reliable at all and 4.84% could not tell.

**e. Social and economic development**

Majority of respondents (57.77%) found the coverage of social and economic development reliable, 7.68% very reliable, 25.83% somewhat reliable, 4.54% not reliable at all and 4.19 could not tell.

**f. Science, technology and environment**

Majority of those surveyed (50.97%) said the coverage of science, technology and environment was reliable. About 6.70% believed it was very reliable. About 29.81% found the media coverage on the topic somewhat not reliable while 5.47% said it was not reliable at all. Some 7.05% respondents could not tell.

## **5.1 Capacity building**

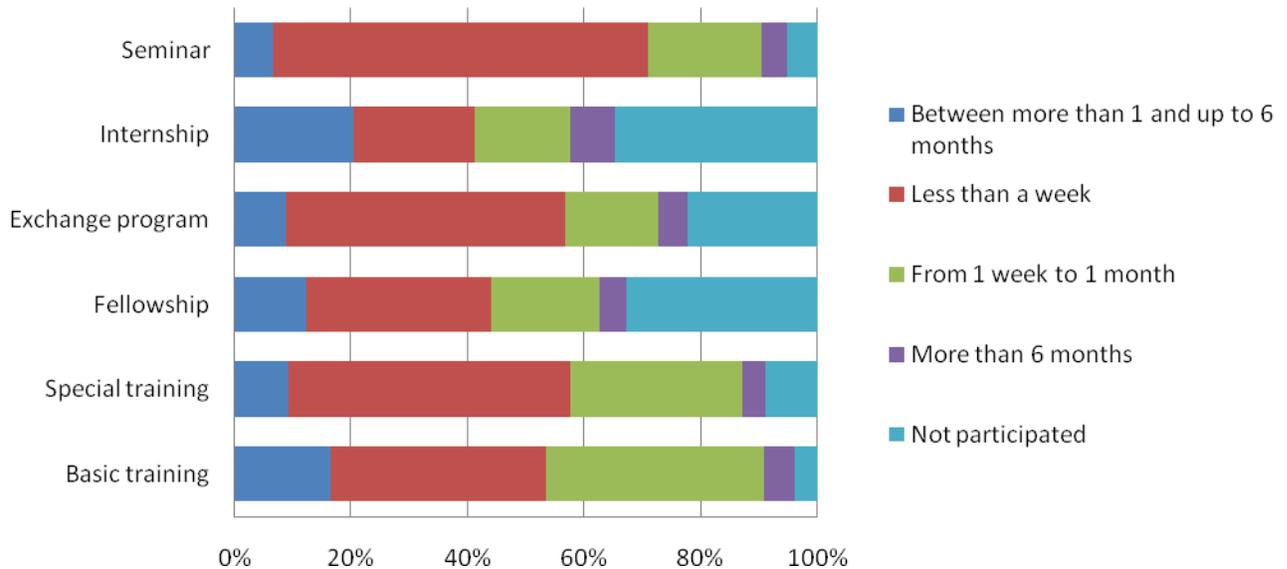
**5.1.1 Education opportunities:** Respondents were asked if they had any opportunities to receive formal education in journalism. About 27.82% said they had studied journalism or mass communication up to 10+2 level while 27.42% of those surveyed said they had obtained a Bachelor's degree in journalism.

Respondents who had received Master's degree in journalism or mass communication comprised 19.35% of the respondents. A small percentage of respondents (5.24%) said they had studied the subject in their high school curriculum. About 20.16% of respondents reported obtaining other formal journalism degrees.

### **5.1.2 Training opportunities journalists had**

The respondents were asked about the opportunities of learning they had received at least once in the past. Most respondents reported having had opportunities to participate in several capacity building programs of various duration. Many reported they had not participated in fellowships or internships.

## Training opportunities



### a. Basic journalism training

About 37.48% respondents reported they had participated in basic journalism training, cumulatively between 1-week to 1-month duration. An almost equal number of respondents (36.77%) said they had participated in sessions amounting to at least a week while 16.52% reported they had obtained 1 to 6 months of basic journalism training. Similarly, journalists who spent more than 6 months in their basic training comprised 5.33% of the total respondents. About 3.91% journalists reported they had not participated in basic journalism training.

### b. Special topic training in journalism

Majority i.e. 48.23% had spent less than a week in the special topic training, 29.65% of total respondents had participated in training period of 1 week to 1 month, and 9.29% respondents had obtained training of between more than 1 and up to 6 months. About 3.76% said they had more than 6 months of fellowships while 9.07% had not participated in any such training.

### c. Fellowship

About 12.24% respondents shared that they had spent between more than 1 and up to 6 months in fellowships, 31.82% spent less than a week, 18.53% spent from 1 week to 1 month, 4.55% respondents said they had participated in more than 6 months of fellowships while 32.87% of the total respondents reported they had not participated in any fellowship.

#### **d. Exchange**

About 8.76% journalists responded that they had spent between more than 1 and up to 6 months in some type of exchange programs while 47.81% had spent less than a week, and 16.06% had spent from 1 week to 1 month of exchange programs. About 5.11% reported they had spent more than 6 months while 22.26% said they had not participated in any such exchange program.

#### **e. Internship**

About 20.41% reported they had spent between more than 1 and up to 6 months for internships, 20.82% had spent less than a week, and 16.33% respondents had spent from 1 week to 1 month. About 7.76% respondents had spent more than 6 months while 34.68% had not had internship opportunities.

#### **f. Seminar**

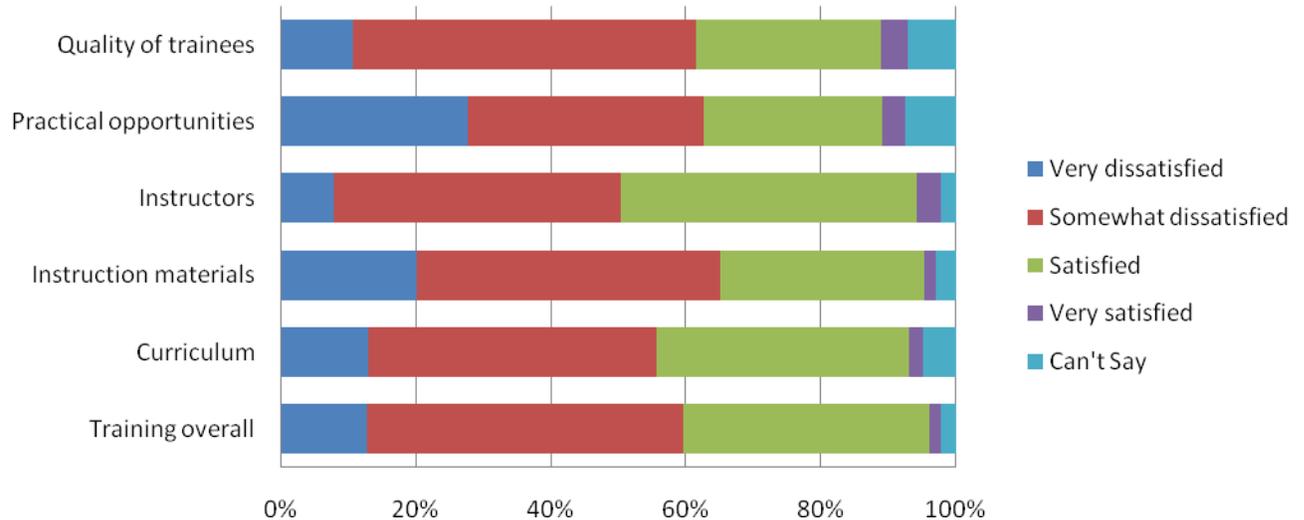
When asked about their participation in seminar, 64.51% said they had less than a week of seminar. About 19.42% said they had 1 week to 1 month of participation in seminars. About 6.47% had spent between more than 1 and up to 6 months while 4.38% had more than 6 months of seminar experience. A small percentage of respondents (5.22%) had not participated in seminars.

**5.1.3 Locations journalists received training from:** To the question "if you are trained in journalism, where did you receive your training from", more than half or 58.25% of total respondents said they obtained their journalism training from 'local and regional level', 21.75% said they received it from 'national level', 10.88% from 'in-house training program', 7.37% from 'international level' and remaining 1.75% from 'other' locations.

#### **5.1.4 Overall training satisfaction**

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with various aspects of journalism training currently in the country. Most of them appeared somewhat dissatisfied with training, curriculum, instruction and practical opportunities such as in-house training and internships.

## Overall training satisfaction



### a. Satisfaction from training

When asked about their satisfaction in the overall quality of existing journalism training programs, 46.68% respondents were somewhat dissatisfied, 12.90% respondents were very dissatisfied while just 1.71% were very satisfied. About 2.28% respondents responded with "can't say" and 36.43% said they were satisfied.

### b. Curriculum satisfaction

Of the total respondents, 42.60% reported they were somewhat dissatisfied with the quality of training curricula while 37.44% were satisfied, 13.00% were very dissatisfied, and only 2.02% were very satisfied. There were 4.93% respondents who could not tell about their satisfaction.

### c. Instruction material satisfaction

Regarding their satisfaction in the availability of instructional and other resource materials, 44.90% reported they were somewhat dissatisfied, while 20.18% said they were very dissatisfied with the materials. Less than 2% were very satisfied. About 30.16% replied they were satisfied. Some 2.95% could not tell.

### d. Satisfaction with instructors

About 42.57% respondents were somewhat dissatisfied with the quality of trainers while 43.69% were satisfied. Of the respondents, 7.88% were very dissatisfied, and 3.06% were very satisfied. A small percentage of respondents (2.25%) responded with 'can't say'.

### e. Practical opportunities (scope for in-house training/internship)

Regarding practical aspects, and scope for in-house training/internship, 34.95% respondents were somewhat dissatisfied, 26.39% were satisfied, 27.78% were very dissatisfied while 3.24% very satisfied. Some 7.64% could not tell about their satisfaction.

**f. Quality of trainees' satisfaction**

Regarding the quality of trainees produced by training institutions, 50.82% were somewhat dissatisfied, 27.27% were satisfied, 10.72% were very dissatisfied while just 3.69% were very satisfied. The remaining 7.23% respondents replied with 'can't say'.

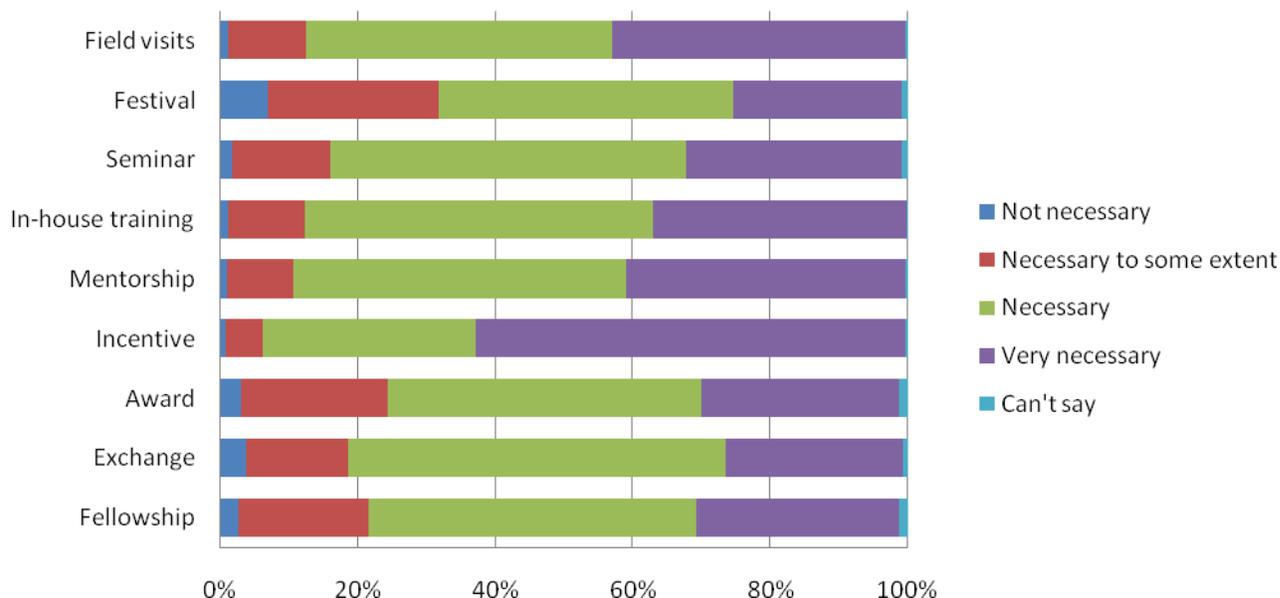
**5.1.5 Professional development**

Journalists were asked about how their training or education in journalism had helped in their professional development. Of the respondents, 38.52% agreed that it had helped, 29.15% believed that it had helped a lot, 28.80% respondents said it had helped somewhat only. Just 2.83% said that it had not helped. The remaining 0.71% replied with 'can't say'.

**5.1.6 Need for capacity opportunities**

Respondents thought Nepali journalists needed various professional opportunities, with most emphasizing incentives, followed by reporting field trips, mentorship, seminars, among others.

**Need for capacity opportunities**



**a. Fellowship need**

Journalists were asked how much they need fellowship opportunities to perform their job better. Of the respondents, 47.60% agreed that it was necessary, 29.45% said that it was very necessary, 19.01% said that it was necessary to some extent while only 2.74% said that it was not necessary. The remaining 1.20% respondents replied with 'can't say'.

**b. Exchange need**

Of the respondents, 54.73% said that it was necessary, 25.82% said that it was very necessary, 14.80% replied that it was necessary to some extent only while just 3.96% said that it was not necessary. Some 0.69% respondents could not tell if it was necessary.

**c. Award need**

When asked how much they needed awards to perform better in their jobs, 45.52% respondents replied that it was necessary, 28.79% said that such awards were very necessary, 21.38% respondents said they were necessary to some extent while just 3.10% respondents replied that it was not necessary. Those who could not tell comprised 1.21% the respondents.

**d. Incentive need**

Journalists were asked how much they needed good remuneration/cash incentives to perform better in their jobs. About 62.48% respondents said it was very necessary, 30.91% replied that it was necessary, 5.29% reported it was necessary to some extent only while just 0.99% respondents said it was not necessary. The remaining 0.33% respondents could not tell if it was necessary.

**e. Mentorship need**

About 48.34 % respondents said that it mentorship (professional counseling, guidance) was necessary, 40.49% said that it was very necessary, 9.77% respondents reported that it was necessary to some extent while just 1.05% respondents believed that it was not necessary. Some 0.35% respondents could not tell if it was necessary.

**f. In-house training need**

Regarding the need of in-house refresher training, 50.43% respondents replied that it was necessary, 36.92% respondents said that it was very necessary, 11.11% respondents believed that it was necessary to some extent while just 1.37% respondents said that it was not necessary. The remaining 0.17% respondents replied with 'can't say'.

**g. Seminar need**

Respondents were asked how much they needed professional workshops, seminars, conventions, etc. About 51.65% respondents replied that it was necessary, 31.37% respondents said that it was very necessary, 14.21% respondents said that it was necessary to some extent only while just 1.91% respondents replied that it was not necessary. The remaining 0.87% respondents said they could not tell.

**h. Festival need**

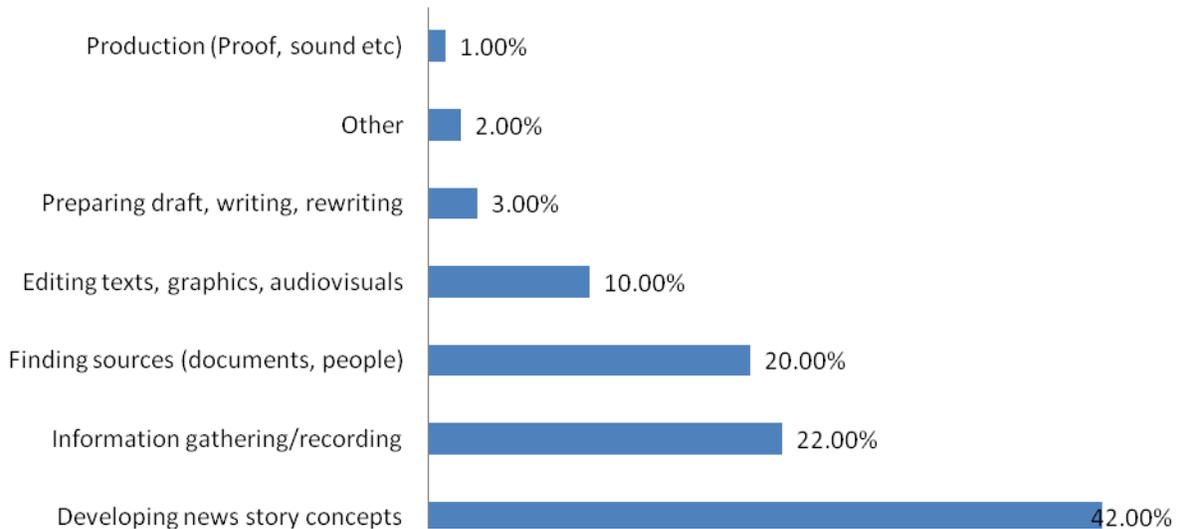
When journalists were asked how much they needed journalistic events like media festivals, 42.7% respondents replied that they were necessary, 24.73% respondents said that they were necessary to some extent only, 24.56% respondents believed that they were very necessary while 7.12% respondents said that they were not necessary. Some 0.89% respondents replied that they could not tell.

**i. Field visits need**

Journalists were asked how much they needed paid reporting trips such as field visits offered by employers, 44.43% respondents said they were necessary, 42.57% said that they were very necessary, 11.32% respondents believed they were necessary to some extent while 1.35% respondents replied that they were not necessary.

**5.1.7 Reporting training needs:** Journalists were asked about immediate training needs in terms of gathering and writing news stories. Among those surveyed, 42% respondents said they needed such training in story idea development, 22% respondents said they needed training in information gathering/recording, and 20% needed the training for locating sources (people, document, field visit, etc.).

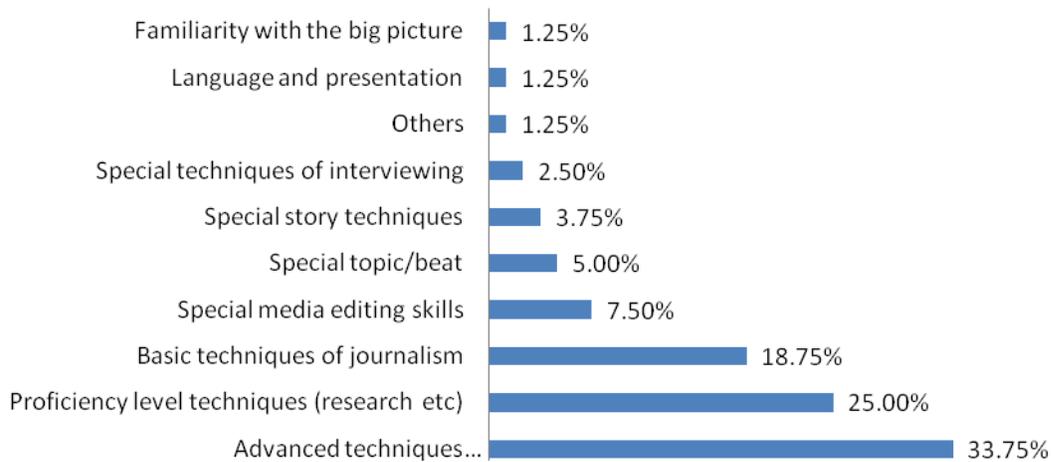
**Immediate training needs**



Of the respondents, 10 % need it in editing texts, graphics, and audiovisuals and just 1% respondents in production (proof reading/sound/light, live-broadcasting, streaming, webcasting, etc). Some 3% respondents needed training in drafting, writing, rewriting the story. The remaining 2% had other training needs.

**5.1.8 Training in methods:** Journalists asked about the methods and techniques most needed for them in their training. Of the respondents, 33.75% said they needed advanced-level journalistic techniques (research, investigative), 18.75% needed basic-level techniques of journalism while 25.00% needed proficiency-level techniques (research etc).

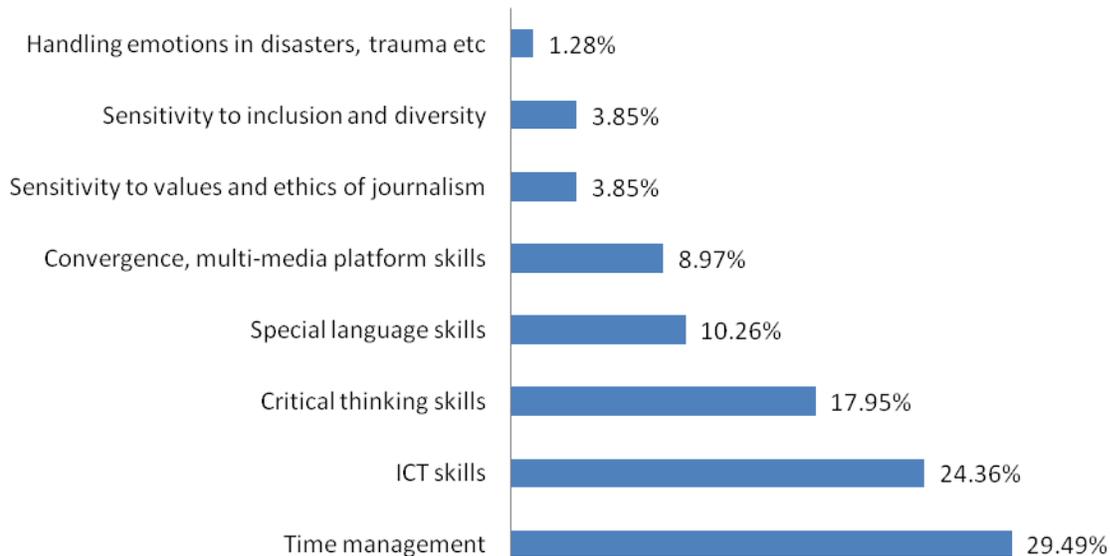
## Need for training in methods



Similarly, 1.25% of respondents felt the need for honing their language and presentation skills, 3.75% felt the need of special story writing techniques. Some 7.5% respondents sought special media editing skills, 5% needed special topic/beat skills training, 2.5% respondents needed training in special interviewing techniques while remaining 1.25% respondents said they needed familiarity with the big picture.

**5.1.9 Resourcefulness need:** When asked about the immediate training needs in terms of journalism resourcefulness, 29.49% respondents pointed out time management, 24.36% cited ICT skills, 17.95% respondents suggested critical thinking skills, and 10.26% respondents sought special language skills.

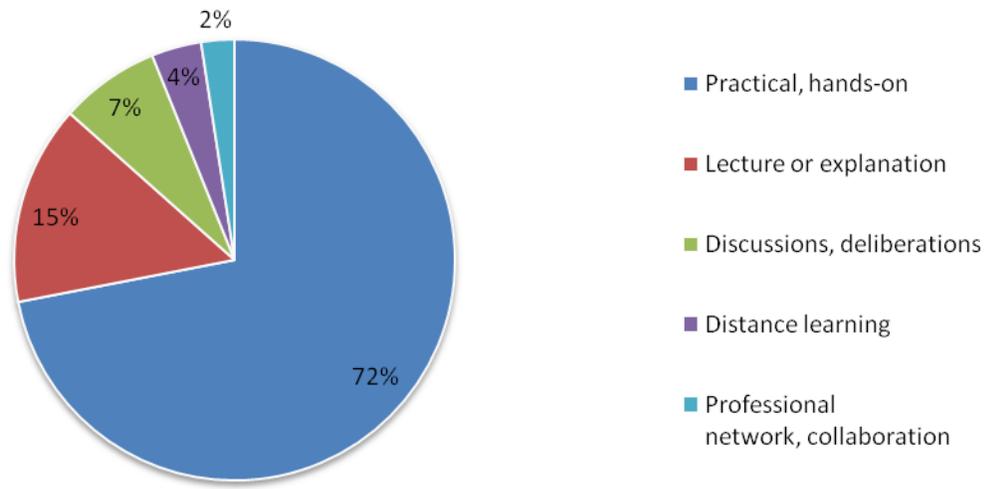
## Need for resourcefulness



About 8.97% respondents said they needed to learn about convergence, multi-media platform skills. Some 3.85% respondents pointed out their need for sensitivity to values and ethics of journalism, 3.85% respondents cited sensitivity inclusion and diversity, and 1.28% respondents believed they needed to learn how to handle emotions in situations of conflict disasters, trauma etc.

**5.1.10 Mode of instruction in training:** Regarding the mode of instruction in the training, a majority of respondents (71.95%) preferred practical, hands-on mode of instruction or opportunities, and 14.63% respondents preferred lecture or trainer-centric mode of instruction.

