

**COVERAGE OF TRANSGENDER ISSUES IN THE
DAILY NEWSPAPERS OF NEPAL**

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

Madan Bhandari Memorial College

New Baneshwor, Kathmandu

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Arts in

Mass Communication and Journalism

Subject Code: JMC-570

Submitted by

Jebicca Karki

Madan Bhandari Memorial College

T.U. registration: 6-2-0453-0244-2013

Symbol No: 4320902

2023

COVERAGE OF TRANSGENDER ISSUES IN THE DAILY NEW...

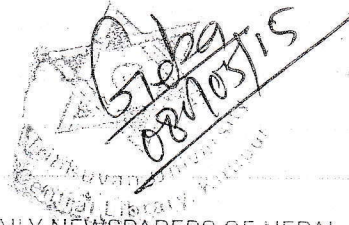
Similarity Index

By: Jebicca Karki

As of: Sep 1, 2023 12:13:10 PM
14,147 words - 3 matches - 1 source

1%

Mode: Similarity Report ▾



paper text:

COVERAGE OF TRANSGENDER ISSUES IN THE DAILY NEWSPAPERS OF NEPAL A DISSERTATION Submitted to Department of Journalism and Mass Communication MadanBhandari Memorial College Anamnagar, Kathmandu In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Arts in Mass Communication and Journalism Submitted by Jebicca Karki MadanBhandari Memorial College T.U. registration: 6-2-0453-0244-2013 Symbol No: 4320902 Subject Code: JMC-570 2023 CHAPTER-ONE 1. Introduction 1.1 Background of the Study Girls, women, boys, men, and those who identify as having a different gender all have roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities that are socially created. It affects how individuals behave and interact, how they see themselves and other people, and how power and resources are distributed in society. Gender identity occurs on a continuum and may evolve over time; it is not limited to a binary (girl/woman, boy/man). The roles that people and groups take on, the expectations that are put on them, how they interact with others, and the nuanced ways that gender is institutionalized in society all contribute to the wide range of how people and groups interpret, feel, and express gender. Bhattarai (2004) pointed out that gender is the socially determined expectations for what it means to be male and female and is caused by the psychological and social development of individuals within a society, as opposed to sex, which is the biologically determined differences between men and women, for example, visible sexual organs that distinguish men from women. Transgender is described as "an umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth" in the 2014 dictionary of terminology for transgender in the GLAAD Media Guide. The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People, (2017) suggests that both "transgender" and "cisgender" are descriptive terms that help us understand and discuss gender identity. They do not indicate a specific gender on their own, but rather describe whether a person's gender identity aligns or doesn't align with societal expectations based on their birth- assigned sex. Transgender individuals are those whose gender identity, which is their personal sense of their own gender, does not correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth. This assignment is typically based on visible physical characteristics, such as genitalia. For example, if someone is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man, they are considered transgender. The term "cisgender" is used to describe individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. In other words, if someone identifies with the same gender that society and medical professionals initially assigned to them based on their physical characteristics, they are considered cisgender. For instance, a person who is assigned male at birth and identifies and lives as a man is cisgender. Trans is a shortened word for transgender, which also refers to trans persons, trans women, trans people, and trans men (NCTE, 2009). Male and female are the only two sexes; nonetheless, transgender is also a gender. The term 'transgender' refers to people who identify as other genders rather than males or females. Queer is another name for persons who are not straight. It is an umbrella phrase for all people who have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. It may encompass persons who are not primarily masculine or feminine (those who are non-binary or gender-queer, including bi-gender, pan-gender, gender-fluid, or a-



LETTER OF APPROVAL

This dissertation entitled “Coverage of transgender issues in the daily newspapers of Nepal” has been submitted by Ms. Jebicca Karki for the final examination for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master in Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication. I hereby, certify that the Evaluation Committee of the faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore, accepted it for the degree.

APPROVED By

.....

Yam Bahadur Dura

Thesis Supervisor

.....

Dr. Shyam Paudel

External Examiner

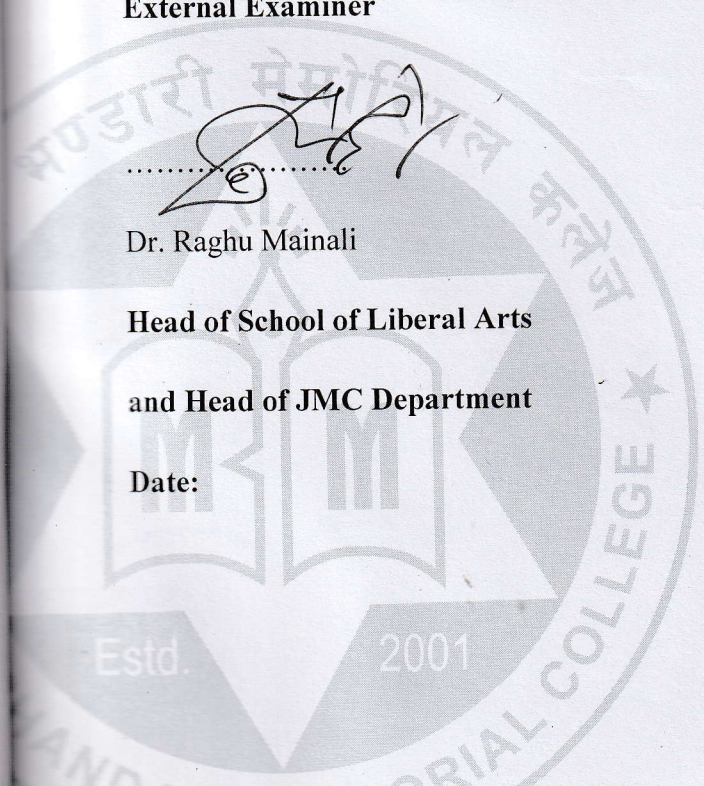
.....

Dr. Raghu Mainali

Head of School of Liberal Arts

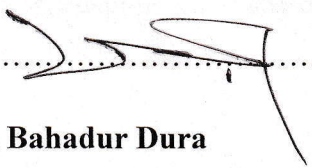
and Head of JMC Department

Date:



LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that Ms. Jebicca Karki has rigorously done this thesis entitled “**Coverage of transgender issues in the daily newspapers of Nepal**” I hereby recommend this corrected version of the dissertation for final evaluation and acceptance to the Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master in Journalism and Mass Communication.

.....


Mr. Yam Bahadur Dura

(Thesis Supervisor)

Date: 2080-06-05

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled “**Coverage of transgender issues in the daily newspapers of Nepal**” is an original report of my research submitted to the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of Madan Bhandari Memorial College. It is put forward for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Masters of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication affiliated by Tribhuvan University. It has been written by me under the supervision of Mr. Yam Bahadur Dura, a faculty member of Journalism and Mass Communication Department. I assure that this has not been submitted for any previous degree. It is almost entirely my own work; the collaborative contributions have been indicated clearly and acknowledged. Due references have been provided on all supporting literatures and resources. I shall be solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.



Jebicca Karki

Date: 2080-06-05

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Yam Bahadur Dura sir who made it possible to complete my research project successfully. His guidance, advice and immense support carried me through all the stages of this thesis project. It was a great privilege and honor to work and study under his guidance.

My sincere gratitude also goes to the Head of School of Liberal Arts and the Head of JMC Department of Madan Bhandari Memorial College Dr. Raghu Mainali for his reinforces and positive counseling throughout my research period.

I would also like to thank my friend Mr. Sabin Rai who constantly supported me throughout my research process and made contributions through several suggestions regarding the topic.

Finally, I would like to show my deep appreciation to my loving mother Mrs. Bala Adhikari for her encouragement, guidance and support throughout my research.

DEDICATION

This thesis is sincerely dedicated to my exceptional mother, Mrs. Bala Adhikari. Her constant support and inspiration have been the driving forces behind my decision to pursue Mass Communication as both a career and an academic pursuit. Her unwavering encouragement has played a crucial role in my successful completion of a degree in this field of study. I want to express my deep gratitude to her for the diverse ways she has enriched both my life and educational journey. The successful accomplishment of this academic milestone stands as a reflection of her unwavering belief in my abilities and her continuous motivation.

Moreover, I offer this heartfelt dedication with utmost respect to all the individuals who have directly or indirectly contributed significantly to the realization of this project. Through their combined efforts, guidance, and input, they have intricately shaped the foundation of this scholarly undertaking, highlighting the collaborative essence of academic advancement.

ABSTRACT

The transgender community's visibility and representation in media play a crucial role in fostering societal acceptance and understanding. This study examines the extent to which Nepal's leading newspapers prioritize the transgender community through their news coverage. The research aims to shed light on the frequency and depth of stories related to transgender individuals, offering insights into the media's role in shaping public perceptions. The primary objective of this thesis is to investigate the priority given to the transgender community by Nepal's prominent daily newspapers in terms of news coverage. The study seeks to uncover whether newspapers adequately address the issues faced by transgender individuals, thus contributing to the broader discourse on media's influence on social inclusion.

A comprehensive six-month study was conducted utilizing a mixed-methods approach. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were employed to comprehensively analyze the content of leading Nepali daily newspapers. Samples of news articles were collected and systematically analyzed to gauge the prevalence and depth of coverage on transgender topics. Additionally, Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted with five media experts to glean their perspectives on the issue.

The analysis of collected data revealed a significant gap in the coverage of transgender community-related issues within Nepali newspapers. English-language newspapers demonstrated a modest effort in covering stories related to transgender individuals. However, no such stories were identified within the Nepali-language newspapers. The interviews with media experts provided consistent feedback, indicating a consensus that the coverage of transgender news and narratives in Nepali newspapers is insufficient.

This study underscores the inadequate attention given to transgender issues in Nepali newspapers. The findings align with the experts' consensus that more equitable coverage is needed, akin to the prominence afforded to women's issues. The study emphasizes the pivotal role of journalists in creating a safe space for transgender individuals to share their stories openly and without fear of societal backlash. It also highlights the experts' recommendation for broader and more inclusive coverage of transgender concerns, fostering their normalization and integration into the fabric of society. Ultimately, this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue on media's role in shaping perceptions of marginalized communities and advocates for a more inclusive approach to news coverage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE NO.
Letter of recommendation	i
Declaration	ii
Acknowledgement	iii
Dedication	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi-vii
List of Tables	viii
Abbreviation	ix
Chapter One: Introduction	
1.1 Background of the Study	1-5
1.2 Statement of Problem	5-6
1.3 Research Questions	6
1.4 Objective of the Study	7
1.5 Significance of the Study	7-8
1.6 Conceptual Framework	8-9
1.7 Limitations and Delimitation	9-10
1.8 Organization of the Study	10
Chapter Two: Literature Review	
2.1 Theoretical Review	11-14
2.2 Policy Review	14-16
2.3 Empirical Literature Review	17-21
Chapter Three: Research Methods	
3.1 Research Design	22-23
3.2 Selection of the Study Area	23
3.3 Nature and Source of Data	23-24
3.4 Universe and Sampling Procedure	24-25

3.5 Method of Data Collection	25-26
3.5.1 Content Analysis	25
3.5.2 Key Informant Interview	25-26
3.6 Method of Data Analysis	26
Chapter Four: Analysis and Interpretation of Data	
4.1 Coverage of transgender issues in Nepali newspapers	27-29
4.2 Views of Key Informant Interviewees	29-35
4.3 Findings	35-36
Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations	
5.1 Summary	37-38
5.2 Conclusion	38-39
5.3 Recommendations	40-41
5.4 Areas for Further Research	41-42
ANNEX 1- Interview Questions	43
ANNEX 2- Interviewees Profile	44
REFERENCES	45-48

LIST OF TABLE

CONTENT	PAGE NO
1. Summary of coverage of transgender issues in the Nepali leading daily newspapers for six months	28

ABBREVIATIONS

LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual
Etc.	Et cetera
MAJMC	Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication
i.e.	That is
ID	Identity
Trans	Transgender
TGD	Transgender and gender diverse
KII	Key informant interview
UCLA	University of California Los Angeles
GLAAD	The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
NCTE	National Center for Transgender Equality

CHAPTER-ONE

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Girls, women, boys, men, and those who identify as having a different gender all have roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities that are socially created. It affects how individuals behave and interact, how they see themselves and other people, and how power and resources are distributed in society. Gender identity occurs on a continuum and may evolve over time; it is not limited to a binary (girl/woman, boy/man). The roles that people and groups take on, the expectations that are put on them, how they interact with others, and the nuanced ways that gender is institutionalized in society all contribute to the wide range of how people and groups interpret, feel, and express gender.

