

POLITICAL INCLINATION OF JOURNALISTS & ITS INFLUENCE ON NEWS

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INTRODUCTION

Journalism in Nepal has deep roots in democratic movements: against the autocratic Rana rule and direct rule of King, where notable leaders like former Prime Minister of Nepal Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was involved in journalistic work.¹ It was Bhattarai who led the foundation of Journalist Association in Nepal as President in March 1956.

There can be no disagreement with the fact that the inception of development of journalism was political in nature, where partisanship among journalists and their affiliation and ideological nearness to political parties, influenced news production. Many journalists work as tool of political parties through politicized unions, openly (Kharel, 2013).

Journalists affiliation with political units in Nepal, can even be observed by formation of journalists association based on the ideological nearness. There are small journalist organisations in Nepal which are affiliated to political parties viz. Press Union associated to Nepali Congress, Press Chautari associated to CPNUML, Revolutionary Journalists Association associated to UCPN Maoist.²

Even the Federation of Journalists Association of Nepal (FNJ), the umbrella organisation of more than eight thousand working journalists, is not free of political bias. History shows that its central members need support from the above mentioned association or should be one of the active member of the organisation to win elections of FNJ. This shows that FNJ even has high political penetration (K.C., 2013a).

¹The political roads to democratic system in Nepal started in 1950's. The political parties led the democratic movements first against the Rana regime and later years against the direct rule of the king. Rana rule (1846- 1951), reduced the Shah monarchs to figureheads and made the prime minister powerful and other government positions hereditary. This system was marked with tyranny, debauchery, economic exploitation and religious persecution characterizing the Rana rule. Political parties and along with the support of monarch, were able to introduce democracy in Nepal in 1951 by overthrowing the Rana regime. However, the period between 1951- 1960 was marked with transition, where later in 1960's King Mahendra dismissed the elected government, which later resulted in direct rule of the King till 1990. With new constitution in effect, the political parties were banned. The democratic movement in 1990's restored multiparty democracy, where Krishna Prasad Bhattarai became the Prime Minister. Again in Feb 1, 2005, King Gyandendra assumed state power by dismissing the elected government and promised normalcy in Nepal, which was hard hit by the Maoist insurgency that started in 1995. Later with support from Seven Party Alliance the major political forces in Nepal and support from the Maoist, the 2006 April Movement II became successful. This movement led Nepal to become a republic. During all these period Nepalese press played a crucial role to support democratic system.

² Five thousand journalists are members of Press Chautari Nepal, three thousands journalists affiliated with Press Union Nepal whereas two thousands affiliated with Revolution Journalists Association.

Despite the partisan character, the role of such organisations during the authoritarian rule have remained crucial. Their role during such period as a vanguard for democratic system in Nepal needs to be outlined, despite their mission in reporting political affairs, in different periods of Nepal's political transition from dictatorship to democratic system.

Still, journalists' professionalism is at question, when such penetration is found organisation such as FNJ. Research showed that journalists associated with weekly newspapers support a political ideology and political parties (Pathak, 2007), but its impact in the newsroom of daily newspapers are difficult to be addressed despite some claims made by the editors, who say there are political parties cadres working in the daily newspapers.³

However, there is lack of evidences to support the fact that the journalist working at daily newspapers have partisan character in the making of the news. Therefore, this study explores whether journalists working in daily newspapers of Nepal are affected by the political ideology or their affiliation influences the making of the news content.

Many journalists work as tool of political parties through politicized unions, openly.

Prof. P. Kharel

The empirical evidences found during this study showed that all journalists who participated in the survey were affected by political ideology, but their affiliation to the political parties were significantly less, which is 17 per cent in those working at daily newspapers. There is a tendency among journalists of leaving political affiliation, whereas 19 per cent who were ones member of political parties left their affiliation because they believed that it influenced news.

The study found that 79 per cent of journalists maintained that political faith influences writing and presentation of news. However, it is interesting to relate that 80 per cent of journalists maintain that they did not filter news because of political faith in political party. 86 per cent of journalists maintain professionalism while writing news. This points out to the fact that journalists working for daily newspapers have faith in political ideology but are negative towards political affiliation, but they try to maintain high degree of professionalism while reporting news story.

