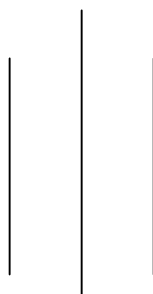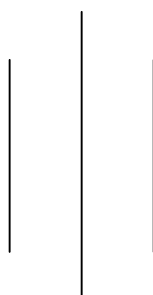# Ethical issues in online Journalism
As Practiced Online Generated in Kathmandu

A dissertation

Submitted in total fulfillment of the requirements of Master's Degree of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuwan University, Central Department of Journalism and Mass Communication Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus

Prepared by
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Exam Symbol No: 4082

<u>Recommendation</u>

This is to certify that **Mr. Surendra Paudyal** completed this dissertation entitled **Ethical Issues in Online Journalism** *(As Practiced Online Generated in Kathmandu)* under my guidance and supervision. Thereby, I recommend this dissertation for final approval and acceptance as total fulfillment of the requirement for the Master's Degree of Humanities and Social Sciences.

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....
Chiranjivi Khanal
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</div>

Letter of Acceptance

The dissertation entitled **Ethical Issues in Online Journalism** *(As Practiced Online Generated in Kathmandu)* prepared and submitted by **Surendra Paudyal** for the total fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree of Humanities and Social Sciences has been approved and accepted by the dissertation committee comprising of :

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Contents

Chapter 1

1.   Introduction

Journalism is defined as that part of social activity which is concerned with the dissemination of news and views about the society. And online journalism is defined as the reporting of facts produced and distributed via the Internet (Wikipedia 2008).

The journalism or media we talk today are capable of reaching vast widespread audiences, thanks to fast moving developments in the field of technology. Despite a lapse related to the terrorist attack, online media deserve high marks (Lasica 2001).

As many as 90 per cent of web users go online for news and information and that TV viewing has declined as Internet use has increased (Maddox and Hu 1998). The past two decades have documented a decline in the newspaper reading habit among teenagers and young adults, the most significant element in overall newspaper circulation decline. Furthermore, there is little evidence that these young people are using newspapers in their 30s or even in their 40s as they tend to rely on electronic media. Although it is not yet evident in the survey numbers, this cohort may rediscover "print" in a newly electronic form (Neuman 1995).

In terms of World Wide Web (WWW) usage the Greenfield Online Netstyles study of 1,000 American households gives some indication of future trends. It is an estimated that 97 million Americans have access to the WWW. Seventy four percent of online households allow children in the home to surf the Web. Fourteen percent of children online are aged five years or younger (Business Wire 1999). Nielsen-NetRatings Inc in its online study in January 2000 revealed an Internet universe of 120 million users with 52 million being active users. They spent an average of two hours 49 minutes surfing the WWW in six sessions per week viewing each page for an average of 53 seconds (Nielsen 2000).

With the WWW, the journalist faces added responsibility and different set of challenges. The profile of the integrated journalist is changing as quickly as this newmedia. The immediate nature of the WWW and the disappearance of the time lapse between when a journalist writes the story and the reader receives a crisp copy of the newspaper has created multiple deadline pressures for the journalist (Lasica 1997).

When the print media was only a medium available to the journalist, ample time was available for proper research, editing, and publication. Indeed, only a few early publishers had access to a printing press with which to make product. As mass media progressed, and new forms of print and broadcasting appeared, the time allowed for journalists have also shrank. Information and news stories now demand 52-weeks a year, 7-days a week and 24-hrs a day update. Cable News Network (CNN) interactive's editor in chief Scott Woelfel observes, "If you look at newspaper deadlines, that's an artificial deadline based on distribution needs. Sometimes it's more important to track the stories minute by minute" (ibid). At this the credibility of the contents thus provided and the ethical standards that the media follow are always the subject to question.

By the advent of the Internet and email, the world has really shrunk. Any person can have access to information at the various websites, with a computer. All major newspapers, magazines, satellite channels have their sites on the Internet. A person, who is unable to go through a newspaper or watch television, can gain access to the latest information by browsing through their respective sites. All these inventions have shrunk the globe to such an extent that the world can now be called a global village (Romila 2008).

In the history of communication, it took nearly 40 years for Radio to reach an audience of 50 millions and 15 years for television to reach the same number of viewers—but it took the World Wide Web (WWW) just over three years to reach its first 50 million users. By 2000, it had become a global medium, with 320 million users. According to a 1999 survey of the WWW by US-based think-tank, there were one billion unique web pages by then (Thussu 2000).

With the number of internet users expected to rise rapidly, all the major media and communication companies are scrambling to get online. The world's top media corporations see the potential of using the new medium to exploit synergies between

their print, broadcast and online operations in a multimedia environment, in which cross-promotion is the norm (ibid).

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) world service has steadily extended its online presence with its projects on interactive websites in different languages throughout the world. Major corporations such as Cable News Network (CNN) also dominate online journalism. Its (CNN's) interactive averaged 640 million page impressions a month before its merger with American Online (AOL) (Herbert 2001). Japanese newspapers 'Yomiuri Shimbun' and 'Asahi Shimbun', the largest selling paper in the world have their own Internet edition.

The Chinese internet monitors have been trying to draw a line between permissible and forbidden topics on the internet. The online revolution is spreading so fast in china that neither government nor industry seem yet to have grasped its implications; Internet companies estimate there are 10 million subscribers in China and the number of account holder is doubling every six months or so (ibid).

In the last ten years, journalism scene in India has changed rapidly. Nearly every news media outlet has a website or an accompanying news site . A new class of news outlets have also emerged. Online journalism even though very new, is catching up very fast. Not only the major outlet's news sites but also others have entirely internet based news outlets. Many of which are targeted at specific demographics or interests (Poynter 2008).

In the pretext of other international media going online, many of our national publication houses, newspapers and others have shifted them a step forward to the online world with almost all the news organizations from leading to those having small market launching their own online services. While most newspapers published their print edition in the online form as well, many others update the news content as that happened. Online news portals like www.ekantipur.com, www.thehimalayantimes.com, www.nepalnews.com, www.nepalmountainnews.com, www.onlinekhabar.com, www.nepalbiznews.com, to name some, are dealing with the latest developments of news and events. To name some more www.gorkhapatra.org.np, www.nepalkhabar.com, www.weeklynepal.com, www.newsofnepal.com are others those provide 'shovelware' materials published in their print version. A new trend of

publishing the radio, television materials have also been developing here. While many broadcasting houses publish some of their popular programmes in different web sites including their own, www.ana.com.np, a private run online broadcasting news service has been serving its viewers worldwide with fully audio and video committed news items in the Nepali language.

The rapid rise of the Internet, in particular the advent of blogging (blog = short for "Web log", a Web-based journal), online journalism and social networking software, is helping in the change of traditional practice in journalism. The Internet has allowed the formal and informal publication of news stories through mainstream medial outlets as well as blogs and other self-published news stories.

The internet allows news and information to move at tremendous dispatch, limited only by the speed of the electron or electromagnetic wave. The immediacy brought by the online environment, a medium where everyone is a potential publisher, allows for even less deliberation by the journalist and editor. But, matters of anonymity, identity, access to information and protection of intellectual property impact the practice of online journalism.

This paper, thus, have studied how journalists and media organizations are dealing with the ethical issues in regard to online journalism and how online journalists can use personal, institutional, and technological tools to ensure the consistency, fairness, and believability of their product.

1.1   Meaning

Online journalism is defined as the reporting of facts produced and distributed through computers with the help of internet.

Journalism has traditionally been published either in printed form or presented on film, or television and radio. But modern journalism "online" includes many venues. Most

prominent is the World Wide Web, plus commercial online information services. Simple Internet email also plays a big role. Also important are CD-ROMs (often included with a book) linked to a web site or other online venue, plus intranets and private dial-up bulletin board systems.

Online journalism is timely in the sense that it covers and breaks the news immediately as that happens. The content must be hosted as soon as it breaks. This is in sharp contrast to print journalism where the deadlines are relatively easier. A newspaper reporter is under no pressure to file a report instantly unless the newsbreak occurs close to print deadline. In the online however, the news cycle does not depend on the number of editions. It is a continuous 24 hrs a day, seven days in a week, 365 days in a year task. In this respect online journalism is closer to wire journalism where a copy is to be generated, edited and moved instantly to the subscribers (Adhikari 2006).

Suraj Adhakari in his unpublished Master's thesis paper described some distinctive features of online journalism, which make the genre different as compared to traditional journalism (Adhikari 2006).

Online = real time

Online journalism can be published in real time, updating breaking news and events as they happen. Nothing new here — we've had this ability with telegraph, teletype, radio, and TV. Just as we gather around the TV or radio, so we can gather and attend real-time events online in chat rooms and auditorium facilities.

Online = shifted time

Online journalism also takes advantage of shifted time. Online publications can publish and archive articles for viewing now or later, just as print, film, or broadcast publications can. WWW articles can be infinitely easier to access, of course.

Online = multimedia

Online journalism can include multimedia elements: text and graphics including the newspapers and books, plus sound, music, motion video, and animation as used in broadcast radio, TV, film, etc.

Online = interactive

Online journalism is interactive as well. Hyperlinks represent the primary mechanism for this interactivity on the Web, linking the various elements of a lengthy, complex work, introducing multiple points of view, and adding depth and detail. A work of online journalism can consist of a hyperlinked set of web pages; these pages can themselves include hyperlinks to other web pages.

Tapas Ray suggests interactive, involvement, integration, immediacy and in-depth analysis as five distinctive features that make the online journalism different compared to other forms of journalism (Ray 2006).

Traditional journalism guides the reader through a linear narrative. The online journalist lets readers become participants, as they click their way through a hyperlinked set of pages. Narrative momentum and a strong editorial voice pull a reader through a linear narrative. With interactivity, the online journalist can pre-determine, to a certain extent, the reader or participant's progress through the material, but manifold navigation pathways, branching options, and hyperlinks encourage the reader or participant to continue to explore various narrative threads assembled by the reporter or writer or editor. A web of interlinked pages is also an ideal mechanism to give reader or participants' access to a library of source documents and background information that form the foundation of an extensive journalistic investigation.