Bhattarai (2004) pointed out that gender is the socially determined expectations for what it means to be male and female and is caused by the psychological and social development of individuals within a society, as opposed to sex, which is the biologically determined differences between men and women, for example, visible sexual organs that distinguish men from women. Transgender is described as "an umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth" in the 2014 dictionary of terminology for transgender in the GLAAD Media Guide.

The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People, (2017) suggests that both "transgender" and "cisgender" are descriptive terms that help us understand and discuss gender identity. They do not indicate a specific gender on their own, but rather describe whether a person's gender identity aligns or doesn't align with societal expectations based on their birth-assigned sex.

Transgender individuals are those whose gender identity, which is their personal sense of their own gender, does not correspond with the gender they were assigned at birth. This assignment is typically based on visible physical characteristics, such as genitalia. For example, if someone is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man, they are considered transgender.

The term "cisgender" is used to describe individuals whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth. In other words, if someone identifies with the same gender that society and medical professionals initially assigned to them based on their physical

characteristics, they are considered cisgender. For instance, a person who is assigned male at birth and identifies and lives as a man is cisgender.

Trans is a shortened word for transgender, which also refers to trans persons, trans women, trans people, and trans men (NCTE, 2009).

Male and female are the only two sexes; nonetheless, transgender is also a gender. The term 'transgender' refers to people who identify as other genders rather than males or females. Queer is another name for persons who are not straight. It is an umbrella phrase for all people who have a gender identity or gender expression that differs from the sex assigned to them at birth. It may encompass persons who are not primarily masculine or feminine (those who are non-binary or gender-queer, including bi-gender, pan-gender, gender-fluid, or a-gender), as well as people whose gender identification is the opposite of their assigned sex (trans men and trans women). Transgender persons are frequently thought of as belonging to a third gender. Cross-dressers may be included under a very broad definition of transgender.

Sexual orientation has no bearing on being transsexual. People who identify as transgender may choose not to categorise their sexual orientation as either gay, bisexual, or asexual. The terms "transgender" and "intersex" are used to refer to persons who were born with physical sex characteristics that did not conform to traditional binary concepts of male or female bodies.

Gender expression is the way a person demonstrates their gender in a given cultural setting by their actions, demeanor, hobbies, and outward appearance. Numerous gender identities fall under the umbrella of the word "transgender," and transgender persons might have various sexual orientations. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, and Asexual, or LGBTQIA, are only a few of the gender identities that fall under the umbrella term "transgender." Until recently, this acronym was solely used to refer to LGBT, or Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, and Transgender people. But when more and more sexual orientations came to light, transgender groups are now referred to as LGBTQIA+.

The queer community today encompasses more people than only lesbians, homosexuals, bisexuals, and transgender people. The scope has widened, and the acronym now includes a few more elements. These days, the LGBTQIA community is often referred to as the queer community.

According to Gold (2018), not only have views and times changed, but so has the terminology used to talk about gender identity and sexual orientation. As a result, a few more letters and a

collection of auxiliary language relating to both sexuality and gender have been added to the already existing L.G.B.T. acronym. However, not everyone has yet adopted them.

In western societies, these communities have gained acceptance and are now viewed as normal and equal to people of the other straight gender. However, in culturally conservative nations like Nepal and India, this term has not yet become common place, and the society has not fully accepted transgender people as being as equal and normal as people of the other straight gender. In Butler (1999). According to the theory of gender performativity, individuals express their gender in accordance with culturally generated standards and definitions of what it means to be male or female. We can distinguish between the categories of "men" and "women" thanks to cultural conceptions of male and female identity. As a result of our societal recognition of gendered subjects as either men or women when they appear on television, we start to instinctively identify them with ingrained characteristics.

Transgender persons are frequently seen in Nepal as belonging to the third gender. The existence and survival of the transgender person are still in doubt in a society like ours where women are still subjugated and considered to be the second sex. Due to their fear of society, very few people have stepped forward to disclose their genuine sexual orientation. While many people have yet to discover their genuine gender, many more are hiding their true selves out of concern for social rejection.

Although transgender persons play an important part in our society, they are not treated with the same respect as other members of society and frequently become the target of injustice and prejudice.

The Williams Institute's Global Acceptance Index indicates that acceptance of the LGBTQ community has increased in 56 out of 175 nations since 1981, according to an article in the World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2022). The top five most accommodating nations are Canada, Sweden, the Netherlands, Iceland, and Norway, with the United States coming in at number 23.

According to Sharma & Banerji (2020), after the end of the decade-long Maoist civil war in 2006 and the abolition of the monarchy two years later, the socially conservative Himalayan country has become more progressive with regard to transgender rights.

Additionally, transgender rights are among the most advanced in Asia in Nepal. Transgender rights are acknowledged as essential rights in the Nepalese Constitution. The government was

required to stop discriminating against transgender individuals and put policies in place to ensure their equal rights as citizens by the Supreme Court in 2007 (LGBT Rights in Nepal).

The media bears the responsibility of comprehensively addressing and representing every facet within a society, functioning as a conduit for those who might otherwise go unheard. Serving as a beacon for marginalized voices, the media plays a pivotal role in enabling individuals to amplify their perspectives, thereby ensuring inclusivity. This is particularly pertinent for transgender individuals, who, as integral members of society, also seek avenues within the media to articulate their concerns and aspirations.

Despite the presence of dedicated organizations like the Blue Diamond Society, which fervently advocate for the rights and well-being of the queer community, there remains a pertinent need for an accessible platform that can effectively magnify their voices. This is where the media steps in as an indispensable catalyst for change. By affording a space for these narratives, the media functions as an amplifier for the struggles, stories, and triumphs of transgender individuals, rendering their experiences visible and compelling the wider society to acknowledge and engage with their issues.

The transgender community has been grappling with a multitude of challenges in their daily lives, and certain issues within this realm necessitate attention and action at both authoritative and state levels. A notable absence of queer representation within the parliament underscores the imperative for the media to step into the role of advocate on behalf of these sexual minorities, championing their rights and safeguarding their well-being.

The media serves as a comprehensive conduit for news from all corners of society, assuming the responsibility of shedding light on matters pertinent to marginalized groups. Its pivotal role in fostering understanding, development, and awareness concerning transgender individuals cannot be overstated; it has the potential to accentuate their concerns and predicaments, thereby prompting governmental action on a prioritized basis. This, in turn, empowers transgender individuals to cultivate a newfound consciousness of their embodied identities, while also facilitating the construction or consolidation of their sense of self.

Tasked with the objectives of informing, assuming, and educating, the media engages in the profound transformation of societal perceptions. Its reach extends to broadcasting critical developments at national and global levels, amplifying voices from marginalized communities, among which the transgender demographic holds significance. Beyond disseminating

information, the media wields considerable influence over society, molding opinions and shaping judgments on a diverse range of matters. It effectively serves as a conduit through which individuals stay apprised of the world's occurrences and form their perspectives.

Transgender individuals occupy a segment of the population that often grapples with diminished social, cultural, and legal recognition. Media representation emerges as a pivotal force shaping awareness and spotlighting the challenges these individuals face. By fostering shifts in perceptions and attitudes, the media actively participates in the construction of gender identities, as highlighted by Hadia Khalil (2020).

Moreover, the media stands as an advocate for marginalized communities, bridging the gap between unheard voices and governing bodies. In cases where issues affecting these minorities remain marginalized, the media becomes their vocal advocate. The transgender community is among these suppressed segments of society.

Given that transgender and sexual minorities are integral components of our societal fabric, the media carries the obligation of spotlighting and addressing their concerns.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In accordance with the recent population census conducted in Nepal during the year 2078 B.S., the total populace of Nepal amounts to 29,164,578 individuals. Of this demographic, a mere 2,928 individuals were officially identified as belonging to the third gender or transgender category, constituting a mere 0.01% of the overall population (National Population and Housing Census, 2021). This statistical evidence underscores the marginalized status of transgender individuals within Nepali society. It is plausible that this figure may reflect the reluctance of certain individuals to openly acknowledge or embrace their authentic gender identity due to apprehensions about societal non-acceptance, a prevailing sentiment within this traditionally conservative nation.

In contexts marked by intolerance and insensitivity, minority and marginalized groups are often subjected to exclusion, boycott, isolation, defamation, vilification, discouragement, intimidation, neglect, threats, or violation (Kharel, 2012). Transgender persons, owing to their gender identity, frequently encounter distinct forms of adversity, encompassing gender-based discrimination, violence, mental health challenges, safety concerns, issues regarding transgender rights, educational disparities, and equitable access to government employment opportunities. Notably,

Nepal, as a nation, has yet to fully cultivate an affirming attitude towards minority segments of its population. The societal acceptance of transgender individuals and other sexual minorities remains a work in progress. Although these groups have been constitutionally acknowledged and granted special rights, they have yet to attain parity with heterosexual individuals in terms of social integration.

A report by The Record (2020) asserts that gender recognition represents merely the foundational stride toward validating and legally formalizing one's identity. Transgender individuals in Nepal encounter violations that permeate all spheres of their lives, even though substantive legislative measures to safeguard them from such infringements, specifically stemming from their transgender identity, are currently absent. Despite the absence of comprehensive and efficacious legal safeguards, Nepal is still perceived as a country that is accommodating to transgender individuals, earning recognition for having legally enshrined their rights.

Given that transgender individuals are integral members of society and citizens of the nation, it is imperative that their voices receive equitable attention alongside those of their male and female counterparts. Paradoxically, their perspectives are not accorded proportional representation. The majority of researchers and publishers predominantly address women's issues when discussing matters of gender equality and rights, with relatively scant attention directed towards transgender concerns. The predicaments faced by transgender individuals remain under-addressed and inadequately advocated for. The present study endeavors to discern the extent of media coverage dedicated to transgender issues.

1.3 Research Question

This paper tends to answer the following question on the coverage of issues related to the transgender and other sexual minority groups:-

1. How often do the print media cover the issues of the transgender?
2. What is the status of transgender in the Nepali media in terms of coverage of the issues related to them?

1.4 Objective of the Study

The general objective is to analyze the news coverage pattern of the issues related to the transgender by the Nepalese newspapers.