³YuvarajGhimire claimed that journalists in the daily newspaper in Nepal were affiliated to political parties. Paper Presented in a program organized by Outline Media January 27, 2014.

BACKGROUND

Nepalese Journalists: The road to political ideology and affiliation

The historical account suggests that the beginning of journalism or say the birth of journalists in Nepal (if we take into consideration ruling system) have been politically motivated where, media was considered as tool to support the dominant ruling elites, whereas opposition considered it to fight for democratic ideals. Taking into the historical account, the journalism in Nepal has passed through three different phases, which can work in tandem: first the ideological phase, then partisan and professional phase.

The inception of journalism was established by the autocratic Rana rule, with the introduction of Gorkhapatra weekly newspapers, whose guidelines clearly mentioned about not to write against the ruling Rana Premier and the system. However, the oppositional group the political leaders, activists and literary writers who fought against the authoritarian regime, the freedom fighters were the predecessor of journalists of Nepal. This period marked the beginning of democratic ideology phase, where journalists favoured the need of democratic system and wrote against the authoritarian Rana regime.

However, the fall of Rana regime and introduction of democracy in 1951 A.D. can be marked as the practical beginning of journalism, when several pioneering journalists took to publishing newspapers in a transitional democracy. However, the later years marked the partisan press along with the ideological division of journalists. Ideologically the journalists could be divided into three categories, one supporter of democratic ideology, second communist ideology and the third supporter of the King.

The Royal takeover of 1960 represented a repressive press system. The political parties were banned and active leadership of King prevailed from 1979-1989 , a decade through which the political parties were continued to be banned. But newspapers became bolder and started to give alternative political views. Journalism was taken as a mission during this party-less Panchayat era (Khanal, 2001). Mission journalism, which supported democratic ideology was hindered time and again by the government. The private sector media had to struggle for survival at times even by compromising their interests with those in power. The Nepali press as

it was then had very little room for criticism (Shrestha, 2003). The seeds of political parallelism was thus sowed during this period, where journalists close to the political elite and supportive to the state were allowed to function.

The change in political system in 1990s from party less Panchayat System to multiparty democratic system heralded the rise of media outlets⁴ in Nepal, with private investment. The political change came as a major landmark in opening up a new era of liberalism and freedom in the country (Shrestha, 2003); the beginning of professional journalism with large investment in media sector. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) formally guaranteed the freedom of press and publication. The restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990s also boosted media industry in Nepal. It was since this period that media houses were granted licenses which resulted in the mushrooming growth for newspapers, Frequency Modulation (FM) radio and private television channels in Nepal.

The launch of private news media has changed the media-scape in Nepal. The last two decades show corporate and business interest has risen than ever before, “almost all major media in Nepal are the result of diagonal (conglomerate) ownership, with proprietors already having other businesses before venturing into the media business” (Kharel, 2012).

This period marked the high partisan journalism in early 1990s and also the introduction of professional and corporate interest journalism in Nepal, with journalists wanting to be away from the political units and be independent from the partisan culture and it still continues to be the same even today.

However, Nepal was caught in a decade-long civil war since 1995 when armed rebel group, Communist party of Nepal (Maoist) announced war against the state. The impact of the Maoist rebel started to be felt since 2001 after its attack on army barrack in Dang district. Later the state declared a state of emergency, where fundamental rights of the citizens were declined. Journalists supportive to the Maoist were arrested or killed.

⁴Media outlets in Nepal: 518 published newspapers among with 102 are dailies and 381 are weeklies publish regularly; radio granted license is 476 and in operation on regular basis is of number 320; for television license granted number is 29 and more than 2 dozens are in operation.

Nepalese press faced problems and challenges both by the state and the Maoist rebel during this period that lasted till 2006. The frequent skirmishes between the leaders of political parties and the press tell of deep distrust between the two. Reporters have time and again been taken into custody, arrested or detained on flimsy grounds and journalists have been harassed, manhandled, maimed, kidnapped and even murdered. The accusations against the state media regarding news blackouts, falsifying information and muffling the public voice, instead of dying out gradually has ironically, reached new heights (Shrestha, 2003).