## Mode of instruction preference



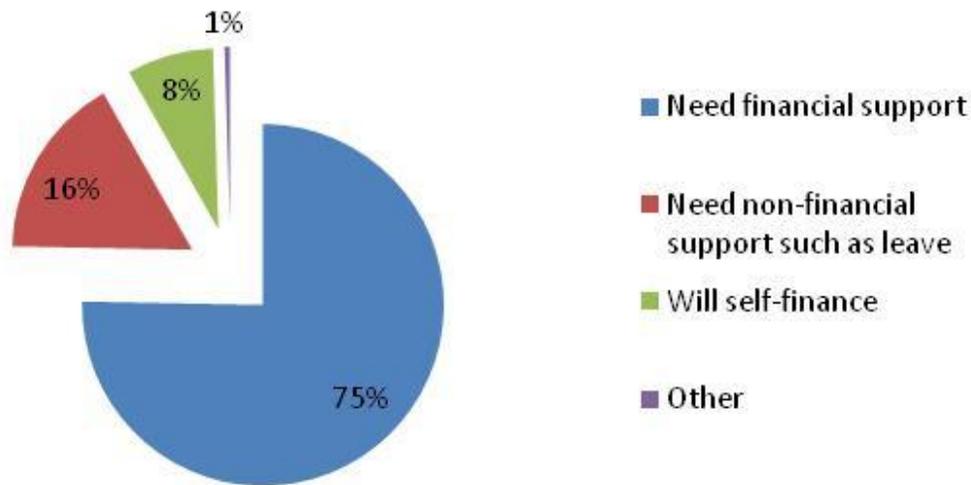
About 7.32% respondents preferred deliberative modes of instruction, and 3.66% preferred distance learning. Some 2.44% respondents said they needed opportunities for professional networking, collaboration etc.

**5.1.11 Level of training preferences:** Regarding which level of training journalists needed, majority of them (72.10%) said they needed advanced level training (more than 3 months), 10.87% needed basic-level training (1-3 months), while another 10.87% pointed out that they needed proficiency-level training (1-3 months). Some 5.07% sought elementary (1 month) level training.

**5.1.12 Suitability of location for current training needs:** Journalists were asked about the suitability of training location for them. The survey found that 29.46% respondents preferred the capital city, 20.54% said it was district headquarter, 17.86% respondents preferred in-house (within their own media house), 14.29% respondents preferred foreign country for the training. Some 9.38% respondents preferred their own village or city, and the remaining 8.04% respondents said regional centers would best suit their current research needs.

**5.1.13 Suitability of instructor:** When asked about the kind of trainers that may serve their training interest best, 33.87% respondents preferred topic/subject specialists, 18.55% respondents preferred international media instructors, 16.13% respondents preferred senior colleagues in media houses, 16.94% respondents preferred working media professionals outside their media house, 6.45% respondents sought instructors with a background in journalism education. About 6.45% respondents were for instructors who had undergone training for trainers (TOT), and the remaining 1.61% respondents said trainers conversant in native tongue would best serve their training needs.

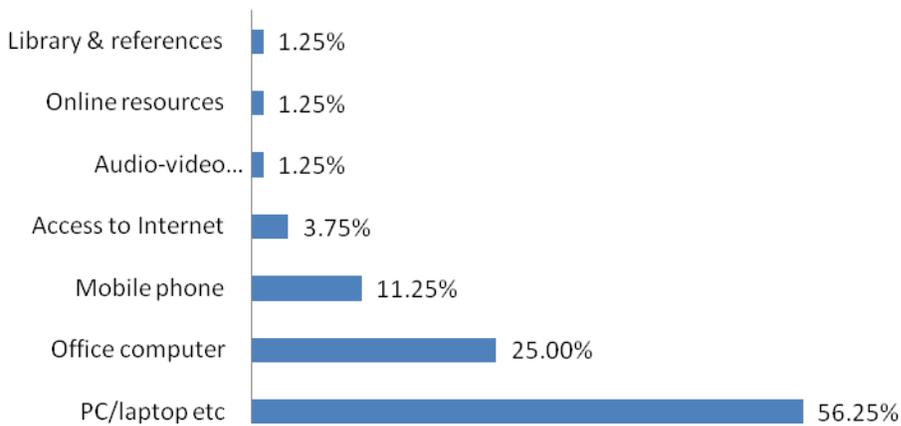
## Training support options



**5.1.14 Training support option:** When asked about who would cover the cost of the training if the respondents were to participate in a training program in the near future, 75% respondents said they will need media house/external support to pay for training, 16.46% respondents pointed out that they will need other non-financial support such as paid leave, and remaining 7.75% respondents reported that they will pay for the training.

**5.1.15 Access to resources:** Journalists differed in their access to resources. The survey found out 56.25% respondents had access to personal computer (laptop etc), 25% respondents had access to office computer, 11.25% respondents had access to mobile phone, 1.25% respondents had access to audio-video recorder, and only 1.25% respondents had access to online resources.

## Access to resources



Some 3.75% respondents had access to internet, and the remaining 1.25% respondents had access to library and reference materials.

**5.1.16 Gains from new media:** Respondents were asked if they used new media (internet, mobile, social media, etc), how it had supported their professional capabilities. The survey found that new media had helped them by enhancing access to subject matter (48.48%), by helping contact the sources and to interact with them (17.17%), by increasing access to sources (13.13%), and by enhancing their work speed and efficiency (6.06%).

### Gains from new media



About 7.07% respondents felt that new media had helped them by enabling them to work from any location. Some respondents said that new media had helped them in sharing or promoting their stories (5.05%), and in creating professional contacts (3.03%).

**5.1.17 Reasons for not using new media:** The survey found that there were many journalists who did not use new media. Of the respondents, 53.2% said they did not have access to new media, 14.78% said they did not have the time to use new media, and 10.34% said they did not want to lose their privacy by using new media. Some 8.87% respondents cited their lack of skill to use the new media and 9.36% said they did not find the new technology easy to use.

**5.1.18 Affiliation with organizations within the country and abroad:** The survey found that journalists had affiliations with different types of media organizations or associations within the country and abroad. Of the respondents, 82.58% said they were affiliated with organizations within the country. Some 6.84% respondents reported that they had affiliations with organizations both within the country and in foreign countries. Those saying they had no such affiliation at home or abroad accounted for 8.24%. Journalists reporting their affiliation with organizations abroad comprised 2.33%.

**5.1.19 Gains from affiliation:** Regarding if journalists' affiliation or membership helped in professional growth, respondents said their affiliation or membership to different media organizations or associations had helped them in their professional development in several ways. The survey found that 52.20% respondents saw the opportunity to expand their networking through such affiliation, 11.95% said their affiliation brought honor to their work, and 23.27% said it helped them develop their professional identity. Some 4.4% respondents said their affiliation with these organizations enhanced their training opportunities. For 6.29% respondents, such an affiliation increased their access to resources.

**5.1.20 Gains from political affiliation:** To the question, if political orientation or affiliation helped in the professional capabilities of Nepali journalists, 64.16% responded believed it did not do so. While 17.44% believed that such affiliation benefitted media, 18.40% replied with 'can't say'.

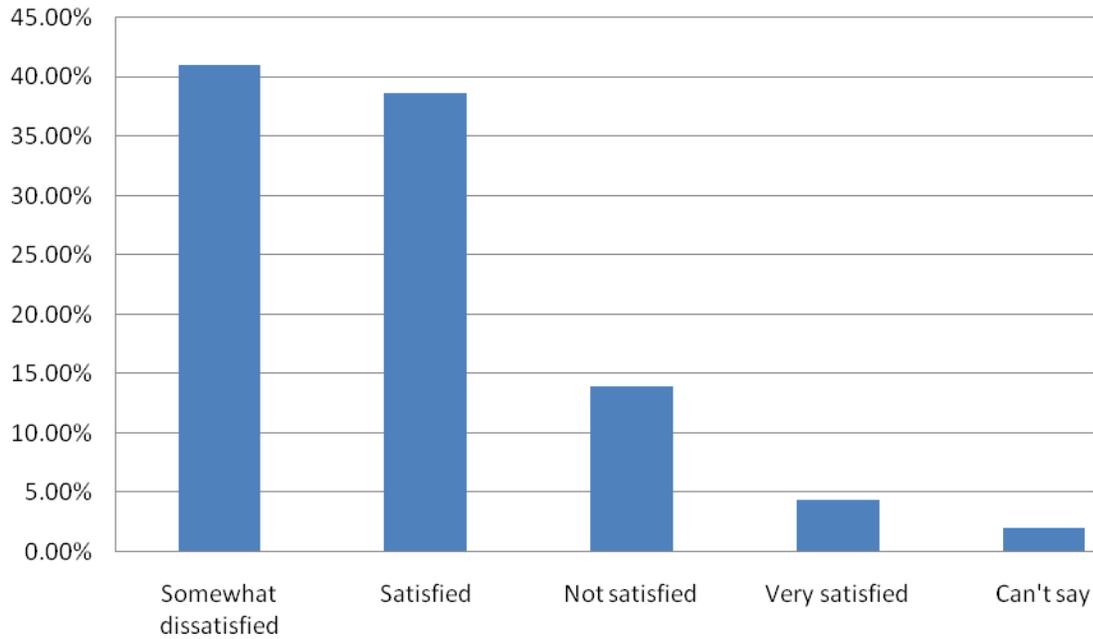
**5.1.21 Why political affiliation:** Journalists said there were different reasons for their political affiliation, with 60% respondents citing personal beliefs or principles. Some 20% said their political affiliation increased access to political information and sources. While 4% cited individual faith or ideological affinity, 6% saw political protection (and gain) as well as patronage to be the reason for their affiliation. Some 3% said affiliation gave them the means to be in the sphere of power and influence, and 6% could not tell the reason. The remaining 1% believed that such affiliation resulted in special connections with particular leaders.

**5.1.22 Other Income:** On whether they earned from sources other than journalism, 63.24% said they didn't, while 31.16% said they did. The remaining 5.60% did not want to tell.

**5.1.23 Other work sectors:** Regarding whether they worked in areas other than journalism, 73.30% said they were in the private sector. Some 11.65% were with the civil society, 11.65% in public/government sector and 3.40% said they worked in 'other' areas.

**5.1.24 Gains from other work:** Journalists were asked how much their involvement in other work helped in their journalistic pursuit. Respondents saying such involvement had helped them a lot comprised the maximum percentage (45.52%), followed by those saying it had helped somewhat (37.24%), and those saying it had not helped (9.66%). Respondents replying with 'can't say' comprised 7.59%.

## Professional satisfaction

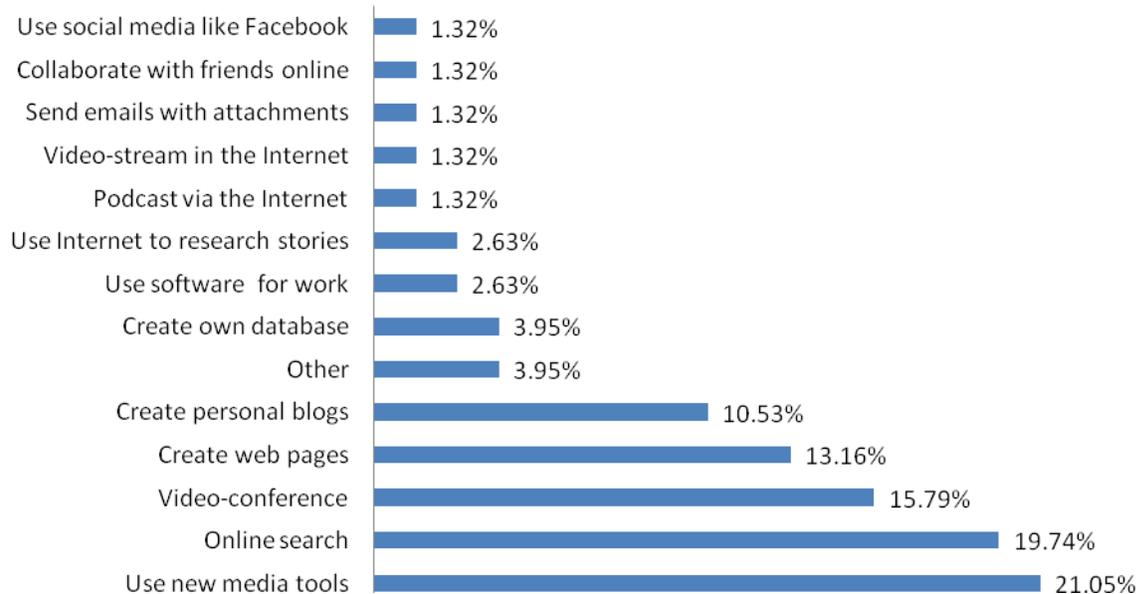


**5.1.25 Professional satisfaction:** Regarding their satisfaction about their achievement in the profession, 41% said they were somewhat dissatisfied, while 38.65% said they were satisfied. Those not satisfied accounted for 13.93% of the respondents. About 4.38% were very satisfied and 2.03% were not sure.

## 6.1 New media literacy

**6.1.1 New media skills.** Responding to a question about their efficiency with handling new media tools, a majority (79.73%) said they could use them for professional work, 6.76% each said they could use social media such as Facebook, and could search for quality information in the Internet. A very small percentage of respondents said they could develop the database for writing the news (1.35%), create personal blogs (1.35%), send emails with attachments (1.35%), and do video-conferencing (1.35%), and create a database for making news (1.35%).

## New media learning interest



**6.1.2 New media learning interest.** On the question about their desire to learn new media for professional advancement, 21.05% said they wanted to learn how to use new media tools needed for their work. About 19.74% said they wanted to learn how to search quality information in the Internet, followed by those who wanted to develop the skill to use software needed for work (2.63%) and use the Internet for researching stories (2.63%). A small percentage (1.32%) of respondents were interested to podcast, while the same percentage of respondents wanted to learn video-streaming, sending emails with attachments, collaborating with others online, and using social media like Facebook. About 3.95% wanted to create their own database for news stories. Of the respondents, 13.16% had the desire to learn how to develop web pages and 10.53% sought to learn how to create personal blogs.

**6.1.3 Suggestions on professional development of Nepali media:** Mostly, in response to the open-ended question, participants in the survey suggested the need for journalists and the media to remain independent, non-partisan, and professional. Pointing out the lack of security, both physical and financial, they emphasized on long term vision for the improvement of the profession. They called for various measures in capacity development, such as training and education.

**6.1.4 Previous survey experience:** Whether the respondents had ever taken part in a survey of journalists, 65% of them said they had not participated in a journalists' survey.

*SECTION V:*  
**Public Opinion Survey**

## 5. PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON MEDIA

This chapter attempts to assess the views of the public on Nepali media and journalists in terms of demographics, perceptions of media professionalism, credibility and media literacy, focusing on public expectations of them.

A total of 2,466 respondents, representing various professional, cultural, ethnic, gender backgrounds and geographic regions participated in the survey. Male respondents were in majority across all clusters, urban (65.84%), semi-urban (73.67%) and rural (61.41%). Rural females (38.58%) were followed by urban females (34.15%) and semi-urban females (26.32%) in percentile terms.

In terms of channel reliance for information, in the urban clusters, males relied on the Internet, TV, newspapers, friends and family, radio and mobile for information in that order. The order for semi-urban females was TV, radio, Internet, newspapers, friends and family and mobiles. In the semi-urban clusters, males relied on the radio, friends and family, TV, newspapers, the Internet and the mobile phone. The order for semi-urban females was friends and family, radio, newspapers, TV, mobile phones and the Internet.

In the rural clusters, males relied on TV, radio and the Internet equally, followed by friends and family, the Internet and the mobile phone in that order. The rural females relied on TV, radio, newspapers and the Internet equally, followed by the mobile phones.

Across clusters, the TV was the most trusted medium. In the urban clusters, both males and females trusted the TV the most. Urban males next trusted the national radio, national dailies and the Internet, followed by local FM at the bottom of their trust rating. Urban females trusted the national radio, and the Internet, followed by local FM, national dailies, and local dailies in that order.

In the semi-urban clusters, males trusted TV the most, followed by local FM, national radio, national dailies, the Internet, local dailies and weeklies/periodicals. The channel trust rating by semi-urban females was similar, with TV topping the tally, followed by local FM, national radio, and national dailies. The semi-urban females trusted the Internet the least.

In the rural clusters, both males and females trusted the TV the most. Rural males next trusted national radio and national dailies equally, followed by local dailies. Below this tier, local FM, weeklies and the Internet received their equal trust ratings. Next to their trust in TV, rural females placed the local FM, followed by national dailies, weeklies/periodicals, national radio, the Internet, and the local dailies.

Most male respondents across urban, semi-urban and rural clusters chose a 'can't say' response to the question on their topic preference for media coverage. Female respondents in urban,

semi-urban and rural clusters followed suit, responding with a 'can't say' about their preference.

Urban males preferred politics and government for media coverage, followed by society and culture and court and crime. Business/economy and science, environment and health, etc, were followed by conflict/disaster and celebs, sports preference. A significant portion of the respondents chose the 'can't say' response on their topic preference.

Urban females stated their equal preference to society/culture, court/crime, science/environment/health, followed by preference to coverage of celebs and sports. A whopping percentage, however, were not sure about their topic preference. Semi-urban males preferred politics and government, followed by business/economy, society/culture, science/environment/health, etc, celebs/sports, and so on.

Semi-urban females also chose politics/government as their topic preference, followed by science/environment/ health, etc., court/crime and society/culture. Rural males stated their preference to society/culture, followed by business/economy coverage. They placed politics/government and science/environment/health, etc, equally at the lower rung. Rural females gave equal preference for society/culture and science/environment/health, etc, followed by court/crime, business/economy and celebrity/sports coverage.

Urban males and females as well as rural males and females made a majority of responses stating that they just make a cursory scan of the media content. Although semi-urban males and females also mostly said they scanned the media content, there were many among them who said they did 'other' things.

The responses to other categories, such as fact checking, looking at the bigger context, trying to figure out the persuasive strategy of the media, looking at owner's interest, ads and personal benefits in the messages were very low across the urban-rural, male female dimensions.

In terms of media literacy, respondents who 'can do' the newspaper reading made up the majority against their counterparts in the 'can do a little bit', 'can do very well', and 'can't say' categories among both the sexes across the clusters. Those who 'can't do' made up less than one-fifth of the respondents, except for urban females, who accounted for more than one third of the respondents in that particular dimension.

Respondents who 'can do' the online newspaper reading generally made up a major chunk against their counterparts in the 'can do a little bit', 'can do very well', and 'can't say' categories among both the sexes across the clusters. Most urban males could read online newspapers very well, whereas urban and rural females said they 'can't do' the online newspaper reading. In percentage terms, more semi-urban males could not read the online newspapers than their female counterparts in the same cluster.

Respondents across all sexes and clusters reported they had the skill to use the mobile phones. Urban males and semi-urban females formed the smallest portions in the respective groups who said they 'can't' use the mobile phones.

Urban males comprised the largest percentage of respondents who could use camera to take pictures very well, while urban and rural females made up large chunks of those who could not use the tool.

Generally, respondents could record videos. Urban and rural females made up large chunks of those who could not do the video recording. The percentage of respondents who could browse the Internet was even among males and females across clusters. However, urban, semi-urban and rural females could browse the Internet less than their male counterparts in the respective groups.

In general, the percentage of respondents who could type on the computer was similar across the urban-rural groupings. Urban and semi-urban females formed the largest chunks in percentage terms grouped for saying 'can't do' typing on the computer. Urban males appeared as significantly doing the typing very well.

Urban males comprised a significant portion in percentage terms in the category of those who could send and receive email very well. Females in urban, semi-urban and rural clusters made the majority saying they can't send and receive email.

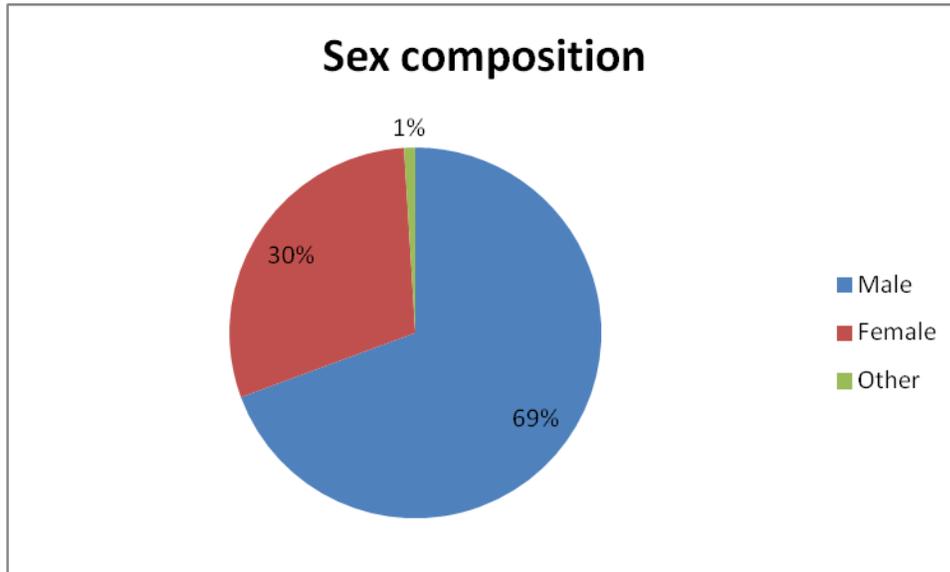
The majority of males and females across all clusters mostly said they could not attach files in emails or could do only a 'little' bit of attaching files, except for urban males whose significant chunk also said they could do this very well.

Again, urban males could do online chat very well, whereas most females from all clusters could not do it. Among males who could not do online chat, semi-urban males formed the major chunk. Except for urban males, other groups formed major chunks of those who could not make Internet calls.

Compared with the respondents' self-reporting about their skill to make the Internet call, type on the computer and browse the Internet, there were smaller portions of female respondents in urban, semi-urban and rural clusters saying they could not play computer/video games. Similarly, male respondents from urban, semi-urban and rural clusters also played computer/video games, with urban males topping the tally of percentages.

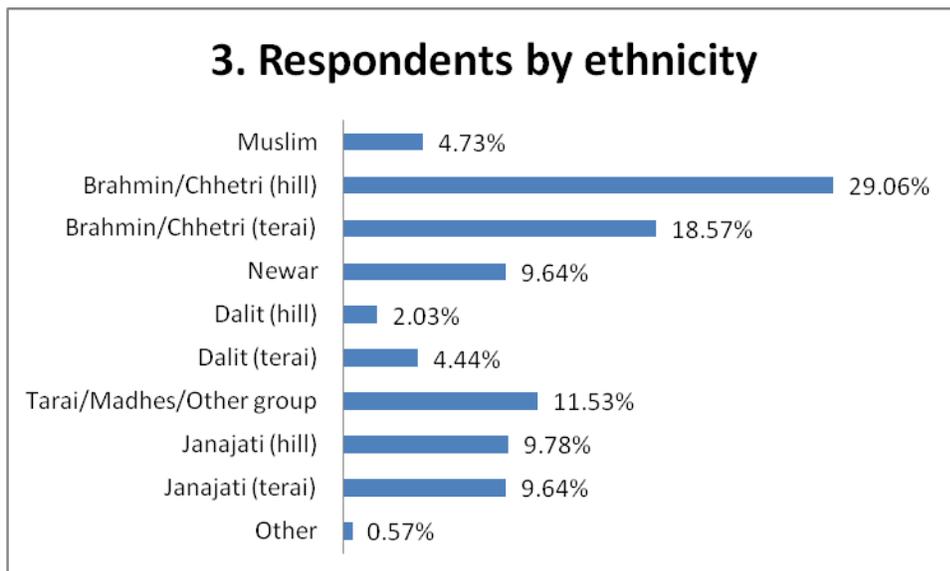
The following pages specifically describe the results in regards to the public demographics, their attitude towards professionalism in the media, media credibility, and media literacy with relevant graphs and charts.

## 5.1 Demographics

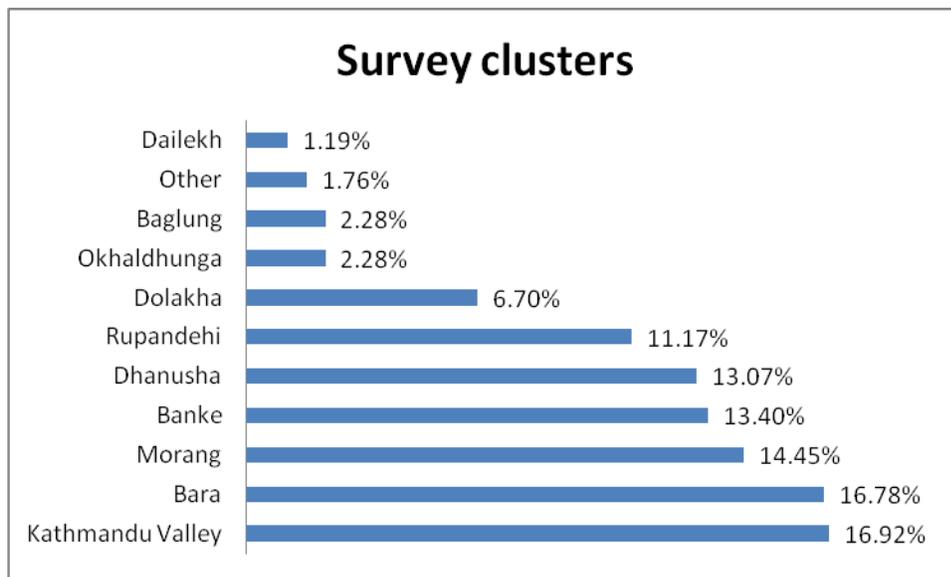


**5.1.1 Sex:** The respondents comprised 69.38% males and 29.63% females. A very small portion of the respondents (0.98%) reported themselves to be in the 'other' category.