The specific objectives of carrying out the study are as follows:-

1. To analyze the how often the Nepali daily newspapers cover issues related to the trans-gender.
2. To explore the importance given by the Nepali daily newspapers to the issues of the transgender.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Researching the coverage pattern of transgender issues in the daily newspapers of Nepal holds significant importance due to its multifaceted implications. Newspapers are pivotal sources of information and opinion formation for the general public, making an analysis of their coverage essential in comprehending how media narratives influence public perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs concerning gender diversity and transgender individuals. By delving into the nature of media representation, researchers can shed light on whether transgender voices and experiences are adequately represented in the media landscape, thereby contributing to increased visibility and awareness.

Moreover, an examination of media coverage enables the identification and addressing of harmful stereotypes and misinformation that often persist about marginalized groups, including transgender individuals. This research serves as a platform to pinpoint instances of insensitive portrayals and misleading information, thus facilitating efforts toward more accurate, sensitive, and empathetic reporting. Such a comprehensive analysis is crucial not only for the improvement of media practices but also for challenging societal biases that may stem from erroneous portrayals.

Beyond its immediate implications, researching the coverage pattern of transgender issues in Nepalese newspapers plays a pivotal role in advocacy, awareness-raising, and policy change. Advocacy groups and activists can gauge the effectiveness of their initiatives and strategies in enhancing awareness about transgender issues. By discerning coverage gaps and areas in need of greater attention, they can tailor their efforts to address these disparities more effectively. Moreover, media coverage significantly influences policy and legal changes. A thorough analysis of how transgender issues are framed and discussed in newspapers can reveal gaps in

policy debates and serve as a foundation for advocating more inclusive policies that genuinely address the unique challenges faced by transgender individuals.

This research also contributes to academic inquiries and social understanding. Researchers can use insights derived from studying media coverage to conduct comprehensive studies on the impact of media on public perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. This further deepens our comprehension of the intricate role media plays in shaping societal dynamics and fostering changes in collective outlook.

Ultimately, this research aims to foster inclusivity, encourage progressive change, and facilitate an accurate understanding of transgender issues in Nepal. Through an insightful analysis of coverage patterns, media outlets can be prompted to offer more authentic, equitable, and compassionate reporting on transgender topics. This shift in media practices contributes to the cultivation of a more inclusive and enlightened society that respects and acknowledges the experiences and challenges faced by transgender individuals.

The figures obtained from this study can show the true status of the issues of the transgender and other sexual minorities in terms of their coverage in Nepali media. This research on the coverage of transgender issues in the Nepali newspapers is not only important for the academic purposes, but it also has its practical implications. This study will help to know whether the representation of the transgender community by media is contributing positive results towards their lives, status etc. Furthermore, this study will be proved little effort for the guidance of the policy makers while framing a policy related to media and transgender representation.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

This study is rooted in the Spiral of Silence theory, which was introduced by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, a German political scientist, in 1974. The term "spiral of silence" refers to the tendency of individuals to remain silent if they believe their opinions go against the prevailing majority viewpoint on a particular topic. This theory explains this phenomenon based on a few key factors:

Fear of Isolation: When individuals sense that their perspective differs from the commonly accepted opinion, they are afraid of becoming isolated from the larger group or public. This fear of being socially marginalized encourages them to withhold their contrary opinions.

Fear of Reprisal: There's also a fear that expressing their differing opinion could lead to more severe consequences beyond social isolation, such as losing their job, status, or facing other negative outcomes.

The dominant viewpoint gains prominence in the public discourse while other perspectives gradually fade away because their advocates choose to remain silent. Essentially, people are reluctant to openly express their attitudes when they believe they are in the minority due to their concern about being isolated from those around them. This phenomenon is referred to as the "Spiral of Silence."

In simpler terms, the theory explains that individuals tend to keep quiet about their opinions if they believe those opinions are not in line with what most people around them believe. They fear being left out or facing negative consequences. This process eventually leads to the suppression of minority views, and the dominant perspective gains even more visibility.

In summary, the Spiral of Silence theory by Noelle-Neumann delves into why people choose to remain silent when they perceive their opinions as divergent from the prevailing consensus. This can lead to the gradual disappearance of alternative viewpoints from public discussions, as individuals are hesitant to voice their differing opinions out of fear of isolation and potential negative repercussions.

Applying this theory to research on the coverage of transgender issues in the daily newspapers of Nepal can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of media representation and societal attitudes towards this topic.

1.7 Limitation and Delimitation

The central aim of this study is to assess how transgender issues are addressed in Nepali newspapers. Nevertheless, certain limitations have influenced the scope of this research. The study was specifically conducted within Kathmandu, the capital city, and focused on individuals within this locale for interviews and surveys. This deliberate confinement, while regrettable, was necessitated by practical constraints such as time, budget, and the relevance of data collection. The comprehensive inclusion of data from every corner of the country was unfeasible due to these constraints. It's important to acknowledge that these limitations, including factors like time, budget, and relevance, could potentially hinder the attainment of pinpoint accurate findings. The

findings of this study are based on a six-month content analysis of four prominent national daily newspapers namely, Kantipur, Gorkhapatra, The Himalayan Times and The Rising Nepal. It's noteworthy that the investigation into transgender and other sexual minority issues in this study deliberately omits the analysis of broadcast and online media platforms.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study will be organized into the following five chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter focuses on introducing the subject of the study by providing its background and context, stating the problem along with the research question, highlighting the significance of the research and stating the limitation of it.

Chapter II: Literature Review

This chapter provides the review of the previously conducted research in the similar subject.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

This chapter includes the methods used for carrying out the research, methods of data collection and interpretation.

Chapter IV: Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This chapter will analyze and interpret the data collected by using research and interpretation methods explained in the previous chapter.

Chapter V: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the final chapter of the research which includes the findings and conclusion of the study along with recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

In the second chapter of this study, the literature surrounding the role of media in shaping societal perceptions, particularly with regard to LGBTQ representation, is examined. The potent influence held by media in disseminating information and shaping narratives cannot be overstated, and it is within these narratives that the portrayal of various societal groups assumes paramount significance. Yet, it is imperative to acknowledge that these depictions, while occasionally shedding light on the complexities of these groups, can inadvertently perpetuate ingrained stereotypes that further exacerbate societal biases (Jobe, 2013).

Venturing into the realm of visual media, a realm rife with both potential and pitfalls, it becomes discernible that this medium bears the capacity to educate, enlighten, and even humanize marginalized communities. In the context of the LGBTQ community, a community that has historically grappled with erasure and invisibility, the call for heightened and authentic representation rings especially poignant. The prevailing demographic landscape demands a heightened representation that resonates with the evolving mosaic of identities within this community. Proposing the establishment of a cohesive and all-encompassing benchmark for measuring LGBTQ representation emerges as a potential watershed moment, capable of galvanizing accountability and fostering a climate of enhanced cultural acceptance (World Economic Forum, 2022).

In many corners of the world, Nepal included, the transgender community emerges as a minority group, their voices often relegated to the periphery of mainstream discourse. Curiously, traditional print media, with its historically formidable role in shaping public opinion, seems to allocate but a mere whisper to this community. The manifold challenges encountered by transgender individuals, spanning from social stigmatization to institutional neglect, frequently find themselves in the shadows of media attention. While the advent of social media has undeniably furnished these marginalized voices with a digital platform to amplify their narratives and secure visibility, the analog world of print media has regrettably lagged behind in its acknowledgment of this dire necessity. This phenomenon, it must be noted, extends far beyond Nepal's borders, casting shadows across the global mediascape.

A pivotal vantage point is afforded by a study conducted in Sweden during the annals of 2019, a year that witnessed a probing exploration into the representation of transgender individuals within the corridors of mainstream newspapers. This longitudinal investigation, spanning an impressive 17 years, unveiled a landscape characterized by a patchwork of portrayals. Some narratives sought to empower and dismantle the rigid constraints of conventional gender norms, yet in an ironic twist, ended up inadvertently reinforcing the very binaries they sought to challenge. The delicate dance between sensitivity and insensitivity was illuminated, as certain articles resorted to archaic gender characterizations and exclusionary lexicon to cast transgender individuals as deviant outliers (Åkerlund, 2019).

In a parallel universe of discourse, a study echoing from the heart of Pakistan ventured into the representation of the transgender community within the pages of English newspapers. The resultant mosaic painted a picture awash with underrepresentation, a lamentable dearth of coverage and visibility that spoke volumes about the societal shadows these individuals still grapple with (Hadia Khalil, 2020).

The narrative quilt of transgender representation, when carefully unfurled, reveals threads woven with unique challenges, intricately spun from the fabric of identity struggles and a society still grappling with the enigma of embracing non-conforming existences. In this intricate narrative, the presence of positive role models looms as an imperative, offering much-needed guidance and hope to these marginalized communities, transgender individuals included. However, the landscape is riddled with a palpable absence of such models within the expanse of mainstream media. The research by Cappuza and Spencer (2017) underscores the potential of media to act as a nurturing conduit, amplifying visibility, validating identities, and fostering social inclusion. Yet, in the theater of reality, this utopian ideal often takes a divergent trajectory. The research canvas unfurls to reveal not just underrepresentation, but the distressing brushstrokes of stereotypes, further entrenching these individuals within a limited sphere of both qualitative and quantitative representation.

Further exploration unravels a complex narrative where media, despite its best intentions, falters in its endeavors to portray transgender characters authentically. The brush strokes of representation, often heralded as harbingers of inclusivity, at times fall short, casting shadows that even the very community they seek to represent finds challenging to accept. This phenomenon is neither exclusive nor uncommon, as echoed by the works of Humphrey (2016),

Morrison (2010), and Pham et al. (2020). The narrative intricacies deepen as patterns of misrepresentation rise to the surface, unveiling a darker underbelly where transphobia and misgendering are artfully woven into sensational narratives (Kermode & Trans Media Watch, 2010). Stereotypes, both insidious and overt—the monstrous, the maternal—find their refuge within these narratives, perpetuating detrimental perceptions and further distorting the kaleidoscope of identities (Ryan, 2009; Lester, 2015; Booth, 2011; Serano, 2007).

The potential of media to become a transformative force, an instrument for societal evolution, surges forth as an ever-present theme within this discourse. The hallowed halls of mainstream media platforms, when graced by authentic and positive portrayals of transgender characters, possess an extraordinary capacity to mold audience perceptions and cultivate a climate of broader acceptance. Scholars such as Booth (2011), Cavalcante (2013), and Gillig et al. (2017) raise their voices in unanimous chorus, underscoring the potential for media to act as a conduit for change. Yet, the inverse rings true as well, where negative portrayals wield the power to foment adverse reverberations (Ringo, 2002). This realization underscores the imperative of moving beyond the mere veneer of visibility and into the realm of substantive representation, a crucial juncture where the complexities of identity find a platform for genuine expression. For, as history has time and again illuminated, mere visibility, when devoid of depth, can unwittingly breed further marginalization, inadvertently reinforcing the very stereotypes we strive to dismantle (Barnhurst, 2007; Creech, 2020; Koch-Rein, Yekani & Verlinden, 2020).