Despite all the constitutional guarantees, violations continued. The press was gagged when King Gyanendra took direct control of power in 2005, citing that the government could not maintain law and order situation and Communist Party of Nepal Maoist which had waged People's War since 1996. The Royal government passed Media Ordinance in October, 2005 to silence media in Nepal. Again journalists despite their differences in ideologies were divided into groups, supporter for democracy and supporter for 'autocratic' steps of the King.

The People's Movement-II of 2006 that resorted to Constituent Assembly election turned Nepal into a republican state. Now the country is governed by an Interim Constitution, which also guarantees press freedom and freedom of expression as people's fundamental rights. But in practice, much remains to be done.

The media, no matter state-owned or private, have not been able to make departure from political obligations.

- Prof. C. Khanal

On the other hand, there still remains political parallelism and lack of professionalism in the Nepalese press. Politicization continues to overwhelm the media sector (KC, 2013b). The media, no matter state-owned or privately run, have not been able to make departure from political obligations (Khanal, 2001). The media looked and analysed these events and issues in their own way but sadly mostly from partisan angles (Shrestha, 2003). Parties press also flourishes. There is some truth in the belief that if one is to get reliable information on a particular issue, then one must read papers that are mouthpieces of the ruling party, the opposition and those that are presumably neutral and then form an opinion (Shrestha, 2003). Private and government media had problems.

Even a casual look into its present state of affairs shows that it is still afflicted by two basic maladies namely, the long felt absence of a truly independent and competitive media in the private sector; and the other, the dominant role of the state owned media (Shrestha, 2003).

Some big media houses in Nepal like Kantipur Group, Nepal Republica House those that dominate the media landscape are claimed to be professional. However, in certain instances their stance in certain news content are politically biased, and in most of the instances economic factor influences the news content of the media. And many small media, community media and cooperative media also are not free from partisan interest. This has affected the professionalism of the press.

To sum up the history and growth of journalism and journalist in Nepal have always been linked with these three elements ideology, partisan and professionalism, where, in some instances journalists are considered to be professional on other instances journalist are taken as a mere puppet of the political parties and further they are also considered to be a ideological heads. This trend is perceived even today, however, it is very difficult to demarcate the line of professionalism, as journalist are skilful communicators and they follow certain ideology. So to what extent can they maintain professionalism in their work while communicating information to public matters is hard to ascertain. Therefore, it is necessary to understand theoretically, linkages between politics and journalist to better understand how journalists are influenced by political factors in making of the news story and ways they disseminate certain ideology. The next chapter deals with theoretical perspective.

Theoretical Perspective

The relationship between journalism and politics 'has always been ideological, and deeply *political*' (McNair, 2005, p.35). The essence of media i.e. the freedom of press to impart information are viewed through the political ideology lens, so where there is democratic political system, it is assumed that media tend to be free and professional. However, the reportage of information content presented by the journalists would have political and ideologies resonance.

So, political climate helps to identify the degree of freedom but are not able to free themselves from politics and ideologies where media survives.

Journalists working in the Western democracies define themselves as news professionals, which is marked by objectivity and political neutrality. However, scholars on media studies argue that journalists are subjected towards rigorous political control and demands of ruling elite (Lal, CK, 2011). But, it needs to be observed comparatively, in which part of world are the journalists functioning.

Mancini (2005) points out that media system depends on political system and culture of a country. He outlines that the main difference between the USA, and partially Great Britain, on the one hand, and Europe, on the other, is certainly the relationship with politics. The European model of journalism is much more partisan than the Anglo-American one (Mancini, 2005).

Patterson and Donsbagh (2010) in their paper *News Decisions: Journalists as partisan actors*, concludes by evidence from a survey conducted among journalists in five countries: the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Sweden that journalists are partisan actors whose political beliefs affect their news decisions.

Journalists are subjected towards rigorous political control and demands of ruling elite.

- CK Lal

“In all five countries, there is a significant correlation between journalists personal beliefs and their news decisions. The relationship is strongest in news systems where partisanship is an acknowledged component of daily news coverage and is more pronounced among newspaper journalists than broadcast journalists, but partisanship has a modest impact on news decisions in all arenas of daily news, even those bound by law or tradition to a policy of political neutrality” (Patterson and Donsbagh, 2010).