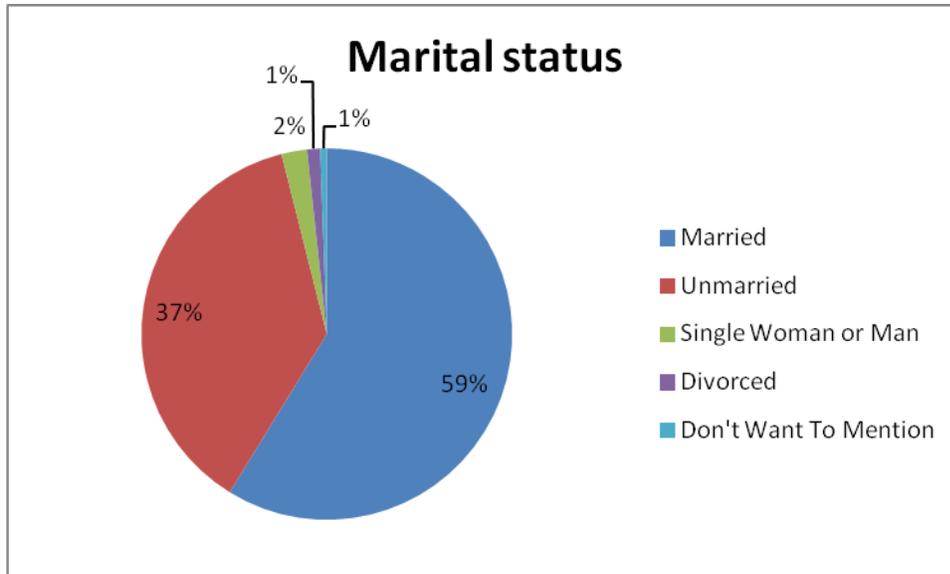
**5.1.2 Age:** Among the age groups, a majority of respondents (23.75%) were between 19 and 24 years. The respondents from the age groups 25-30 yrs, 31-36 yrs and 37-42 yrs comprised 21.05%, 15.45% and 12.37% of the respondents, respectively. Among the minorities are people of more advanced age: 43-48 years (8.12%), 49-54 years (4.57%), 55-64 years (3.83%), and above 65 years (1.12%). Some were below 18 years (9.75%).



**5.1.3 Ethnicity:** In terms of ethnicity, journalists from the Brahmin/Chhetri (hill) background comprised the majority of respondents (29.06%). There were 18.57% respondents from the Brahmin/Chhetri (terai) background. Newars included 9.64% of the respondents, whereas Terai/Madhes/Other group comprised 11.53% of the total respondents. Janajati (terai) and Janajati (hill) were almost equally represented in the survey, accounting for 9.64% and 9.78% of total respondents respectively. Journalists from the Dalit (terai) background and Muslim background included 4.44% and 4.37% of the total respondents respectively, followed by those from the Dalit (hill) background (2.03%).

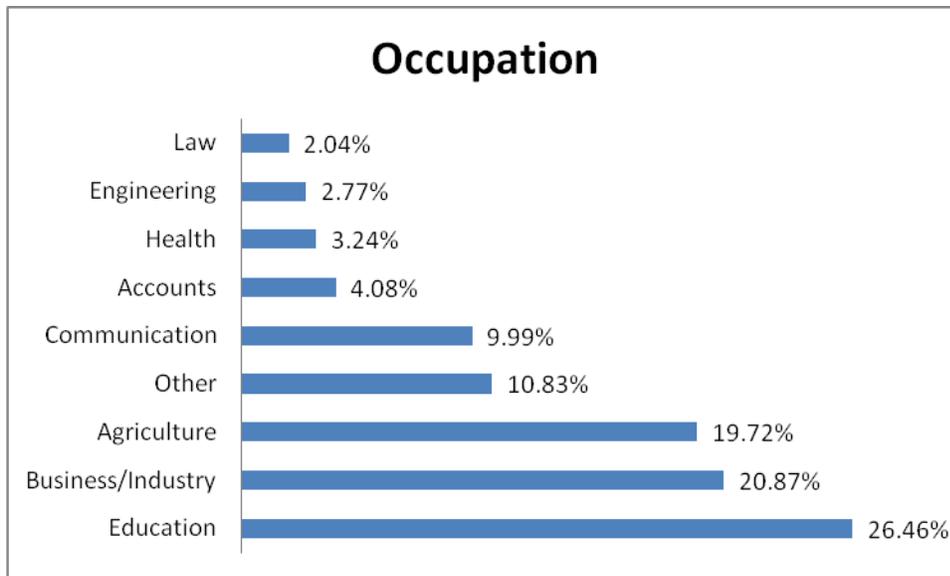


**5.1.4 Cluster:** Among the ten clusters, most of the respondents (16.92%) were from Kathmandu, followed by Bara (16.78%) and Morang (14.45%). Two clusters Banke (13.40%) and Dhanusha (13.07%) had similar share in the total. Nawalparasi and Dolakha clusters had 11.17% and 6.70% respondents respectively. Okhaldhunga and Baglung had 2.28% of the total respondents each. Also, Dailekh (1.19%) and 'other' category (1.76%) were represented the least among clusters.



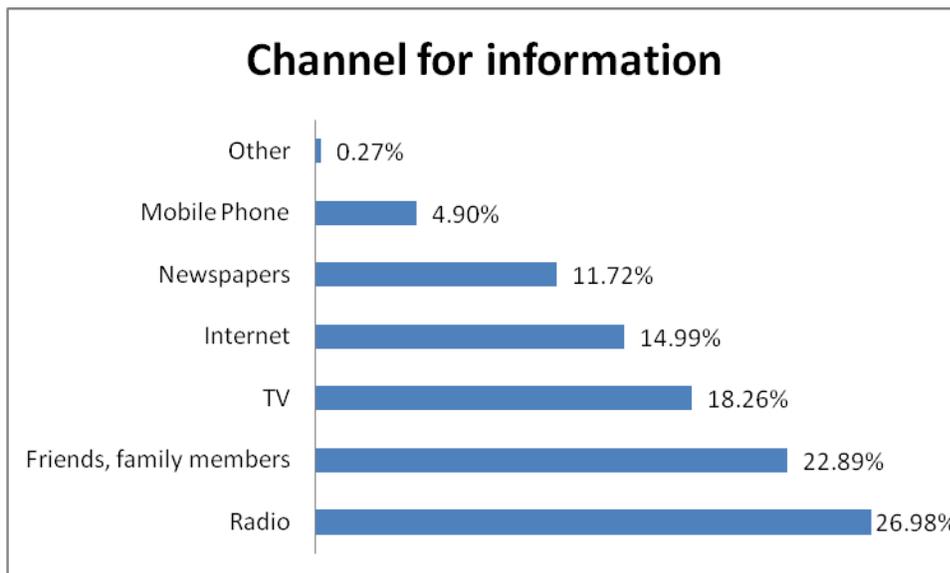
**5.1.5 Marital Status:** Most of the respondents (58.78%) reported they were married, and 37.29% said they were unmarried. Very few of the respondents were divorced (1.14%) or single (2.23%). Of the total, a small number of respondents (0.57%) said they 'didn't want to mention' their marital status.

**5.1.6 Education level:** A majority of those surveyed had a higher academic degree. More than a quarter of the respondents (29.33%) had the Bachelor's degree and a little over one fifth (22.86%) of the respondents had completed the 10+2 or the Proficiency level. Those completing grade ten, test or less and the SLC level comprised 15.33 % and 15.17% of the respondents respectively. Only 13.19% of the respondents had the Master's degree or beyond. Those who had acquired "self-education" or "other educational level" were 2.29% and 1.83% of the respondents respectively.



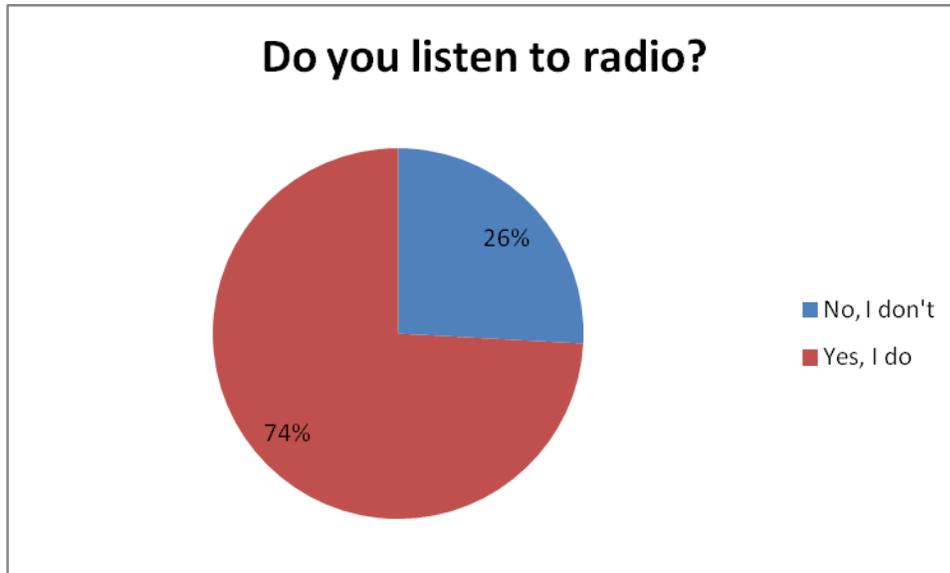
**5.1.7 Occupation:** Most of the respondents had their occupation in the field of Education (26.46%) followed by Business/Industry (20.87%) and Agriculture (19.72%). Respondents from the communication sector (9.99%) and 'other' category (10.83%) had similar share in the total. Those who were in the field of Law (2.04%), Engineering (2.77%) and Account (4.08%) sectors were the least in number.

## 5.2 Media credibility

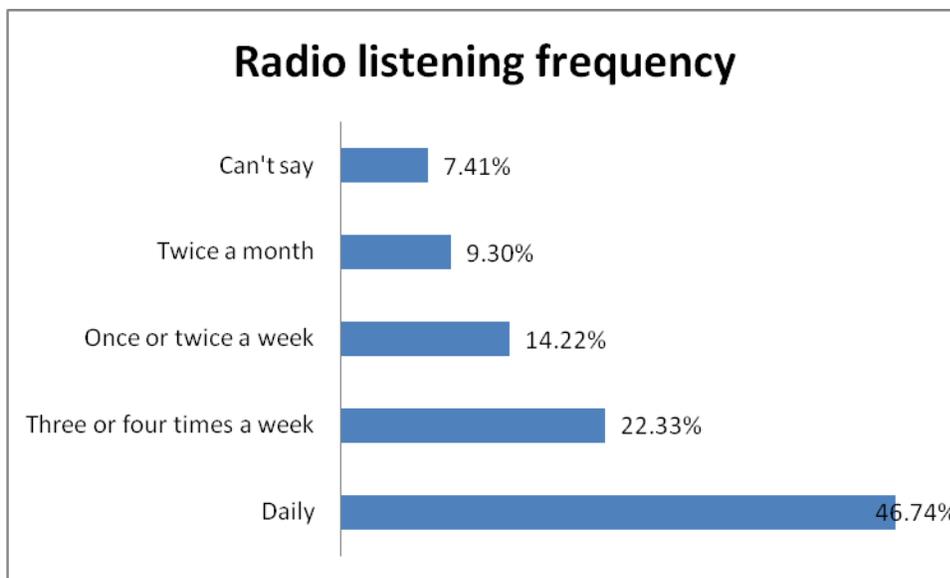


**5.2.1 Channel reliance for information:** Most of the respondents relied on Radio (26.98%) for information followed by friends and family members (22.89%) and TV (18.26%). Also 14.99% respondents said they found the Internet as a reliable channel, while respondents relying on

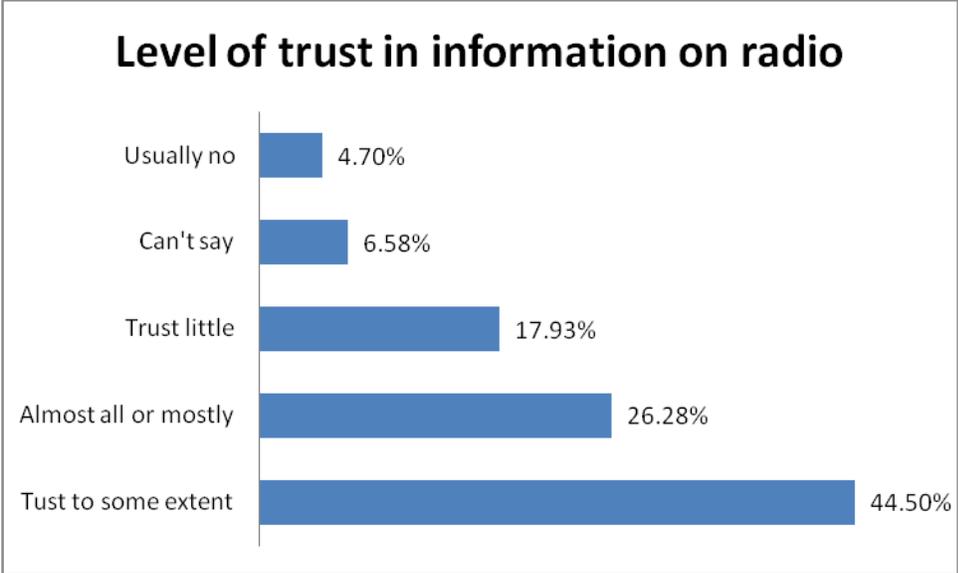
mobile phones (4.90%) and other category (0.27%) were among those with the least numbers contributing to the total.



**5.2.2 Listening to radio:** To the general, opening question if the respondent (ever) listened to radio, of the 2,031 respondents, almost three quarters (74.15%) said they do listen to the radio.



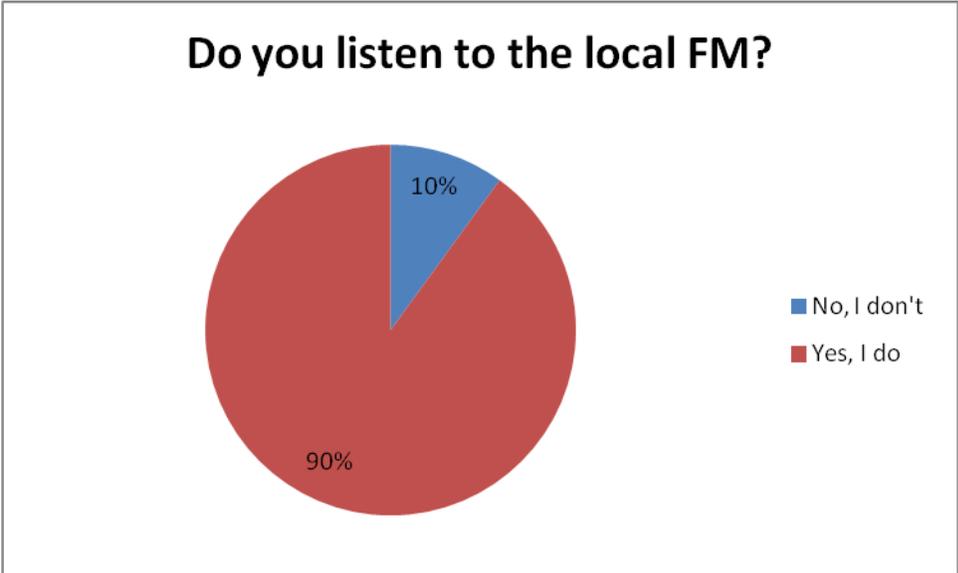
**5.2.3 Radio listening frequency:** Almost half of the respondents (46.74%) listened to the radio daily while more than one-fifth of the respondents (22.33%) listened to the radio three or four times a week. Some 14.22% respondents listen to the radio once or twice a week while 9.30% respondents were listening to the radio twice a month. Of the respondents, 7.41% replied with a 'can't say' about their radio listening frequency.



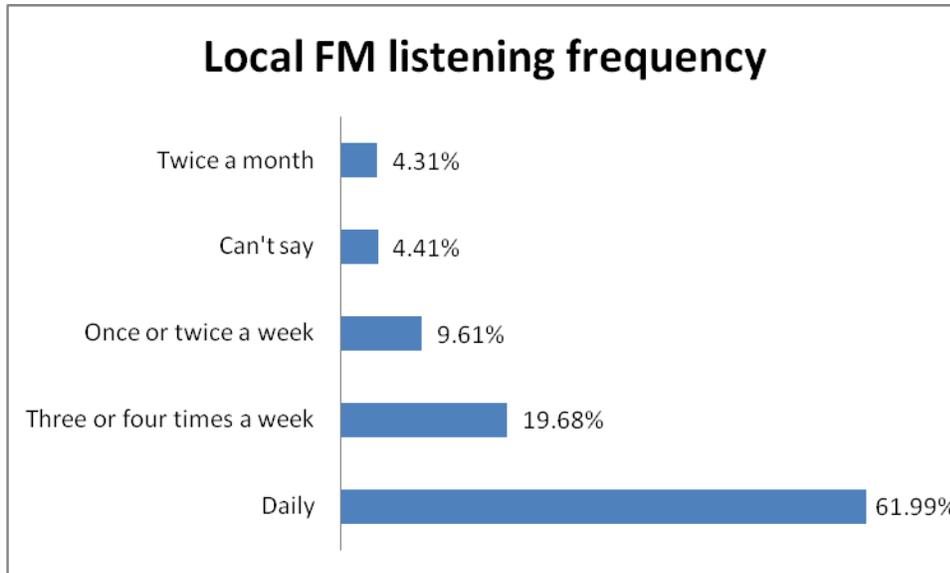
**5.2.4 Trust in information on Radio:** Most of the respondents (44.50%) said they trust the information on radio to some extent, while 26.28% respondents trusted almost all or most of the information on radio. About 17.93% respondents said that they had only a little bit of trust in them. Also, 4.70% respondents had the least trust and 6.58% replied with a ‘can’t say’.

**5.2.5 Reason for trust in radio**

Majority of respondents (32.96%) said they had trust in radio because they presented believable programs. About 19.61% said the radio was factual, and 13.16% reported it was trustworthy. Some 13.03% believed the radio was impartial while 9.06% thought it gave them relevant content. Respondents who said radio used expert sources and materials comprised 5.93% while those it gave complete information totaled 4.36%. The remaining 1.89% placed their trust on radio for other reasons.

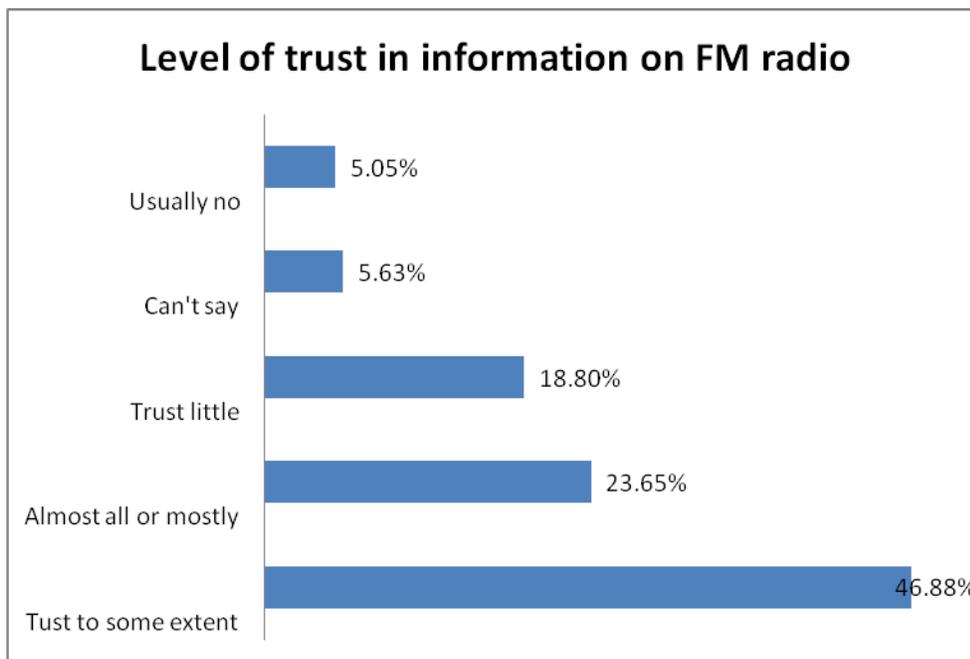


**5.2.6 Listening to local FM radio:** A huge majority of respondents (89.99%) listened to the local FM stations while only a fraction (10.01%) said that they didn't listen to the local FM stations.



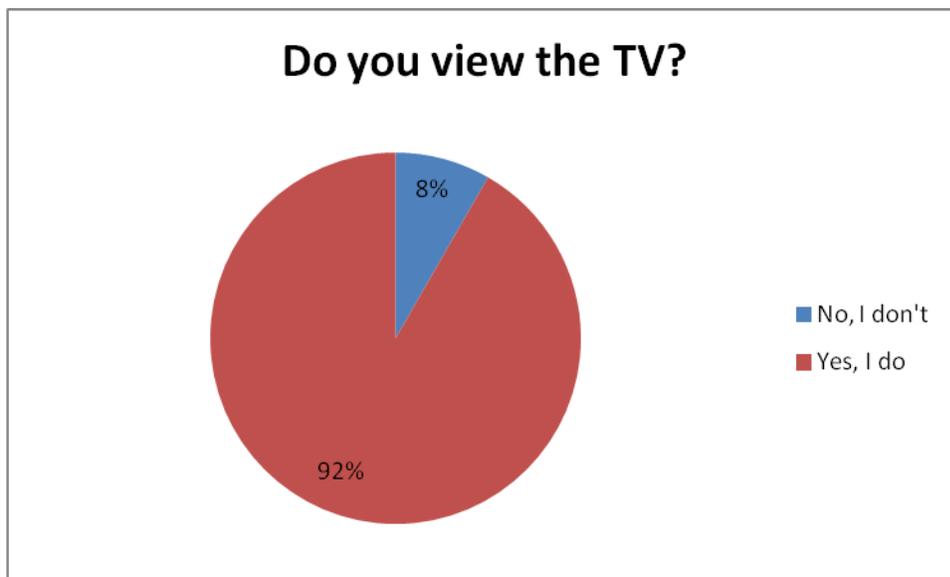
### 5.2.7 Local FM listening frequency

More than half of the respondents (61.99%) listened to radio daily while almost one-fifth of respondents (19.68%) listened to radio three or four times a week. About 9.61% respondents listened to the radio once or twice a week, while the numbers of respondents listening twice a month (4.31%) or responding with a 'can't say' (4.41%) were almost the same.



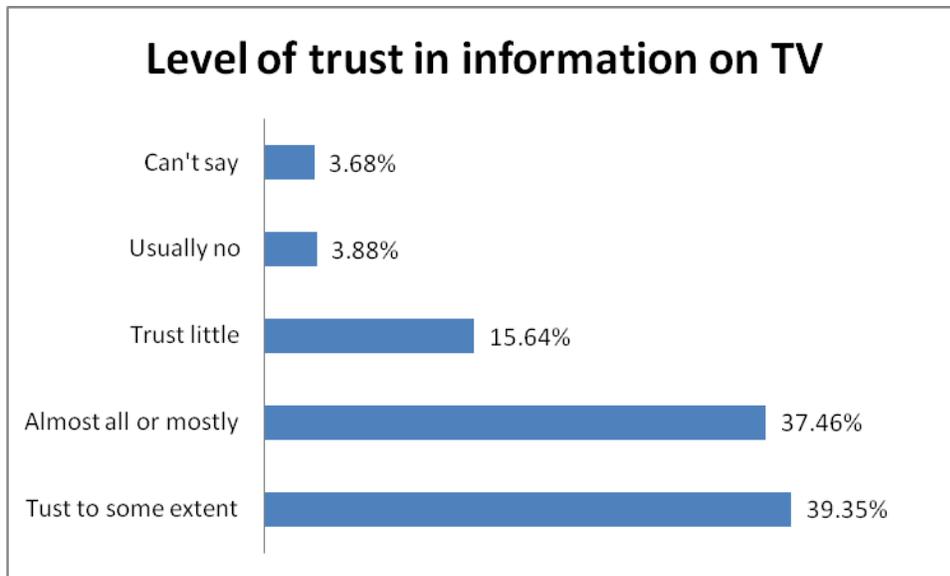
**5.2.8 Level of trust in FM information:** Most of the respondents (46.88%) had only some trust in information provided by the FM and only 23.65% respondents had the trust in all or most of the radio information. About 18% respondents said that they had trust in only a little bit of the information received from radio. Some 5.05% respondents said that they usually didn't trust radio information and the remaining 6.58% answered with a 'can't say' regarding their level of trust in radio information.