Readers or participants can respond instantly to material presented by the online journalist; this response can take several forms. Email to the reporter or editor resembles the traditional letter to editor of print publications, but email letters can be published much sooner online than in print. Online journalists can also take advantage of threaded discussions that let readers respond immediately to an article, and to the comments of other readers, in a bulletin board-style discussion that can be accessed at any time. Readers can become participants in the ongoing co-creation of an editorial environment that evolves from the online journalist's original reporting and the initial article.

News published on the web and elsewhere online amounts to nothing more than traditional magazine or newspaper articles and graphics, perhaps with some added links to related web pages. By providing an instant, ubiquitous, cheap distribution medium, the internet adds tremendous value to such articles.

1.1.1 Beginning

There are hundreds of news sites updating 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year now. We can visit such sites and lots of newspapers in the internet as their online version. The popularity of these news sites is increasing day by day. We can see thousands of such news sites in the internet publishing around the world. The computer and the internet made possible online journalism. The root date of online journalism lies in the decade of 1970 when the ARPANET has been experimented in the US. The very first form of online journalism was the teletext system in the world. This system is free to use and provide useful news, information, and advertising. No telephone or computer required, and many televisions sets sold outside the United States have teletext decoder chips built in. On the business side teletext enables broadcasters to generate advertising revenue from a part of the broadcast signal that had gone unused before the new technology became available (Various internet sources).

Over twenty-five American companies, including television networks and stations, newspapers, magazines, cable operators and others launched teletext system between 1975 and 1984 but none were commercially successful enough to survive long-term. The last major US system, carried in the VBI of Atlanta's cable super station WTBS, closed in early 1994. The second form of online journalism is the invention of the videotext, another type of digital journalism was invented at British Telecom, then a research laboratory operated by the British post office. Unlike teletext systems, videotext system was interactive, allowing consumers actually to communicate with the videotext system to send and receive data (ibid).

1.1.2 Ethics

Every human have to follow certain norms and values set by the society and the country. With the development of civilization, certain rules and laws are made intending the members of the society to follow. And a system of punishment had also been formed for those who disobey such laws. Apart from the state designated laws, various organizations and groups etc have developed their own rules that embed them to function as per the rules and regulations of the society. With the development of various industrial institutions in the 20th century, different ethical norms thus formed, guided them to function with wide practice of professionalism in their respective fields.

Ethics is not the same as law, and ethical constraints are not the same as legal rules (Newsu 2008).

According to Collins Dictionary of Sociology- ethics is that branch of philosophy that deals with the things that the humans have to follow to act decently (Collins 2007).

A journalistic code of ethics refers to a set of principles of professional conduct that are adopted and controlled by journalists themselves (McQuail 2001).

Ethics is the limitations and beliefs of any commercial attitude;   a set of conventional principles and expectations that are considered binding on any person who is a member of a particular group. In journalism the ethical norms are set to preserve the people's right to information making the press aware of its privilege as the fourth organ of the state. Professional respect, code of conducts, respect to laws are the things that the ethics intend to guide. The journalistic ethics helps to embed the journalism profession into the ethical path. With appropriate practice of ethics while in collection and dissemination of information, an ethical discipline will be established in the society. In contrary, unethical matters will led the society towards an unpredicted catastrophe. Journalists who were assigned with the responsibility to inform and educate the society have to follow such norms as ethical and self-directives (Regmi 2006).

Ethical challenges never end. The debates still rage over the application of standards to real life. It will be no different for the Internet as it struggles to find its balance (Kelly 2000).

The ethics of journalism is a branch of philosophy concern with actions that are morally permissible and those that are not. It assists media workers in determining what is right, and how to choose the best from several alternatives. Ethics constitutes a normative science of conduct and must therefore be applied voluntarily. Ethics should set guidelines, rules, norms, codes and principles that will lead journalists and all other media workers to make moral decisions. They should not be forced to do so because ethics is applied voluntarily (Lets 2008).

Mc Bride Commission also defined the journalistic ethics as a way that directs the mode towards professionalism from the state of dilemma and almost all the ethics have their area of study limited in between the periphery of conflict and agreement among the nature of social values and the attitude of an individual.

Nepal had its first newspaper in 1958 B.S namely Gorkhapatra Weekly. With the publication of the weekly, the then Rana regime had enacted 'Sanad' directing the paper 'what ought to publish and what ought not'. Notwithstanding the objective behind enacting the 'Sanad', it can be said that 'Sanad' was the first ever attempt in the Nepalis journalism history that publications were directed through 'a kind of ethical norms'. For the next four decades, as no newspaper in the public sector were published, no need of any ethics were felt then. However, 'Gorkha Bharat Prakasani Samati' had been formed on 1970 B.S. to direct other publications then. After the publications of Sarada on 1990 B.S different papers had also been started publishing from the private sector, which led to the government initiatives for enacting new regulations regarding the press and publications. As a result on 2005 B.S, a press law was brought into the country for the first time (Press Council Nepal 2055).

Despite the fact the then Royal Press Commission of Nepal formed in 2014 B.S, in its report, submitted to the government, a year later of its establishment, had suggested the government to publish journalist ethics by implementing the existing rules and regulations, the history of Nepalis journalist ethics dated back to 2023 B.S when the first general assembly of the then Journalist association endorsed 14- point Journalist Code of Conduct (Dahal 2049).

In 2027 B.S, Press Council Nepal was established in Nepal. After few months the Press Suggesting Council thus formed enacted 21-point code of conduct. As per the clues in

the Press and Publications Act 2032 B.S, the Press Council Nepal issued another 22-point publications and journalist code in 2033. After that a series of ethical codes have been brought into existence in the following years.

Not to talk about the suggestions by Royal Press Commission in 2015, the Nepalis journalism sector has so far gone through nine series of code of conduct. However, the implementation and practice sides were found very poor. The situation here (in Nepal) was found affected by the passiveness of the concerned body (Press Council) and equally the apathy of the affected person for Council's remedy. Study of data available at the Council on the petition against the violation of ethics shows that most of the victims preferred to knock the court doors rather than waiting for its remedy (ibid).

1.1.3 Ethical Developments Worldwide

Societies have transmitted news since the dawn of human consciousness and pre-literate society. The origin of the modern journalism, however, begins with Gutenberg's printing press and a host of social, political and economic changes in Western Europe that provided the conditions necessary for the emergence of a periodic news press by the 17th century. That was the press which included a variety of news and opinion for sale to a public, and it did so periodically. It took the form of weekly and bi-weekly "news books" or "news sheets" in Europe in the early 1600s.

From that beginning, the press grew into the daily press of the 18th century, especially in England. By the end of the 18th century, the press had played a major role in the American and French revolutions and was a major social force. The press was a "fourth estate."

Around mid-1800 A.D. some North American media houses and professional institutions have started publishing some types of norms and standards. In the beginning the publishing houses have designated the ethical codes to guide their press men. The norms then were found as the colloid of ethical norms and the practical norms. By the end of 19th century publication houses in North America have 'Public Service Codes' for their journalists. And it is found that the ethics then were developed due to various reasons as to safeguard press from public criticism, from legal complications, to make

the journalism profession more dedicated and professional among others (various internet sources).

Ward, Stephen J. A. writes on online posting of Center for Online Journalism that global journalism ethics aims at developing a comprehensive set of principles and standards for the practice of journalism in an age of global news media. New forms of communication are reshaping the practice of a once parochial craft serving a local, regional or national public. Today, news media use communication technology to gather text, video and images from around the world, with unprecedented speed and varying degrees of editorial control. The same technology allows news media to disseminate this information to audiences scattered around the globe (Ward 2008).

Despite these global trends, most codes of ethics contain standards for news organizations or associations in specific countries. International associations of journalists exist, and some have constructed declarations of principle. But no global code has been adopted by all major journalism associations and news organizations (Ward 2008). (See appendix F for ethical history flow chart)

Since 1970s, a global media ethics has been part of controversial attempts to establish a "new world information order". These international movements have included broad "media" issues that, albeit important, are not a primary focus of journalism ethics per se, e.g., the equal distribution of computer technology in the world. Developing nations and UN agencies such as UNESCO have led such movements. None to date has been successful. In the late 1900s, the movement was opposed by governments and news organizations in the United States and Britain. They feared that non-democratic powers might use a global ethic to justify limits to freedom of expression and of the press (ibid).

Till the second decade of 20th century i.e 1920, press had been established as the major medium and Radio had also started to leave its influence. Due to the reason there was a kind of competition between the newspapers for market. Mainly between, Joseph Pulitzer- publisher of The New York World and William Randolph Hearst-publisher of New York Journal, who had established their newspaper business in between 1896 and 1898. Pulitzer gave a new definition to journalism with composition of more sensational and rumour based news items in his paper. Also his market opponent Hearst opted the same techniques. As a result, rather than publishing high-class news items, only

astounding news got newspaper space with large headlines, more pictures and description that uplifts the low category person (Pokharel 2051).

Due to the trend, that was mainly popular in western nations, journalists who were supposed to be responsible to the people and society, started to ignore their responsibility. With the fear that such attitudes of journalists would lead the society to a catastrophe some intellectuals have started thinking over that. Amidst the scenario the American Society of Newspapers Editors (ASNE) organized a seminar in 1923 and issued a six-point ethical guidance which were called as Cannons of Journalism (Mencher 1997).

Responsibility, freedom of the press, independence, truth and accuracy, impartiality and fair play are the areas of journalists' ethical behaviour. And the points are codified by the ASNE in 1923 (Dahal 2002).

The Hutchins Commission formed in 1947 had also articulated code of social responsibility for the press to adhere to requiring five basic services as a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning; a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism; the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society; the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society; and full access to the day's intelligence.

But, the movement towards codifying journalistic practice had already started in the USA before the Hutchins Committee Report (Hutchins, 1947) and one of the first Canons of Journalism was published by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 1923. Codes of conducts were being introduced in Europe at around the same time, notably in France, Sweden and Finland, and eventually in nearly all countries (McQuail 2001).

After the publications of the Hutchins Commission's report, people started believing that the journalism is not a pure private business rather it is a social business that largely deals with society and people. Subsequently following concepts had been drawn viewing the responsibility of the journalism.