In China journalists are ‘virtually’ employees of the state and private capital in media ownership is denied. Lee (2005) points out that journalists can only draw on personal faith and political experience to imagine what the party secretary may want. “The communist- capitalist media negotiate, paradoxically, between Communist ideological control and quasi-capitalist market operation” (Lee, 2005).

In India, media is considered to rather free, but the issue of political control in media has questioned the independency of journalists. SuhrithParthasarathy a writer and lawyer explained that there is great deal of freedom that can be reported from India but “there is the issue of political control of the Indian media which begs the question of how truly free are journalists" (Galhotra, 2014).

The effect of politics on journalists is a world-wide phenomena. However, there are instances where political transformation has led journalists to maintain high level of professionalization. “The journalist respects several rules that are common to all those who practice the same profession regardless of their political affiliation. This transformation of American political culture was accompanied by an ardent professionalism of journalism. Partisanship endured, but reporters came increasingly to enjoy a culture of their own independent of political parties” (Mancini, 2005).

In case of Nepal, the change in political ruling system from autocratic rule to direct rule of the king to parliamentary democratic system, journalists have transformed themselves and adopted to these system. Journalists have also changed as per the time and circumstances, they endure professionalism letting themselves loose from the direct clutches of political parties. However, Nepalese press still suffer from accusation of being partisan and lack professionalism. Nepalese media scholars observed that partisan press have affected Nepalese journalists and their professionalism where Nepal continues to have partisan media because media willingly function in such manner (Aditya, 1996, 2010).

The problem of such partisan in press and journalists can lead to disinformation to people. Ghimire (2010) observes that political affiliation and inclining to a political ideology can lead to distortion of coverage, which affects professionalism of journalism. This is the problem where public interest is constantly veiled, and party interest emerge important resulting to biasness. Political biasness has to do with the reporter's education, religion, social class, gender, party affiliation, political ideology, and a whole bevy of personal biases. The reporter filters the story through this personal biases and, although doing so may be largely unconscious, biases the story in some way (Dennis and Merril, 1996). “The bias may be unintentional, but it is still bias;

it may be unconsciously woven into the fabric of the story, but it is still bias” (Dennis and Merrill, 1996).

Different research in the international front support to the fact that journalists are bias towards a political ideology or party or circumstances that are political in nature. In US, journalists call themselves conservative and liberal.

A survey conducted among 1,410 US journalists in 1992 by Indiana University journalism professors David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, about journalists political affiliations showed that 44 per cent of journalists identified themselves as Democrats, compared to only 18 per cent who tagged themselves as Republican.

In the context of Nepal, a cross sectional survey conducted among 132 journalists showed that 39 per cent of journalists were affiliated to political parties whereas 61 per cent indicated no affiliation to political parties (Ramaprasad, 2005).

Ramaprasad (2005) finds that journalists in Nepal are realistic about the influences and recognized that their profession and its practice were not free from personal and particularly institutional pressures.

The reporter filters the story through this personal biases and, although doing so may be largely unconscious, biases the story in some way.

“Among Nepalese journalists, too, news organization policy emerged as the major institutional source of pressure. And while government media respondents heeded government pressure more than did private media respondents, they still rated news organization policy (mean = 1.84) and management guidelines (mean = 2.13) as more critical than government pressure (mean = 2.33)” (Ramaprasad, 2005:104).⁵

- Dennis and Merrill

Another study conducted among 108 journalists working in weekly newspapers of Nepal showed that 52 per cent journalist obtained the membership of political parties, whereas 48 per were not member of any political parties (Pathak, 2006). The study even showed majority

⁵ The influence was measured on six sources based on Institutional: news organization policy, management guidelines, government position. Personal as personal values and opinions, political orientation and ethnic affiliation.

of editors were affiliated to political parties compared to reporters. However, 13 per cent of journalists were of the group saying that they were once members of political parties, where majority of journalists leaving such political affiliation was because of their indifference to party's policy.