The intricate dance between media and LGBTQ representation, though tinged with progress, remains ensnared within the throes of a struggle for authentic voices and meaningful representation. The parched landscape of coverage surrounding LGBTQ issues plays a pivotal role in muffling their voices, perpetuating their relegation to societal fringes, and consigning their concerns to the periphery of general discourse. Media platforms within Nepal, grappling with their own set of challenges, often stand accused of sensationalizing stories at the cost of offering nuanced and accurate portrayals of the multifaceted experiences of LGBTQ individuals. The journey from legal recognition to authentic inclusion is marred by the enduring grip of entrenched gender norms and heteronormativity, which wield their influence over media coverage and the prevailing attitudes towards LGBTQ issues (Being LGBT in Asia: Nepal Country Report, 2014). In the sporadic instances when LGBTQ issues do grace media narratives, the content frequently leans toward sensationalism, inadvertently contributing to the echo

chambers of preconceived notions rather than fostering constructive dialogue and progressive change.

2.2 Policy Review

The recognized obligations of nations to protect the human rights of individuals who identify as LGBT and intersex are firmly established within the framework of global human rights law, drawing from both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international human rights agreements. All individuals, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity, are entitled to the safeguards outlined in international human rights law. These protections encompass various rights, such as the right to life, personal security, and privacy, as well as freedom from torture, unjustified arrest and detention, discrimination, and the right to express themselves, associates with others, and engage in peaceful gatherings. (Adapted from "Born Free and Equal: Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in International Human Rights Law, 1st Edition")

Though OHCHR has listed some rights for the sexual minorities in the world, the rights and freedom exercised differs from nation to nation.

Sexual minority rights in Nepal are considered some of the most progressive in Asia. The 2015 Constitution of Nepal recognizes sexual minority rights as fundamental rights. The decriminalization of same-sex relations occurred in 2007, alongside the implementation of various new laws that offer protections based on sexual orientation.

According to Lance's analysis in 2017, it is argued that prior to 2007; sexual minority rights were not a primary concern in Nepal. However, following the resolution of Nepal's internal conflict, changes to the Constitution and the active involvement of transgender advocates facilitated the creation of new legal frameworks. The government established laws to ensure workplace safeguards for transgender individuals. Celebrations commemorating sexual minority culture grew in number. Transgender individuals gained the right to indicate their gender identity on identification documents, including an option for a gender-neutral category known as the third gender.

The Nepalese Constitution, approved by the Constituent Assembly on September 16, 2015, contains several provisions addressing the rights of sexual minority individuals. Article 12

ensures the right to possess a citizenship identification reflecting one's self-identified gender. Article 18 addresses equality rights and asserts that the State shall not "discriminate [against] any citizens based on origin, religion, race, caste, tribe, gender, language, or ideological conviction, or any other status."

Article 18 also explicitly lists sexual minority individuals among the disadvantaged groups officially recognized by Nepal's Constitution. It specifies that this provision does not preclude the enactment of specific laws to protect, empower, or advance the interests of socially and culturally disadvantaged women, Dalits, indigenous people, tribes, Madhesi, Tharu, Muslim, ethnic minorities, backward classes, minorities, marginalized individuals, farmers, workers, youth, children, senior citizens, sexual minorities, differently-abled persons, expectant persons, disabled or vulnerable individuals, residents of less developed regions, and economically disadvantaged citizens.

Furthermore, Article 18 replaces language from the previous Constitution that referred to "male and female" and "son or daughter" with gender-neutral terms. Additionally, Article 42 includes "sexual minorities" among the groups entitled to participate in state mechanisms and public services based on the "principle of inclusion" (as stated in Nepal's Constitution 2015, 2022). In Nepal, even though the constitution grants rights to sexual minorities, there is a notable absence of explicit coverage policies for addressing their concerns within the media. While media guidelines do emphasize inclusivity, they lack detailed instructions on the appropriate manner of reporting news related to this community. However there are some international documents that provide a guideline for reporting issues related to transgender people.

GLAAD media reference guide suggests the following guidelines to the journalists for covering the transgender issues:

1. Obtain interviewee's name and pronouns and use them accurately in your reporting.
2. Obtain explicit permission before using a transgender person's birth name ("dead name"), even from official sources like police or medical records, as this can harm their identity and the community.
3. In stories about transgender individuals or youth, seek input from transgender sources for quotes and background information.
4. Prioritize expertise over personal opinion when crafting your reporting.

5. Challenge individuals making negative claims about the transgender community to provide factual evidence, and incorporate fact-checking into your reporting, headlines, and social media promotion.
6. Investigate the affiliations of sources with groups opposing LGBTQ rights, providing historical context to avoid misleading narratives.
7. Include the history of groups or lawmakers advocating against LGBTQ rights, referencing resources like the GLAAD Accountability Project.
8. Accurately convey the consensus among major medical associations and global health authorities regarding healthcare for transgender individuals.
9. Avoid giving undue attention to isolated voices or rare cases that conflict with the prevailing consensus and evidence.
10. Incorporate research highlighting the tangible harms of anti-LGBTQ efforts on vulnerable communities, as well as the benefits of affirmation for LGBTQ youth, referencing sources like The Trevor Project.
11. Prioritize the safety and security of storytellers: obtain their comfort level with sharing personal information, including using pseudonyms, and protect their identity and location in visuals.
12. Whenever possible, seek out transgender youth and families who are already visible in media to respect privacy and safety concerns, refraining from outing minors.
13. Ensure informed consent from transgender storytellers by being transparent about your outlet and audience, respecting their boundaries, and allowing them to decide what aspects of their story are on or off the record. (Dallara, 2023)

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

Scientists conducting research according to established methodologies consistently initiate their investigations by engaging with existing literature. This approach ensures that they are well-informed about prior research efforts, methodologies employed, and the findings that have been obtained by other researchers (Wimmer & Dominick, 2015). This practice serves as a foundation for their own research and helps them build upon existing knowledge.

Wimmer and Dominick (2015) underscore the crucial role of literature reviews in scientific research within the realm of mass communication. They highlight the vast body of research globally that investigates the portrayal of transgender and sexual minorities in media. However, they also draw attention to the dearth of research in Nepal concerning the same topic. This calls for increased scholarly attention to understanding how these issues are represented within Nepal's media landscape.

While it is challenging to locate literature solely dedicated to studying the depiction of transgender individuals in Nepali media, a wealth of international studies exists that explore the experiences and representation of transgender individuals across the globe. This disparity highlights the need for more comprehensive research within the Nepali context.

Wirtz et al. (2020) highlight the common trend of global estimates concerning gender-based violence concentrating predominantly on the experiences of cisgender women who identify as heterosexual. However, these estimates frequently overlook the unique challenges faced by transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, revealing the need for more inclusive research and attention to marginalized groups.

Thomas J Billard's 2016 study exposes the limited attention dedicated to transgender-related subjects within mainstream newspapers. Additionally, the language used in this coverage frequently casts doubt on the legitimacy of transgender claims and experiences, with potential repercussions for their political standing and public reception.

Sullivan (2000) highlights the longstanding trend of media depicting transgender individuals in unfavorable ways. He suggests that media representations often follow specific patterns that cast transgender characters in a negative light, impacting public perceptions and sympathies.

While the media can have a crucial role in advocating for transgender rights, it has also been demonstrated that the media functions as a platform through which it markets and endorses the concept of trans-sexualism to contemporary society. The advent of information and

communication technologies has brought about profound changes, enabling the public to exchange knowledge, information, and cultural practices. Mass media has empowered transgender individuals with a renewed identity and resilience within society.

In recent times, the media has provided a stronger platform for the voices of the transgender and gender diverse (TGD) community. Despite this increased visibility, there are constraints on the types of TGD representation that are showcased in the media. An investigation involving 27 TGD individuals shed light on their perspectives regarding the growing portrayal of TGD individuals in the media. This inquiry revealed prominent themes, including heightened TGD awareness, self-discovery of TGD identities, and the significance of role models. It is evident that a disparity exists between how the media portrays norms related to transgender issues and the actual norms surrounding transgender individuals in reality (Mocarski, 2019).

In the context of Nepal, transgender individuals continue to face significant challenges due to the absence of essential facilities and adequate governmental protection. This situation becomes particularly evident when considering their interactions with law enforcement agencies, as highlighted by the research conducted by Pokhrel, Shrestha, and Thapa in 2014. The experience of transgender individuals with the police is fraught with difficulties and obstacles.

Within the realm of education, the disparity is pronounced, as many transgender individuals find themselves excluded from formal schooling at both the school and university levels. Alarming instances emerge where some transgender students are even denied the opportunity to sit for examinations. This education gap perpetuates the cycle of marginalization and lack of opportunities for this community.

Similarly, the employment landscape for transgender people remains grim, with limited prospects in both government and private sectors. Discriminatory practices and biased attitudes hinder their access to job opportunities, pushing them to the fringes of the workforce.

Interestingly, in contrast to the struggles faced in Nepal, several Western countries have made strides in recognizing and accepting transgender individuals, fostering social inclusion and respect for their rights over the past years.

Though advocacy campaigns and media representations often emphasize the challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community, they often neglect to showcase the successes and achievements of these individuals. In media narratives, gay characters often find themselves in secondary roles, serving to support the heterosexual protagonists of the story. This unequal representation not

only diminishes the capabilities of LGBTQ+ characters but also reinforces their portrayal as vulnerable and powerless, as discussed by Joshi in 2017.

Nepal still grapples with a prevailing stigma around homosexuality, with some perceiving it as a taboo or even a medical condition. However, there exists a potential avenue for changing public perception and fostering a positive attitude toward homosexuality: the media. By leveraging its influential platform, the media can actively contribute to reshaping public attitudes, normalizing homosexuality, and paving the way for a more inclusive society.

A noteworthy case that garnered significant media attention in 2012 was that of Pratik Pant, now known as Caitlyn. Her story of undergoing sex reassignment surgery in Thailand captured the headlines, particularly due to her connection as the youngest child of a prominent Nepali actor, Santosh Pant. This instance marked a milestone as one of the first instances in Nepal where a narrative surrounding an LGBTQ+ individual gained widespread public recognition, thus playing a role in raising awareness and encouraging a more favorable perception of transgender individuals.

In the realm of media's influence, contemporary mass media platforms hold the power to shape the societal understanding of reality. They function as vital agents in shaping public discourse on various aspects, including social cohesion, integration, tolerance, and international understanding. The media's ability to direct public attention shapes the societal priorities, highlighting or overlooking certain issues based on their coverage. The matters that gain media exposure possess the potential to transcend individual experiences and evoke broader discussions on social and political implications.

Given the minority status of transgender individuals within society, their voices demand increased attention from the media. As Bishwokarma (2021) asserts, Nepali culture values diversity across caste, ethnicity, religion, and language. However, this diversity is often disregarded by the dominant governing communities. Marginalized communities persistently advocate for equality, human rights, and a dignified existence. In this context, media inclusivity emerges as a pivotal factor in fostering democratic societies that embrace diversity and eradicate prejudice. To achieve this, media organizations should educate their journalists on sociopolitical power dynamics, amplify diverse perspectives, and create content that is sensitive to a wide range of topics. Educational institutions and training facilities should develop curricula that focus

on social diversity. Oversight bodies such as Press Council Nepal should actively monitor media coverage to ensure the implementation of inclusive practices.

The research conducted by Press (2019) highlights a concerning trend regarding the portrayal of transgender individuals in media narratives. The study reveals a notable increase in negative depictions of transgender people over the years. These portrayals often cast transgender individuals as prone to conflicts, offense, or trouble. What is particularly alarming is that the number of cases exhibiting these negative stereotypes has grown significantly, from just 8 instances in 2012 to 586 cases in the span of 2018-19.