- Mass media should be responsible to society. Notwithstanding its ownership, that may personal, it should function for societal interest
- Media should have timely functioning being truthful and accurate
- Media should function independently and free from any restrictions
- Follow the ethical norms
- Government should work to fulfill the aspirations of people (Regmi 2005).

Likewise in the 'International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism' set by the UNESCO and issued by the fourth consultative meeting of international and regional journalists, Paris, 1983, under its auspices included the idea of a Right to Information; Journalist's Dedication to Objective Reality; Social Responsibility; Professional Integrity; Public Access and Participation; Respect for Privacy and Human Dignity; Respect for Public Interest; Respect for Universal Values and Diversity of Cultures and Elimination of War and Other Great Evils Confronting Humanity as some of the codes that journalist should follow (Leproux 2008).

On the face of it, it does look as if there is quite a lot of common ground in what journalists in different countries formally accept as the appropriate standards. In that sense there is something like a shared body of normative theory to apply to daily practice. There is much less attention to be found in most codes, if at all, to the largest purpose of journalism in society. The predominant emphasis nearly everywhere is on the standards of objective, independent and informative journalism. The gap between theory and practice is found on two main points. One relates to the investigative, critical and advocacy role of the journalist that gets little notice in any code. Another relates to the supposed independence and neutrality of journalism, when in practice most journalism operates in rather close symbiosis with government, powerful economic interests and other authorities. These observations lead at least to the conclusion that journalistic codes are inadequate and incomplete as theory and perhaps to the view that they should better be regarded as a particular ideology with a particular purpose (McQuail 2001).

1.1.4 Media History in Nepal

The institutional history of Nepali press could be traced back to 1851 when Rana Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana installed a printing press (the Giddhe Press), or in 1901 when the state-owned newspaper, the Gorkhapatra, was launched. But, its practical history begins in the 1950s, after the fall of Ranas, when several pioneering journalists took to publishing newspapers in a transitional democracy (Nepal Press Freedom 2008).

After the Restoration of democracy in 1990 a drastic change came in the Nepali Media particularly in the private sector. Liberal provision and guarantee of press freedom enshrined in the constitution opened up avenues for the private sector to involve on media sector. The 1990's democracy yielded by the People's Movement also established rights and freedom of the press. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) formally guaranteed the freedom of press and publication.

The constitution has provisions in it that said within the limits of existing laws no news/articles shall be censored. It along with the freedom has, however, restricted the press to provide anything that may undermine the sovereignty and integrity of the country, or which may jeopardize the harmonious relations subsisting among the peoples of various castes, tribes or communities; or on any act of sedition, defamation, contempt of court or incitement to an offence; or an any act which may be contrary to decent public behavior or morality and shall make laws to impose reasonable restrictions on any act (Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063).

No press shall be closed or seized for printing any news item, article or other reading material. The registration of newspaper or periodicals shall not be cancelled merely for publishing any news item, article or other reading material (ibid Article 13).

And, according to Article 26 of the Constitution, every citizen shall have the right to demand and receive information on any matter of public importance: provided that nothing in this Article shall compel any person to provide information on any matter about which secrecy is to be maintained by law.

The following years that saw launching of Maoist insurgency (in 1995) and direct rule of the King (in 2001), private sector press was subjected to acute censorship and later on FM radio stations have been totally banned to broadcast news and current affair

programs.

During the period, newspapers were asked by the government not to print any material on security operation or Maoist insurgency without scrutinizing the facts from the Army. Most newspapers outside Kathmandu have suffered intimidation or arbitrary suspension at the order of District authorities. Nearly 50 percent of local publications were closed down owing to unfavorable conditions created by the State.

Due to prohibition on news and news-based programs over private radio stations and strict censorship even on TV channels, several media managements either closed or curtailed programs and relieved staff members. As a result, many journalists have become jobless. People were completely deprived from right to information and other civil rights such as right to free movement inside the country and freedom of expression and of opinion.

Ethical issues after 2006

Despite a historic year for Nepali politics, the country's media faced significant harassment and obstruction; however it contributed enough in bringing the country back to democratic path being a part of the 2006 April Uprising. Ever following the restoration of democracy and signing up of Comprehensive Peace Accord between the Nepal Government and CPN (Maoist), a rebel force, Nepali media and media workers did not witness a sigh of relief and respite from the brutal attacks and blatant violation of press freedom perpetrated by the state, CPN (Maoist) including other agitating parties. During the period from April 25, 2006 to April 12, 2008 after the democracy, altogether 676 journalists and media workers (266 in 2064 BS and 410 in 2065) experienced various incidents of press freedom violation. Likewise, three journalists were killed during this period.

The promulgation of Right to Information Act-2064, Working Journalist Act-2064 (Second Amendment) and constitutional guarantee of freedom of press and expression in the Interim Constitution-2063 (see appendix C) have been the remarkable achievements yielded in Nepali press.

During the Terai movement launched by Terai-based various agitating parties and groups, Nepali media witnessed another setback as it was manipulated and numerous incidents of attack and atrocity in the series of political confrontation and clash erupted in the Terai region In short, there is still need for Nepali Media to wage struggle for their professional and physical safety as well as to establish freedom of press and of expression in Nepal.

1.1.5 Code of conduct in Nepal

Code of conduct is a set of conventional principles and expectations that are considered binding on any person who is a member of a particular group (Wordweb 2008).

Journalist code of conduct is a set of ethical terms that every journalist is expected to follow. The journalist is expected to be truthful, to do his or her own work, to avoid pursuing any activity that would raise question about his or her integrity. These and other ethical principles are outlined in various codes that newspapers, broadcast stations and national journalism organizations have adopted (Mencher 1997).

The codes prescribe responsibility to the reader or listener, accuracy, fairness and compassion. In its code, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) in 1923 has listed responsibility, freedom of press, independence, truth and accuracy, impartiality and fair play as six areas of ethical behaviour (ibid).

The study of codes on their own can give a misleading idea of what journalism is really about, but their content provides a good idea of what it was felt that journalism ought to be doing (McQuail 2001).

Nevertheless, the codes are often little more than collections of disparate and practical prescriptions that do not express any single organizing idea about the nature of society or the overall social purpose of the institution. The many different codes reflect differences in the conventions and traditions of the country concerned and in the relative influence of different interested parties- publishers, editors, journalists or an external regulatory body. Most codes concentrate on the provision of reliable information and on avoiding distortion, suppression, bias, sensationalism and the invasion of privacy. But

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some codes go further in expressing some view of the larger role of journalism in society (ibid).

Nepal had her first prototype code of conduct for journalists as early as 1901 AD, which was promulgated in the form of a decree issued by Prime Minister Dev Shumser J.B. Rana. The decree- popularly known as 'Sanad'- was deemed essential to guide the operations of the first official weekly newspaper "Gorkhapatra". The 'Sanad' set limits to what were not to be printed and gave freedom to what should be printed for public knowledge. The editors of the time were required to abide by the code, the violation of which would invite dire consequences (Press Council Nepal 2056).

In subsequent periods, the ethical standards for journalists formed a part of the press laws issued at various times without necessitating a separate code. However, the Press Commission constituted by the Government in 1957, for the first time recommended a 18-point code of conduct for journalists. This was followed a 22-point code adopted by the All Nepal Conference of Journalists held in 1967. In 1978, the government formulated a 22-point code of conduct in pursuance of the provisions of the Press and Publication Act 1976 (ibid).

Despite the fact that the Royal Press Commission, in its report, submitted to the government, a year later of its establishment, had asked the government to publish journalist ethics by implementing the existing rules and regulations, the history of Nepalese journalists ethics dated back to 1967 when the first general assembly of then Journalist association endorsed 14- point Journalist Code of Conduct (Dahal 2049).

After the restoration of multi-party democracy in April 1990, the Press Council was again empowered by laws to formulate and enforce a Code of Conduct for journalists. Section 7 (clause 4) of the Press Council Nepal Act 1992, empowers it "to formulate a code of conduct for journalists and enforce it with a view to developing healthy journalism". Subsequently, the Council issued a new 10-point Code of Conduct by condensing all the previous codes which seeks to guide the media practitioners in the adoption of high professional standards and for safeguarding the dignity of the press through the prevention of abuses of press freedom. The Code imbibes most of the important ingredients of similar codes issued by various media associations and voluntary bodies of other developed societies. It as also laid elaborate quasi-judicial

procedures providing for the hearing of complaints from aggrieved parties for violation of the provisions and settlement of complaints (Press Council Nepal 2056).

After that, the two working team members of Press Council Nepal and Federation of Nepalese Journalists adopted a new 7-point code of conduct by merging the two codes of conduct: Codes of Conduct 1992 and 1993 issued by Press Council and Federation of Nepalese Journalists respectively. The code says- whereas, in order to make the press sector and journalism responsible and prestigious by uniting all journalists in the bond of unity, and to make them responsible towards all humans by protecting the democratic norms guaranteed by the Constituent of the Kingdom of Nepal, 2047 (1990) and; whereas, with the objectives of basic goal to circulate information to the public in general.

All other series of the ethics brought into effect subsequently sought similar dedication from the journalists. Recently, the Journalists Code of Conduct (2003) formulated by the Federation of Nepalese Journalists and revised in 2008 is in action (see detail in Appendix B).

1.1.6 Ethics and Standards

The increasing number of newspapers, television channels and radio stations has intensified competition within the media sector. In the rush to give sensational headlines, any issue is taken up and distorted. Thus, knowingly or unknowingly, the ethics of journalism is bypassed (Marasini 2008).

Perhaps the largest ethical trap facing a new generation of journalists is learning when cut-and-paste research convenience turns into flat-out plagiarism (Lasica 2001).

Journalism ethics and standards comprise principles of ethics and good practice as applicable to the specific challenges faced by professional journalists. Historically and currently, this subset of media ethics is widely known to journalists as their professional "code of ethics" or the "canons of journalism." The basic codes and canons commonly appear in statements drafted by both professional journalism associations and individual print, broadcast, and online news organizations (Wikipedia 2008).

Most of the time, journalists are expected to be responsible and objective in their analysis, and are supposed to refrain from personal biases or prejudices. However, this is one of the most debated of all journalistic values, and many today feel that objectivity is a myth.