Pathak (2006) also found that journalists affiliation to political party have had influence in reporting news. However, majority of journalists maintain that they try to balance their news report and not be biased.

There is a tendency in Nepal to take into account that the journalist working with the daily newspapers are considered to be highly professional, whereas those working at weeklies are generalised as party cadres. This study by Pathak dismisses such myth of journalists working at weekly newspaper. Therefore, this study is based on the journalists working with daily newspapers to understand the ideological and political influence in making of the news content in Nepal.

RESEARCH METHODS

A cross sectional survey of Nepalese journalists was conducted among 52 political journalists working at daily newspapers of Nepal. An online survey form was developed and distributed through emails to major journalist working at daily newspapers between 5th January to 8th February, 2014. The respondents were identified on the basis of political bureau and editorial team of these newspapers. This researcher also made telephone calls requesting journalists reporting on politics to fill out the forms. With some journalists, this researcher was involved to fill out the form face to face.

This sample of 52 political journalists represented 21 media daily newspapers that cover all the daily newspaper political journalists. The questionnaire was first made in Nepali and then translated in English with support from research team members from Centre for Media Research consultation, as it was liable that the journalist would be able to fill forms in Nepali.

More than 60 journalists were emailed to fill out the questionnaire. The respondents were based on the response of the email. So there is an uneven distribution of participation of journalists from different daily newspaper.

Table 1. Journalists Participation from daily newspapers

Name of Newspapers (Daily)	Total number of daily	Number of Participants of each paper	Total Respondents
Kantipur, Nagarik	2	6	12
Annapurna Post	1	5	5
The Kathmandu Post, The Republica	2	4	8
Rajdhani, NayaPatrika, AdarshaSamaj, The Himalayan Times	4	3	12
Karobar, RastriyaDainikPatrika, Gorkhapatra	3	2	6
Nepal Samacharpatra, ArthikAbhiyan, Himalaya Times, The Rising Nepal, Partik, Janakpur Today, NayaYugbodh, Lumbini and MechikaliSandesh.	9	1	9
Total	21 dailies		52

OPERATIONAL DEFINATIONS

- Political affiliation of journalist: Journalists who has taken membership of a political party.
- Political Inclination of journalist: Journalist who is loyal with a political a party because of certain political faith.
- Influence in News: Journalists either prioritize news or minimize news due to certain political faith.
- Professional Balance: Journalist maintains principles of journalism.
- Leftist/ Progressive ideology: Ideology followed by Communist Party, supporting tenant of the political left and progressive ideas and plan.
- Democratic ideology: Ideology followed by Nepali Congress Party and belief of principles of democracy.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Journalist's Political ideology and affiliation

All the journalists surveyed mentioned that they were close to some political ideology. The study shows, 85 per cent of journalists openly expressed their nearness to political ideology, where 15 per cent did not want to mention. 52 per cent of journalists stated that they found themselves close to the leftist ideology whereas 33 per cent of journalists favoured the democratic ideology.

However, being close to political ideology does not mean that journalists are affiliated to political parties. It is interesting to observe that 81 per cent of journalists working in daily newspaper have no affiliation to political parties, whereas 17 per cent of journalists stated they are affiliated to political parties, and 2 per cent did not want to mention.

Despite daily newspapers journalists don't have affiliation with political parties but they are affiliated to journalist association, which are inclined to political parties ideology. The survey finds that 14 respondents declared their affiliation with journalist association affiliated to political ideas, where 71 per cent of journalists are affiliated with Press Chautari Nepal (journalist organization which have inclination with the political party CPN-UML), 22 per cent with Press Union Nepal (journalist organization which have inclination with the political party Nepali Congress) and 7 per cent with Revolutionary Journalist Association (journalist organization which have inclination with the political party UCPN-Maoist).

Among them 42 per cent said that they obtained affiliation for professional welfare and 68 per cent because of their political belief. However, the study also showed the tendency of journalists leaving political parties affiliation. 19 per cent of journalists had previous affiliation, but the major reasons mentioned was party affiliation affected the profession. The data revealed that 64 per cent of journalists have never been affiliated to political parties. These groups of journalists pointed out the reasons for not being affiliated are: be independent (63 per cent), affect profession (27 per cent), institutional policies not get party affiliation (3 per cent).