In addition to this, the research also draws attention to the rise in labeling transgender individuals as demanding or aggressive in media narratives. This trend, where transgender people are described using such terms, showcases a pattern of depicting them as confrontational or unreasonable. This could contribute to fostering biases and stigmatization, ultimately affecting societal attitudes towards the transgender community. This pattern has surged from 5 cases in 2012 to 334 cases in the 2018-19 period.

Another troubling aspect highlighted in the study is the media's association of transgender individuals with crime. Whether portraying them as criminals or victims, the media's framing can perpetuate a perception of transgender individuals that is linked with criminality or victimhood. This association has risen dramatically, from just 3 cases in 2012 to a staggering 608 cases in the 2018-19 period.

A noteworthy emergence within the media narratives is the term "trans(gender) lobby." This term, previously absent in 2012, has surfaced in more recent years with a notable 151 mentions. What's intriguing is that the context in which it's used often carries a negative connotation. This suggests attempts to stifle open discussions or promote ideas that are politically biased. The term is described in contradictory ways, both as insignificant and powerful, reflecting the complex and diverse perspectives surrounding transgender advocacy.

In conclusion, the findings from Press' research underscore the influential role of media in shaping societal perceptions. The rising trend of negative portrayal of transgender individuals could contribute to a hostile environment and hinder progress towards inclusivity. This emphasizes the importance of responsible and informed reporting that accurately represents transgender experiences and avoids perpetuating harmful stereotypes. The findings also highlight

the need for continuous education and awareness efforts to foster understanding and acceptance of transgender identities and rights.

The plight of transgender individuals in Nepal underscores the need for media to play a pivotal role in challenging misconceptions, fostering inclusivity, and advocating for positive change. By actively highlighting success stories, fostering understanding, and representing diverse voices, the media can contribute to reshaping societal perceptions and advancing a more equitable future for all.

Changes in people's attitudes often occur when they are exposed to fresh information from external sources like peers or media. This information, coupled with direct encounters involving the subject of the attitude, can lead individuals to alter their behavior. The media holds significant influence over personal beliefs, attitudes, and actions. As a result, strategies aimed at shaping mass media communication have been employed to target and transform social norms that contribute to and promote gender-based violence.

Past studies have proposed that media influence operates through two distinct mechanisms: the private or individual effect and the public or social effect. In the individual effect, media content containing information about new norms has the potential to convince individuals to adopt these norms. On the other hand, the social effect entails the dissemination of information that establishes a shared understanding of a given norm. This, in turn, bolsters social coordination, as individuals are more likely to embrace the new norm when they believe that others have also embraced it (Quarrat-ul-Ann, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

The research design employed in this study encompasses both qualitative and quantitative research methods to comprehensively analyze the topic under investigation. The primary focus is on exploring the coverage of transgender issues within four major leading daily newspapers of the country: Kantipur, Gorkhapatra, The Himalayan Times, and The Rising Nepal. The research design consists of the following key components:

1. Data Collection Method:

Content Analysis: This research employs content analysis as a primary method for data collection. Content analysis involves systematically analyzing the textual, visual, or audio content of a communication source to identify patterns, themes, and trends. In this case, the researchers are examining how transgender issues are portrayed and covered in the selected newspapers over a specific time period. The analysis encompasses the content published in these newspapers from Kartik 1, 2078, to Chaitra 30, 2078, spanning duration of six months.

2. Data Collection Source:

Newspapers: The primary data source for this study is the content published in the four chosen newspapers. These newspapers are considered representative of the country's media landscape and are likely to have a substantial readership.

3. Quantitative Component:

The content analysis involves a quantitative component. This could entail quantifying aspects such as the frequency of articles related to transgender issues, the placement of these articles within the newspaper (front page, inside pages, etc.), the length of articles, the use of images or graphics, and other measurable attributes. Quantitative data provides numerical insights that allow for statistical analysis and comparisons.

4. Qualitative Component:

Alongside the quantitative analysis, a qualitative component is also incorporated in the research design. This is achieved through key informant interviews (KII). KII involves engaging with individuals who possess specialized knowledge or expertise related to the research topic. In this case, five newspaper journalists and a social expert are selected for KII. These interviews are

likely to yield rich insights into the editorial decisions, perspectives, and experiences related to transgender issue coverage in newspapers.

5. Key Informant Interviews (KII):

The KII method involves posing a set of five specific questions to the selected newspaper journalists and the social expert. These questions are designed to gather detailed and nuanced information about the coverage of transgender issues in the selected newspapers. The KII data provides qualitative insights that can shed light on the reasons behind certain editorial decisions, the challenges faced, and the broader societal context.

6. Integration of Methods:

By incorporating both content analysis and KII, the research design aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the coverage of transgender issues in the Nepali daily newspapers. The quantitative analysis offers a broader overview of trends and patterns, while the qualitative insights from KII provide depth and context.

7. Time Frame:

The study spans a six-month period from Kartik 1, 2078, to Chaitra 30, 2078. This time frame allows the researchers to analyze a substantial amount of content and observe any potential changes or trends over time.

In conclusion, the research design employed in this study is a combination of content analysis and key informant interviews, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The aim is to comprehensively explore how transgender issues are covered in the selected Nepali daily newspapers and to gain insights into the perspectives of both journalists and a social expert on this topic.

3.2 Selection of the Study Area

This study has been conducted within Kathmandu Valley. Also the key informants selected for the KII are also based within Kathmandu Valley.

3.3 Nature and Source of Data

Both qualitative and quantitative tools of data collection have been used in this study. Hence both primary and secondary data are taken from various areas. Here, as a primary data and information purposive sampling has been taken and KII have been conducted. This method is intended to make the strength of one method compensate the weakness of another method which

enables the checking of information, from one source, with information collected using another method.

Four leading daily newspapers have been collected to analyze the number of issues of transgender and other sexual minorities covered by them over the period of six months. The data collected is further more illustrated using figures and tables.

Key informant interview method is used in order to analyze and support the primary result obtained from quantitative technique. Also, the research carried out previously on this topic have also been studied along with other books, journals, articles, newspapers, online portals etc. for the collection of the secondary data.

3.4 Universe and Sampling Procedure

The Press Council of Nepal has provided valuable insights into the media landscape of the country, shedding light on the presence and publication status of registered newspapers. As of the data available, there are a total of 3,865 newspapers that are registered across Nepal. These newspapers are distributed across various categories, including 655 dailies, 30 bi-weeklies, 2,778 weeklies, and 402 fortnightlies, showcasing the diversity of print media in the country.

It's important to note that while there are thousands of registered newspapers, not all of them are actively published. Among the registered newspapers, only a fraction of them, specifically 863, were found to be published. Among these published newspapers, 607 were consistently published in all issues. This indicates that while there is a considerable number of registered newspapers, a significant portion of them face challenges or constraints that prevent them from regular publication.

Nepal sees a total of 189 newspapers being published daily, underlining the dynamic nature of the media landscape. However, to conduct a more targeted study, the research focuses on four prominent newspapers: Gorkhapatra Daily, Kantipur National Daily, The Himalayan Times, and The Rising Nepal. Among these, Gorkhapatra and The Rising Nepal are state-owned newspapers, while Kantipur and The Himalayan Times are privately owned. Furthermore, Gorkhapatra and Kantipur are published in the Nepali language, catering to the local audience, while The Rising Nepal and The Himalayan Times are English-language newspapers, potentially attracting a more diverse readership.

To delve into the content analysis of these four newspapers, a sample spanning six months from the first day of Kartik, 2078 (approximately mid-October 2021) to Chaitra 30, 2078 (approximately mid-April 2022) was collected. This extended time frame was chosen to allow for a comprehensive examination of the coverage patterns related to transgender issues in these leading Nepali newspapers. By comparing the content, themes, and perspectives presented in these newspapers, the study aims to provide insights into how both government and private media outlets address transgender issues.

In summary, the Press Council Nepal's data on the vast number of registered newspapers, combined with the nuanced selection of prominent newspapers for content analysis, paves the way for a comprehensive examination of the coverage of transgender issues within the country's media landscape. The differences between state-owned and privately owned, as well as language preferences, provide a unique perspective for understanding the portrayal of such important social issues across various media outlets.

3.5 Method of Data Collection

Primary data will be collected from content analysis and key informant interview. And for secondary data, previous researches carried out on this topic, related books, articles, journals etc. will be accessed.

3.5.1 Content Analysis

For this study four leading newspapers of the country, Gorkhapatra Daily, Kantipur National Daily, The Rising Nepal and The Himalayan Times have been selected. Out of them two are owned by the government and other two owned by a private entity. Two of them are English medium daily newspapers while the other two are published in Nepali medium. The contents of them have been analyzed for six months starting from 2078-07-01 to 2078-12-30. The frequency of the coverage of the issues related to the transgender on all these leading national dailies have been presented in the forms of tables separately for each month. The findings from all the months have been further summarized in another table.

3.5.2 Key Informant Interview

After obtaining quantitative data from content analysis, the key informant interview data collection technique has been conducted to collect information from a wide range of people including, media professionals and experts who have first-hand knowledge about the issue and research topic. This method of using key informant interview for the collection of additional data can be very crucial for getting genuine information through face-to-face interviews. The KII has been conducted through email, telephone and face to face meetings.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the analysis has been presented in the form of tables for interpretation and analysis. The data obtained has been further interpreted by description. After content analysis, KII has been used as qualitative method to make the research more credible by interpreting the views of experts related to this subject.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

4.1 Coverage of Transgender Issues in Nepali Newspapers

The frequencies of news coverage pertaining to transgender issues within the four distinct samples are studied on a per-month basis. Issues were collected for content analysis starting from the month of Kartik 2078 where only four items about transgender were detected during the entire month that too only in the English language newspapers. Two articles each were published in The Himalayan times and The Rising Nepal while there were no any items on any of the two Nepali language dailies. On Kartik 5, 2078 an article titled, “Cancel Chappelle: Netflix staff, allies walk out in protest of comedian’s anti-transgender comments” was published on the last page of the Himalayan times. On the same date, on page 7 of The Rising Nepal an article related to the same issue titled,” Chappelle special spurs Netflix walkout, ‘Trans lives matter’” was published. On the other hand, no other two newspapers had published any article related to them. On Kartik 16, another article was published by The Himalayan times related to transgender on page 8, titled,” Penn comes out as gay, engaged to partner of eleven years”. On the same date The Rising Nepal also published an item on the topic titled, “Kal Penn comes out, announcing engagement to partner of eleven years.” Besides these, no any articles were found related to transgender on the month in any of the samples.

The same samples were collected further months also, but no article was found on the following months including Mangsir, Poush, Magh and Chaitra .

In the month of Falgun in 2078, samples were collected on each of the 30 days. Among the 120 newspapers analyzed, only one newspaper, The Himalayan Times, published an article pertaining to transgender issues. This singular article, titled "LGBTQ references in friends edited out on Chinese platforms," was found on the 5th of Falgun. However, the other three sampled newspapers did not contain any content related to transgender matters on the same date.

Throughout the entire month, no further coverage of transgender topics was identified in any of the sampled newspapers. This lack of coverage remained consistent across all four newspapers during the month of Falgun.