Journalists should also keep in mind that quite a few media organizations, specially in television broadcasting, maintain internal codes of practice (sometimes published, sometimes not) dealing with the same and other issues to provide guidelines for editors and producers. These are somewhat different from the professional codes, because they mainly assist internal control and accountability. Sometimes they are designed to cope with the special circumstances of audiovisual media, with their greater potential for impact. They also play a part in responding to external content regulations that apply, not only to journalism, but also to fiction and dramatic representations. In those circumstances, different specific problems arise, although in the end they usually derive from the same basic principles, which include truth, fairness, openness, respect for others, decency and the need to avoid harmful public consequences (McQuail 2001).

For the entire development of the society and country, all the professional and commercial sectors must be function morally and with some norms. For the purpose, the organizations themselves or the state used to code some norms that will function as the ethical codes from them. The concept of ethics had been brought in the world journalism sector when there were rapid growths of mass media but lack proper mechanisms to check them.

The modern definition of mass media covers the print, radio, television and new media. Since these media have the capability to reach large number of audiences at once, they have special significance in the society, consequently, have special tasks to perform in the society. Therefore, the information they disseminate also have great importance in the society. The main functions of the mass media are to inform, educate, entertain and persuade the people. Besides, they are voice of the voiceless and, of course, the fourth state. In the backdrop of all such, the information thus provided from the mass media must be accurate, credible, and most importantly, abided to the social responsibility. If the mass media failed to provide accurate and responsible information and keeps the society into dark with wrong information, the society and its people may head to the path of uncertainty (various internet sources).

With the due reasons, journalists and other media practitioner are expected to act ethically. And the state enacted laws and other regulations guiding them to function accordingly. If the media people act ethically then the society will head towards the path of betterment.

'Press is the major force to motivate the strength of people in the society, but irresponsible and dissolute press will pave the ways of destruction. Freedom without accountability is only the license to crime. Press freedom and the press ethics are complementary as there is no reason of press freedom without press ethics and no ethics could alone have its meaning without freedom. Well judged, upright and accountable journalism can only strengthen the voice of public. That's why the professional set of laws designated for thoroughly professional performance is ethics' (Dahal 2049).

Journalists, who are taken as the frontier of the society, if act unethically that would cost the country a lot and a system in the society for the rule of law would never be establish. That's why even a minor mistake committed by the journalist while disseminating information and news would prove much worthy for the society to pay.

Since the first general assembly of then Journalist Association codified 22-point journalist code of conduct, Nepalis journalism sector have gone through nine series of code of conduct so far. But though the code of conducts were formed envisioning to track media practitioners and mass media itself, leaving few clauses, all other terms were often voided.

After the restoration of multi-party democracy in April 1990 and issuance of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal 1990 with provisions on freedom of expression, press and publications, a countable number of publications came into existence. With the privileges of the constitutional guarantee most of the publications especially weekly papers published from private sector, began publishing whatsoever they like. Daily papers, in that case, were found somewhat balanced. "And in between lack of proper mechanism to check functioning of such media a rapid development in the field of mass media including newspapers, FM radio, television and online and their growing influence in the society were seen. However, plea over increasing threat to democracy and press freedom is always there. And that is due to apathy of the concerned in taking action for the offense committed with the journalistic privileges in hand. So, to prevent

the press from such coordination between the mass media and the press council is not only necessary but mandatory" (Dahal 2058).

The Code of Journalistic Ethics, 2003 has been amended and revised in a timely fashion in 2008 by covering all forms of the press and making timely adjustments in accordance with international practice and norms, with the basic objectives of safeguarding the freedom and rights guaranteed by the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2063 (2007). The ethics has accepted the norms on protection and promotion of the freedom of press, respect for humanitarianism, human rights and international relations, safeguard and enforce the right to information, professionalism of a high order, social responsibility, respect mutual relations among others for the journalists and media organizations to follow. However, many of these norms are still far off subject when we talk about their practice (Gairhe 2008).

In lack of proper ethical guidelines targeting the online media and amid common trend of adopting print format, and materials of course, for the online edition, many points that the print media found ignoring, online too repeats the same mistakes or go through similar ethical lapses. Consequently, many mistakes that ethics say journalists and media institutions shall not carry out were done by online media. Points like: do not undermine national integrity, do not adversely affect social justice or goodwill, do not disclose confidential sources of news, do not use news material for fulfillment of personal interests, do not penalize the victims, do not encourage violence, terrorism and crime, do not publish or broadcast scenes of nudity or pictures in a manner that spreads hatred, fear and provocation, do not mention the name of a person not related to the event, do not distort facts, do not present advertisement as news, do not re-use without citing the source are often found neglected.

Concerning the press, the Press Council in its annual report (2042-43) has said that the trend among the media to presented them unprofessionally and unethically by using offensive and condemnable words to make that sensational while analyzing news materials has gone unabated. The Council in its earlier yearly report (2040-41) had uncovered the same growing trend among the media that they hypothetically sensitized the issues without entering the subject matter while analyzing any news (Khanal et al. 1997).

'As far as the professionalism and gravity of the subject is concerned, a list of abuse of conduct can be prepared when we talk about the use of pictures in the media. We seldom hesitate to publish photos of scattered corpses, and that those hit the sentiments of general people. Our editors, even, haven't conceived the codes that define nudeness (Pradhan 2064).

'We even today are engaged in implementing basic ethical norms. Even the basic norms like- any news sans source should not be published, the facts by one source must to verify from at least two other sources, a written confirmation must be attained for authenticity, kin to the person in news must not be affected- are far from our practices (ibid).

It depends on journalist's personal interest whether to follow ethics or not as these weren't enforced as laws. However, many common codes could be traced into the ethics made by various organizations around the globe. The points could be summed up into some basic norms as done by the American Society of Newspapers Editors (ASNE) (Pokharel 2051).

However, there is a partial listing of questions complied by 'The Ethics Advice Line'. Like, being away from wrong sources, not to compromise to the pointless demands of the sources, not to use the secret source for easy available information, not to save the sources lawlessly, among others to code some. In the same way, is it ethical to make an appointment to interview an arsonist sought by police, without informing police in advance of the interview? Is lack of proper attribution plagiarism? Should a reporter write a story about a local priest who confessed to a sex crime if it will cost the newspaper readers and advertisers who are sympathetic to the priest? Is it ethical for a reporter to write a news piece on the same topic on which he or she has written an opinion piece in the same paper? Under what circumstances do you identify a person who was arrested as a relative of a public figure? Can a journalist reveal a source of information after guaranteeing confidentiality if the source proves to be unreliable? These and many such points are there to which the journalists always face ethical dilemmas and all our media and journalists must prepare them ready to answer that. Otherwise, there won't be different between a journalist and a foxy village liar (Pradhan 2064).

Hyperlinks are another issues for online publishers; should a story provide links to other web sites, even if these links are not fully investigated or endorsed by the news entity? Should retractions be posted, or does the webmaster simply overwrite the incorrect content? Professional groups such as the Online News Association may provide some leadership in these areas (Palser 1999).

 As per other ethical codes, there is a perennial concern that the standards of journalism are being ignored. One of the most controversial issues in modern reporting is media bias, especially in the political issues, but also with regard to cultural and other issues. Sensationalism is also a common complaint. Minor factual errors are also extremely common, as almost anyone who is familiar with the subject of a particular report will quickly realize (Wikipedia 2008).

There are also some wider concerns, as the media continue to change, for example; the brevity of news reports and use of soundbites has reduced fidelity to the truth, and may contribute to a lack of needed context for public understanding. From outside the profession, the rise of news management contributes to the real possibility that news media may be deliberately manipulated. Selective reporting (spiking, double standards) are very commonly alleged against newspapers, and by their nature are forms of bias not easy to establish, or guard against.

In the pretext of that, this thesis has aimed to analyze the practice of journalist code of conduct in the present context. And since Nepalis press till date have no any code of conduct that directs the online journalism in particular, the study aimed to explore the possibilities and performances of the online journalism sector in lack of that.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

Online journalists face similar ethical challenges that their brethren in newspapers, TV and radio struggle with. But there are ethical issues unique to the online world that confronts everyone from traditional mainstream journalists who have moved online to the thousands of independent bloggers who practice various forms of journalism (Newsu 2008).

Ethical challenges never end. The debates still rage over the application of standards to real life. It won't be different for the Internet as it struggles to find its balance (Kelly 2000).

The main ethical implications are threefold: increased competition has affected the quality of news reports, the public has heightened its demand for transparency, and the news world's understanding of copyright has ceased to suffice.

Newsmakers face increasing competition to cover all the relevant stories and reach sources before their competitors. CNN, for instance, and website news have resorted to wall-to-wall, 24 hour coverage to ensure that they can provide the story to their readers and viewers as soon as it occurs. The danger is that speed will prevail over accuracy, and journalists will exchange their ethical motives as fact-checking truth-seekers for the love of breaking a story -- any story.

As Palsar say, Online journalism will surely face a great legal and ethical challenges in the future. Leadership and ethical standards are musts for the maintenance of journalistic standards (Palser 1999).

While some journalists turn to transparency to justify the claims in their reports, others have resorted to a much more careless form of writing, dubbed "journalism of assertion." Many blogs and independent e-zines, lacking an engrained sense of duty to the truth or to readers, have developed a journalistic style of unsubstantiated opinion. Ideas are accrued and then restated, without regard to their origin or factuality.

The fact that information can be so easily accessed and then redistributed on the internet has lent itself to yet another trend: questioning the value of copyright.

The challenge is to balance the legitimate desires of the online audience for up-to-the-minute reports with the profession's traditions of fairness, completeness, balance and accuracy (Lasica 2007).

The Internet also throws up ethical problems of its own. Concerns over copyright and intellectual property rights loom very large among these concerns and they will have to be sorted out internationally.

Likewise the question of source validity is always there in the online journalism. While talking about the online journalism, the danger is the assumption that what we see is what is true. The proof of the source is much more difficult on the Internet. Even if the press release or the site with the relevant facts carries a credible name, there's no guarantee that the name is as it should be. All Internet information needs to be treated with caution and checked. This information also usually only gives one side of the story: that of the government, the company, and the individual.