**5.2.9 Reason for FM trust level:** Almost one-third (32.30%) respondents trusted radio information because they found them believable, while 19.59% respondents said FM stations were factual. Only 14.15% respondents trusted on FM stations due to their 'impartiality'. About 12.94% respondents found radio information relevant to them, while 11.57% respondents trusted on radio because, according to them, they were trustworthy. Some 4.47% respondents trusted FM because they gave complete information, while 3.44% said that FM stations were trustworthy because they used expert sources and materials. Only 1.55% respondents cited 'other' reason for their trust level on FM.



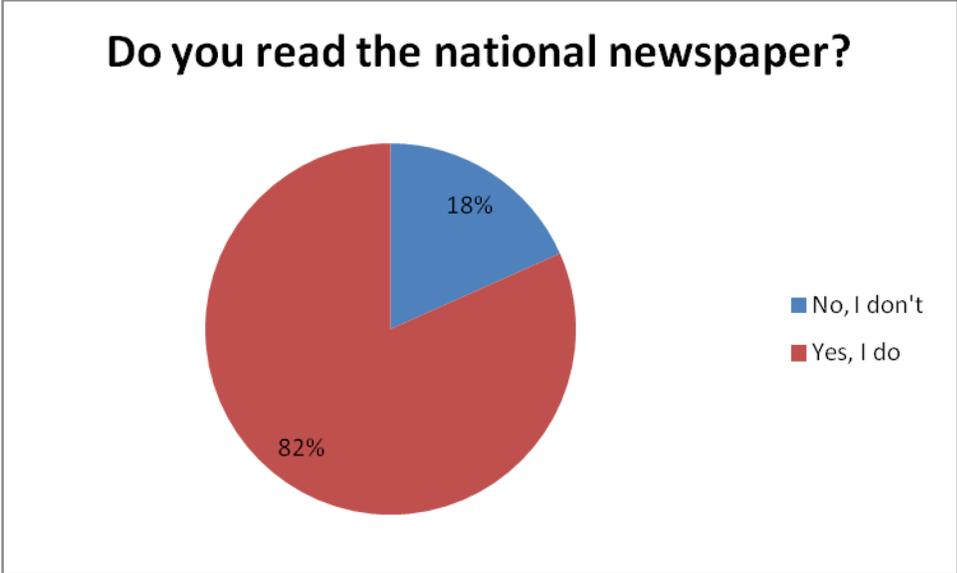
**5.2.10 Watching TV:** To the general opening question, if the respondent watched television, most (91.69%) said that they watch television. The remaining 8.31% said – 'No, I don't'.

**5.2.11 TV viewing frequency:** The survey found almost two-thirds respondents (63.73%) watched television daily while more than one-fifth respondents (21.50%) watched television three or four times a week. About 9.38% respondents watched television once or twice a week while only 3.32% respondents said they were watching television about twice a month. The remaining 2.07% respondents responded with a 'can't say' regarding the frequency of their TV viewing.



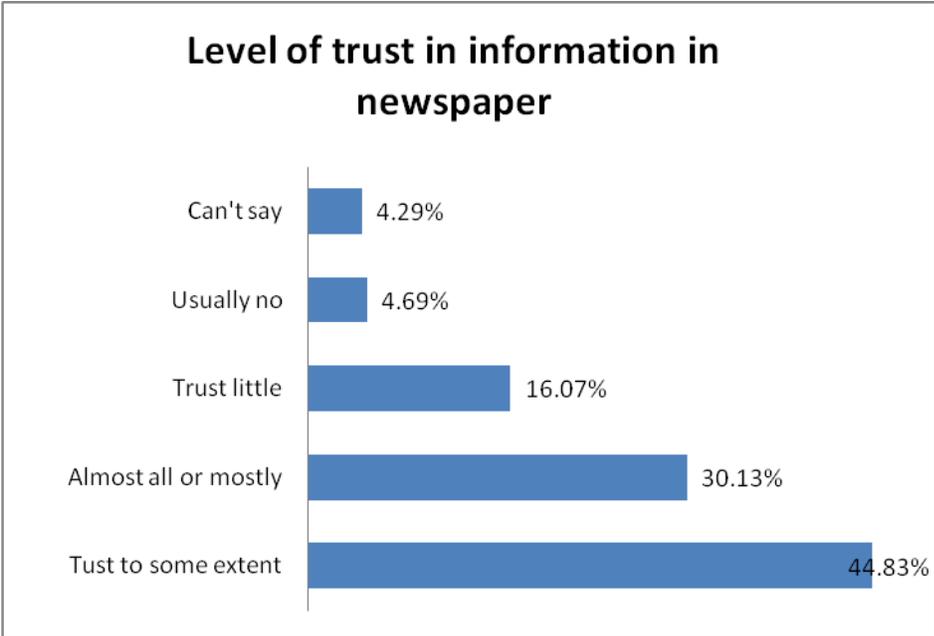
**5.2.12 Trust in TV:** Most of the respondents (39.35%) had only some trust in TV which is similar to 37.46% respondents who had trust in all or most of the TV. About 15.64% respondents said that they had a little bit of trust in TV. Also, 15.64% respondents had some trust in TV while the number of respondents saying 'usually no' (3.88%) and 'can't say' (3.68%) were in the lower side of the scale of TV viewing.

**5.2.13 Reason for trust in TV:** Most of the respondents (23.36%) had the trust in TV because, they said, they found television believable, while 23.14% respondents said that TV gave factual information. Some 17.04% respondents trusted on TV stations due to their 'impartiality' while 13.08% respondents believed TV information was trustworthy. About 9.84% respondents said the information given by TV was relevant to them, the reason they cited for their trust in TV. Respondents saying TV gave complete information (6.10%) and used expert sources and materials (6.10%) were about equal in number. The remaining 1.32% respondents cited 'other' reasons for their trust in TV.



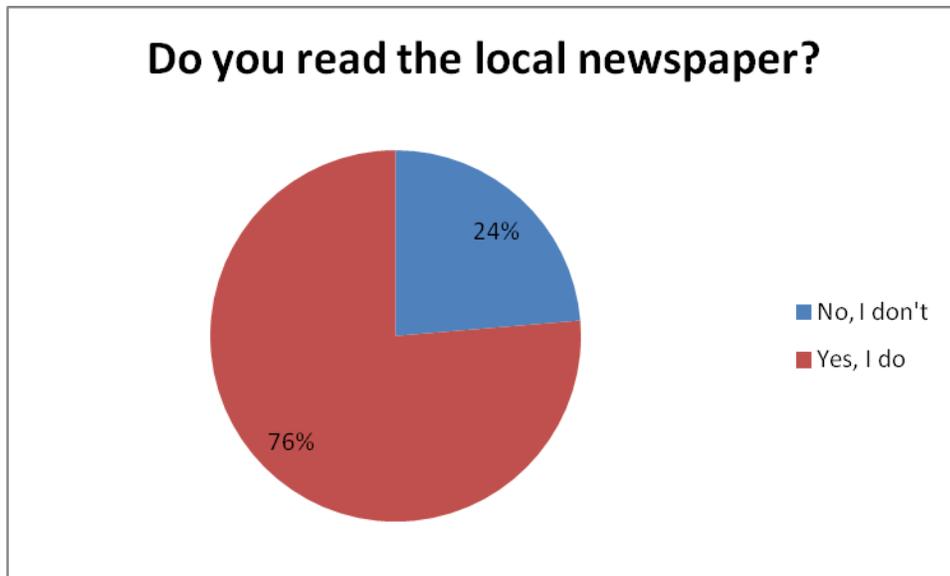
**5.2.14 Reading national newspaper:** To the basic, opening question, if the respondent read national newspaper, most (81.67%) said that they did while the remaining 18.33% said they did not.

**5.2.15 Newspaper reading frequency:** More than half of the respondents (59.65%) read the newspapers daily, while more than one-fifth (21.80%) of respondents read the newspapers three or four times a week. Also, 11.30% respondents read the newspapers once or twice a week, while the number of respondents who read only twice a month totaled 4.39%. The remaining 2.85% respondents selected the 'can't say' response.



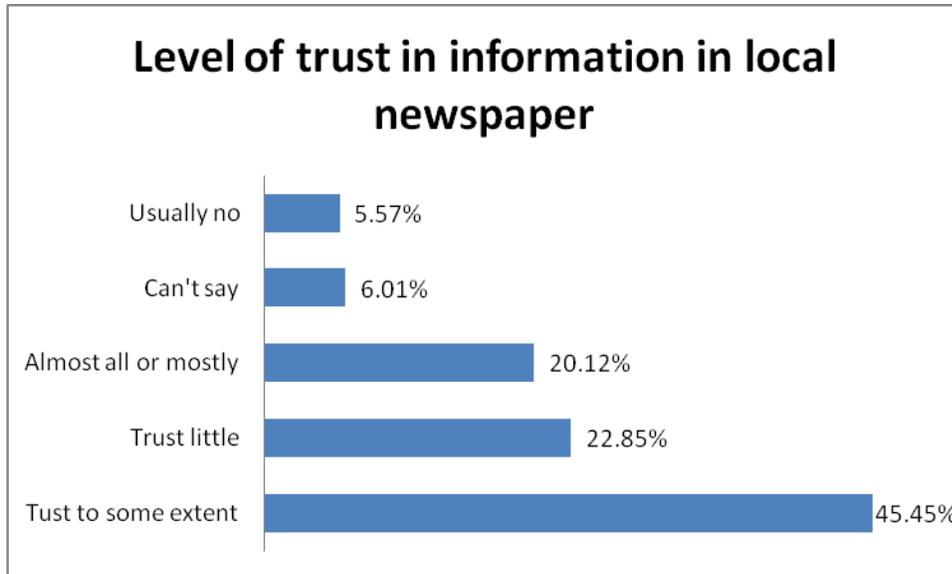
**5.2.16 Trust in newspaper:** Majority of the respondents (44.83%) had some trust in the newspapers, while 30.13% respondents trusted all or most of their information. About 16.07% had a little bit of trust in the newspapers. Respondents having usually no trust were 4.69%, while the remaining 4.29% respondents didn't say anything about their trust in newspapers.

**5.2.17 Reason for trust in newspaper:** Majority of the respondents (28.61%) trusted the newspapers because they found them believable while 21.66% respondents shared their belief that newspapers were factual. Only 14.52% respondents relied on newspapers due to their 'trustworthiness'. About 12.94% respondents said they found the information relevant to them, while 11.57% respondents trusted because, according to them, they were trustworthy. About 4.47% respondents believed in them for the complete information, while 3.44% said they were merited trust by using expert sources and materials. Only 1.55% respondents cited 'other' reason for their trust level.



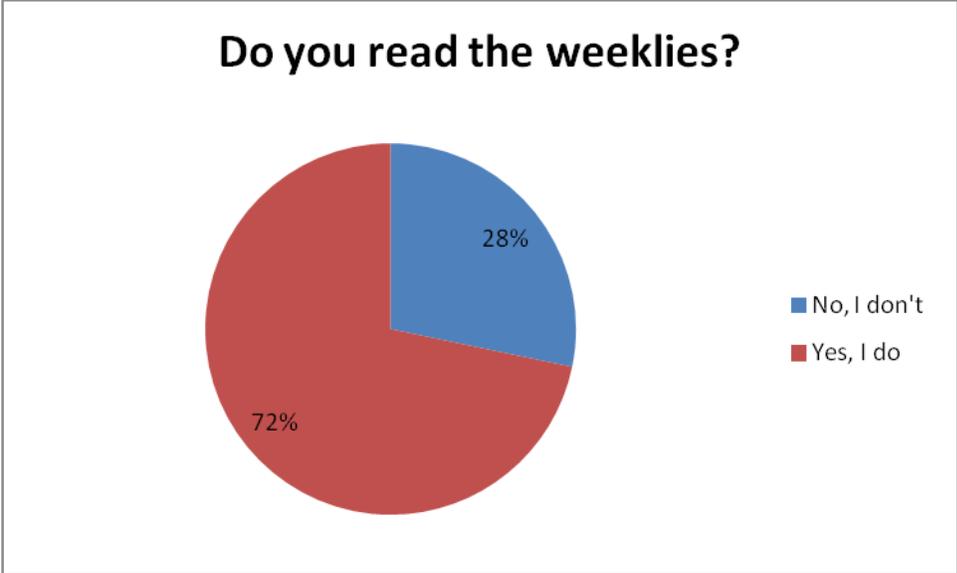
**5.2.18 Reading local newspaper:** To the basic, opening question, if the respondent read local newspaper, a majority of the respondents (76.32%) said they did, while the remaining 23.68% said they didn't.

**5.2.19 Local newspaper reading frequency:** More than half of the respondents (52.98%) read the local newspapers daily while almost one-fifth (19.96%) respondents read the newspapers three or four times a week. About 12.57% respondents read the local newspapers once or twice a week while there were some respondents who read them only twice a month (9.26%). The remaining 5.23% respondents responded with a 'can't say'.



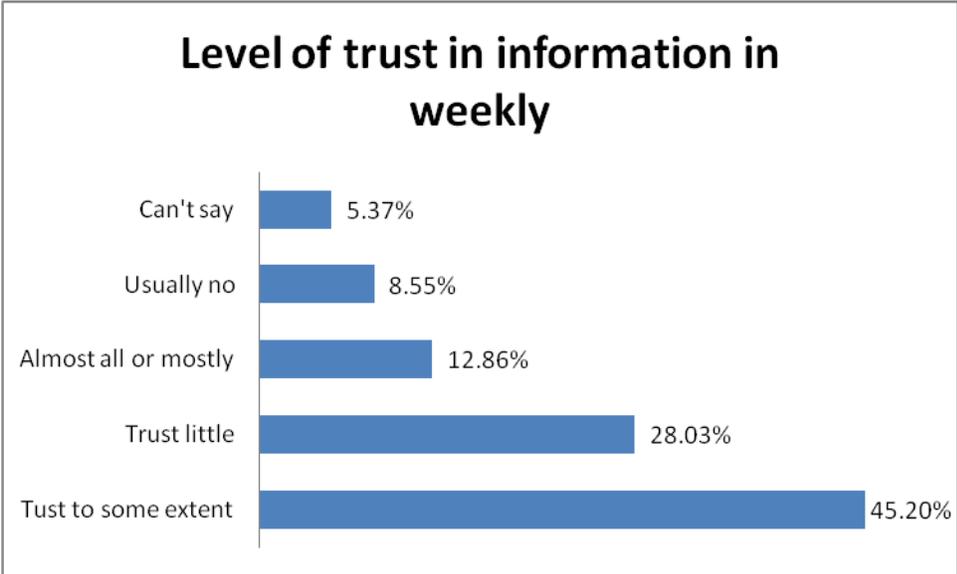
**5.2.20 Level of trust in local newspaper:** Majority of the respondents (44.83%) had some trust in local newspapers while more than one-fifth (22.85%) had a little bit of trust in them. About 20.12% respondents had the trust in all or most of them while respondents with usually no trust were 5.57%. The remaining 6.01% respondents didn't say anything about their trust in local newspapers.

**5.2.21 Reason for trust in local newspaper:** Majority of the respondents (32.87%) trusted local newspapers because they said they found them believable, while 19.44% respondents said local newspapers were factual. Only 14.95% respondents trusted in local newspapers due to their 'trustworthiness'. Some 11.90% respondents said they found the information relevant to them while 6.02% respondents shared their views that local newspapers were believable. About 2.25% believed that local newspapers merited trust by using expert sources and materials. The remaining 2.05% respondents cited 'other' reasons for their trust level on FM.



**5.2.22 Reading weekly newspaper:** To the basic, opening question, if the respondent read weekly newspaper, a majority of the respondents (71.74%) said they did, while the remaining 28.26% respondents said that they didn't.

**5.2.23 Weekly paper reading frequency:** More than half the respondents (53.06%) read the weekly paper sometimes while almost one-third (32.85%) respondents usually read the weekly paper. Also, 10.34% respondents rarely read the weekly paper. The remaining 3.75% respondents replied a 'can't say'.

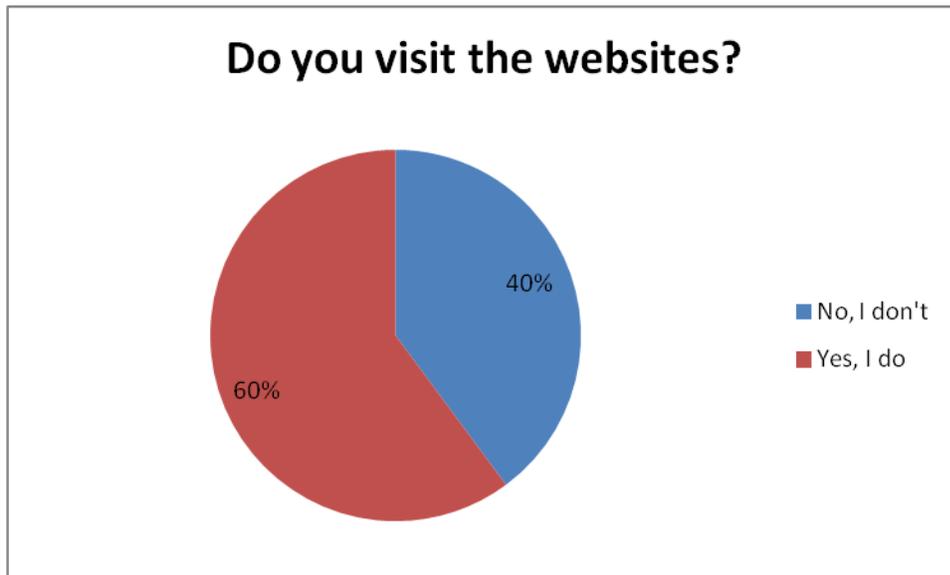


### 5.2.24 Level of trust in weekly paper

Majority of the respondents (45.20%) had some trust in the weekly paper while more than one-fifth (28.23%) had a little bit of trust in it. Similarly 20.86% respondents had the trust in all or most of the information in it while 8.55% respondents said they had usually no trust. The remaining 5.37% respondents could not tell about their trust in the weekly paper.

### 5.2.25 Reason for trust in weekly paper

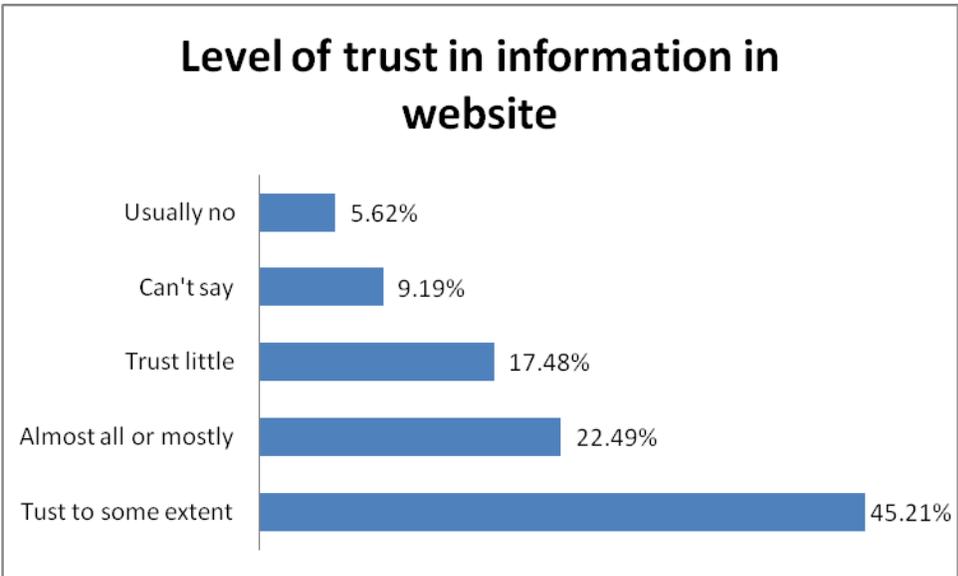
The study shows that a majority of the respondents (30.46%) trusted the weekly papers because they said they found them believable, while 16.09% respondents said they were factual. Some 13.86% respondents found the weekly papers relevant to them while 12% respondents trusted in them owing to their 'trustworthiness'. About 6.25% respondents said weekly papers deserved trust because they used expert sources and materials. The remaining 2.51% respondents cited 'other' reason for their trust level on weekly paper.



**5.2.26 Visiting websites:** To the basic, opening question, if the respondent visited websites, a majority of the respondents (60.15%) they did, while the remaining 39.85% respondents said that they didn't.

### 5.2.27 Websites visiting frequency

More than half the respondents (39.70%) visited websites on a daily basis, while 22.04% respondents visited the websites three or four times a week. Some 15.92% respondents visited websites once or twice a week and 12.68% respondents visited websites once or twice a month while 9.66% respondents could not tell.

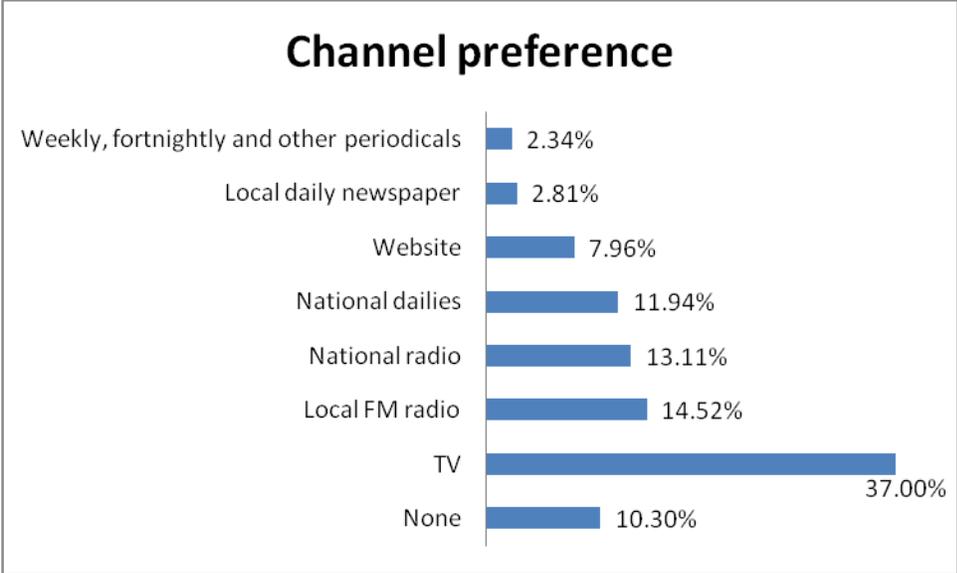


**5.2.28 Level of trust in websites**

Almost half (45.21%) had some trust in websites while 17.48% respondents had a little bit of trust in them. About 22.49% respondents had the trust in all or most of them, while 5.62% respondents had usually no trust in websites. The remaining 9.19% respondents responded with a ‘can’t say’ regarding their trust in websites.

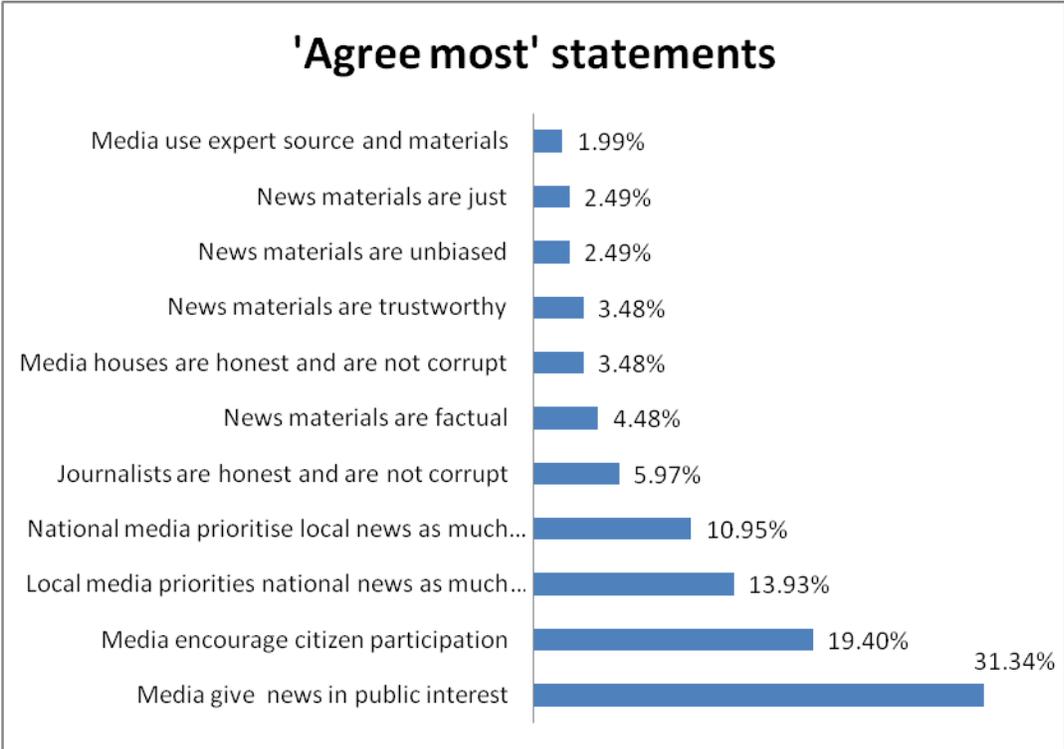
**5.2.29 Reason for trust in websites**

Majority of the respondents (29.06%) trusted in websites because they found them believable while 16.56% respondents said websites were factual. About 13.91% respondents said they found websites relevant to them while 13.82% respondents trusted in websites due to their ‘trustworthiness’. Some 10.84% respondents said that they trusted websites because they were impartial. Some 5.63% respondents trusted websites for their use of expert sources and materials while 6.62% respondents perceived they were complete. The remaining 3.56% respondents cited the ‘other’ reason for their trust in websites.