Chaitra was the final month for the collection of samples for the purpose of analysis. No any item was found on this month either.

The analysis of these newspapers for six months are further summarized in the table below to show the frequency of the coverage of transgender issues by the leading Nepali national dailies on the monthly basis starting from Kartik 2078 to Chaitra 2078:

Table 1: Summary of Coverage of transgender issues in the Nepali leading daily newspapers for six months

S.N	Month	No of Days	Kantipur	Gorkhapatra	The Himalayan Times	The Rising Nepal
1.	Kartik	30	0	0	2	2
2.	Mangsir	29	0	0	0	0
3.	Poush	30	0	0	0	0
4.	Magh	29	0	0	0	0
5.	Falgun	30	0	0	1	0
6.	Chaitra	30	0	0	0	0
Total		178	0	0	3	2
Total no of Samples collected (No. of Total Days * No. of Samples) 178*4						712
Total number of issues covered						5

Source: Content Analysis, 2078

The above table no. 1 summarizes the frequency of all the items covered in the four samples collected for six months as a whole. In the above table, we can see that there are 30 days in the month of Kartik while the total number of articles covered is four, i.e. two items in The Himalayan Times and two in The Rising Nepal of the same dates. No any items related to transgender were found in any of the four newspapers on the month of Mangsir, Poush and Magh having 29, 30 and 29 number of days respectively. There was only one item covered in the month of Falgun while there was no any article in the month of Chaitra. Both the two months were 30 days long.

The four sample newspapers were collected for the total 178 days. The total number of samples collected for this research is hence (178*4) 712. But sadly the total number of news or articles found in these 712 newspapers was only 5. Out of which 3 articles were published in The Himalayan Times, while the other two were published in The Rising Nepal. Both of these newspapers are English medium newspapers. Not even a single piece of article related to

transgender was found in the Nepali medium newspapers, Kantipur and Gorkhapatra during the entire six month period of sample collection for research.

4.2 Views of Key Informant Interviewees

Since, the title of our research is coverage of transgender issues in the print media of Nepal, five journalists working in the Nepali newspapers have been selected for the KII of this research. Five questions were asked to each of them with the intention of getting further insight in the research topic. Their views have been presented below:-

Respondent 1:

Mrs. Bala Adhikari, the initial respondent in this discussion, offered a resolute perspective on the inadequacy of print media in Nepal in addressing news and matters pertinent to the transgender community within the country. Expressing her viewpoints, she noted that, throughout her extensive career as a journalist in Nepal spanning over two decades, she has not once tackled any news stories relating to the transgender community in the country. Despite her extensive experience, she candidly acknowledged her lack of coverage in this area. She shared an intriguing anecdote about a former colleague who eventually revealed their transgender identity, but even this individual had not engaged with topics regarding the transgender community.

Interestingly, she disclosed that her personal exposure to articles concerning transgender matters has been notably limited, primarily arising during the annual pride month celebrations in July over the past few years. Beyond this specific period, she felt that the media's attention to transgender issues remained insufficient. In her assessment, while societal attitudes are gradually evolving, acceptance of transgender individuals is still a complex challenge in Nepal, impeding them from openly discussing the genuine challenges they face in media narratives. Mrs. Adhikari asserted that transgender concerns often occupy a peripheral position in discussions, rendering them one of the less-discussed marginalized groups.

Drawing a contrast, she highlighted that in the Western context, notable figures such as celebrities and influencers are increasingly embracing their true gender identities, but Nepal's society exhibits a lingering reluctance to embrace this progressive understanding of gender. She further emphasized that, while there has been some progress in recent years,

many individuals from transgender communities still refrain from revealing their identities, which restricts the availability of stories and issues that could be covered by the media.

Acknowledging the paramount influence of digital media platforms, Mrs. Adhikari acknowledged that online outlets are the prevailing sources of information for many. Nonetheless, she underscored that a substantial portion of the population continues to rely on traditional newspapers for their news consumption. In her analysis, individuals who are active on social media and consume online content possess at least some awareness about transgender matters. Conversely, those who exclusively rely on print newspapers remain largely uninformed about these issues. Therefore, she underscored the importance of elevating the coverage of transgender-related stories to foster societal familiarity and eventual acceptance.

Mrs. Adhikari illuminated a notable disparity in the discourse surrounding gender issues. She observed that gender conversations frequently revolve around women as a suppressed group, addressing issues like violence and representation. However, she pointed out the scarcity of discussions that incorporate the transgender community, highlighting the need for a more inclusive perspective when discussing gender-related topics.

In terms of potential solutions, Mrs. Adhikari proposed a multi-faceted approach. She urged the necessity of educating journalists themselves about transgender concerns, as their recognition of the importance of these matters is crucial to driving change in media coverage patterns. In her opinion, media organizations should prioritize hiring reporters from transgender backgrounds to ensure more accurate and sensitive coverage of their issues. She posited that an increased focus on storytelling would lead to greater societal normalization of transgender identities. Encouraging print media journalists to emulate the practices of their online counterparts, who engage with the struggles and stories of transgender communities, could contribute significantly to broadening the scope of coverage and understanding in the media landscape.

Respondent 2:

Mr. Arjun Sapkota, drawing upon his extensive experience working with Naya Patrika, a prominent daily newspaper in Nepal, as well as his role as the English news editor for Radio Nepal, expressed a firm conviction that the representation of transgender-related news remains inadequate within the Nepali media landscape. Sapkota contended that the issue goes beyond print media, as he highlighted that broadcast media also lag in prioritizing the voices and concerns of the transgender community. Despite this, Sapkota noted a discernible shift in recent years, acknowledging that Nepali media outlets have begun to sporadically address transgender issues. However, he underscored the persistent lack of sufficient space allotted to these concerns, suggesting that the coverage remains limited in scope.

The prevailing trend in Nepal's news coverage of transgender topics, as Sapkota observed, predominantly fixates on high-profile transgender celebrities. When prompted to provide his perspective on this pattern, he explained that the media's inclination toward such stories is largely rooted in their marketability and newsworthiness. Sapkota offered a thought-provoking analysis, positing that the broader Nepali society has not yet fully embraced the presence of transgender individuals and their associated concerns. He therefore advocated for a transformative role of the media in shaping societal attitudes, envisioning a media-driven endeavor to cultivate a culture that genuinely values and acknowledges the existence of transgender individuals, enabling them to lead lives of dignity.

In order to bolster the visibility of transgender issues within Nepali society, Sapkota put forth several suggestions. Foremost, he stressed the need for the media itself to demonstrate a proactive commitment to accommodating more comprehensive coverage of transgender matters. Sapkota highlighted the urgency of elevating transgender concerns to the status of major issues within Nepali society and reflected accordingly in media narratives. He recommended that media outlets willingly extend both space and time to delve into the intricacies of transgender issues, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of their experiences and challenges.

In essence, Mr. Sapkota's viewpoints underscore the ongoing struggle for equitable representation of transgender voices and issues within the Nepali media landscape. His observations encourage a broader dialogue about media responsibility, societal acceptance, and the transformative potential of journalistic engagement in driving social change.

Respondent 3:

Mr. Sukreet Nepal, a seasoned figure in the field of journalism, currently contributing to the Gorkhapatra, holds a significant history in this profession. He derives inspiration from his father, the esteemed senior journalist Kishor Nepal, and presently serves as an entertainment journalist for this prestigious publication. Within the context of Nepal, Mr. Sukreet Nepal observes that transgender individuals are often stigmatized and perceived as taboo or afflicted with an ailment. While his efforts in covering transgender issues have not yielded substantial success, he recounts his attempts to connect with transgender celebrities for their stories, only to be met with consistent refusal. Through his lens, he perceives a dearth of adequate coverage on transgender subjects within the media landscape of Nepal. Mr. Nepal believes that celebrities hold sway as figures of inspiration for the general populace. However, in the Nepali context, even celebrities exhibit reluctance in openly discussing their true sexual identities. He has noticed that, unlike the Western norm where celebrities are progressively more open about their transgender identities, Nepali celebrities remain hesitant. This hesitancy might stem from the fear of societal non-acceptance. He contends that a substantial portion of journalists, being an integral part of the same societal fabric, remain bound by traditional perspectives, thereby failing to fully embrace the transgender existence as naturally as the conventional binary genders. This, in turn, results in a lack of comprehensive and earnest coverage of transgender-related matters in traditional Nepali media.

In Mr. Nepal's assessment, the transformation sought in this regard will be a gradual process. He recommends that newspaper journalists draw inspiration from their online counterparts, who tend to exhibit greater adaptability and open-mindedness in keeping pace with evolving times. He asserts that journalists need to cultivate an attitude of acceptance and equality toward transgender individuals, recognizing their significance within society. Only when this mindset shift occurs can journalists effectively delve into transgender issues and narratives.

In his concluding remarks, Mr. Nepal underscores a pivotal initial step to enhance the coverage of transgender matters within Nepal's leading daily newspapers: educating journalists themselves about transgender concepts. He contends that until journalists genuinely comprehend and embrace transgender individuals as integral members of society, the deeper exploration of their issues and concerns will remain elusive. This, he emphasizes, is an indispensable prerequisite for substantial progress in the representation of transgender stories and perspectives within Nepali media.

Respondent 4:

Nima Wangyal Lama currently holds the role of a reporter at Naya Patrika. He candidly acknowledged that, much like his peers, he has never ventured into reporting news pertaining to the transgender community. His primary focus remains on political matters, and the thought of interlinking transgender issues with politics has never crossed his mind. In his experience, news regarding transgender individuals is scarcely noticeable, except during the month of June, celebrated as LGBT Pride Month. Within this limited scope, Nima Wangyal Lama asserted that newspapers tend to spotlight transgender matters solely during this Pride Month, while during the remainder of the year, their voices remain secondary. He emphasized that the sporadic coverage offered is far from sufficient. Viewing transgender individuals as both marginalized and integral constituents of society, Nima Wangyal Lama underscored that their voices, opinions, and struggles warrant equivalent consideration as anyone else's. He recognized that news about celebrities, due to their elevated status and public interest, garners substantial coverage. Consequently, news about transgender celebrities, particularly those who identify as gay, often receives significant attention. Nevertheless, Nima Wangyal Lama observed that common individuals rarely come forward openly about their transgender identities, thereby leading to a dearth of media coverage on their concerns.

In alignment with his peers, Nima Wangyal Lama contended that journalists have yet to provide adequate attention to transgender issues. He noted a tendency for media to spotlight the more sensational or superficial facets of transgender lives, while overlooking their profound struggles for acceptance and survival within society.

To enhance the representation of transgender issues within newspapers, Nima Wangyal Lama proposed a multifaceted approach. He underscored the significance of cultivating an environment where transgender community members feel at ease discussing their concerns without reservation. He stressed the importance of inclusivity, suggesting that whenever marginalized groups are being discussed, the transgender community should be integrally considered. In his view, newspapers possess the potential to allocate a dedicated column for transgender narratives, even if not on a daily basis, then perhaps weekly, allowing for more sustained and comprehensive coverage. This, he believes, would contribute significantly to elevating the visibility and understanding of transgender issues within the media landscape.

Respondent 5:

Mr. Laxman Karki, a current reporter for the Lokprawa newspaper who frequently contributes articles to various other publications, offers a distinct perspective on the representation of transgender issues in the media. In terms of his personal coverage, Mr. Karki candidly admits that he has yet to address news stories related to the transgender community. He contends that there is already substantial media coverage concerning their stories and challenges. While transgender individuals are increasingly making their presence known in both popular culture and daily life, they continue to grapple with profound discrimination and systemic disparities.