Instead of this, effectiveness of the online medium seemed increasing day to day. People from different sector are seen using online medium for its positive values like interactivity, greater access to different types of media and greater diversity of content, reduced 'gatekeeping' powers, new and powerful story-telling methods through multi-media technology, and more resources to probe issues. However, there are many con sides of online journalists. Rise in "journalism of assertion": unsubstantiated opinion and rumor which harms journalistic credibility; lack of restraint among online writers; Pressure to lower ethical standards and sensationalize stories; Public complaints about how a "omnipresent" media violate personal privacy; Confusion about who is a journalist, when anyone can publish; and Ethical "vertigo" regarding news values, newsworthiness, credibility.

Everyone knows there is no restriction for any subject matters in the Internet. Journalists working for the online news medium are seen using any information from anywhere in the internet world that they find relevant, most often, without mentioning the sources. In such, how would the online reader take that is the point to look at. There is no doubt that Internet is useful resource in every aspect of our life. But when such resources were used as information in any news item then the readers always sought reliable source for that to believe. And if the information were misused it could invite danger in many forms. So it is necessary to know about the journalists' habit to pass on such information.

So, following questions have been set up to study Ethical Issues in Online Journalism:
- How the online journalism are functioning in Kathmandu in relation to the ethical aspects?
- How much the Nepalese online journalists aware of the journalistic ethics?

1.3 Significance of the study

The proposed study aimed to study different issues related to online journalism in Nepal and its aspects relating ethics and code of conduct. Besides, the study also aimed at garnering the opinion of Nepali journalists about ethics and code of conducts in online journalism. This would be a beneficial part of this thesis as this may provide relevant data on the topic.

The study will have both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, the study is the first literature of its kind in the field of online journalism in Nepal as the study will explore knowledge on ethical issues in online journalism in the country. Besides, it will provide an insight into how Nepali journalists view ethics and code of conduct in daily journalism.

Practically, as the study is the first of its kind in the field of online journalism in Nepal, it will help the practitioner understand different aspects of technicalities in maintaining ethics and credibility in online journalism, thus, contribute in development and promotion of the genre. Besides, this will also help policy makers and media experts to draw strategies accordingly. It is also hoped that the findings of this study will help people who wish to garner knowledge on the online journalism and its ethics.

1.4 Limitations of the study

As the study has to be done under the periphery of limitations of all from subject area to time to geographical locations, this thesis paper also have its own limits in contains and subject under study. However, it will be the first priority of the study to minimize such shortcomings with maximum use of related literature available and internet sources. Since the online journalism is a vague topic itself, covering all aspects of it in a study will not only make the paper hazy but also prevents to go beneath the subject matter. So, for consistency, the study is focused mainly on the ethical aspects of the online journalism with general information on other aspects of the genre.

The scope of this study has 3 restrictions. First it was centered on definition of the online media. Second, impacts of ethical values were assessed. Finally, conclusions were drawn on the basis of study findings. The sample population is similar in occupation, fields of study, but varies in professional experience.

2. Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to focus on different issues of online journalism in Nepal with special focus in the ethical standard they gone through. The general objectives of the study are identified as:

- Study the relative position of journalist ethics followed by Nepali online journalists.
- Know impact of existing ethical codes in performance of online journalists.
- Study the strength of ethical values on the basis of analysis of online journalists.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The ethics of online journalism are, ultimately, no different than the ethics of journalism. It comprises principles of ethics and good practice as applicable to the specific challenges faced by professional journalists. Historically and currently, this subset of media ethics is widely known to journalists as their professional "code of ethics" or the "canons of journalism." The basic codes and canons commonly appear in statements drafted by both professional journalism associations and individual print, broadcast, and online news organizations (Salcito 2007).

"Knowing that an action is legal doesn't always mean it's the path we should follow. But how do we make ethical decision?" (Artwick 2005).

The Society of Professional Journalists has articulated a comprehensive policy of journalism ethics that can help guide any conscientious online writer. No plagiarism, prefect disclosure of news contents, avoid conflicts of interest, reward readers with accurate information, and honesty as some basic qualities that any good online writer ought content ought to demonstrate (Niles 2008).

The western press that come across with experiences of more than two hundred years have little disputes on minor subject matters like ours. The government of their countries would never think to enforce ethical guidance over the press nor do they imagine on that. Any of the renowned organizations are found functioning with their own set of ethical codes placing themselves a step forward to other guidance set by their governments, and professional organizations like Press Council, Journalist's Associations, Editor's Associations etc (Pradhan 2064).

Though it is found that the development of journalistic ethics in Nepal has late beginning considering the origin of media ethics in other countries around the globe, the Gorkhapatra in its first issue had accepted the occurrences of mistakes while printing. The first issue of then weekly and the "Sanad" designated to operate that had also said that the journalists must be adept and a good moral practitioner (Press Council Nepal 2055).

A primary framework envisioning journalist's ethics was framed for the first time by Press Commission Report in 2015. The report defined that the journalists must- apart them from the interest of self and of any party, respect human rights, act as per communal interest, aware if any report is against the communal harmony, stimulate religious violence.

The report also said that the journalists should keep them aware if anything against the truth is published, prohibit the unconfirmed news, a quick initiative to admit mistakes and must keep away from the sensational materials in their publications. Rather a journalist should function as per the will and wish of the society. It also directed the journalists to respect their sources' belief towards them and their individual rights. And also not to misuse the privilege they owned in their capacity as the fourth organ of the state (ibid).

Many cases after the outline of the ethics had also been filed seeking legal actions against the 'abusers'. A written clarification sought by the Kathmandu district magistrate from the Samaj Daily in 2011 and the answer it sent against the news it published about the France visit of a member of Royal Commission, case filed against Nepal Times (Hindi) by Samaj Daily seeking remedy for obscenity in 2013 are some of the examples that proved that the journalists since the beginning are aware of the ethical standards (ibid).

Since ethical choices by nature depend on concrete situations, the journalist has to make these decisions on the facts of each individual case (Ray 2006).

According to J.D Lasica, Senior Editor, Online Journalism Review (a publication published by the well-known Annenberg School of Communication, University of

Southern California), the issues can be grouped under three broad categories: news gathering, news reporting, and news presentation.

Claudette Guzan Artwick writes good journalists must sometimes do difficult things. Their stories can expose wrongdoing, and may anger people. And, because of the nature of this work, the question, "Can I be sued for this?" sometimes emerges. The answer isn't always clear, especially online, where the issues are still evolving. In many cases its advisable to consult newsroom management or the company's attorney for guidance. But its also wise to become familiar with the law as it pertains to everyday news-gathering and presentation (Artwick 2005).

Claudette in the book has referred some points including libel, privacy, copyright, reporter's privilege, and free press/ free trail that may poise with ethical questions to the online journalists.

The evolving medium of the Internet provides journalists a fresh means of communication and research. Companions to these new capabilities are potential pitfalls. The definitions of journalists and publisher become skewed. Legally, anyone who posts information on the World Wide Web is a publisher; the people who compose the information are journalists, regardless of training or experience. Both are subject to the same privileges and liabilities of their conventional counterparts. The Internet spans the globe, encompassing all manner of geography and political/governmental entities. Today we see online webcasts of news and even the injection of audience input in breaking news. It is a brave new world in the field of online journalism. Adhering to conventional ethics and credibility can help ensure its success (Garcia 2001).

The Society of Professional Journalists maintains some ethics guide in www.spj.org/ethics. The same site further writes: New forms of journalism require new approaches to ethics. Many current ethical issues will remain, and others will emerge. Increasing consolidation of corporate media and the continued evolution of the Internet complicate the ethics of online journalism further. The need for a global approach, requiring a shared set of values, also poses a challenge for journalists in all media (Richards 1999).

Graphic manipulation, banner ads placed atop a newspaper web site, and commingling of editorial and advertising content are just a few of the many ethical issues that new media raise for journalism. News organizations have built and maintain compelling web sites; they now seek to make these sites commercially viable.

The rules of copyright and ownership still apply to the Internet. Some sites upload a revised story, noting the time of the revision but leaving no trace of the original. Often, no attempt is made to correct information for those who read the flawed version earlier (Kelly 2000).

A comparative study of journalistic codes in 31 European countries carried out by Laitila (1995) shows there to be a very large number of different principles, although she classified them in terms of six types of accountability. There were: to the public; to the source and referents; to the state; to the employer; for professional integrity; for protection of the status and unity of the profession. Although there is considerable diversity of codes, especially when all the separate entries are considered, Laitila found quite a high level of agreement on certain general principles. Six in particular, all with some degree of relevance to the wider society, were found in nearly all of the 31codes examined. Certain specific provisions that were common (present in more than 70% of codes) included: the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity/religion, etc.; respect for privacy; prohibition of bribes or any other benefits (McQuail 2001).

A research paper entitled "An Overview of Online Journalism and Online Newspapers" published by Katebrigham states ethics on the WWW is likely to develop into a major cause of concern as the medium is entirely digital in nature, since images, Hyper Text Markup Languages (HTML) and text are easily and quickly duplicated. This process is facilitated by the WWW browser's "View Source Code" feature allowing users to examine a web site's HTML source code and being able to easily copy and modify these codes for personal use. This is aided by the fact that most images on the WWW have a small byte size as they need to be loaded quickly making it convenient for images/photographs to be copied.

Plagiarisation and misappropriation of WWW content are emerging concerns for news organizations. "This was guerrilla journalism at its best, evidence that the Internet had

spawned a new class of journalistic outsiders and armed them to outdo the greatest media operations with no more than a computer (software) and an Internet connection". Though the WWW has made information and news widely accessible, publishing online is equally simple for those with the skills and equipment. Publishing online requires nothing more than a modem, literacy, and something to say. This has implications for the standards of the content. "Getting into print in traditional media usually requires some sort of journalistic apprenticeship or education, where keen young writers are indoctrinated in the rules of journalism's ethics. Ethical niceties rank in priority somewhere below hard-disk crashes in the online world" (The Economist 1999).

Suraj Adhikari in his unpublished Master's Thesis, Online in Nepal: A case study of online media in Kathmandu Valley, writes: "There are two category of online presence in Kathmandu. One is completely dedicated to the online reporting, writing and publishing that are real time news media and another is newspaper that published its copy in the internet as archived version. Nepalnews.com, kantipuronline.com and newsofnepal.com are the major news portals that are publishing daily as real time. Gorkhapatra is publishing its copy of daily version of Rising Nepal. First three online media are real time online (Adhikari 2006).