**5.2.30 Channel preference**

More than one-third respondents (37%) preferred TV for information while the least number of respondents (2.34%) relied on weekly, fortnightly and other periodicals. Respondents relying on the local FM radio (14.52%) and the national radio (13.11%) were in similar in the preference measure. National dailies were preferred by 11.94% whereas none of the channels were preferred by 10.30%. About 7.96% respondents relied on websites for information while the remaining 2.81% respondents preferred the local daily newspapers for information.

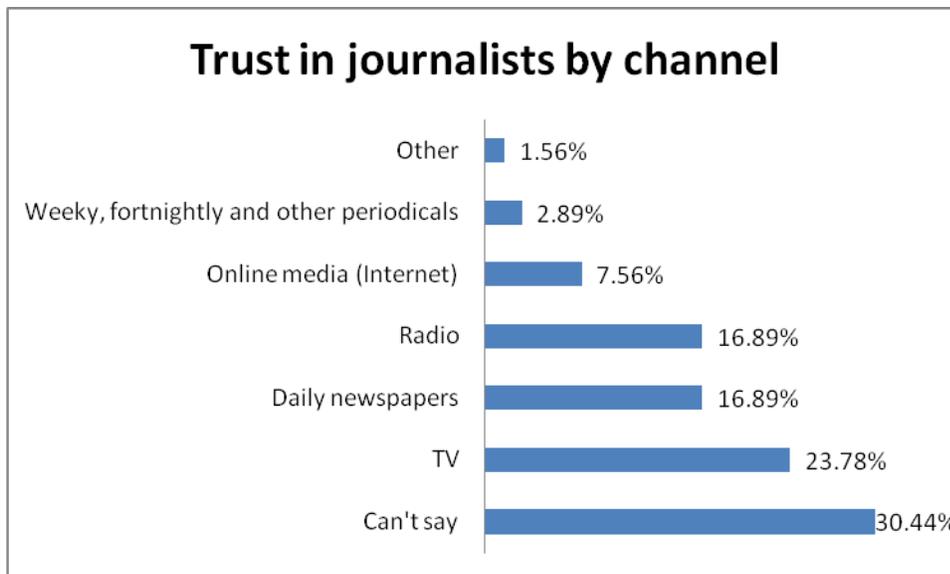


### 5.2.31 'Agree most on' statements

Almost one-third respondents (31.34%) agreed that Nepali media presented news on public interest. Almost one-fifth of the respondents (19.40%) agreed that Nepali media encouraged citizen participation through letter to the editor column and other means, while 1.99% agreed that Nepali media used expert sources and materials. There were some respondents (10.95%) who agreed that the national media gave as much priority to local news as they gave to the national news while 5.97% respondents agreed that journalists were honest and were not corrupt. Respondents who agreed with the factuality of news were at a low (4.48%). Those who agreed with the view that media houses were honest and were not corrupt (3.38%) and trustworthy (3.48%) were similar in number. Respondents agreeing with the statements 'news material are unbiased' and 'news material are just' were equal in percentages (2.49%).

### 5.2.32 Agreement statements on media houses

Almost half the respondents (49.50%) agreed with 'none' of the statements. About 15.17% respondents agreed with the view that media houses adopted ways to involve audiences through direct phone calls, followed by another 14.68% respondents who agreed with the view that media houses tried to learn more about the audiences through the surveys etc. About 6.72% respondents agreed with the statement that media houses tried to understand the feedback on the quality of news while another 5.47% respondents agreed with the view that media houses tried to understand the audience feedback on cultural diversity. The number of respondents who agreed with the statement 'media houses try to be responsible' (3.98%) and 'media houses try to be transparent' (3.73%) were similar in number. The remaining 0.75% agreed with the view that media monitors and community organizations regularly evaluated/monitored the media.

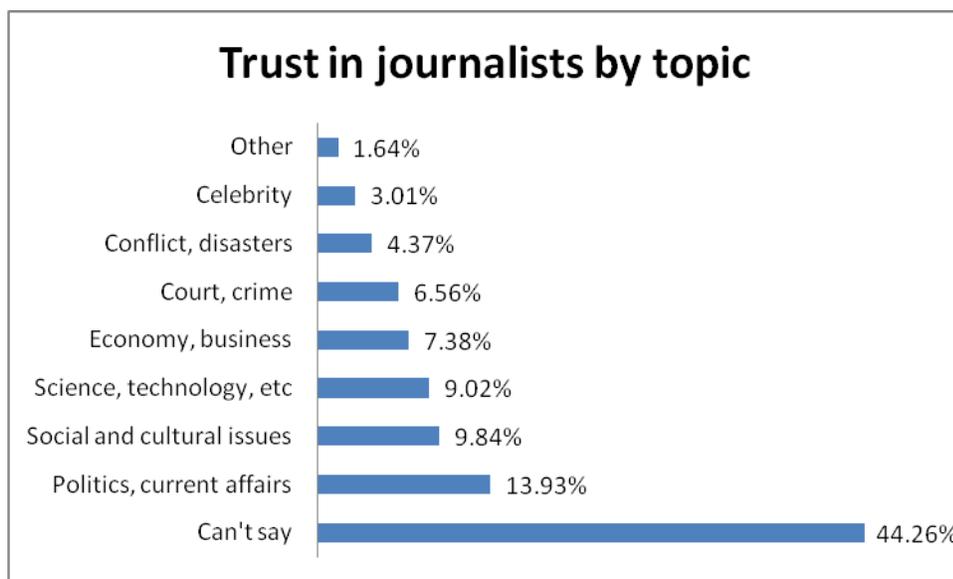


### 5.2.33 Trust in journalists by channel

Of the respondents, 23.78% trusted TV journalists, followed by journalists of the daily newspapers (16.89%) and radio (16.89%) in that order. Respondents saying they trusted journalists working for the online news sites comprised 7.56%. Responses received for journalists of weeklies, fortnightlies and other periodicals accounted for 2.89% and for journalists of 'other' category 1.56%. Almost one-third (30.44%) of respondents could not tell about their trust in journalists by channel.

### 5.2.34 Trust in journalists by base

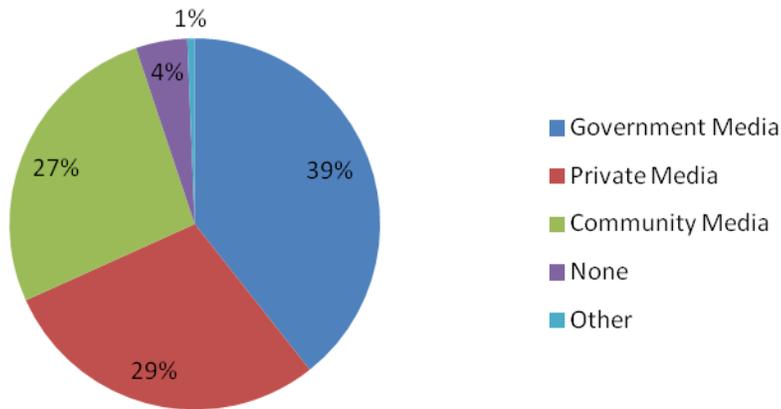
Almost half the respondents (45.16%) could not tell about their trust on journalists by their location or base. Almost one-fifth of the respondents (20.97%) trusted the Nepali journalists stationed in the local area, while 16.13% respondents trusted the Nepali journalists stationed in district, zone and region. Some 9.86% respondents trusted Nepali journalists working from the capital followed by Nepali journalists working from foreign countries (7.17%). The remaining 0.72% respondents trusted journalists of 'other' category.



### 5.2.35 Trust in journalists by topic

Most of the respondents (44.26%) answered with a 'can't say' regarding their trust in journalists by topic. Respondents (13.93%) trusted in journalists covering politics, current affairs etc followed by social and cultural issues (9.84%), court and crime (6.56%), economy and business (7.38%) and conflict and disaster (4.37%). A few respondents trusted journalists covering celebrity (3.01%) and 'other' topics (1.64%).

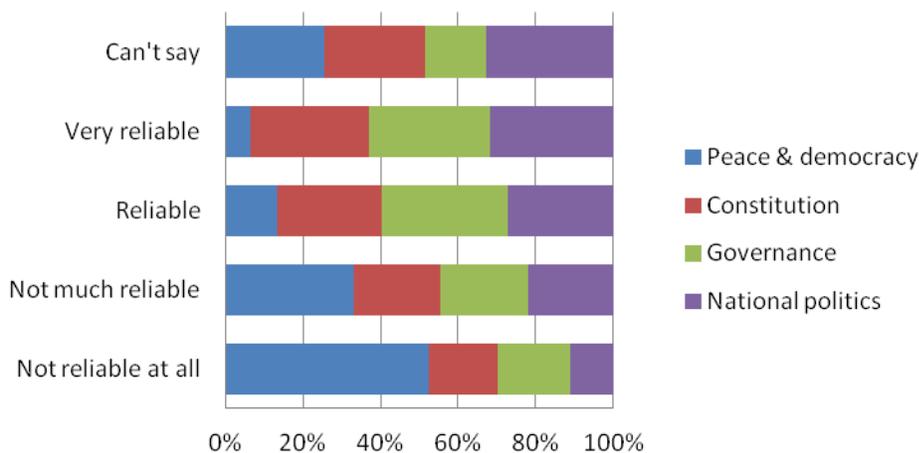
### Trust in journalist by nature of outlet



#### 5.2.36 Trust in journalist by media ownership

More than one-third respondents (39.35%) trusted journalists working in the government media with private media (28.92%), community media (26.59%) and other (0.64%) behind them in that order. Respondents who trusted none of them comprised 4.50%.

### Level of trust by beat coverage



#### 5.2.37 Level of trust by topics

The public viewed governance, national politics, constitution-making as generally reliable, but the coverage of peace and democracy as not much reliable.

##### a. Peace and democracy

Almost half the respondents (45.75%) said they found the ‘peace and democracy’ topic reporting not much reliable, while almost one-third (30.07%) said they found the coverage not

reliable at all. Respondents had different levels of trust in the coverage of 'peace and democracy' with 'can't say' accounting for 10.73%, followed by 'very reliable' (7.58%) and 'reliable' (5.88%).

**b. Constitution-making**

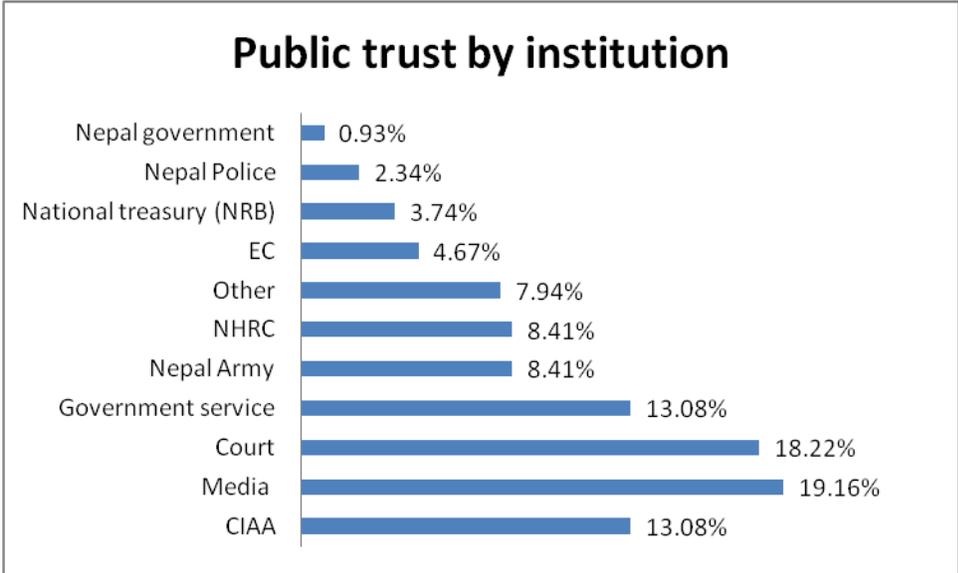
More than one third (36.25%) said they found the coverage on constitution-making coverage very reliable, while less than one third respondents (30.74%) said it was not much reliable. There were 11.94% respondents who said they found the coverage reliable while 11.02% respondents were not sure.

**c. Governance**

More than one-third respondents (36.85%) said they found the coverage on governance very reliable while less than one third respondents (31.26%) said they found the reporting not much reliable. There were 14.45% respondents who found the coverage reliable while 10.84% respondents found the coverage not reliable at all. The remaining 6.60% respondents could not tell.

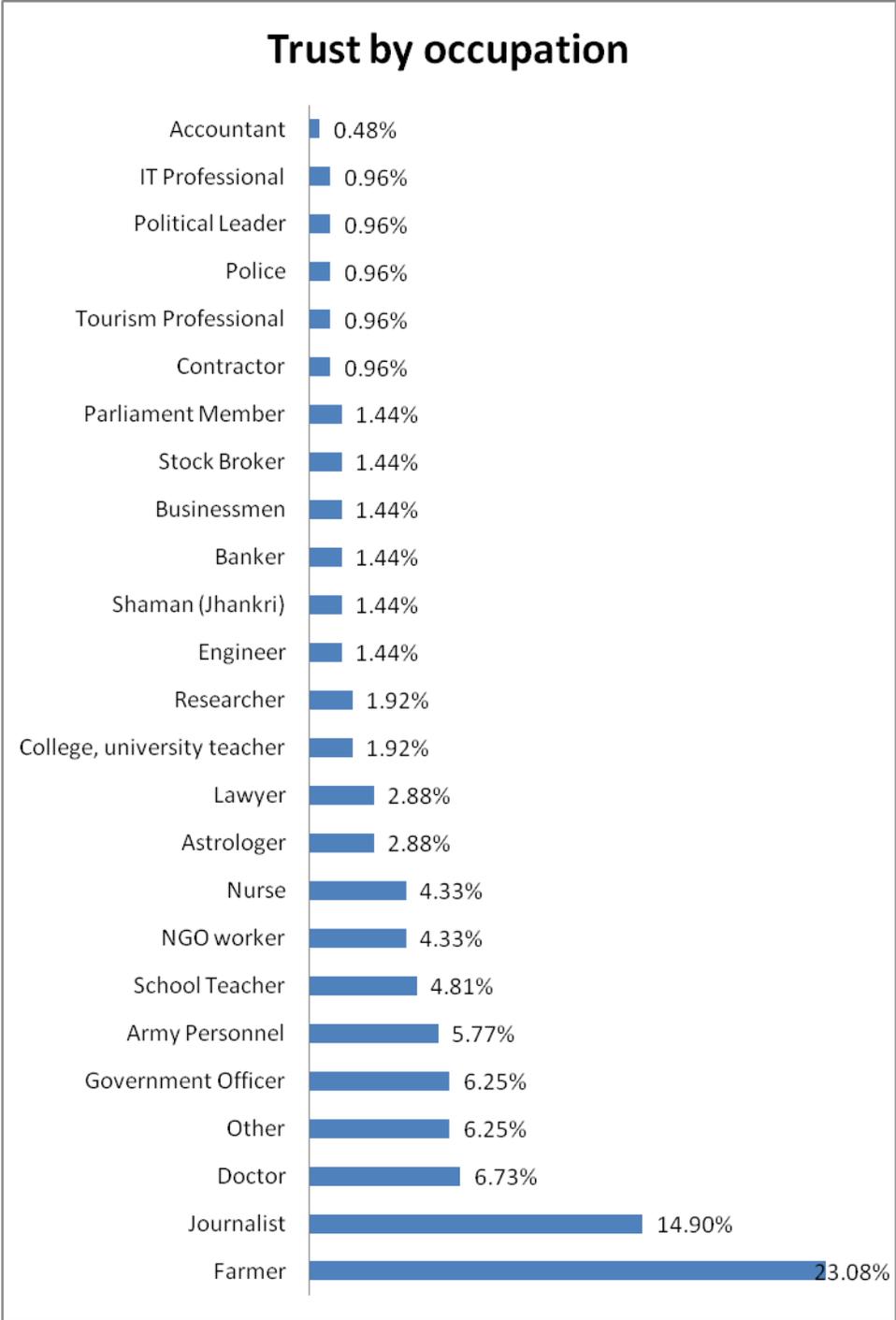
**d. National politics**

More than one-third respondents (37.37%) said they found reporting of national politics very reliable while less than one third respondents (30.36%) said they found the coverage not much reliable. There were 12.10% respondents who found the coverage reliable while 6.33% respondents found the coverage not reliable at all. The remaining 13.84% respondents were not sure.



### **5.2.38 Trust by institutions**

The media topped the tally of trust rating by respondents with almost one-fifth of them (19.16%) saying they were the most trustworthy among several institutions. The court received 18.22% respondents as trusting it, followed by CIAA (13.08%), government service (13.08%), NHRC (8.41%) and Nepal Army (8.41%). Fewer respondents trusted EC (4.67%), National Treasury, that is, NRB, (3.74%), Nepal Police (2.34%) and Nepal government (0.93%). The remaining 7.94% respondents placed their trusted in the 'other' category.

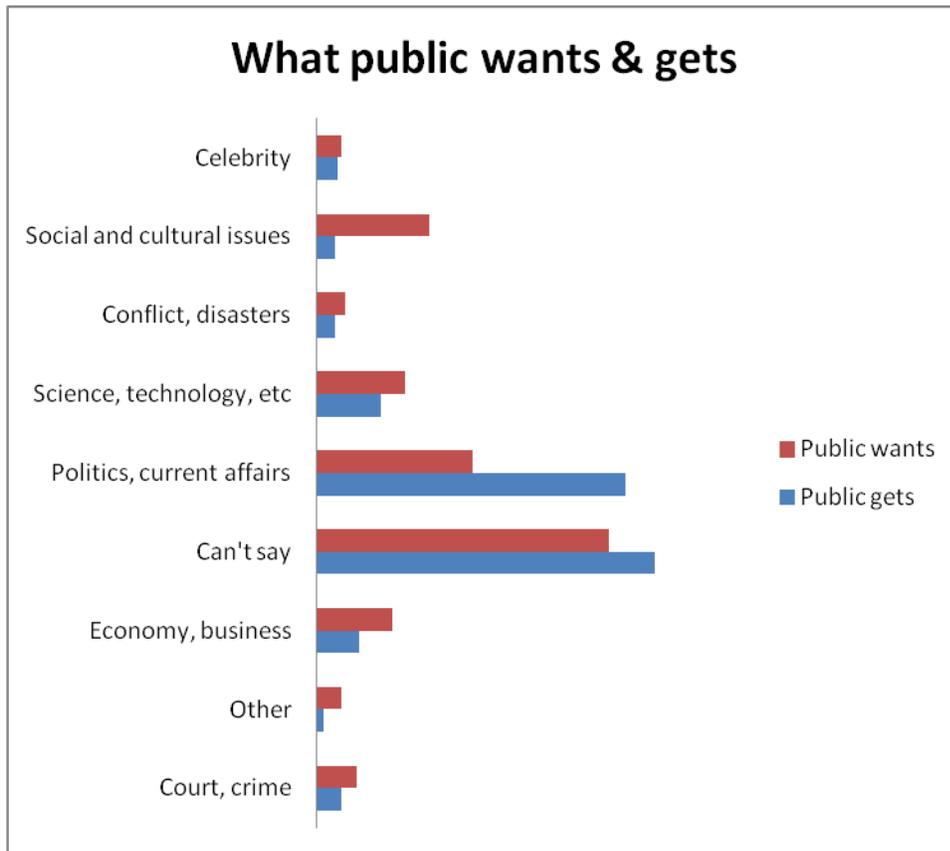


**5.2.39 Trust by occupation**

Farmers were the most trusted among the people in different occupational groups with one-fifth of the respondents (23.08%) favoring them, journalists were ranked in the second position with 14.90% respondents behind them. The third and the fourth most trusted were the government officer (6.25%) and doctor (6.73%) followed by army personnel (5.77%) and school teacher (4.81%). Nurse (4.33%) and NGO worker (4.33%) were equally trusted. The same was

the case with astrologer (2.88%) and lawyer (2.88%). Fewer respondents trusted the college university teacher (1.92%) and researcher (1.92%). They were followed businessmen (1.44%), shaman (1.44%), stock broker (1.44%), parliament member (1.44%), banker (1.44%), and (1.44%). IT professional (0.96%), tourism professional (0.96%), political Leader (0.96%), contractor (0.96%), police (0.96%), and accountant (0.48%) were in the lower rung of the tally. The remaining 6.25% trusted the people in the 'other' occupation category.

### 5.3 Professional issues in media



#### 5.3.1 Frequently covered topics

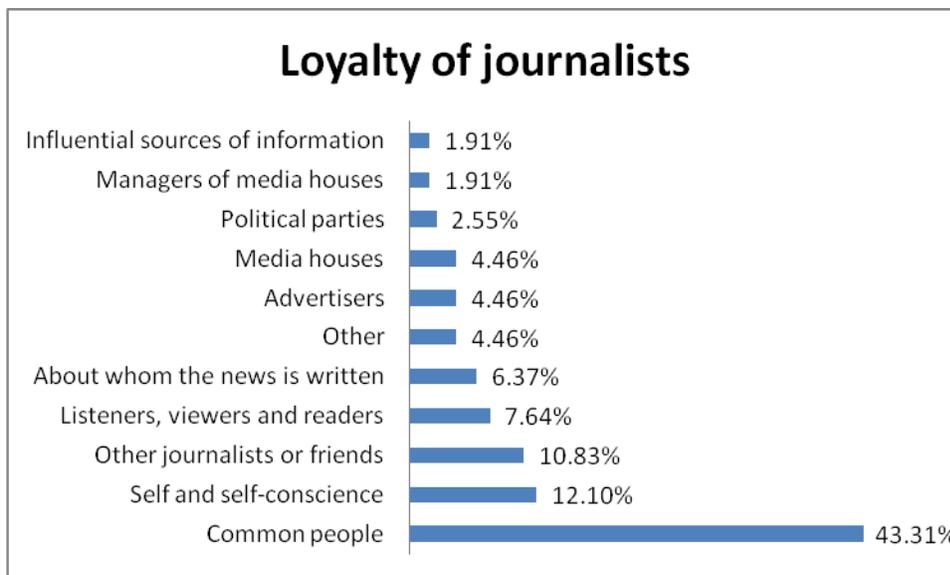
More than one-third respondents (40.29%) could not tell their views about the frequently covered topics. More than one-third respondents (36.69%) said politics and current affairs were the most frequently covered topics, followed by science and technology (7.55%) and economy and business (5.04%). Fewer respondents chose court & crime (2.88%) and celebrity (2.52%) as the most frequently covered topics. Two topics, conflicts and disasters (2.16%) and social and cultural issues (2.16%) were placed below this rung. The remaining 0.72% respondents cited the 'other' as the frequently covered topic.

### 5.3.2 Topics journalists should report or write about most frequently

More than one third respondents (34.76%) were not sure about their view on the most needed topics to be covered in the media. Nearly one-fifth respondents (18.57%) reported politics and current affairs as topics needing more coverage, followed by social and cultural issues (13.33%), science and technology (10.48%) and economy and business (9.05%). Fewer respondents chose court and crime (4.76%) and conflict and disasters (3.33%) as other topics the media needed to cover. The least chosen as a topic needing coverage was celebrity (2.86%), while the remaining 2.86% respondents chose 'other' category to be the most needed topics in media.