Journalists were even asked about their expectation for being political affiliated. Majority of journalists declined the need for political appointments. 56 per cent journalists were of the

view that they would take political appointment whereas 25 per cent were willing to take political appointments and 19 per cent did not want to comment.

Among the 25 per cent who would take political appointments wanted to be appointed as press adviser (3 per cent), press council (21 per cent), ambassador (15 per cent) and government media board (21 per cent). The journalists were even asked if they were interested to join politics in future, 27 per cent wanted to join politics whereas 73 per cent declined to join politics.

Table 2. Distribution of journalists based on political ideology and affiliation to political parties and other tendencies

Nearness to Political Ideology	Number	Percentage
Leftist Progressive	27	52
Democratic	17	33
No comment	8	15
Affiliation to Political Parties		
Yes	9	17
No	42	81
No Comment	1	2
Affiliation of press wings of political party		
Press Chautari	10	71
Press Union	3	22
Revolutionary Journalist Association	1	7
Reasons for affiliations		
Professional welfare	6	42
Political belief	8	68
Journalists expectation of political appointments		
Press Council	3	21
Press Adviser	6	43
Government media board	3	21
Ambassador	2	15

Influence in News

This survey showed that in general the journalists viewed that the political inclination influences news. 79 per cent journalists are of the view that political inclination influence news, where 17 per cent points out it did not and 4 per cent did not want to comment.

Table 3. Distribution of journalists view on political influence on news

Political belief influences news	Number	Percentage
Yes	41	79
No	9	17
No Comment	2	4
Impact in News writing and presentation		
Yes	34	65
No	16	31
No comment	2	4
Filtering news		
Yes	3	6
No	42	81
No comment	7	13
Exaggeration of positive news		
High	1	2
Medium	9	17
Low	19	37
Very Low	23	44
Hide negative news		
High	1	2
Medium	2	4
Low	15	29
Very Low	34	65

Similarly, about the journalists personal experience majority of respondents (65 per cent) said that political inclination influences in writing and presentation of news story. However, they claim to be independent while presenting news story. 81 per cent journalists said they were not bias in selection and imparting information due to political inclination, i.e. they did not filter news story. Despite political inclination, exaggeration of positive and hiding negative news was comparatively low.

Professionalism and balance

The survey showed political journalists maintained some degree of professionalism. 93 per cent of respondents maintained that the situation of political journalism is professional to some degree. Here, majority of journalists (52 per cent) rated the practice to medium level of professionalism.

But the respondents' practice of professionalism in balancing news story showed that 81 per cent of respondents said that they maintained high degree of professionalism in making of the news.

Table 4. Distribution of journalists view professionalism and balancing news

Professionalism in political journalism	Number	Percentage
Very High	4	8
High	17	33
Medium	27	52
Low	3	6
No	1	2
Professional balance in writing news		
Very High	20	39
High	22	42
Medium	8	15
Low	2	4

Journalists Profile

The profile of journalists reporting on politics that emerged from 52 respondents showed that majority of journalists is male (96 per cent) and female (4 per cent). Majority of political journalists belonged to age group 31 to 40 years (46 per cent). 36 per cent belonged to 21 to 30 year group and 12 per cent belonged to 41 to 50 year group. Similarly, 4 per cent belonged to over-50 year and 2 per cent belonged to under-20 year age group. This shows those journalists reporting on politics are male and fall between age group 31 to 40 years.

Majority of journalists reporting political affairs are graduates from universities in Nepal. 54 per cent of journalists have passed Masters degree, whereas 36 per cent of journalists have passed Bachelors degree, and 10 per cent of journalists have completed minimum education of 12 grade.

This survey showed that majority of journalist 67 per cent of journalists have experience of working in the field for more than 11 years where 37 per cent of political journalist have experience of working less than 10 years. A majority of 60 per cent of journalists started to reporting on politics since the beginning of their career, which is different to other journalists who started by reporting on other beats and then write on politics was 40 per cent.