Cherilyn Parsons an online journalist, writer for the site www.ojr.org, the Online Journalism Review, a Web-based journal produced at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California wrote an article about the situation of online journalism as follows. He posted this article on 1998 and later he modified it on 2002.

In his article Parsons has mention a real situation of Nepal's online and Internet history. "The rocky road of the Internet in Nepal illustrates the challenges for online journalism in developing countries. Strap on your sense of humor — which replaces seatbelts here — for a wild ride.

He starts with the technology. The World Wide Web in Nepal has been much like the roads here. There are only a few real cross-country highways in Nepal, and these often fall apart during the monsoon. Likewise, there are only three ISPs (now 30 license holder) in the country. They rely on overseas lines (Singapore, Hong Kong and Canada are favorite carriers) but have to shut down service during Nepal's periodic lapses in

local electricity. Blame the gods and the government for both types of collapsed highway (Journalism Online 2008).

Kapil Kafle in his online article published in dainikee.com said, "In Nepal the online journalism has now been bestowed with more possibilities than yesteryears. Till two years back the online journalists were even deprived from the government Press Passes. The Department of Information now has in its record that the government has issued seven press passes particularly to online journalists. The online journalism has started emerging slowly even though the Press Council seldom bothers it thinking on distributing advertising to the online after categorizing as it did for newspapers. The Office of the company registrar under the Ministry of Industries has complied records on online media, though this is not the appropriate place for online journalism. The press council itself should maintain records and implied appropriate suggestions as per its need" (Kafle 2009).

It is well-known fact that the state has accepted the concept of online journalism in the country lately. Its, at least, been a decade that many European nations, specially the US had started recognizing online journalists. In Nepal, it has been recognized only after the promulgation of Interim Constitution 2063. The Interim Constitution under Article 15 has guaranteed the publication, broadcasting and press rights. It says:- "No publication and broadcasting or printing of any news items, editorial, article, writings or other readings, audio-visual materials, by any means including electronic publication, broadcasting and press, shall be censored". The genre feel further respite with the constitutional provision that reads:- "No radio, television, online or any other types of digital or electronic means, press or any other communication media shall be closed, seized or be cancelled the registration because of publishing and broadcasting or printing any material by such means of audio, audio-visual or electronic equipments" (ibid).

During the study of the related literature I found that most of the studies conducted so far mainly focused on the relation between the online journalism and the traditional journalism (print and broadcasting) and most of them by the foreign researchers in their own context. With reference of those I in this study have tried to dig out some findings relating the ethics or code of conduct to the online journalism. How online journalists

look the existing code of conduct and how they find the ethical provisions helping their daily jobs are the area towards which my study is focused.

Chapter 3

3.1   Research Methodology

The main objective of this study is to find out the status of Nepalese online journalism in terms of ethical standards. To find out the situation of the online media websites, those are providing the online news and overall presence of the Kathmandu based online news sites, the research is focused on close look of online news portals those purely deal with the news and current affairs as their online contents with timely update of those being based in Kathmandu. A purposive sample selection method was adopted to decide the online news sites on the basis of their language, popularity and their intensity on updating the news materials. The popularity was judged according to the number of their visitors recorded in their news portals' hit counters. And the study has analyzed the response obtained from the journalists working in those media through questionnaire response.

Study of the literature on the online and the new media and scheduled interviews with both the experts and journalists and their concerns to ethics were also undertaken to access their views on the subject matter.

The topic is completely a new subject of study in Nepali context. Viewing the potentiality of internet resources in this case, internet sources and library methods were considered as the first choice of study. Besides, both the experts and online journalists were approached for their response about the online journalism, its practice and trend in Nepal. For this a method of scheduled interview and questionnaire presentation was followed.

Basically and tactically, the methods opted to conduct the study could be summed up into following steps:

- Preparation of lists containing names of online news portals which are providing news, views and other news materials.
- With the method of purpose sampling, ten web news portals have been selected on the basis of their language, popularity and their intensity on updating the news materials.
- A set of questionnaire containing 24 items has been prepared targeting the online journalists working in those selected news portals and subsequently approached for their response to that.
- Respondents have also been approached with other informal questions intending to know more in the subject of study through scheduled interviews.
- Library method has also been followed to gather more information and review of the related literature by side of the questionnaire response.
- The primary data have been collected through questionnaires responses obtained from respondent journalists.
- The secondary data have been collected through direct observation and opinion of the experts related with the field.
- Responses obtained through questionnaire survey and other methods have been tabulated and analysed to draw conclusion.
- The findings have been presented through pie diagram.
- Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation have been drawn after the study, interpretation and analyses of data.

3.2   Data Collection

There are a total of 100 respondents to the questionnaire survey. Among participants are online journalists those are working in different media houses with online news portal.

The focus on journalists in this study stems from the fact that journalists (specially reporters) are more responsible in gathering and preparing the news materials to be published. And they are the first person to contact the sources and source materials. The respondents are not divided into males and females. But, I tried my best to make their equal participation.

For questionnaire response the participants were selected on the basis of the selection of online news portals. Here the selection of the online portals was made according to its web presence, language, frequency in update and visitors. During the questionnaire response I was aware to include the respondents having different work experiences. The survey was very small in its kind and the views were collected from journalists (reporters) practicing in Kathmandu. As the working field and work experience have effect upon the performance of a journalist, the selection criteria were set giving more priority to the same. But my assumption failed as I found many of the online portals and its journalists use shovelware contains from their print editions or the journalists themselves working in print media. Thus it was a random sampling. All the responses to the survey collected were first-hand and clear because I myself visited the journalists and made them clear about the questions. Therefore, the return rate for survey and resulting sample size was total 100.

The participants in this study represent total online journalists of urban areas across the valley and the study clearly displays the current trend of online practices in the country.

A small-scale survey was made to gather information. I earlier thought to send questions through Internet to the respondents to conduct a form of a standardized e-mail survey of journalists. But later realize that e-mail has restricted layout possibilities, which would have considerably complicated filling out a questionnaire. Likewise, sending the questionnaire as an attachment file would have required a greater degree of willingness to cooperate than we could assume, since respondents may seem unwilling to respond on such. So I thought it will be more influential if I visited them and asked them the questions.

The questionnaires were given 10 journalists of each group by visiting their offices and respective institutions to collect primary data. The secondary data were collected through direct observation and opinion of the experts related with this field. The area of the study was as per the first-hand information given by the journalists who are working in online media in Kathmandu. The questionnaires, which contain questions about 'the ethical practices' and 'can it be useful for journalists', were filled by the online journalists. At the first step I collected a list of media houses which run online news portals and the number of journalists working there. Then the journalists were approached with questions for their response on that. At the same time I asked questions to the experts related to media field on their opinion about how can media be benefited from the well ethical practices? and also collected first hand information about the current state of online journalism in our country from direct observation.

Though the question set doesn't have any particular format, all the questions were targeted to achieve responses as designated in the objective. Questions were designed in such a way that help reveal understanding of journalists those work for online news portals in terms of ethical issues.

The reliability of the survey can be assessed by means of confirming and comparing it with given sources.

Chapter 4

4.1   Data Analysis

When asked since how long are they associated with the online journalism 58 percent respondent journalists replied with second option that reads 3-4 years. Though its been more than a decade that online journalism has begun to take pace, the survey results revealed that only 7 percent of the total respondents have more than 6 years work experience in the field. A total of 23 testees replied that they already had spent 1-2 years in the field, 12 percent said they possessed 5-6 years of working experience in the genre.

Fig.4.1.1 **Respondents' experience in online journalism**
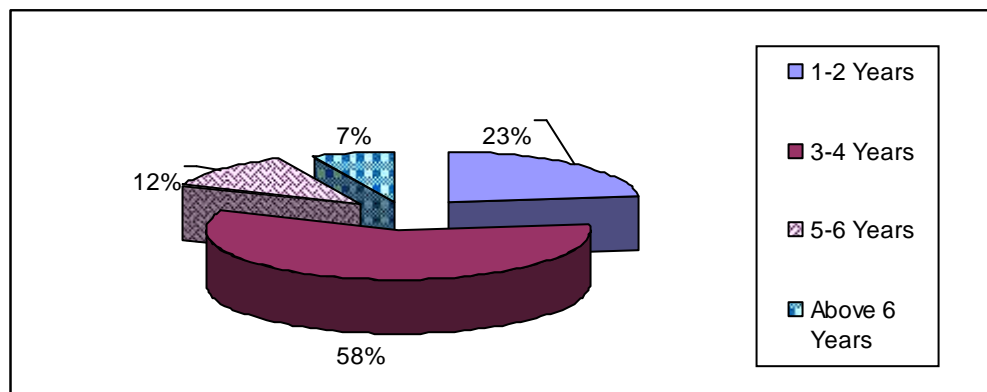
The survey findings revealed that all the online practitioners are not from the media field. Since online is a new genre of journalism it has been assumed that most of journalists, specially reporters, in the filed were from other fields of media including print and broadcasting. But according to the survey results most of the online journalists are from other fields. Only 12 percent out of total 100 respondents said they were from the journalism field. They replied with the option 'work in same filed but with different media'. 63 percent of total respondents said they had no specific job to mention before they joined the online sector and another 18 percent said they work in another field while the remaining 7 respondents said they opted other jobs without further explication what that mean.