In addressing the multifaceted issues concerning the transgender community, Mr. Karki raises pivotal concerns that warrant the attention of print media. He highlights the pressing matters of violence against transgender individuals, insufficient healthcare access and identity documentation, the pervasive stigmatization, harassment, and discrimination they face, the absence of legal safeguards, and the scourge of poverty. Mr. Karki asserts that these pressing concerns hold paramount importance and should be robustly covered by Nepali newspapers.

He further points out that Nepal's constitution offers limited provisions specifically for transgender people, yet these provisions often fail to materialize as concrete policies and operational guidelines. This gap is attributed to factors such as inadequate education, low visibility, and insufficient advocacy. Despite their relatively lower priority in media, celebrities included, transgender individuals encounter significant negative attitudes from families and society at large. They encounter exclusion, discrimination, and ostracization, which Mr. Karki believes should be meticulously addressed in media coverage. He contends that shedding light on transgender-related news stories can serve as a catalyst to dismantle these prejudices and foster a more comprehensive understanding of gender diversity.

Mr. Karki underscores the overarching importance of covering transgender issues in Nepali newspapers. He posits that gender plays a pivotal role in delineating power dynamics, privileges, and opportunities within a society. He underscores that progress toward equality and freedom from discrimination is inherently intertwined with how gender issues are addressed in the media. Nepal's societal perspective has evolved, transitioning from previously viewing transgender individuals as 'unnatural' and 'perverted' to acknowledging their rightful existence. The legal system and government have been urged by court decisions to formulate inclusive laws and amend existing ones to ensure their rights.

Yet, despite this progress, challenges persist, with negative attitudes and discrimination still prevalent within society. Mr. Karki believes that to effect lasting change, including LGBTQ studies within educational curricula could foster acceptance and recognition of transgender individuals as integral facets of society. He outlines a multifaceted approach to increasing transgender issue coverage. Journalists, he notes, must cultivate genuine interest in the transgender community, media organizations should allocate ample space for their stories, and the transgender community should also step forward to openly discuss their concerns. In essence, Mr. Karki's insights emphasize the vital role of media in challenging preconceptions, advancing equality, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities.

4.3 Findings

The data obtained from the research provides a clear picture of the media landscape in Nepal concerning coverage of transgender issues. The research period spanned from July 1, 2078, to December 30, 2078, during which it was found that there was a complete absence of news or articles related to the transgender community in Nepali language newspapers. This absence extended to both the mainstream Nepali newspapers. While the English language newspapers did have some coverage, it was extremely limited in scope and insufficient in quantity.

The research analyzed a total of 712 newspaper issues over a six-month period, and only 5 articles were discovered that discussed or mentioned the transgender community. These articles were predominantly categorized as entertainment news. The topics covered revolved around Hollywood celebrities, indicating that transgender-related coverage was often associated with international stories, rather than local or domestic issues.

The articles in question included news about celebrities within the Hollywood film industry. Two articles, published simultaneously in *The Himalayan Times* and *The Rising Nepal*, focused on the Netflix staff's protest against a comedian's anti-transgender comments. Additionally, two other articles, also published concurrently by both newspapers, highlighted a celebrity coming out as gay and getting engaged to their partner. A noteworthy article emerged three months later in *The Himalayan Times*, discussing China's removal of LGBTQ references in the popular Hollywood sitcom "Friends."

Upon closer examination of the content covered by these newspapers, it becomes apparent that the issues affecting the transgender community were not addressed in a meaningful way. The

coverage did not delve into the everyday struggles, challenges, and voices of the transgender community. The articles largely sourced their content from international media rather than local journalistic reporting.

Furthermore, all the news stories focused on international events and individuals. None of the celebrities mentioned in the articles were from Nepal, and the protests and controversies highlighted were not centered in Nepal either. This emphasized the lack of attention to local transgender issues within the Nepali media landscape.

The data suggests that the limited coverage and its lack of contextual relevance indicate a systemic problem in the prioritization of transgender issues by Nepali newspapers. The findings were reinforced through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with five selected media professionals. The interviews revealed that none of the journalists had personally covered stories related to the transgender community. While one journalist displayed more familiarity with transgender topics, they too had not covered these stories. The consensus among the interviewed journalists was that the sporadic coverage observed in newspapers was inadequate to address the real challenges faced by the transgender community.

The interviewees acknowledged that the dearth of coverage stemmed from a lack of attention and priority given to transgender issues within the media landscape. This sentiment was echoed by the interviewees who emphasized that increased coverage of transgender issues in newspapers would lead to greater awareness, understanding, and ultimately acceptance of the community by both the general public and government authorities. The interviewees proposed that transgender individuals should also actively share their stories and concerns. By doing so, they could amplify their voices, increase media coverage, and contribute to normalizing their presence and rights within society.

In summary, the research reveals a significant gap in the coverage of transgender issues within Nepali newspapers. Despite some limited coverage in English language newspapers, the content focused on international stories and did not address the real struggles and concerns of the transgender community in Nepal. This pattern highlights the need for increased attention, understanding, and advocacy to address the marginalization of the transgender community within the media landscape and society at large.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The research titled "Coverage of transgender issues in the daily newspapers of Nepal" aimed to investigate the extent to which the leading newspapers in Nepal prioritize the coverage of transgender-related topics in their news reporting. The primary objective of the study was to gauge the attention and significance given to the transgender community within the context of media coverage by Nepali newspapers.

The research employed a methodology involving a six-month-long content analysis of the newspapers. This process involved systematically collecting and examining news articles, stories, and features related to transgender issues over the specified duration. The analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of how frequently and prominently transgender topics were covered in these newspapers.

The findings of the research indicated that there was a notable deficiency in the coverage of issues concerning the transgender community in Nepali newspapers. Specifically, the data revealed that there was a lack of substantial coverage of transgender-related stories and news items. However, there was a slight positive note to be found in English-medium newspapers, which exhibited some level of effort in covering stories related to the transgender community. Regrettably, no stories whatsoever were identified in the case of Nepali-medium newspapers. Furthermore, the study extended its scope to include interviews with media personalities through Key Informant Interviews (KII). The feedback and opinions gathered from these individuals were consistent with the data-driven findings. The media personalities, who were presumably experienced and knowledgeable about the media landscape, corroborated the insufficiency of transgender-related news coverage in Nepali newspapers. They concurred that the newspapers did not adequately address the stories and issues of the transgender community.

In light of these observations, the interviewed media personalities proposed certain suggestions for a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to covering transgender issues. They emphasized the importance of providing equal significance to transgender-related topics in news reporting. They advocated for the creation of an environment wherein transgender individuals could openly share their stories and concerns in the media without apprehension of societal disapproval. To this end, they encouraged journalists to actively engage with transgender

communities and work towards normalizing the portrayal of transgender individuals within society.

Ultimately, the recommendations of the media personalities converged on the idea that by covering a broader spectrum of transgender issues, the media could play a pivotal role in fostering societal acceptance and understanding. This normalization would, in turn, contribute to a more equitable and inclusive society, where transgender individuals are acknowledged as integral members, deserving of equal respect and rights.

5.2 Conclusion

All the four newspapers studied for this research, are the top and leading daily newspapers of the country with wide range of circulation but none of them had a proper article about the transgender community during the entire six months of research. The English language newspaper however had a few articles about them but the Nepali language newspapers had none. This shows that the Nepali newspapers do not even look at the issues of the transgender community as an issue. The figures obtained from the research show how poorly are the issues of transgender are looked after. Also, the little news covered by the English language newspapers did not talk about anything that would shed light upon the important issues of the transgender. Only filthy entertainment news that too not related to Nepal had been covered.

As the ethics and principles of journalism, journalists are supposed to be the voice of the voiceless. Over the years journalists have actively been a part of various social movement through their write ups but one of the marginalized groups that are ignored by the society are ignored by the journalists in newspapers also. The term transgender might not be new to them but the sentiment of these communities is, as they have not put any serious effort in finding out and reporting about their daily lives struggles. These communities are as ignored by the daily newspapers as they are by the society.

One of the interview mentioned that articles related to transgender are covered with importance only during the pride month but the other days nor their voices are heard nor are they given priority.

It is not that the journalists are not aware about the existence of transgender community but they ignore them and do not prioritize them as much they know that they should.

Policies reviewed also suggest that Despite the constitutional provisions designed to protect the rights of sexual minorities in Nepal, their experiences and challenges often go unnoticed in the media landscape. While the country has taken a significant step forward by acknowledging these marginalized groups in its legal framework, the media sector has yet to fully embrace the responsibility of representing their stories effectively.

Media guidelines do acknowledge the importance of inclusivity, promoting the idea that all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, should be treated fairly and respectfully in news coverage. However, the guidelines fall short when it comes to providing clear and comprehensive directions on how to navigate the intricate and sensitive aspects of reporting on sexual minority issues.

As a result, journalists and newsrooms might find themselves unsure about how to approach stories related to sexual minorities. The absence of explicit guidelines can lead to inconsistencies in reporting, with some media outlets unintentionally perpetuating stereotypes or failing to adequately represent the lived experiences of sexual minorities.

To bridge this gap, there is a pressing need for well-defined guidelines that offer practical advice on reporting ethically, accurately, and respectfully on matters concerning sexual minorities.

These guidelines should address terminology usage, avoid sensationalism or stigmatization, and encourage diverse representation in news stories. By providing journalists with a clear framework, the media can play a pivotal role in fostering understanding, acceptance, and empathy toward sexual minorities in Nepal and beyond.

The more the issues of transgender are covered by the newspapers the more their issues will be addressed but the coverage of their stories is so few that they do not get the attention they deserve.

Hence, on the basis of the data collected by content analysis and interview with various media personalities, we can conclude that there is no enough coverage of transgender issues in the leading daily newspapers of Nepal. The journalists are well aware about them being a part of the society but do not prioritize them as much as other gender while, they are the most vulnerable and require to be heard.

5.3 Recommendations

By analyzing and interpreting the data collected by content analysis and then consulting with various journalists working for the print media, the following points have been suggested and recommended for the proper coverage of transgender issues in the Nepali daily newspapers:-

1. Transgender people have been going through various struggles in their day to day lives as they are not accepted by our society with open arms. Newspapers have a vital role in making their lives easier.
2. Transgender people are as equal part of the society as other gender so their concerns must be treated as equally as the concerns of other genders by the Nepali daily newspapers.
3. More issues should be covered about the transgender communities to make their voices heard far and wide.
4. Journalists should first themselves be willingly interested to cover their stories. Before the readers, the journalist must themselves accept the existence of the transgender people as normal as the other two genders.
5. The media also should first of all itself be ready to provide more spaces and time to the issues of transgender.
6. The concerns of transgender people should also be taken as major issue in the society which should be reflected in the daily newspapers too.
7. Journalists should create an atmosphere of ease for these marginalized groups so that they can open up easily in front of them without any fear or hesitation.
8. While covering the stories related to the transgender people the journalists must dig into their real concerns not just filthy entertainment news.
9. Whenever the newspaper talks about gender violence, the violence that these communities face must also be talked about.
10. If not daily then at least a column can be dedicated to these people on a weekly basis to increase the coverage. Doing this can help them grab the attention toward their concerns ignored by the government and the society.
11. The more repeatedly their issues are read the more people will begin to normalize and accept them.
12. The more they are normalized by the society, the more it will contribute in making their lives easier in the society.