### 5.3.3 Professional roles

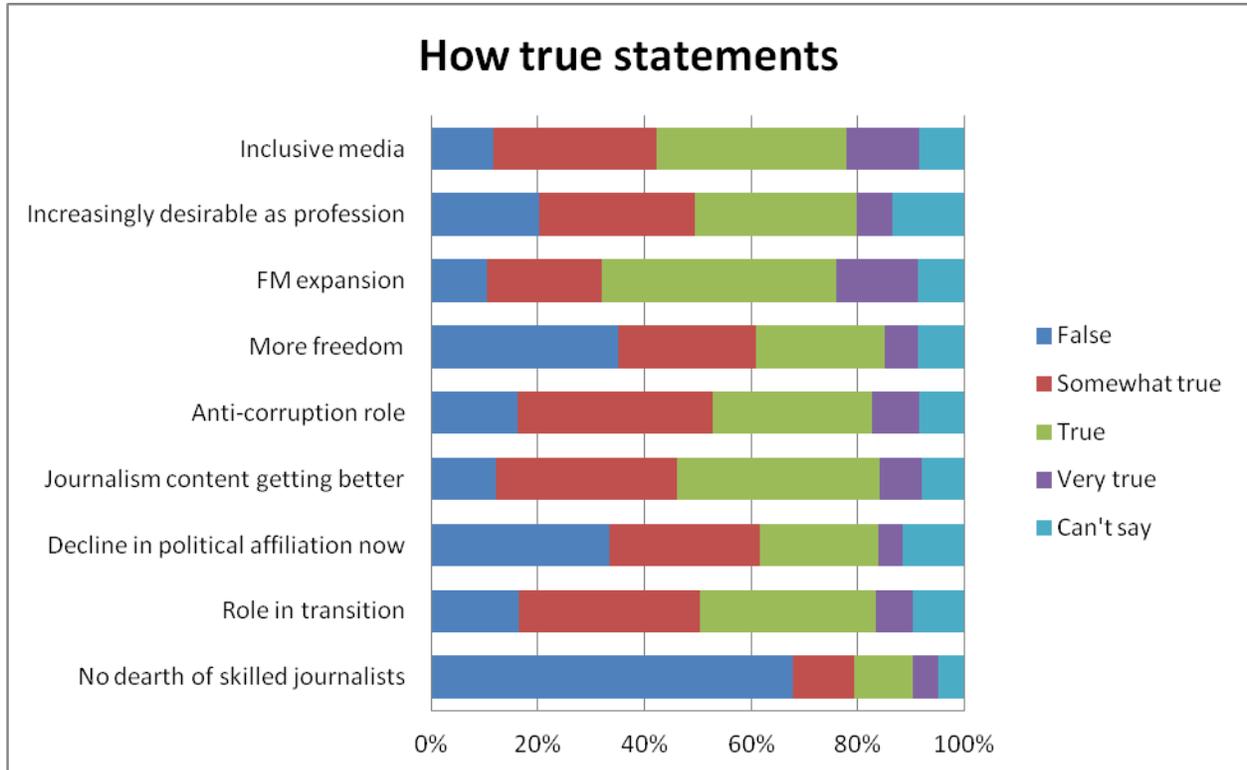
Respondents (16.26%) said journalists should generate awareness on health, education, economy and environment. About 14.63% respondents said that they should inform, educate and entertain the common people. Fewer respondents (13.82%) voted that the media should press the government and rulers to be responsible, while 11.38% respondents opined that the media should reflect plurality and diversity of the nation in work. The same number of respondents (11.38%) reported that the media should advocate against social evils such as discrimination, while 12.20% respondents believed that the media should involve the common people in the important contemporary topics. Fewer respondents (7.32%) preferred media's professional role as 'helping foster dialogue among various actors of the society'. The remaining 13.01% respondents saw the role of the media in the 'other' category.



### 5.3.4 Loyalty

Almost half the respondents (43.31%) said that the media should be loyal to the common people. Fewer respondents (12.10%) reported self and self-conscience. Loyalty of 10.83% was with other journalists or friends and of 7.64% was with the listeners, viewers and readers. Of the respondents, 6.37% said journalists were loyal to those about whom the news is written or those who were made the topic of news. Fewer respondents saw loyalty with media houses

(4.46%), advertisers (4.46%) and 'other' category (4.46%). Very few (2.55%) of them said that the media should be responsible towards political parties while managers of media houses (1.91%) and influential sources of information (1.91%) deserved the same level of media loyalty according to the respondents.



### 5.3.5 How true statement

#### a. No dearth of skilled journalist

Regarding the public views on the availability of skilled journalists in Nepal, more than two-thirds (67.99%) believed that there was no lack of skilled and capable journalists in Nepal, whereas 11.49% said that was only somewhat true. Of the respondents, 4.65% said the statement was very true, but 4.86% were unsure. Almost one in ten respondents (11.01%) said it was true that there was no lack of skilled journalists in Nepal.

#### b. Role in transition

Regarding the role of Nepali journalism in the country's transition to federalism, more than one-third (33.88%) said it was somewhat true that it had a role and nearly the same number 32.95% said that it was true. Fewer respondents believed the statement as 'very true' (7.04%), while almost one-tenth (9.60%) were unsure about the Nepali media's role in transition. Also, 16.53% respondents reported such a role of journalism to be false.

#### c. Less political affiliation now

On the statement that journalists did not have as much of political affiliation now as in the past, more than one quarter (28.14%) said that was somewhat true. More than one-fifth (22.25%) said the statement was true. Fewer respondents (4.55%) reported the statement to be very true while 11.60% were not sure. More than one-thirds (33.46%) said the statement was false.

**d. Journalism content getting better**

On the statement that journalism content was getting better, more than one-third (37.82%) said that was true. Almost the same percentage of respondents (34.12%) reported the statement to be somewhat true. Those who found the statement 'very true' comprised 8.12%. More than one-tenth (12.10%) respondents said it was false, while the remaining 7.84% respondents were unsure about it.

**e. Exposing corruption role**

Respondents were asked about their views on the role of journalists in exposing corruption in their content. More than one-third (36.49%) said the role was somewhat true. Those saying the statement was true comprised 30.05% and those who said very true made up 8.84%. Almost one-tenth respondents (8.34%) were not sure, while 16.28% respondents rejected the role as false.

**f. There is more freedom today**

Respondents were asked for their views on media freedom as gaining a better hold in the recent days. More than one-third (35.12%) perceived this as false while almost one-quarter (25.74%) said this was somewhat true. Almost one-quarter (24.32%) of respondents said it was true that the media were freer nowadays while 6.05% respondents said that was very true. The remaining 8.77% respondents were unsure about the statement.

**g. FM expansion as the significant achievement**

Respondents were asked for their views on the statement that expansion of FM stations across the country was the most significant achievement of the recent times. Almost half the respondents (43.84%) took the statement to be true while more than one-fifth (21.69%) said that was only somewhat true. Fewer respondents (15.53%) reported the statement to be very true, while one-fifth (10.39%) took it as false. The remaining 8.56% respondents were unsure.

**h. Desirable profession**

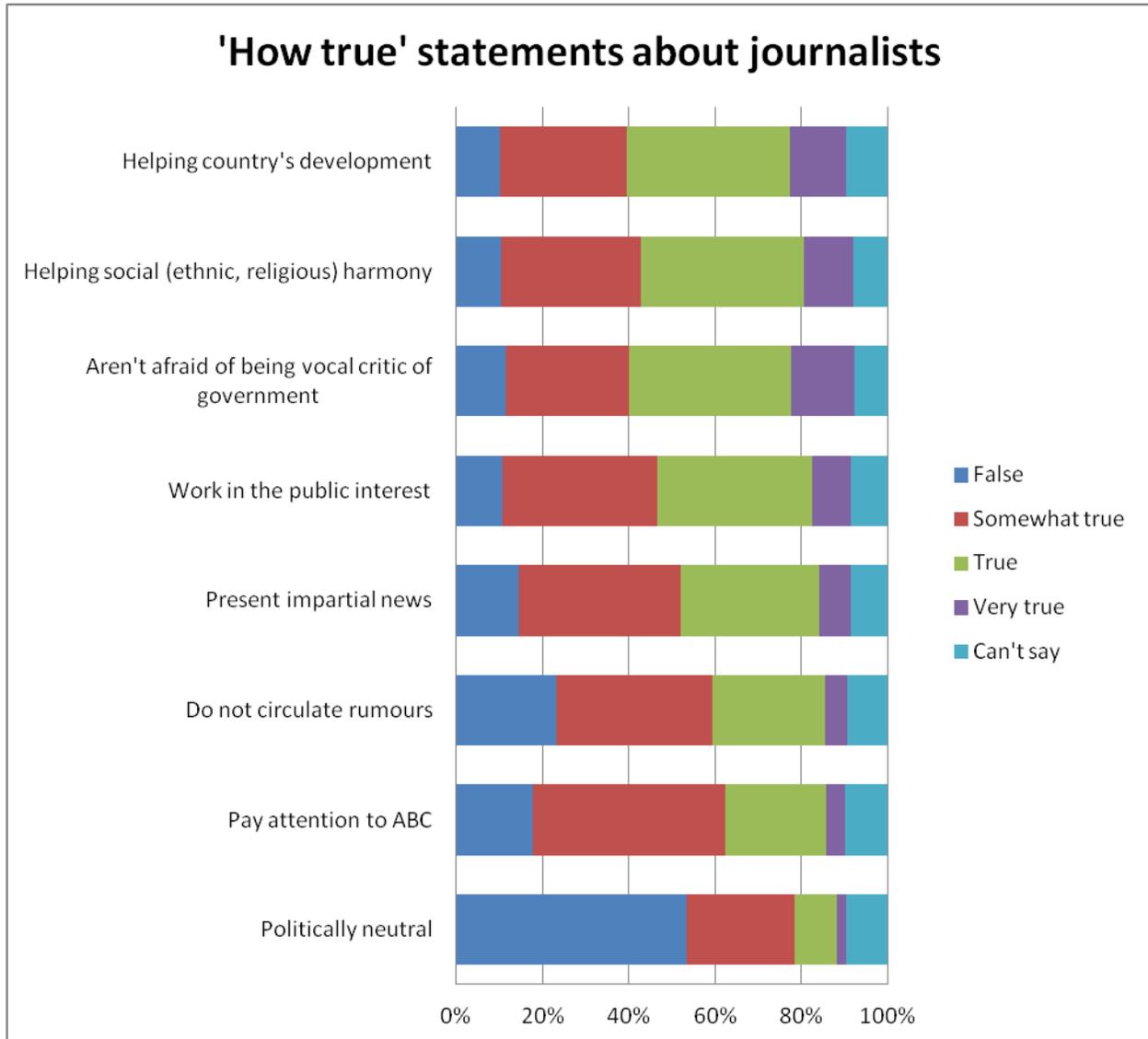
Respondents were asked if journalism had emerged as the most desirable profession in the country. Almost one-third respondents (30.38%) took the statement to be true while more than one-quarter (29.23%) respondents took the statement to be somewhat true. Fewer respondents (6.69%) reported the statement to be very true while one-fifth (20.19%) took it as false. The remaining 13.50% respondents could not say if that was the case.

**i. Inclusive media**

Respondents were asked if Nepali journalism was becoming more inclusive on raising the voices of women and the marginalized groups. About one-third (35.65%) took the statement to be true while a little less (30.75%) respondents took the statement to be somewhat true. Fewer

respondents (13.63%) reported the statement to be very true while more than one-fifth (11.64%) took it as false. The remaining 8.33% respondents were not sure.

### 5.3.6 How true statement



#### a. Journalists are politically neutral

Respondents were asked for their views if they perceived journalists as politically neutral. More than half the respondents (53.39) reported the statement to be false while one-quarter (25.01%) took it to be somewhat true. Fewer respondents (9.82%) believed the statement to be true while a similar percentage of them (9.55%) were unsure. Of the respondents, 2.22% took the statement to be very true.

**b. Journalists pay attention to ABC**

Respondents were asked for their views on whether journalists pay attention to their professional values of accuracy, balance and credibility (ABC). Almost half the respondents (44.47%) took the statement to be somewhat true while a little less than one-quarter of the respondents (23.58%) took the statement to be true. Fewer respondents (4.21%) took the statements to be very true. Almost one fifth (17.86%) perceived the statement to be false while a little less than one-fifth (9.88%) were unsure.

**c . Journalist don't circulate rumor**

Respondents were asked for their views on the statement: 'Journalists don't circulate rumors'. More than one third of the respondents (35.96%) took the statement to be somewhat true while a little more than one-quarter (26.18%) took it to be true. Less than one quarter (23.37%) reported the statement to be false while fewer respondents (5.06%) took it to be very true. Almost one tenth respondents (9.44%) remained undecided on the statement.

**d. Journalists present impartial news**

Respondents were asked whether they perceived journalists presented impartial news. More than one third respondents (37.34%) took the statement to be somewhat true, while a little less than that (32.21%) took the statement to be true. Some 14.66% reported the statement to be false while fewer respondents (7.22%) took the statements to be very true. Almost one tenth respondents (8.57%) were unsure.

**e. Journalists work in the public interest**

Respondents were asked for their views on the statement – 'Journalists work in the public interest'. More than one third respondents (36.01%) took the statement to be somewhat true while similar number of respondents (35.78%) took the statement to be true. More than one-fifth (10.61%) reported the statement to be false, while fewer respondents (9.00%) took the statement to be very true. Some respondents (8.60%) could not tell.

**f. They are vocal critics of the government**

Respondents were asked for their views on the statement – 'Nepali journalists are vocal critics of the government'. More than one third respondents (37.71%) took the statement to be true while a little more than one quarter (28.46%) took the statement to be somewhat true. Some 14.69% respondents reported the statement to be very true while fewer respondents (11.57%) took the statements to be very false. Fewer respondents (7.58%) were unsure.

**g. Journalists help social (ethnic, religious) harmony**

Respondents were asked for their views on the statement – 'Nepali Journalists help maintain social (ethnic, religious) harmony'. More than one-third reported the statement to be true while a similar percentage of (32.44%) took the statement to be somewhat true. Almost one in

ten respondents (11.40%) took the statement to be very true. Fewer respondents (10.49%) took the statement to be false. Still fewer respondents (7.97%) were unsure.

#### **h. They are contributing to the country's development**

Respondents were asked for their views on the statement – ‘Nepali journalists are contributing to the country's development’. More than one-third respondents (37.79%) reported the statement to be true while more than one quarter respondents (29.48%) took the statement to be somewhat true. Some respondents (13.03%) took the statement to be very true. Fewer respondents (10.07%) believed the statement was false. Those not sure about it made up 9.62%.

#### **5.3.7 Hurdles to journalists in following code of conduct**

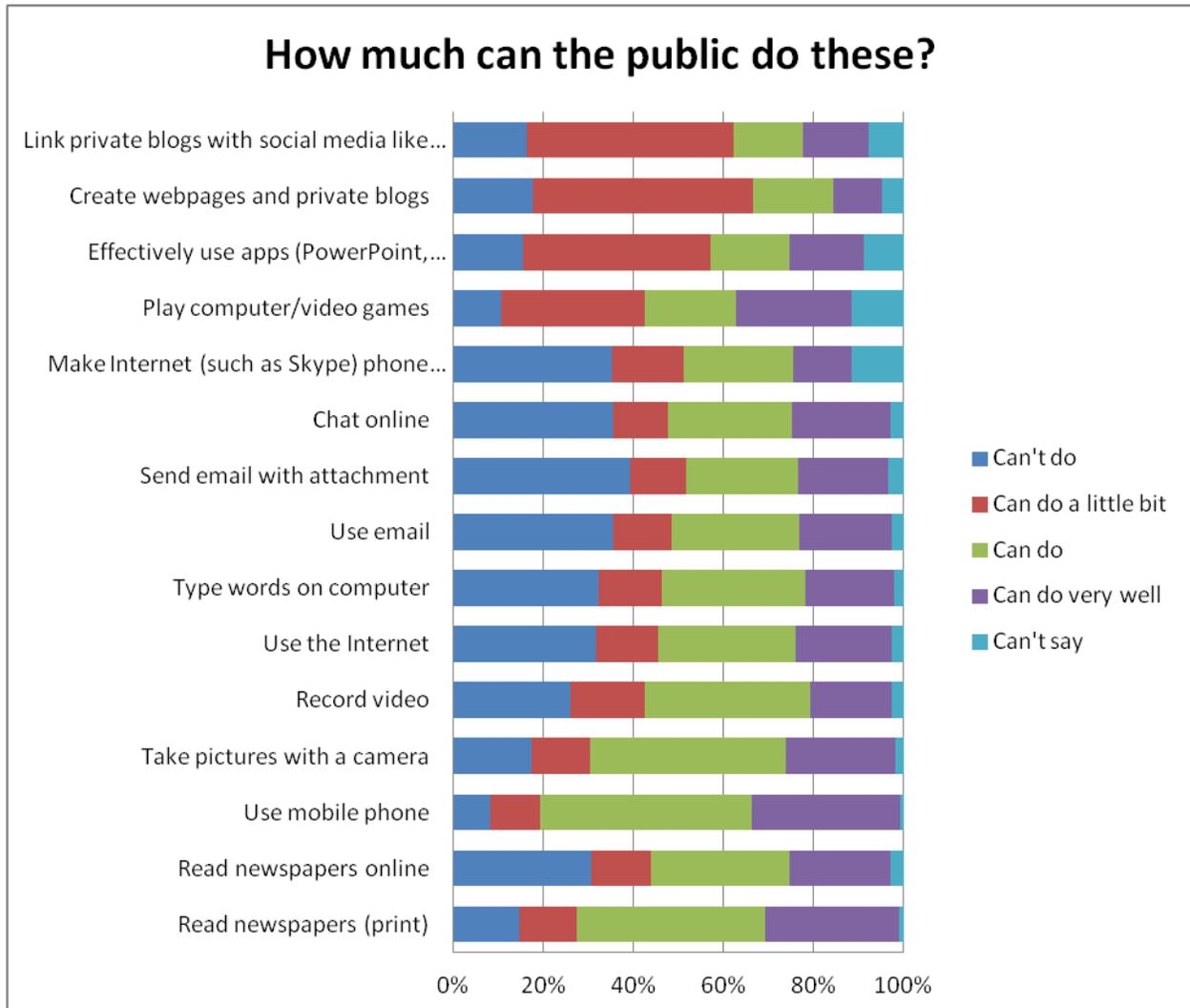
Respondents were asked about their views on the various hurdles faced by Nepali journalists in following the code of conduct. Some respondents (15.57%) reported the lack of respect to moral norms and values as the major hurdle, followed by lack of awareness on the code of conduct (13.11%), disrespect for norms and values for personal benefits (12.30%), poor work conditions, such as the lack of security (8.20%) and the lack of personal honesty and integrity (8.20%). Fewer respondents reported other reasons as the main hurdle. Media houses not giving attention to moral concerns (7.38%), lack of incentives to doing good work (5.74%), unhealthy competition for presentation of scoops (5.74%) and editor, publisher being involved in activities against the code of conduct (5.74%), were among the reasons. The remaining 4.92% respondents took the apathy by concerned agencies towards objecting to the wrong deeds by journalists as the main hurdle in obliging journalists to follow the code of conduct.

## **5.4 Media literacy**

### **5.4.1 Access to resources**

Respondents were asked which resources they had regular access to. Radio ranked the first (32.82%), followed by TV (21.67%), newspapers (13.62%), the DSL/broadband or WiFi Internet service (8.98%), and mobile phone (8.36%). Fewer respondents (1.24%) had a regular access to ‘other’ category of resources followed by camera (1.86%). The number of respondents who had regular access to video recorder, computer, audio recorder, CD, VCD and DVD cumulatively accounted for almost 3% of the respondents. Some 8.36% respondents had the regular access to none of these.

## 5.4.2 Media skills



Respondents were asked to rate their various skills related to media. Mixed responses were received.

### a. Read newspapers (print)

When they were asked about their newspaper (print) reading skill, most of the respondents (41.68%) reported that they had it. More than one quarter of respondents (29.76%) said that they could do it very well. Other responses were can't do (14.77%) and can do a little bit (12.69%). The remaining 1.10% respondents were not sure.

### b. Read newspapers online

When they were asked about their online skills to read the newspapers, 30.71% respondents each replied either they could do or they could not do it. About one-fifth of the respondents

(22.43%) reported that they could do it very well while more than one tenth of respondents (13.24%) said that they could do it a little bit. The remaining 2.91% respondents were not sure.

**c. Use mobile phone**

When they were asked about their skills to use the mobile phone, almost half the respondents (46.91%) reported that they could do it while almost one-third respondents (33.09%) reported that they could use the mobile phone very well. One-tenth respondents (10.96%) replied that they could do a little bit of it while 8.31% respondents reported that they could not do so. The remaining 0.73% respondents remained undecided on their skills.

**d. Take picture with a camera**

When they were asked about their skills to take the picture with a camera, most of the respondents (43.48%) reported that they could do it while almost one quarter respondents (24.31%) said that they could use the camera well. Other responses were could not do (17.45%) and could do a little bit (12.69%). The remaining 1.83% respondents could not tell.

**e. Record video**

When they were asked about their skills to record videos, more than one-third of the respondents (36.59%) reported that they could do it while more than one quarter respondents (26.07%) said that they could not do it. A little less than one-fifth of the respondents (18.15%) reported that they could record videos very well while a little less than this number (16.47%) said that they could do a little bit of it. The remaining 2.72% respondents were not sure about this skill.

**f. Use the internet**

When they were asked about their skills to use the internet, less than one-third of the respondents (30.59%) reported that they could do it while more than 31.74% respondents said that they could not use the internet. Almost one-fifth respondents (21.31%) said that they could use the internet very well, while 13.65% reported that they could use the internet a little bit. The remaining 2.71% respondents remained unsure.

**g. Type words on computer**

When asked about their computer typing skills, almost one-third respondents (32.37%) reported that they could not type, while a little less than one-third (31.79%) said that they could type words on computer. Almost one-fifth (19.73%) said they could type very well, while some 19.73% reported that they could type a little bit on the computer. The remaining 2.14% respondents remained undecided on their skills.

**h. Use email**

When they were asked about their skill to use the email, almost one-third respondents (35.57%) reported that they couldn't use the email while a little more than one-quarter respondents (28.56%) said that they could type words on computer. Almost one-fifth (20.34%) respondents were found to using email very well while little more than one-tenth respondents

(12.80%) reported that they can use a little bit of email. The remaining 2.72% respondents responded with a 'can't say'.

**i. Send email with attachment**

When they were asked about their skill to send emails with attachments, more than one-third respondents (39.22%) reported that they could not send email with attachment, while a little less than one-quarter respondents (24.88%) said that they could do it while one-fifth of the respondents (20.05%) reported that they could do it very well. A little more than one-tenth (12.47%) of respondents were found to be doing a little of it, while the remaining 3.38% respondents were not sure.

**j. Chat online**

When they were asked about their online skills, more than one-third respondents (35.36%) reported that they could not chat online while a little more than one-quarter respondents (27.57%) said that they could chat online. A little more than one-fifth (21.78%) of the respondents said they had the chatting skills very well while a little more than one-tenth respondents (12.34%) reported that they could chat online a little bit. The remaining 2.95% respondents were unsure.

**k. Make phone calls using the internet**

When they were asked about the skill to make the phone call using the internet, more than one-third respondents (35.11%) reported that they could not do it while a little less than one-quarter respondents (24.46%) said that they could chat online. Some 15.97% respondents said they had the internet phone call skills a little bit, while a little more than one-tenth of respondents (12.93%) reported that they could make calls through the internet very well. More than one-tenth respondents (11.53) remained undecided on their skills.

**l. Play computer/video games**

When they were asked about their skills to play computer/video games, a little less than one-third respondents (32.03%) reported that they could do a little bit of it while more than one-quarter respondents (25.65%) said that they could play computer/video games very well. Almost one-fifth (20.15%) respondents reported that they could do it while more than one-tenth respondents (10.52%) reported that they could not do it. The remaining 11.64% respondents were not sure.

**m. Using presentation tools**

When they were asked about their presentation skills, more than one-third respondents (41.43%) reported that they could do a little bit of it while less than one-fifth respondents (17.61%) said that they could do it. Less than one-fifth (16.54%) respondents reported they could do it very well while an equal percentage of the respondents (15.58%) reported that they could not do it. The remaining 8.84% were unsure.

**n. Create web pages**

When they were asked about their skills to create web pages, almost half the respondents (48.90%) reported that they could do a little of it while less than one-fifth respondents (17.77%) said that they could create webpages. Some 17.77% respondents reported that they could not do it, while one-fifth respondents (10.85%) said they had the skill to create web pages very well. Fewer respondents (4.71%) said they could not tell.

**o. Linking blog with web page, twitter**

When they were asked about their skills to link blog with webpage and twitter, nearly half of the respondents (45.72%) reported that they could do it a little bit of it while less than one-fifth respondents (16.43%) said that they could not do it. More than one-tenth (15.40%) respondents said they had the blog linking skills, while 14.61% respondents reported that they could do it very well. The remaining 7.82% respondents were not sure.