Fig. 4.1.2 **Respondents' field of experience before joining online**
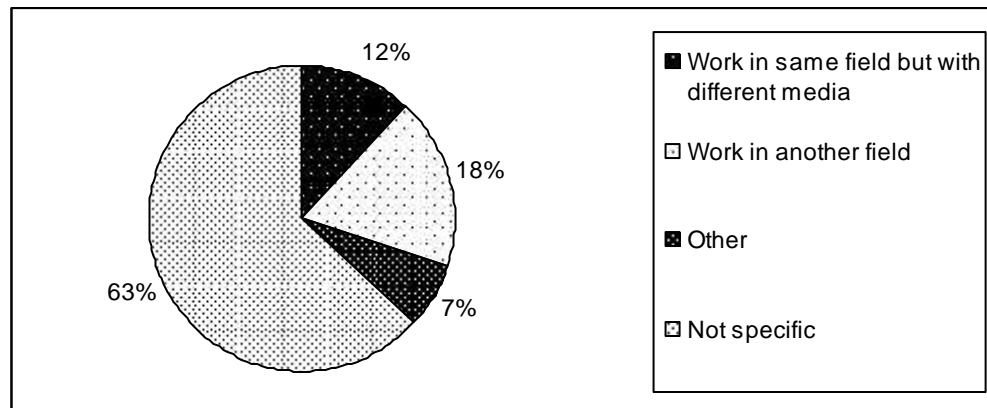
Despite their varied responses regarding previous work experience all among the respondents replied that they were aware of the ethical norms and the journalist ethics. The results showed none of the journalists those participated the survey unfamiliar to the ethics. When asked what ethics is, about 93 percent respondents said it is intermingle of professional law and self-regulated law. While among remaining seven percent 5 said it is self-regulated law and other 2 percent go with the option professional law.
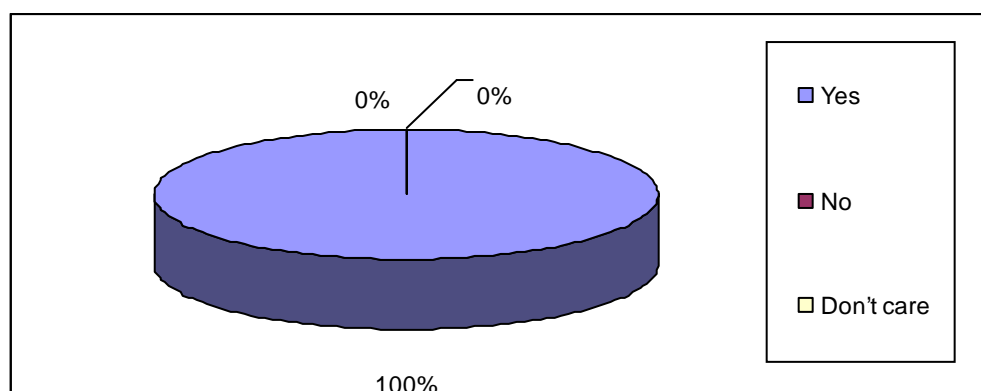
Fig.4.1.3 **Journalists' understanding of ethics**
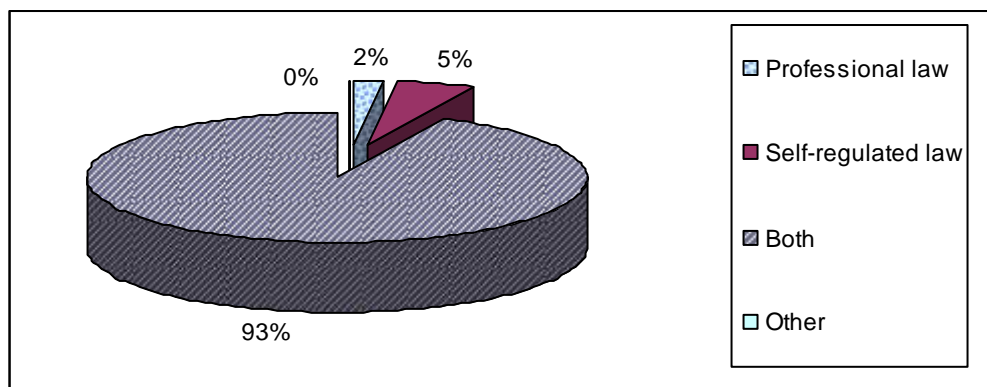
Likewise, all the respondents revealed that they know about Journalist Code of Conduct 2064.

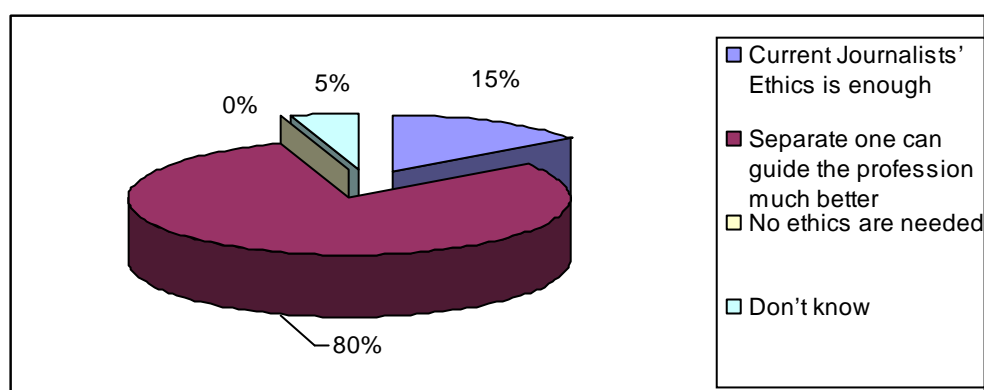*Fig. 4.1.4* **Participants' knowledge on Code of Conduct**

Yes

No

Don't care

0%   0%

100%

Respondents, stating that since the country don't have any code of conduct that guide the online journalism in particular, said it would be better if separate one is there. However, some of them expressed content over the existing one, and some other said they 'don't know'. According to the survey results, the number that saw need of separate ethical guidelines for online journalism are 80, which is also the 80 percent of total respondents. Similarly, 15 percent said the current journalists' ethics is enough. They reasoned that it takes a considerable time to implement new code of conduct for online journalism in particular and since the existing one is also not bad it is enough for the time being. Only 5 percent respondents go with the option that they don't know on the issue.

Fig. 4.1.5 **Respondents' view on separate codes for online journalism**

Current Journalists' Ethics is enough

Separate one can guide the profession much better

No ethics are needed

Don't know

0%   5%   15%

80%

The respondents were also asked questions regarding the professional norms or ethics they are following. When asked what organizational policies and professional guidelines you are following, almost all have responded with similar reply mentioning

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about Journalists' code of conduct, constitutional provisions, other related Nepal laws. Some have mentioned laws like, Small Scale Act, Press Council Act, Press and Publication Act and Regulations, Broadcasting Acts and Regulations etc. and organizational policies as guidelines to act professionally. But they said they have no any mechanism that checks exact consequences of their news among readers. However, some said they take feedback and comments obtained from their readers as significant factors to know their readers. They said that the impacts of their news are judged based on those comments and feedbacks.

On the assumption that journalists are benefited in their professional and social life after they act ethically, none of the respondents desired to say that they disagree with that best guess. Out of total answerers 7 percent said they strongly agree that journalists were/would benefited after practicing ethically. The remaining percentage of respondents (93) also supports the statement with their affirmative response. They said they agree to the given statement.

Fig. 4.1.6 **Respondents benefited acting ethically**
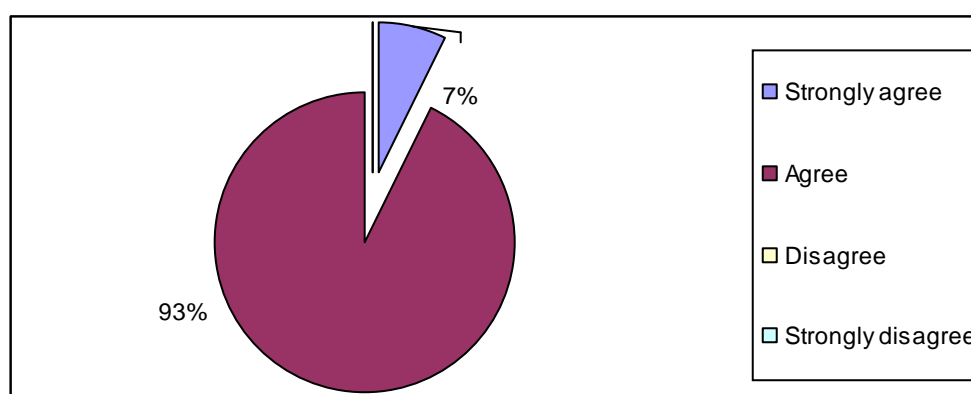
Source: Field Survey, 2065

When asked about a question how many times such happened, though the testees were unable to reveal any exact case and number, they didn't hesitate to say that such happened many times. 47 percent among the respondents answered that they did not remember the exact event and number and 33 of them said many times. The other 20 like to say this as other.

Fig. 4.1.7 **Number of times respondents benefited**
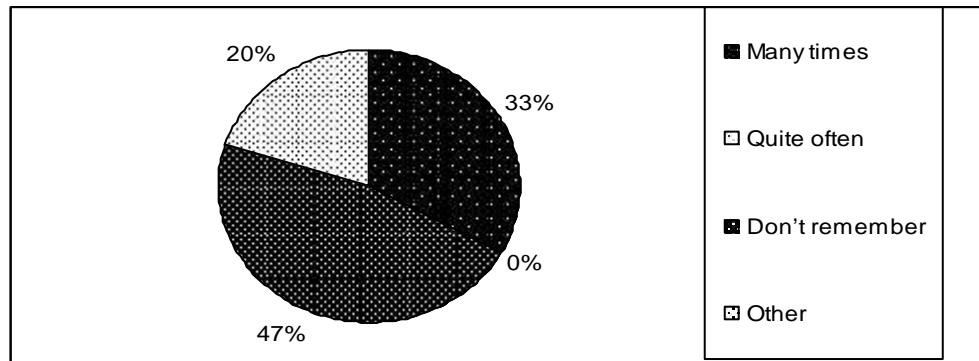
Notwithstanding the fact they were benefited after acting within limits of ethics, the respondents said that they had to go through pressures from various sectors to remain intact with ethical guidelines. Out of total respondents 78 percent replied with multiple response that they had faced pressure from the management and political sector while acting ethically. Likewise ten and twelve percent said they had to confront against managerial and political coerce respectively. None of the respondents said they face problem from the society to act ethically.