13. Various fellowship or interaction programs with the transgender people can be conducted for the journalists in order to make them friendlier to their issues.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

The research conducted indicates that the prominent daily newspapers in Nepal lack adequate coverage of topics related to transgender individuals. This conclusion is drawn from an analysis of the frequency with which relevant subjects appeared in these newspapers during a specific timeframe.

The study's findings highlight a concerning gap in media coverage concerning transgender issues within the Nepali context. While newspapers are an influential medium that can shape public opinion and discourse, the research suggests that they are not effectively addressing the concerns and experiences of transgender individuals. This underrepresentation in mainstream media could perpetuate misunderstandings, stereotypes, and discrimination against transgender people.

One crucial aspect that this research points out is the insufficient coverage of violence against transgender individuals. Acts of violence and discrimination against this community are serious human rights concerns, and their visibility in the media can play a role in raising awareness and advocating for change. The lack of attention to these issues in newspapers suggests a need for further investigation into why these matters are not receiving the coverage they deserve.

Another avenue for future research could be exploring the impact of media coverage (or the lack thereof) on the lives of transgender individuals. Media representation has the potential to influence societal attitudes, perceptions, and policies. Understanding how newspaper coverage, or the absence of it, affects the well-being, social inclusion, and rights of transgender people would provide valuable insights into the role of media in shaping public opinion and promoting social change.

The research also indicates potential gaps in employment opportunities and work environments for transgender individuals within the media industry. Investigating the representation and experiences of transgender people working in media houses could reveal barriers they face, such as discrimination or lack of inclusivity, which might be hindering their professional growth and contributions to journalism.

In conclusion, this research serves as a crucial starting point in identifying a significant deficiency in the coverage of transgender-related issues by leading Nepali daily newspapers. The findings suggest a need for greater attention to topics such as violence against transgender individuals and the status of transgender individuals working in the media. By addressing these gaps, media outlets can contribute to a more inclusive and informed society. Further studies focusing on the suggested areas, such as the impact of media coverage and the experiences of transgender journalists, can provide deeper insights into the complex dynamics between media, society, and the transgender community.

ANNEX

ANNEX- 1

Questionnaire for Key Informant Interview

The prime objective of this questionnaire is to gather information from the experts related to media field. This research is conducted by a student Jebicca Karki of Madan Bhandari Memorial College for the partial fulfilment of the master's degree course (Thesis). Please respond to the given questions below and answer them. The information gathered here is accurate, reliable and completely related with the thesis topic.

Note: Please do not leave any blank space.

Name of Expert: _____

Currently involved organization: _____

Address: _____ **Contact No:** _____

Email Address: _____

1. As a journalist working in the print media of Nepal, how often do you report news related to transgender?
2. Do you think there has been enough coverage of their stories and issues?
3. If we analyze the pattern of news coverage related to transgender, mostly news of celebrities is covered. What do you think is the reason behind it?
4. How important do you think it is to cover the issues of transgender in Nepali newspapers?
5. What can be done to increase the coverage of transgender issues in the Nepali newspapers?

(Thank you so much your valuable time)

ANNEX- 2
Interviewees Profile

S.N	Name	Bio-lines
1.	Bala Adhikari	She is a senior journalist currently the Editor in chief for Lokprawaha Weekly and loksatta.com. She is also the current Vice chair-person of the Federation of Nepali Journalists, FNJ.
2.	Arjun Sapkota	He is currently working as the English news editor and presenter for Radio Nepal. He also has the experience of working as a reporter for Naya Patrika.
3.	Sukreet Nepal	He is a media practitioner and journalist, currently working for the Gorkhpatra Daily.
4.	NimaWangyal Lama	Actively involved in various mass media organisation, he is currently working as a reporter for Naya Patrika.
5.	Laxman Karki	He is media student and a reporter for Lokprawaha newspaper. He also contributes articles to various magazines and newspapers as a freelance journalist.

References

- Åkerlund, M. (2018, August 28). Representations of trans people in Swedish newspapers. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1461670X.2018.1513816> , 1319-1338.
- Bhattarai, S. (2004). Kathmandu: Nepal Book Center.
- Billard, T. J. (2016). Writing in the Margins: Mainstream news media representations of transgenderism. *International journal of communication* .
- Barnhurst, K.G. (2007). Visibility as a paradox: Representation and simultaneous contrast. In K.G. Barnhurst (Eds.) *Media/Queered: Visibility and its discontents*. Media Q. Peter Lang Publishing.
- B, J. B. (2021). Social diversity and code of ethics in Nepali media. In *Nepali Media: Issue of Ethics and Sustainability* (1st ed., Vol. 1, pp. 67–77). Press Council Nepal. <https://www.presscouncilnepal.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Nepali-Media-Journal-PCN.pdf>
- Born free and equal: sexual orientation and gender identity in international human rights law (1st edition) (Archive)*. (n.d.). OHCHR. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/publications/special-issue-publications/born-free-and-equal-sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity>
- Capuzza, J. C., & Spencer, L. G. (2017). Regressing, progressing, or transgressing on the small screen? *Transgender characters on US scripted television series*. *Communication Quarterly*, vol.65:2, pp.214-230.
- Cavalcante, A. (2013). *Centering transgender identity via the textual periphery: Trans America and the “Double Work” of paratexts*. *Critical studies in media communication*.
- Creech, B. (2020). Exploring the politics of visibility: Technology, digital representation, and the mediated workings of power, *Semiotica*, 236-237, 123-139, DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1515/sem-2018-0043>.
- Communication Theory*. (2011). https://www.communicationtheory.org/the-spiral-of-silence-theory/factsheet_8.3_role_of_the_media. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.parliament.qld.gov.au: https://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/documents/explore/education/factsheets/Factsheet_8.3_RoleOfTheMedia.pdf
- Dallara, A. (2023, March 23). *FACT SHEET: Reporter Guide to Covering Transgender People, Topics, and Legislation - GLAAD*. GLAAD - GLAAD Rewrites the Script for LGBTQ

Acceptance. <https://glaad.org/fact-sheet-evidence-based-healthcare-transgender-people-and-youth/>

Fu`rsich, E. (2019, October 25). Media and the representation of others. *International school science journal* .

Gillig, T.K., Rosenthal, E.L., Murphy, S.T. & Folb, K.L. (2017). More than a media moment: The influence of televised storylines on viewers' *Attitudes toward Transgender people and policies*. Sex Roles.

glossary of terms: transgender. (2014). Retrieved from GLAAD media reference guide: <https://glaad.org/reference/trans-terms/>

Gold, M. (2018). The ABCs of L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+. *The New York Times* .

Hadia Khalil, M. K. (2020). Representation of transgender community in Pakistani. *Journal of social sciences and humanities* , 121-132.

Humphrey, R. (2016). "I think journalists sometimes forget that we're just people": Analysing the Effects of UK Trans media representation on trans audiences, gender forum.

J., B. (1999). *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.

Jobe, J. N. (2013). *Transgender representation in the media*. Retrieved from https://encompass.eku.edu/honors_theses/132/

Joshi, A. (2017, June 12). Reel Truth: A new portrayal of LGBT characters in Nepal. *The Common Ground Blog* .

Kharel, P. (2012). *Media for participatory democracy*. Kathmaandu: Kamala Kharel.

Koch-Rein, A., Yekani, E.H. & Verlinden, J.J. (2020). Representing Trans: Visibility and its discontents, *European journal of English studies*, vol.24:1, pp.1-12. DOI: 10.1080/13825577.2020.1730040.

Lance, E. (2017, January 13). *The common ground blog*. Retrieved from Search for common ground: <https://www.sfcg.org/lgbt-rights-nepal-pahunch/>

Lester, P. (2015). From abomination to indifference: A visual analysis of transgender stereotypes in the media. *Transgender communication: Histories, trends, and trajectories*, 143-154.

LGBT Rights in Nepal. (n.d.). Retrieved from equaldex: <http://www.equaldex.com/region/nepal>

- Mocarski, R. (2019). The rise of transgender and gender diverse representation in the media: Impacts on the population. In *Communication, culture and critique* (pp. 416-433). Oxford University Press.
- Morrison, E. G. (2010). Transgender as ingroup or outgroup? Lesbian, gay, and bisexual viewers respond to a transgender character in daytime television. *Journal of Homosexuality*.
- National Population and Housing Census. (2021). National statistics office
- NCTE. (2009). Retrieved from transequality.org/Resources/NTCE_Transterminology.pdf
- Nepali Actor Santosh Panta's younger son Pratik changes into female after sex change surgery.* (2012, 02). Retrieved 2023, from Fun and Entertainment Blog: <http://nikes-funworld.blogspot.com/2012/02/nepali-actor-santosh-pantas-younger-son.html>
- Nepal's Constitution of 2015.* (2022, April 27). Retrieved from constituteproject.org: https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Nepal_2015.pdf?lang=en
- Pham, A., Morgan, A. & Kerman, H. (2020). How are transgender and gender nonconforming youth affected by the News? A qualitative study. *Journal of adolescent health*
- Pokhrel, A., Shrestha, B. M., & Thapa, S. J. (2014). *Being LGBT in Asia: Nepal country report* . Pokhrel, R. (Ed.). (2022). XIX, 8.
- Press, M. (2019, November 18). *EXCLUSIVE: Mermaids' research into newspaper coverage on trans issues.* - Mermaids. Mermaids. <https://mermaidsuk.org.uk/news/exclusive-mermaids-research-into-newspaper-coverage-on-trans-issues/>
- Qurrat-ul-Ann Malik, A.A (2022). Newspaper representation of Transgender in Pakistan: A multi-modal analysis. *Pakistan journal of gender studies*.
- Ringo, P. (2002). Media roles in female-to-male transsexual and transgender identity formation. *International journal of transgenderism*, 6(3)
- Ryan, J. R. (2009). *Reel gender: Examining the politics of trans images in film and media*, [Unpublished Doctoral thesis]. Bowling Green State University.
- Serano, J. (2007). *Whipping girl: A transsexual woman on sexism and the scapegoating offemininity*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.
- Sharma, G., & Banerji, A. (2020, February 7). Nepal's next census to count LGBT+ people for the first time. *Reuters* .
- The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People.* (2017, August 31). Radical Copyeditor. <https://radicalcopyeditor.com/2017/08/31/transgender-style-guide/>

The reality of transgender rights in Nepal. (2020). Retrived from The Record:
<https://www.recordnepal.com/the-reality-of-transgender-rights-in-nepal>

UCLA Centre for health policy research. (n.d.). Retrieved from
https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/programs/health-data/trainings/Documents/tw_cba23.pdf

UNDP, USAID (2014). *Being LGBT in Asia: Nepal Country Report.* Bangkok.

Why LGBTQ representation should be a priority for business and media. (2022, May 24).
Retrieved from World Economic Forum: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/05/why-lgbtq-representation-should-be-a-priority-for-business-and-media/>

Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2015). *Mass media research: An introduction.* India: Cengage Learning.

Wirtz, A., Poteat, T. C., Malik, M., & Glass, N. (2020). Gender based violence against transgender people in the United States: a call for research and programming. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* , 227-241.