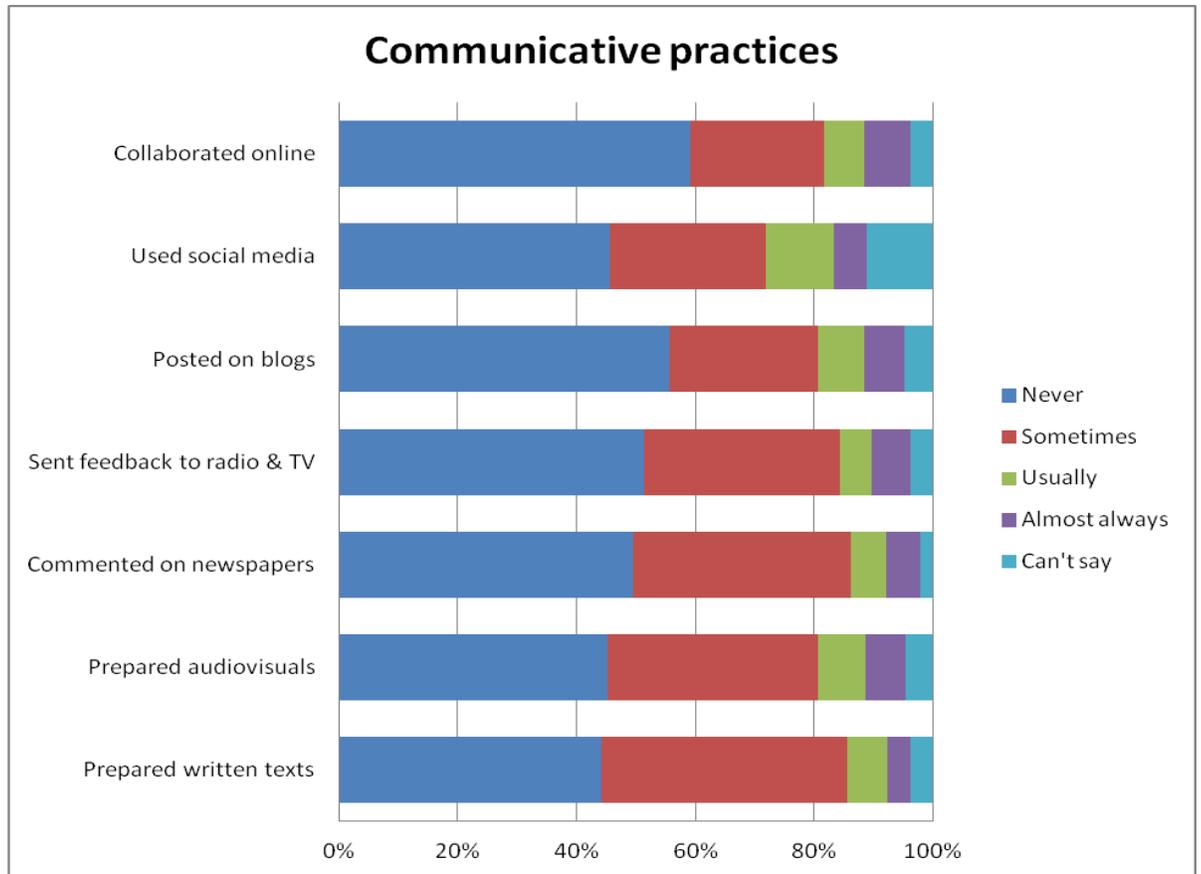
**5.4.3 While consuming media**

Respondents were asked how they read the newspapers, watched television, listened to the radio or browsed the internet. A majority of the respondents (63.98%) said they just scanned them, 6.16% respondents said they analyzed the context of information provided by the media, 4.27% respondents said they tried to look at what political and social messages the materials contained while a few respondents (2.84%) said they tried to understand if the media presentation was an advertisement. An equal number of respondents (2.37%) tried to understand what kind of materials were there in them to lure or distinguish between factual and fictitious materials or looked for and considered whether the media were exaggerating and distorting facts or tried to find if there was the interest of the media houses in the content of the media or did not care who produced the news materials or seriously consider whether the content was good or not. Fewer respondents (1.42%) considered whether the information had more than one interpretation while the remaining less than 2% respondents tried to find out who the information was aimed at. There were no respondents who would question the information material if they found it deficient or archived and preserved materials for further review later. The remaining 8.06% respondents chose the 'other' category for their responses.

**5.4.4 How often have you done these?**

**a. Produced a variety of written content**

Respondents were asked how often they produced a variety of written content. Less than half the respondents (44.26%) reported that they never did it while a similar number of respondents was found to be doing it sometimes. Fewer respondents (3.91%) frequently did it while 6.76% respondents usually did it. The remaining 3.73% were not sure.



**b. Produced audio, video content**

Respondents were asked how often they produced audio and video contents. Less than half the respondents (45.23%) reported that they never did it while more than one-third respondents (35.39%) said they were doing it sometimes. Fewer respondents (6.66%) frequently did it while 8.07% respondents usually did it. The remaining 4.65% respondents were not sure.

**c. I have written letters to newspapers or magazines in reaction to their articles**

Respondents were asked how often they had written letters to newspapers or magazines in reaction to their articles. Almost half the respondents (49.57%) reported that they never did it while more than one-third respondents (36.59%) said they were found to be doing it sometimes. Fewer respondents (5.85%) frequently did it while 5.91% respondents usually did it. The remaining 2.07% respondents could not tell.

**d. I have called radio or TV stations to comment on their news**

Respondents were asked how often they called radio or TV stations to comment on their news. Almost half the respondents (51.45%) reported that they never did it while almost one-third respondents (32.88%) said they called them sometimes. Fewer respondents (6.48%) frequently did it while 5.37% respondents usually did it. The remaining 3.82% respondents could not tell.

**e. I have commented on blogs or posted updates on my blog**

Respondents were asked how often they commented on blogs or posted updates on their own blogs. More than half the respondents (55.73%) reported that they had never done it while almost one-quarter respondents (24.91%) said they had done this sometimes. Fewer respondents (6.85%) frequently did it while 7.72% respondents usually did it. The remaining 4.79% respondents chose the 'can't say' option.

**f. I use social media network(s) like Facebook or Twitter and have posted updates**

Respondents were asked how often they used social media network(s) like Facebook or Twitter and have posted updates. Almost half the respondents (45.62%) reported that they had never done it while almost one-quarter respondents (26.15%) said they were doing this sometimes. Fewer respondents (5.57%) frequently did it while 11.57% respondents usually did it. The remaining 11.08% respondents said nothing about it.

**g. I collaborate online with others, like posting on wiki**

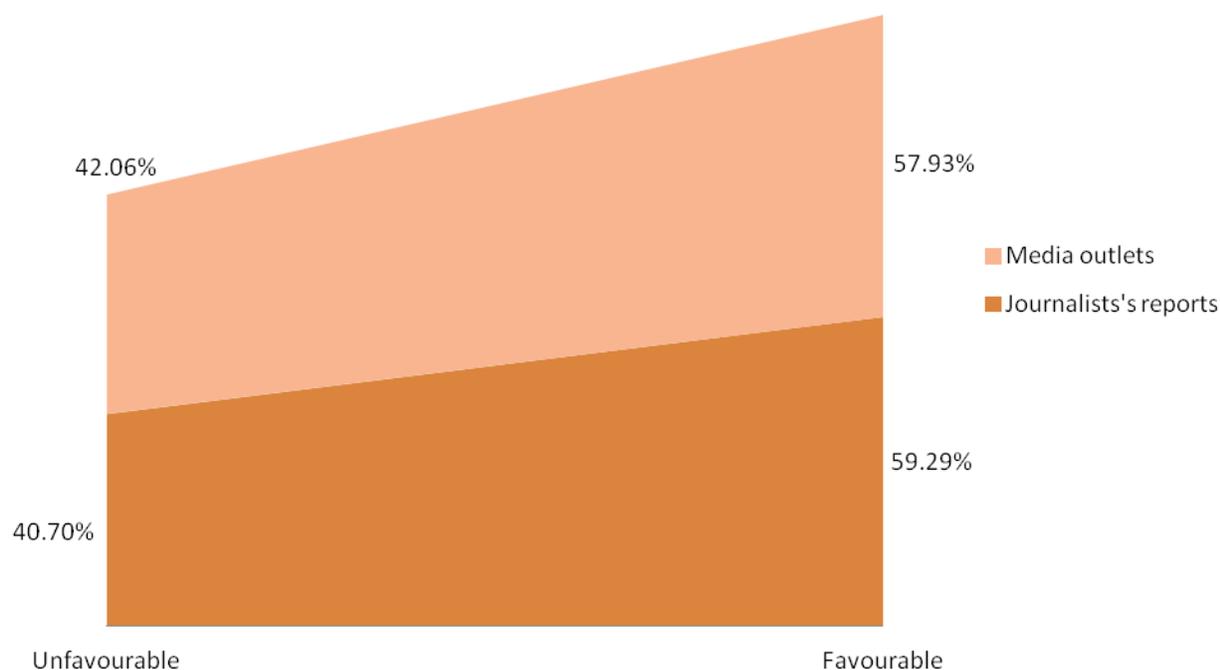
Respondents were asked how often they collaborated online with others, like posting on wiki. More than half the respondents (59.07%) reported that they had never done this while less than one-quarter respondents (22.54%) said they had done this sometimes. Fewer respondents (7.79%) frequently did it while 6.83% respondents usually did it. The remaining 3.77% respondents chose the 'can't say' option.

*SECTION VI:*  
**SMS Poll**

## 6. SMS POLL

The SMS poll was part of the two national surveys on Nepali media- one on journalists' perspectives and another on public perceptions. It was designed to complement the survey data. In particular, the objective was also to access the perspectives of the segment of population with increasing access to mobile telephony. In addition, SMS responses were expected to help cap the two surveys, making it possible to compare views of journalists and the public on a broad scale.

### Change over time in public trust of media (N=739)



Both the journalists' survey and the public opinion survey discussed in the previous two chapters sought to assess respondents' trust in media as well as information and analyses by journalists. While the journalists' survey revealed that a majority (57.62%) of respondents said Nepali media and their content was generally trustworthy, almost half the respondents (47.12%) said Nepali media were not impartial. The public (19.16%) rated the Nepali media top among the institutions in society it trusted the most. The SMS poll appeared to confirm the results from both the surveys, and it suggested an increase in public trust toward media and journalists' reports.

In the SMS poll, respondents were asked two questions, with the option to answer one or both: "Has your trust in Nepali news organizations increased over the past 3-4 years?" "Do you agree that your trust in news/analysis by Nepali journalists has increased over the past 3-4 years?" (See appendix 7 for details). The 3-4 years cited in the questions called attention to a period of enormous political transition in the country.

Both questions were based on the overall thrust of the survey assessments reported in this study. The questions were subject to some limitations in mobile phone technology today, such as characters limit, and language barriers (only English could be used for end-to-end SMS service).

Most respondents had a favorable view of media or their content. Majority of respondents (57.97%) said their trust in Nepali media organizations had increased over the past 3-4 years, while the rest reported their trust in those organizations had not increased. Similarly, majority of participants (59.29%) in the SMS poll reported that their trust in news and analyses by Nepali journalists had increased over the past 3-4 years.

The SMS poll was conducted during the last week of July. A sample of randomly generated mobile phone numbers were targeted. In total, 739 reponses were received. Newspaper announcements, social media networks, word of mouth, etc were utilized to encourage people to participate in the poll.

*SECTION VII:*  
**Stakeholders Discussions**

## **7. STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS**

The surveys in the previous chapters sought responses from a large number of respondents, and each of them, including the SMS poll, showed that despite many flaws, Nepali media and journalists are generally regarded as trustworthy. The pre-determined survey questions were limited in their analytical powers to explain the gaps in the quantitative responses.

Stakeholder discussions helped to directly interact with key stakeholders on a more substantive level. Together the participants introspected and shared critical insights on capacity building in media and inter-related topics. Often they advanced unique, perspectives based on personal experiences, emphasizing long-term views and change in attitudes and practices within a rigid cultural context. FGD participants noted that terms like media credibility or literacy are relative in nature, requiring an open-ended approach to inquiry.

Focus group discussions (FGDs), as method of research, involve a small group of homogenous people, usually 8 to 10 in numbers, who meet to discuss topics and help identify important issues. The distinguishing feature of focus groups is the "use of interaction as part of the research data" (Kitzinger (1994, p. 104). FGDs help complement quantitative studies, for example, filling in the gaps in surveys and rationalizing quantitative information. They can help compensate survey errors in self-reporting or poor response rates.

Side by side with the survey assessments, in all, six FGDs involving the cross-sections of stakeholders were held throughout the months of April-July, 2012. In addition, this section also draws on the notes from loose network discussions with varied stakeholders carried out by SPCBN/UNDP.

The notes from the FGDs were first transcribed and then organized thematically keeping the names of participants anonymous. The material here is presented in a narrative format. The material here is organized along these themes: Profile of participants, professionalism, media credibility, media capacity building, and media literacy. Each of these themes except profile of participants is further discussed in terms of stakeholders' conceptual understanding of the particular theme, the challenges and opportunities they perceive about it, and finally, their suggestion about what to do next to further improve the existing situation.

The FGDs were helpful to elicit varied contextual information, including inputs from the lived experiences of different stakeholders of the media sector.

### **7.1 Profile of participants**

Participants in those FGDs included working journalists, photographers, media trainers, researchers, educators, media advocates, students as well as housewives, teachers and other users of media. They included journalists' groups (actively working news professionals, Dalit journalists, women journalists) as well as in collaboration with institutions (Federation of Nepali Journalists, Sancharika Samuha, Martin Chautari, Jagaran Media Center, etc.), and the general

public. Collaborative discussions with FNJ involved members of FNJ central executive committee and the research coordinators from Media Foundation- Nepal (MF-N). Media literacy discussion with Public focus group included teachers, students and housewives who were all users of cellular mobile phones and mass media, including radio, television and the Internet. They shared their views on a range of issues relating to media.

## 7.2 Professionalism

**7.2.1 Conceptual understanding:** Accuracy, Balance and Credibility (ABC) is said to be the cornerstone of media professionalism. Responsible and a professional media can grow satisfactorily under democratic norms and values. However, professionalism greatly lacks in the Nepali media. There is no environment for journalists to depend on his honesty and integrity. An undergraduate journalism student, a participant in one of the FGDs on media education, observed that scribes misuse journalism to serve their own vested interests and this brings about problems. It is very hard for newcomers to make career in journalism. Media professionalism also incorporates diverse ethnic, religious, regional and language regimes into the media content, management as well as audience.

**7.2.2 Challenges:** As corporate journalism is yet to develop in Nepal, economic base of media houses is fragile; hence the status of editorial freedom is also fragile. Both financial and editorial aspects ought to be consolidated to promote media professionalism.

The state has shown frequent tendencies to highlight journalists' responsibility in the name of media policy. Censorship or stagnation of freedom of expression may poke their faces in future as well, particularly if political uncertainty persists.

Professional security is a key concern in times of political uncertainty and crises. When newspapers close due to sustained strikes, conflict or threat, it is not the media owners who suffer but the journalists. These were the views of some journalists during FGD with FNJ.

As stakeholders pointed out, Nepal's media sector is characterized by low salaries, irregular payments, ownership control, non-transparency regarding the investment in the media sector, and insecurity. What's more, the media sector is largely controlled, and operates in a way as wished by the ownership and is insecure in many ways (Loose Network Discussion, SPCBN/UNDP, June 29, 2012).

Dedication to profession and building the level of motivation seem to be a big challenge. At another session, a Kathmandu-based middle-aged media trainer shared this observation about students' lack of motivation in the media profession (FGD, June 24, 2012). He said he once asked his students as to how many of them actually wanted to be a journalist? Surprisingly, only 6 out of 36 students raised their hands in affirmation.

Projecting a good public image also is a challenge to journalists. A young journalist working at the International Desk of a leading private-sector daily said he would better be known as the owner of a blog he owns. He said he had reservations about identifying himself as a newspaper journalist because journalists' image was dwindling and their professional integrity was questioned, mostly in districts outside the Kathmandu Valley. (FGD, June 24, 2012).

Newsroom is not female friendly. Sometimes, female members of the staff find their workplace atmosphere de-motivating, as male colleagues walk into the working desk with bottles or cans of beer (FGD, May 6, 2012).

Similarly, inclusion is another area of concern for professional growth. In this regard, while some think that the Dalits are better covered by Dalit journalists, others say it was an issue of fairness and objectivity no matter who covered them. Some maintained that ethnicity may positively relate to access to sources/story subject, framing of questions, and assumptions of a reporter. And positive discrimination accorded some degree of fairness in the news process. However, one participant cited a case in which a Muslim journalist was criticized for the way he covered a Muslim issue (FGD, July 22, 2012).

Similarly, there was also the possibility of skewed sourcing, as seen in stories on Maoists covered by reporters close to the Maoists. Participants called for newsroom diversity, and more objective and yet engaged reporting of minority issues.

**7.2.3 Opportunities:** A BA-pass student at Kathmandu University expressed the view that there is no money in media sector, but it offers opportunities and exposures for professional development. Professional engagement with media also helps one by enhancing the ability to tap opportunities available in other sectors. "I did not take up media studies to make good earning," he said. "Though I took up media studies, I am working in development sector now. One can work in other sectors besides media, I think there are opportunities" (FGD, March 11, 2012).

Professional fellowships offered by various organizations--both at home and abroad--provide good deal of opportunities towards a journalist's professional development, some participants observed. They not only provide exposure but also contribute to broaden one's worldview. Participants who have had benefitted from fellowships encouraged others to pursue training and fellowship opportunities whenever available.

#### **7.2.4 What needs to be done**

- Editorial freedom should be a topic of a new debate now. The concept of editorial freedom should be viewed in terms of the capitalist orientation and media ownership. Corporate houses have to ensure editorial freedom. There should be a culture of respecting both the capital and the labor (Loose Network Discussion, SPCBN/UNDP, June 29, 2012).

- Donor-driven approach is one of the major problems in training sector. Media training are based more on what funding agencies want rather than what journalists actually need. Need-based training module is necessary (FGD, June 24, 2012).
- Training packages must be attuned to the level of trainees. Basic level training for aspiring journalist who hasn't yet entered the media field and advanced level training for those who are already working in the field could be the two simple options in this regard (FGD, June 24, 2012).
- Trainings have become a means to elongate the CV pages, particularly when they are available for free. Training organizers may shift the usual full cost covering programs to a model wherein the trainee bears half of the cost. This, some participants believe, could promote the feeling of ownership as well as make the training more effective ((FGD, June 24, 2012).
- Building journalistic capacity through close inspection of media contents and correction of lapses could also help address some of our problems. 'Allowance seeking' mentality and the trend of holding 'training just for the name of training' should end from the institutional level.
- A journalist can always polish himself or herself with vigorous self study. Nepali journalists mostly do not reflect this quality. In recent years, more women have enrolled in journalism education, but most of them do not enter journalism profession. There could be many reasons for this--from domestic factors to matters relating to professional opportunities and limitations (FGD, May 6, 2012).
- Accuracy, balance, credibility (ABC) should be in line with the vision of proportional inclusion of even Dalit and other marginalized section of society.

## 7.3 Media Credibility

**7.3.1 Conceptual Understanding:** Credibility refers to the quality of being believable or trust-winning. It concerns with several issues ranging from source, medium, message, process as well as accountability of media contents, from production to the consumption phases. Media content with no logical basis takes a directly toll on its credibility. Determining one's level of trust on media and their content calls for a mixed approach to one's media assessment, according to some users of media.

Asked if their trust on Nepali media had increased or decreased over the past 3-4 years, a FGD session generated mixed views. Amidst mushrooming media outlets, the public has multiple choices and the trust factor is always relative in nature. "The way I trust a media or its content is always guided by the details provided to me. The more the factual details the more I tend to trust them," said a media user during an FGD program held at Media Foundation (FGD, July 27, 2012).

Media credibility is thus a matter linked with the Channel-Audience connection facilitated with contents of local concern. People tend to trust those media that cater to their interests or

curiosities. For example, female participants said they "rarely skip primetime news at *Kantipur* and *Avenues*" whereas *Nepal 1* fared less for its "low coverage on Nepali issues" (FGD, July 27, 2012).

In many cases the public has displayed their trust to media. Those people who fall sick and need to go to hospital during general strikes or other emergency situations contact media seeking their help rather than doctors or the police (FGD, May 1, 2012). This is a sign that public trust on media has not died out.

**7.3.2 Opportunities:** Opportunities on the credibility factor in Nepali media can be related to availability of choices of information and channel of communication. In the modern context, public trust on media can be said to depend on verifiability of truth of the contents, as well as the rooms made available in media forums for public participation.

Over the years, media have given increased space for public participation. Increasingly, sound bites and images of public have been included in television news or their opinion and comments have been given space in the 'feedback' sections of newspapers (FGD, July 27, 2012.).

**7.3.3 Challenges:** Some participants observed that lack of seriousness in data verification is one of the major challenges in credibility standard. On the crime reporting front, for example, the participants were dissatisfied with television and other media for presenting the accused as guilty.

Some participants were concerned about the way people view new media, without much anxiety. One observed that that there was almost no concern about the credibility question of online feeds/sources.

Distortion of facts is a regular blame on media. Media should not distort facts. Television commercials sometimes air contents that ultimately turn out fraudulent. Risk to public health grows when, for example, a celebrated film artiste is hired in a commercial to advertise a substandard consumer product.

Electronic media credibility is even lower because of frequent factual inaccuracies and violations of Code of Ethics.

Similarly, public trust on media may drastically fall when, for example, a news item or coverage on the craze of using *Mehendi* (henna) further promotes the craze without talking anything about the possible medical risk (e.g. allergies which sometimes can have serious consequences on the users' health).

#### **7.3.4 What needs to be done**

The participants opined that maximum use of news sources, presence of an independent media monitoring services, provision of incentives and prizes for aspiring journalist and seriousness towards implementing media ethics would lead to high credibility of Nepali media.

They expressed the belief that neutrality and balance factor in the media coverage-- both of state and private-sector ownership--could go a long way towards winning public trust. Public service media had been the real need of the current time.

Government media's role in this regard is significant, as they still enjoy greater public trust than the private sector media outlets.

At an FGD program, some women professionals maintained that knowing Code of Ethics was also important as it is the link issue between credibility and capacity. Credibility scale is positively affected when news contents display relevant public issues (FGD, July 27, 2012).

Programs with no logical basis should be avoided by television or they will lose their credibility. Rather media should be active in spreading awareness about the negative consequences of such programs.

## 7.4 Media Capacities

**7.4.1 Conceptual understanding:** Capacity is the art of identifying issues and presenting them. An FGD program held in Kathmandu (FGD, 24 June, 2012) discussed various aspects of capacity building of journalists, such as media education, practices and training opportunities in Nepal. Media capacity refers to skill or capability of journalist to perform one's responsibility, whereas, on the part of media users, it is related to the skills to use different media for effective and efficient use. The FGD collected diverse views on role of training in capacity building of journalists and the impact of institutional affiliation of journalist on their skills and practices.

**7.4.2 Opportunities:** Media houses, training institutes and universities, including TU, KU, PU and PoU have been promoting journalism through practice, trainings and studies, respectively.

Wider ranges of opportunities are opening up in formal education and training sector. This collectively has a positive bearing on the media capacity development.

Media studies programs at universities are becoming more popular. The opportunities for capacity building of journalists have surpassed the traditional means of training, as vast literature is available in different online resources and research-based institutions like Martin Chautari and Social Science Baha.

New Media also has been an informal source of education, wherein the art of journalism can be gained and developed through visual facilities like Youtube and social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc as well as various blog sites.

International fellowships provide good opportunities for journalists to widen their worldview and develop workmanship. At a separate FGD program held at Media Foundation premises in 11 March, 2012, journalists who benefitted from various international fellowships shared their views and experiences. Some of the noted fellowship packages were provided by East-West Center/Asia Pacific Leadership Fellowship, American government, IIMC (India), Climate Change Media Partnership (2010) and the Swansea University, UK, Even locally hosted trainings were of significant usefulness to some participants.

**7.4.3 Challenges:** Media's capacity related problems could be linked to either Newsroom or classroom or both. But classroom knowledge must be complimented or bridged with the practical skills required in the actual field of journalism. Many teachers see a huge gap between what is taught in the classrooms and what is required in the newsrooms. (Loose Network Discussion, SPCBN/UNDP, June 29, 2012).

Professional journalism training are very limited; most journalists have considered their own media house as the training ground for them.

Media managers are usually not interested to address the issue of journalists' capacity building.

Journalism trainers feel that the training modules generally applied in the country to build journalist capacity are mostly outdated and cannot ensure long-term utility.

There has been unfair distribution of training resources and opportunities between rural and urban areas.

Quick-fix attitude on part of the learners, i.e. to be satisfied barely with the rubrics of the profession, is not supporting their long-term career goals, or professional sustainability. Moreover, some pointed out growing training fatigue among people who have to attend the same types of courses again and again (FGD, March 11, 2012)

Resources in media have increased but quality issues remain ignored. The current technology-driven media has sidelined the mainstream conventional journalism. Technology is preferred over journalistic capacity. And even media houses underestimate the issue of journalist's ability and, instead, seek their apparent technological insight. 'If you have an expensive latest camera, you can be a photographer and will be given big space' said one participant, illustrating this point.

Media training has become too much Capital-centric. Criteria for selecting trainees are erroneous, where the same person can attend a particular kind of training for dozens of occasions. A distinguished media trainer claimed he has met a trainee who has attended similar media trainings for the 40<sup>th</sup> time!

#### 7.4.4 What needs to be done

- In-house media training/refresher courses should be frequently arranged for working journalists within a media organization.
- Trainees as well as working journalists must be oriented on the importance of focused and serious learning. They must be taught to make optimum utilization of media and communication resources.
- Training and other opportunities of capacity development should be diversified nationwide, rather than concentrating them in the capital.
- Fellowship, awards and other forms of incentives should be provided to enhance journalist's capabilities.
- Women communicators feel that there is a need for beats-based training to Nepalese journalists. Arrangement for editorial training could go a long way to improve the scenario. It will also contribute to overall human resource enhancement in a newsroom and the entire media organization.
- In terms of the performance caliber, women journalists are no less capable than their male counterparts but roles are seldom given to them. What a woman journalist would desire is responsibility with roles. Almost 95% our news sources are males--whether Brahmins, janajati (ethnic nationalities or Madhesi (FGD, FNJ, May 1, 2012).
- Female topics do not normally become issues in newsroom, as it is mostly predominated by males. Female perspectives could be different- but there is a lack of willingness to include or accommodate female perspectives--be it news, editorial, or workplace atmosphere. Any design of training for journalists should address this lacking.