Table 5. Distribution of journalists by demography

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	50	96
Female	2	4
Age (years)		
Below 21	1	2
21-30	19	36
31-40	24	46
41-50	6	12
Above 50	2	4
Education		
Proficiency Certificate Level	5	10
Graduate	19	36
Post Graduate	28	54
Experience		
Less than 5 years	3	6
Between 6-10 years	14	27
Between 11-15 years	23	44
Between 16-20 years	6	11
Between 21-25 years	4	8
Between 26-30 years	1	2
Above 30 years	1	2
Beat Reporting		
Nepali Congress	12	23
CPN-UML	16	31
UCPN Maoist	9	17
Regional political parties (Tarai based party)	6	11.5
CPN Maoist	1	2
Other	1	2
Don't want to mention	1	2
All parties	6	11.5

With respect to party wise reporting, 31 per cent of journalists report on CPN-UML, 23 per cent report on Nepali Congress, 17 per cent on UCPN (Maoist), 10 per cent on regional political parties (Tarai based parties) 2 per cent have Communist Party Nepal (Maoist), 11 per cent report on all parties, 2 per cent haven't given any political parties and 4 per cent of journalists reports on other political parties. This points out to the fact that media houses manage beat reporter targeting large political parties. Nepali Congress, CPN- UML and UCPN

(Maoist) become respectively first, second and third largest parties from Constitution Assembly election 2013.

Journalists were even asked whether they were allowed to choose their news beat they liked, 39 per cent of journalist said beat was assigned to them by the editor, 19 per cent of journalists said they got responsibility by the News Coordinator, 40 per cent of journalists said they chose own self and 2 per cent of journalists didn't like to disclose.

Those who chose oneself, 76 per cent of journalists said that they chose their beat on the basis of their knowledge about subject matter, 14 per cent of journalists said they chose their beat on the basis of access, 5 per cent of journalist said they chose due to inclination and 5 per cent of journalists didn't like to mention.

Those who didn't choose beat themselves, 68 per cent of journalists said they got their beat according to their will and 21 per cent of journalists said 'no' whereas 11 per cent of journalists didn't like to disclose.

To sum up, the empirical evidences found during this study showed that the journalists reporting on political affairs, working with the daily newspaper are to some extent affected by political ideology, but their affiliation to the political parties were significantly less. There is a tendency of journalist (19 per cent) leaving political affiliation. They believed that party affiliation influence their profession.

The study even found that despite 79 per cent of journalists maintained that political faith influence news and whereas 69 per cent stated that it affected in their practise of presentation and writing of the news. However, it is interesting to relate that 81 per cent of journalists maintained that they did not filter news because of political faith. 81 per cent of journalists claimed that they maintained a high degree of professionalism and balanced news reports.

This points out to the fact that journalists working for daily newspapers have faith in political ideology but are negative towards political affiliation, but they try to maintain a high degree of professionalism while reporting news story.

CONCLUSION

The empirical evidences from the survey clearly indicates that journalists reporting on political affairs in major daily newspapers of Nepal are influenced by political ideology at personal level, but their affiliation to the political parties were significantly less. Taking into consideration of past study conducted by Pathak and Ramaprasad, Nepalese journalists affiliation to political parties are declining.

This study showed that only 17 per cent of journalist were affiliated to political parties that worked for daily newspaper specially the political journalists, whereas it was 61 per cent in Ramaprasad's report (2005) and 52 per cent in Pathak's report (2006). This study also showed the tendency of journalists leaving the political parties affiliation (19 per cent), who were once members of political parties, had left the affiliation citing that it affected their profession.

This supports the claim of professionalism that they maintain. At least 81 per cent of journalists maintained that they did not filter news because of political faith. 81 per cent of journalists claimed that they maintained high degree of professionalism and balanced news reports.

However, journalists working independently cannot be 100 per cent. To certain level, political influence and journalists personal ideological support does show effect in writing and presentation of news report. The evidences also support this fact, where 79 per cent journalists are of the view that political inclination influence news in general, and at personal level 65 per cent maintained that political inclination influenced in writing and presentation of news story.

Further this tendency is also seen in exaggeration of positive news of political parties, toward which the journalists are inclined to and the hiding negative news cannot be totally discarded. However, this tendency is low among this group of journalist surveyed.

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