## 7.5 Media Literacy

**7.5.1 Conceptual Understanding:** In general, participants agreed that media literacy as an ability to use and understand media tools and contents. Most journalists in Nepal do have some formal education but not media literacy. Being able to use and apply the media tools and content for personal and professional development is necessary in the present times. Media literacy also teaches journalists what they should not do in their profession.

In this regard, media literacy also means understanding the various media laws, codes and instruments affecting the media sector. Reflecting over the level of media literacy, many members of public expressed ignorance about were not aware about the existence of Press Council Nepal where anyone can show their disagreement and appeal for action against any kind objectionable media content.

**7.5.2 Opportunities:** The world today has become almost like one small village due to advances in modern information and communication (ICT) technology as well as because of the growing public access to mass media. While half of nation's population has access to mobile phone, and there is a growth in public choice for media (FGD, MF-N, July 27, 2012). Seven out of nine

public participants had their own mobile phones, and the same number had personalized email accounts.

The use of media was found so pervasive that a participant claimed he used all forms of media, depending on time and context. He said he would listen to radio immediately after waking up in the morning and then would watch television after some time. During the day he would surf the Internet or hook up with Facebook.

Aware of the existence of different newspapers and television stations in town, participant indicated that media was a storehouse of knowledge and information for them. "If only we know the 'how to' of so many facilities in the mobile as well as in the Internet, we could know and do so many things through media," said a participant (FGD, July 27, 2012.).

Without the media, today's audience or readers find their life full of darkness. The focus group participants, too, said that it is the inbuilt nature of human mind to know what is happening around us. And the media are playing a key role to address that need.

Flash news, phone calls, FM radio, music, video, email, social networks were some examples of the common media tools referred to by the FGD participants.

**7.5.3 Challenges:** The status of media literacy is poor in the country, as some women communicators said during a focus group discussion (FGD with Sancharika, May 6, 2012). New media literacy is particularly of much importance, although training a vast number of journalists is a task that cannot be achieved overnight. Learning everything about technology or a system within a short period of time is, indeed, not possible.

Most of the journalists working as news desk editors are not trained, and this in a sense also reflects media illiteracy. There is also the need for appropriate textbooks designed to enhance media literacy. It should be integrated in academic and training curricula nationwide. For this concerted efforts are necessary from all stakeholders.

The Internet and cellular mobile phones have not been used to their fullest potential mainly due to technological difficulty or ignorance. A vast majority of people do not have access to these resources.

Participants were quite aware of the issue of media convergence being pushed up by mobile phone, and their own tapping of its scope was limited due to technological difficulty. They said their use of mobile phones was limited to its regular function of making and receiving calls.

#### **7.5.4 What needs to be done**

- Long term strategy should be developed to train and educate journalists as well as the general public as users of media, on various aspects of media utilities. Textbooks ought to be designed and media literacy ought to be made an integral part of academic and training curricula nationwide.

- To ensure that media contents are accurate, balanced and credible, a filtering mechanism is necessary to verify the validity of broadcasting or media contents.
- Even as media are mostly easy to handle or to understand, it becomes difficult for many rural folks to grasp the message when content and the technology both are complex for them. Efforts should be made to minimize gaps between the media literate and the media illiterate populations.
- Participants at an FGD program expressed the view that the horizon of feedback mechanism should be increased and the public themselves should proactively find their space in media and increase their participation.
- The public should also work to create their own *chautari* or a kind of public meeting space (forum) where they can discuss the good and the bad aspects of media. This would help them to decide what to take and reject regarding media content.

## 7. 6 Conclusions

Traditional ideals of journalism, characterized by details, reason, and special skills of reporting and writing are becoming universally accessible today to everyone mainly because of new technologies, increasing media access and improved education system in schools.

And yet, little is being done to explore opportunities that enhance journalists' capacities. While Nepali journalists are increasingly becoming well-informed, there remains much to be desired in terms of actually putting into practice what they already know. Journalists' prestige as professionals is not possible today without the wider public appreciating their work. Hence, media education or media literacy should be a public agenda today.

To put it in a nutshell, while opportunities and challenges are equally potent in all categories, professionalism in media would require more editorial freedom, need-based trainings, content-assessment mechanism, vigorous self studies, commitment to profession, and open, dynamic and inclusive newsrooms.

Credibility status could be enhanced in multiple ways, including verification of data, attribution to authentic sources, adherence to ethical codes and standard, exercise of neutrality and balance, orientation towards general public, sense of responsibility or accountability in what one covers, and dependence on factual information.

Likewise, most of the pressing issues relating to capacity development would demand a package of programs such as in-house and/or out-house media training/refresher courses, nurturing serious commitment among trainees as well as working journalists, optimum utilization of media and communication resources, diversification/decentralization of opportunities, fellowship, awards and other forms of incentives. Beats-based training, editorial writing training, gender balance in content coverage and workplace sanctity are important in this regard.

What's more, a comprehensive strategy should be made to achieve the right level of media literacy, aimed at both media persons and the public. This is to make sure that journalists as well as the people, as users of media, can have sufficient knowledge to tap the facilities offered, and use available platforms, using the media skills.

It appears imperative to design appropriate textbooks, devise ways to assess media credibility, and to take measures to minimize gaps between the media 'literate' and the media 'illiterates'.

## *SECTION VIII:* Conclusions and Recommendations

### **8. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION**

This section of the study discusses the key findings of this study, and it reflects on their implications for the future development of media in Nepal. In response to the TOR of this study, it points out the salient professional attributes and attitudes of journalists, as well as

illustrates the public perceptions of media and their credibility. It compares perspectives of journalists with the perspectives of the public, takes stock of the limitations and constraints of the study, and finally puts forward a set of recommendations.

### **Demographics**

As the surveys in the previous chapter revealed, Nepali journalists are mostly young, educated male, from the Brahmin-Chhetri background, urban, semi-urban and still largely print-based. They earn low to moderate income, and are often perceived, most of them working full-time, in the private sector media.

In comparison, the public was predominantly urban and semi-urban young male, from the Brahmin-Chhetri background, with slightly larger percentage of women than of the journalists. Half the public was married, and most came from education background, followed by business/industry and agriculture.

### **Professional issues**

Some of the major challenges Nepali journalists perceived included partisan image of themselves in the eyes of the society, inclination of media houses toward a political party or ideology, inadequate security to journalists from the state, and lack of technological resources and training needed for professional growth.

The public viewed journalists privileged with freedom, acknowledged their important role in democratic transition of the country, in uncovering corruption, and saw them improving in the quality of content. However, more than half the respondents in the public survey could not accept that journalists are neutral. Generally, journalists had a favorable view of coverage of topics such as peace, democracy and constitution-making. In contrast, the public viewed governance, national politics, constitution-making as generally reliable, but the coverage of peace and democracy as not much reliable.

Although majority of journalists (57.62%) believed what they read, heard and saw in the Nepali media were credible, they cited poor content quality or mediocre language or presentation, lack of awareness of ethics or practice of accuracy, balance and credibility (ABCs), and lack of rigorous verification as major factors affecting their professional credibility. Still, as the results in the public survey in the previous chapter showed, both the journalists and the media outlets are highly regarded by the members of the public. The public viewed media as the most trusted among all public institutions and journalists as the second most trusted occupation group, after farmers.

In regards to capacity building issues, journalists appeared somewhat dissatisfied with available opportunities, in-house training, mentorship, fellowships. They stressed on the need for hands-on proficiency and advanced/specialized training, time management, ICT skills, critical thinking skills, and language skills. More than two-thirds of the public rejected the view that there was no dearth of skilled journalists in Nepal.

Journalists suggestions on improving the overall quality of the profession mainly underscore the need for improved security situation, press-friendly laws, institutional transparency, editorial independence, timely pays or salaries to employees, technological resources, journalism education and training, etc. While journalists emphasize their democratic role in creating awareness and development, the public generally does not believe media houses encourage citizen engagement or participation.

In terms of media literacy, a majority of journalists expressed the confidence in using new media tools. They showed interest in learning various aspects of new media such as handling hardware devices, online searching, video-conferencing, creating webpages, and personal blogs. The public used as wide a variety of media or new media, however, more than two-third (63.98%) reported they only scanned their media and rarely analyzed the context of information given to them.

The basic questions that asked the respondents if they read newspapers, listened to radio, watched television or visited websites, etc was simply meant to introduce respondents to how often they used the particular media. The responses these opening questions generated may reflect their regular media use habits.

Focus group and loose network discussions helped to directly reach relevant stakeholders, such as active professionals, media trainers/teachers, students, members of professional associations. They also included ordinary media users and housewives as well as people from marginalized or minority communities like Dalit, women, etc.

Unlike the pre-determined choices in the surveys, focus group and loose network discussions emphasize long-term, holistic, behavioral or attitudinal change in media professionals. The discussions helped reach a shared understanding of professional challenges, such as balancing economic profit and editorial freedom, continuing threat of conflict, monopoly and corporatization of media, lack of motivation among journalists, lack of women-friendly environment, exclusionary newsroom, and skewed sourcing practices.

In regards to media credibility, FGD participants generally concurred with survey respondents in their assessment media distortions, libelous content, disregard to rigorous verification of facts, and media hype of propaganda. However, the stakeholders emphasized that the swift pace of development in new technologies had created a sort of new media anxiety among many people. The Internet had widened access to content, but it had also posed a challenge in verifying materials online.

FGD participants agreed with survey respondents on the poor quality of training opportunities for journalists, lack of initiative from media outlets in in-house training, outdated curricula and modules, quick-fix and shallow approach to imparting training, and faulty participant selection criteria. But they went further in observing that the existing training programs were donor-

driven with little input from beneficiaries themselves, and a long-term, sustainable approach was lacking.

Some FGD participants observed that repeat participation by individuals in the same course had resulted in training fatigue among some trainees while many other media professionals or enthusiasts were having hard time to acclimatize with the fast changing tech world that required multi-tasking and constant adjustments.

## **8.1 Key findings and discussion**

### **Desk review:**

- The post-1990 liberal polity brought about significant growth in media, particularly in the field of radio; but the Nepali press is far from professional.
- Despite Nepali media's expanding role in today's society and its increasing penetration, the extent of their impact in Nepali political and social realm remains unclear.
- Few empirical studies exist that examine media credibility, capacity and literacy. It is hard to generalize on these ideas based on existing analysis and commentaries.
- Generally, literature on media credibility in Nepal shows problems related with source and message credibility. Political partisanship, loss of editorial independence, sensationalism, etc are often cited as contributing to the lack of credibility of media. But, when it comes to public perceptions of the media overall, people hold Nepali media in high esteem.
- Legal provisions today are generally conducive to media development, but few are enforced or implemented uniformly or consistently.
- Codes of media ethics do exist, however, they are not binding on journalists, and a systematic media accountability system has not yet evolved in the country.
- Capacity development efforts have traditionally focused on journalism training, with little consideration of incentives, award, the nature and mode of training, instruction, curricula development as well as infrastructure, stakeholder collaboration, research and development initiatives.
- Formal education in journalism or media topics is gaining popularity, and academic curricula appears to be becoming eclectic and diversifying, however, there is little information available on the scope and impact of these programs on professional development of their graduates.
- Media literacy, the skills to analyze media and their messages critically, has received little attention in the country.

## **Survey of journalists**

### *Attributes of journalists*

- Although women constitute majority of the national population, the survey indicates that women journalists comprise a small portion of the Nepali news workers.
- Most of the Nepali journalists are young; more than half of them are between 19 and 30 years old.
- Majority of journalists, almost 70%, are from the Brahmin/Chhetri background, followed by those from Newari, Madhesi/terai or janajati background.
- Close to one-third of journalists are from the urban Kathmandu Valley, followed by some terai districts (Bara, Morang, Banke).
- The survey suggests a majority of Nepali journalists have obtained higher education, and half of the journalists have a Bachelor's degree.
- A vast majority, three-fourth of the total journalists, come from humanities and social science background, followed by those who are from management discipline.
- The survey indicates that most of the Nepali journalists, about 66%, are married, while about 33 % are single.
- Majority of Nepali journalists work for the newspapers, and there are more journalists working for private media, or working full time.
- More than half of the journalists have 2 to 10 years of work experience, suggesting the number of new entrants to the profession may be high.
- The survey found that more than four-fifth of Nepali journalists earned below Rs. 15000 a month from their work in journalism.

#### *Attitudes of journalists*

##### **Professionalism**

- Nepali journalists mostly emphasize that their main role is to create awareness on developmental issues or to reflect the country's plurality and diversity in their work.
- Nepali journalists consider that seeking undue economic benefit or disclosing identity of victims as lead examples of code violations. More than half of journalists believe lack of awareness about ethics is the main reason for code violation.
- The major challenges perceived by Nepali journalists include partisan image of media professionals, lack of security from state, partisan media houses, and individual media worker's lack of technological resources and training.
- The survey indicates that more than half of Nepali journalists believe, as news professionals, they should be loyal to 'the public in general'.

##### **Credibility**

- Majority of journalists see Nepali media and their content generally trustworthy. However, many tend to see them as partisan.
- Journalists often cite 'mediocre language presentation and style' as adversely affecting the credibility of Nepali media.
- Journalists generally trust all media for news or information. However, more journalists trust such information in newspapers, television, or radio than on the Internet.
- Generally, journalists find the coverage of contemporary topics like peace, democracy, constitution-making, governance, national politics, etc reliable.

## **Capacity**

- Journalists appeared somewhat dissatisfied with the available training, curriculum, instruction and practical opportunities such as in-house training and internships in the country today.
- Professional opportunities like incentives, followed by reporting field trips, mentorship, seminars, are among the often emphasized needs.
- Story idea development, followed by information gathering and writing news stories, and locating sources are among the most sought after training needs of journalists.
- Advanced-level journalistic techniques, and proficiency-level techniques, followed by basic-level techniques were most often cited needs in methods training.
- In terms of resourcefulness, time-management, ICT skills, followed by special language skills and multi-media are among the most commonly cited needs of journalists.
- Many journalists prefer practical, hands-on over other modes of instruction.
- The survey suggests that three-fourth of journalists would seek financial support from their media house or external sources to participate in training in the near future.
- Journalists feel that new media has helped them by enhancing access to subject matter, and by helping contact the sources and to interact with them.
- Although many journalists rely on the Internet for information and news, more than half of those surveyed said they do not have access to new media.
- Majority of journalists are affiliated with one or the other professional association or organization. Many believe such affiliation has helped in their networking efforts.
- Personal beliefs or principles were most often cited as the reasons for journalists' political affiliation, but most of the journalists think such affiliation does not help in their professional capabilities.
- Journalists believe extra income from sources other than their regular work in journalism has helped in their journalistic pursuit
- Journalists tend to have somewhat mixed views about their satisfaction with achievement in the profession; with over 40% saying they are somewhat dissatisfied.

## **New media literacy**

- Many journalists (more than half of those surveyed) report they do not have access to new media. Oddly enough, four-fifth of those surveyed say they could handle new media tools efficiently, for professional work.
- Using new media tools, online searching, video-conferencing, creating web pages or personal blogs are among the most cited new media learning interests of journalists.

## **Public opinion survey**

### *Attributes of the public*

- The male-female ratio of the media using public was slightly higher than that for the journalists' community.
- Majority of the media-consuming public is comprised of young people, almost half of them in the age group 19 to 30 years.
- Almost half comprise the public from Brahmin/Chhetri background, followed by people from the terai/Madhese communities, or janajatis, and Newars.
- Most of the public come from Kathmandu Valley, and terai districts of Bara, Parsa, Rautahat, followed by Morang and Sunsari.
- They are more married than unmarried.
- There were fewer members of the public with higher academic degrees compare to the journalists that were surveyed.
- Most among the public worked in the education sector, followed by business/industry.

### *Public perceptions*

#### **Professionalism**

- The survey results suggest that more than one-third of the public has no idea what topics the Nepali media cover; another one-third believes current affairs is the most frequently covered.
- Similarly, more than one-third of the public is not sure about the most needed topic to be covered by the media.
- Unlike the journalists who saw media role more in generating awareness on development issues, the public emphasizes journalists' role more in generating awareness on health, education, economy and the environment.
- A majority of the public concurs with the journalists in stressing that journalists should be loyal to the general public.
- More than two-third of the public believes that there is no dearth of skilled journalist in Nepal; a majority of the public sees the role of the press in the country's transition to federalism, believes journalists have less political affiliation today, journalism content is getting better now, that media are contributing to exposing cases of corruption, and there is more freedom today, etc.
- Although the public had high perception of journalists' work as a watchdog, or as a catalyst for social harmony, more than half of those surveyed did not believe Nepali media was neutral.

#### **Media credibility**

- Most of the public relied on the radio for information and news, followed by friends and family members, and TV.
- Believability is a major factor for the public trust in media channels, including print and broadcast channels.
- The public is divided in their channel preferences, with most opting for local FM stations, the national radio, and newspapers.

- Almost one-third of the surveyed public believed Nepali media presented news on public interest, followed by those who thought it encouraged citizen participation.
- The public generally does not believe that media houses encourage citizen engagement or participation.
- The public trust TV journalists, followed by journalists of the daily newspapers and radio in that order.
- The public is not sure about their trust on journalists by their location or base.
- The public is not sure regarding their trust in journalists by the topics they cover.
- The public trusts journalists working with government media more than those working with the private media, or community media.
- The public viewed governance, national politics, constitution-making as generally reliable, but the coverage of peace and democracy as not much reliable.
- The public rated the Nepali media top among the institutions it trusted the most. Other institutions in the list were Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), government service, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Nepal Army, Election Commission, National Treasury (Nepal Rastra Bank), Nepal Police, and Nepal government.
- It ranked journalists in the second position, behind farmers, as a trusted professional group. The third and the fourth most trusted groups were government officers and doctors, followed by army personnel, and school teacher. Nurses (4.33%) and NGO workers were equally trusted.

### **Media literacy**

- In terms of their access to media, most members of the public ranked the radio first, followed by TV, newspapers and the Internet
- A majority of the public believes it has the skills to use mobile phone, read newspapers, create web page, play video games, etc. with more than one-third respondents saying they cannot chat online
- Self-reported media use behavior of public indicates that the Nepali public is not far from being a discerning or media literate. More than two-third reported they only scan their media and rarely analyze the context of information given to them.
- A majority of the public surveyed had not produced a variety of written or audio-visual material, had not written to newspapers or called a TV or radio station, etc.

### **SMS poll**

#### **Public trust**

- The public has a favorable view of media organizations and the news/analyses written or produced by journalists. A majority of them believe that their trust in them has increased over the past 3-4 years.

### **Focus group discussions**

### **Professionalism**

- Nepal's media sector is characterized by low salaries, irregular payments, ownership control, non-transparency regarding the investment in the media sector, and insecurity.
- Dedication to profession and building the level of motivation seem to be a big challenge. Projecting a good public image also is a challenge to journalists.
- Newsroom is not female friendly. Similarly, exclusion based on socio-cultural factors is another area of concern for professional growth.

### **Media credibility**

- There are mixed views on whether people's trust on Nepali media have increased or decreased in recent years.
- People tend to trust those media that cater to their interests or curiosities. In many cases the public has displayed their trust to media.
- Lack of seriousness in data verification is one of the major challenges in credibility standard.
- There is also concern about the credibility question of online feeds/sources.
- Distortion of facts is a regular blame on media.
- Electronic media credibility is even lower because of frequent factual inaccuracies and violations of Code of Ethics.

### **Media capacities**

- It is the art of identifying issues and presenting them. It involves media education, practices and training opportunities in Nepal.
- Media houses, training institutes and universities have been promoting journalism through practice, trainings and studies, respectively. Wider ranges of opportunities are opening up in formal education and training sector.
- New Media also has been an informal source of education and for capacity building.
- International fellowships provide good opportunities for journalists to widen their worldview and develop workmanship.

### **Media literacy**

- Participants view media literacy as an ability to use and understand media tools and contents.
- It also means understanding the various media laws, codes and instruments affecting the media sector.
- The use of media was found so pervasive that a participant claimed he used all forms of media, depending on time and context.
- Focus group participants, too, said that it is the inbuilt nature of human mind to know what is happening around us. And the media are playing a key role to address that need.
- The status of media literacy is poor in the country, as some women communicators said during a focus group discussion

- Most of the journalists working as news desk editors are not trained, and this in a sense also reflects media illiteracy.
- The Internet and cellular mobile phones have not been used to their fullest potential mainly due to technological difficulty or ignorance. A vast majority of people do not have access to these resources.

It becomes apparent from the above discussion points that in a number of ways the profile of the journalist that emerges from this survey defies the stereotypical image of the Nepali journalist. Today, the survey shows, the majority of journalists are relatively young, have higher academic degrees, and most work full time. The media and the public hold each other in high esteem. Journalists think they must be most loyal to the general public, and the public considers the media as the most trusted social institution. In addition, the public rates journalists among the second most trusted vocational group, after farmers. The SMS poll results, which show that the public's trust in the media has clearly increased in the past few years, also highlights the growing clout of media in the country.

The overall public perception of media appears positive, with more than two-third of the public believing that there is no dearth of skilled journalist in Nepal today. Majority of the public sees the role of the press in the country's transition to federalism, believes journalists have less political affiliation today, journalism content is getting better now, that media are contributing to exposing cases of corruption, and there is more freedom today, etc. Also in the survey, almost one-third of the public believe Nepali media presents news on public interest, followed by those who thought it encourages citizen participation.

Journalists, on their part, may not be positive about themselves. Results of this survey suggest that they tend to have somewhat mixed views about their satisfaction with achievement in the profession; with over 40% saying they are somewhat dissatisfied. Their general dissatisfaction with the available training, curriculum, instruction, practical opportunities such as in-house training and internships underscores the need for their capacity building. A majority of them call for advanced and proficiency level training, incentives and support.

The results of this survey offer further insights into the other characters, attitudes, behaviors, preferences, or expectations of Nepali journalists and the public at this moment in time. The value of this study lies in its wealth of data, incorporating rare perspectives and views of the general public on media. It is imperative to be cautious in generalizing these results to the journalists' population as a whole. Although the sample size was robust, enough to ensure above 95% confidence level for genuine random sample, not every journalist's name and address was available for this survey. Hence, a combination of sampling methods, stratified proportionately along channels, regions, sex, ethnicity etc was utilized.

For an online survey with selective print option, there is the potential for coverage error, or for non-response or self-reporting bias. One example may relate to "media literacy". Based on literature, media literacy was assessed in terms of access/user skills, critical understanding, and communicative abilities. However, surveys are not effective ways to assess "the level of media

literacy" of the public, especially in assessing their "critical understanding". Self-reporting bias cannot be ruled out in the case of the survey questions on critical viewing habits of individual media users (See Question 56, Public Opinion Survey).

Sometimes, the discrepancy in the responses, and by extension, the behavior of both the journalists and the public can be mystifying. For example, although many journalists in this study said they rely on the Internet for information and news, more than half of those participating in the survey reported they do not have access to new media.

Another facet of this study is the rare insight the results offer into the state of media literacy among the public or the news professionals. A sizable percentage of respondents in the public survey said they were not sure about topic coverage in the media. More than two-third reported they only scan their media and rarely analyze the context of information given to them. It may also come as a surprise that the public reported they trust journalists working with government media more than those working with the private media, or community media.

## **8.2 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the key findings:

- Media education or media literacy should be made a public agenda.
- More editorial freedom, need-based trainings, content-assessment mechanism, vigorous self studies, commitment to profession, and open, dynamic and inclusive newsrooms are the need of the hour.
- Journalists' credibility and accountability should be enhanced.
- Package of programs should be launched (such as in-house and/or out-house media training/refresher courses, fellowship, etc)
- A comprehensive strategy should be made to achieve the right level of media literacy, aimed at both media persons and the public.
- Textbooks should be written, teaching measures to promote credibility and minimize gaps between the media 'literate' and the media 'illiterates'.

### **Recommendations**

(To authorities)

- Undertake systematic, empirical studies on topics such as media credibility, capacity and literacy in order to get a clear picture of media development in the country.
- Formulate a holistic plan for media development and take measures to put the vision in practice.

- Reorient capacity development efforts with sufficient amounts of incentives, awards, and the skill development packages, also promoting stakeholder collaboration, research and development initiatives.
- Work to ensure that all the prevailing legal and official instruments relating to media, information and communications are fully functional in the best interest of people and other stakeholders.

**(To Media Houses)**

- Promote pluralistic ideologies and practices within organizations so as to gradually terminate political partisanship and promote editorial independence.
- Enhance the representation of women, ethnicities, and other minorities in the media, including improving of newsroom diversity.
- Provide for in-house training, incentives and other opportunities to journalists/staff members
- Find ways to improve the economic or financial status of journalists. Provide paid leave, special reporting assignments and similar other facilities involving some financial incentives to journalists.
- Honor the growing public trust by widening the space for public participation and being accountable.

**(To Public/Civil Society)**

- Watch the watchdogs. Keep constant vigil on the ways media houses offer various contents for public consumption. Monitor and evaluate media processes, events and products.
- Make extensive use of media forums to ensure maximum public welfare.

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