Fig. 4.1.8 **Problems respondents face while acting ethically**
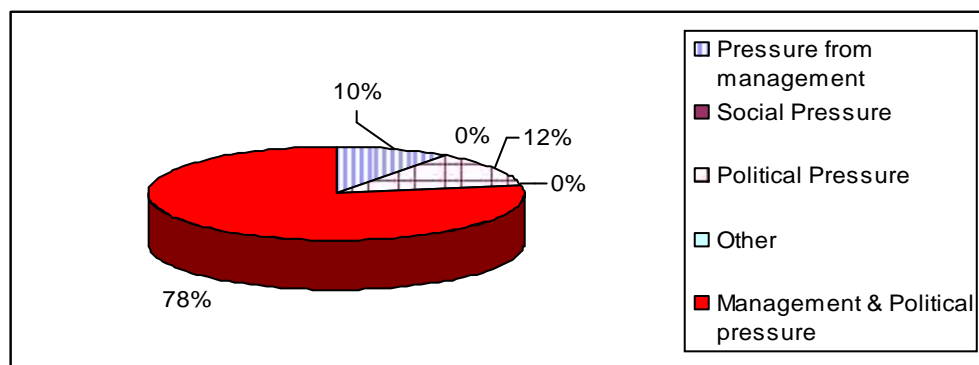
A majority of respondents said they are usual to the journalistic purpose. 90 percent respondents said that the journalistic purpose is to act as watchdog and accountable to the people and society. While 5 percent each respondents replied with either options to the above. They said that the purpose of the journalism is either act as watch dog and accountable to the people and society.

Fig. 4.1.9 **Respondents define journalistic purpose**

Legend:
- Act as watch dog
- Accountable to the people & society
- A job of a journalist
- Not specific
- Act as watchdog & accountable to people & society

Values shown: 0%, 5%, 5%, 0%, 90%
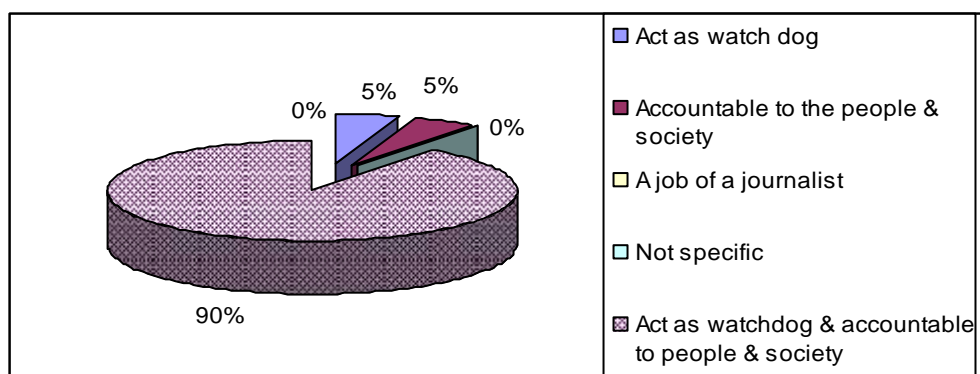
The results also revealed the fact that online journalists relay more or less to the materials published in other forms of media, speci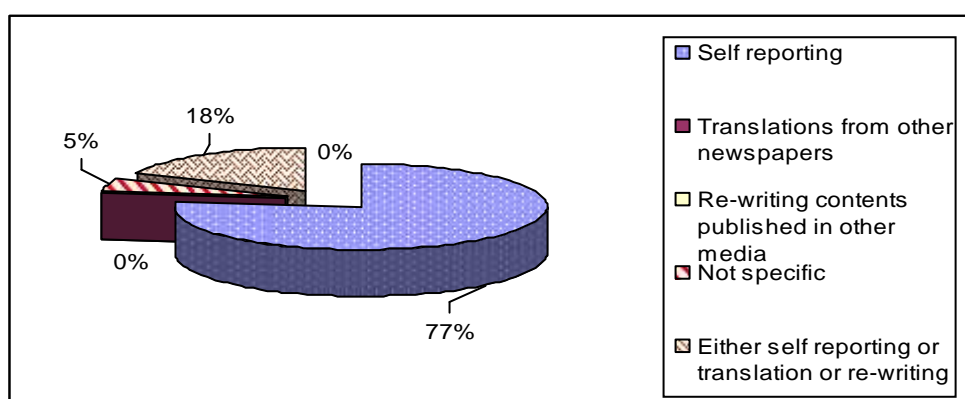ally print, radio and television. And the way of writing news materials are found not different from that of other media. According to the survey results, all most all 77 percent respondents said they get the materials to publish from self reporting. Likewise, 18 percent respond with multiple responses stating they get the materials either from self-reporting or translate materials published in other media or re-write such contents. Only 5 percent of them said there is no specific way of getting the matters to publish.

Fig. 4.1.10 **Source of materials to publish online**

Legend:
- Self reporting
- Translations from other newspapers
- Re-writing contents published in other media
- Not specific
- Either self reporting or translation or re-writing

Values shown: 18%, 5%, 0%, 0%, 77%

The respondents while answering the questionnaires also admitted that they sometimes relay on materials of other media. Nearly all the respondents replied with the option that they sometimes use news and other news related materials from other media. While responding to the question, respondents who replied earlier that they get materials for their portals to publish from self reporting, also goes with the option that they sometimes relay on materials of other media. The participants, however, tried to justify their answers stating that by other media they mean news agencies, wire services, syndicates or other similar ones.

Fig. 4.1.11 News portals relay on materials published in other media
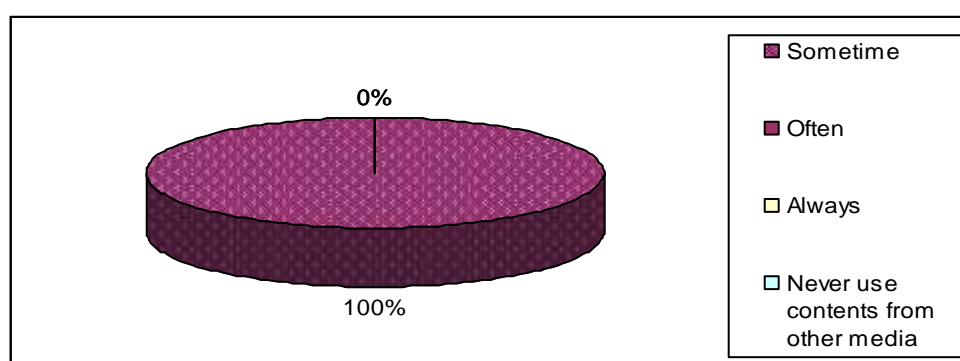
Though they sometimes passed on news from other media, 60 percent respondents said they compile the information obtained before publishing. While 25 percent respondents replied that they accessed the news source themselves after knowing the information, 15 percent said their activity whether to use shovelware media content, or to re-write those or contact news source for more details depends on the gravity of subject matter. None among the respondents replied with the option 'totally or use shovelware materials'.

Fig4.1.12 How online portals use other media contents

☐	Totally or use shovelware materials
■	Information are complied in own words
☐	Self access to the sources after knowing the information
■	Depends on the gravity of subject matter

15%   0%
25%   60%
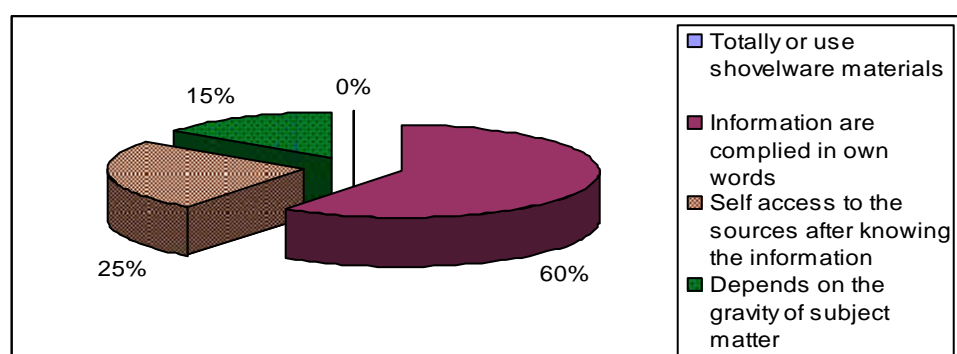
Source: Field Survey, 2065

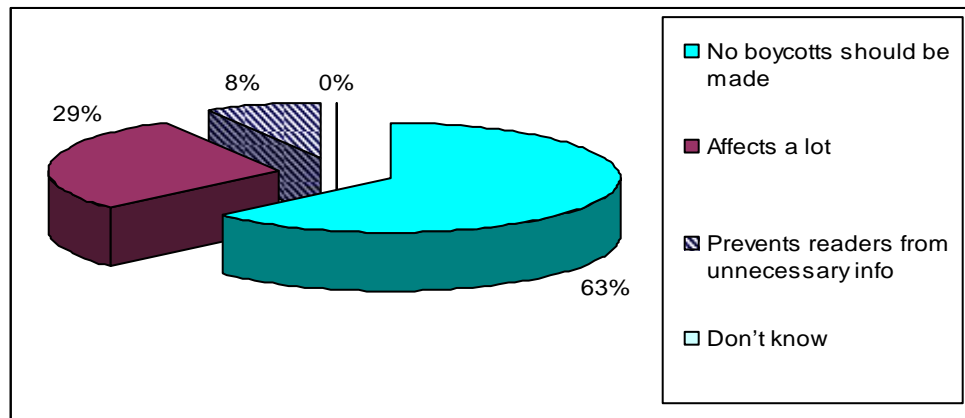After knowing their ethical understandings and its use in their daily works, the respondents were approached with both open-ended and multiple choice questionnaires to know how they deal with any information or news story. The main reason behind asking such questions is to know about their practices and the way they treat their readers/viewers. In response to the question how do they cover news on army and arms, a considerable number of respondents said that their portals have no such particular reporters who deals with the subject as in other big print and broadcasting media houses. Response in the question was also found differ among the journalists of same media. While journalists working for portals those are sister publication of print editions said they consult the issues with other news reporters of their mother publications and only publish such matters on due credit to them, respondents from news portals those only run online media replied that they deal with the subjects as per the gravity of the subject matter. While some respondents said they investigate the topic on their own with the concerned officials considering the importance of subject, many of them said they relay on news of big media houses in such issues. However, they have common understanding over a point that reports should be further investigated before publishing if that carry information on grave national interest.

In response to the question if journalist's choice to news curtail their audiences' right to know, about 63 percent respondent said such activities of journalist will affect people's right to information. They, for the reason, said 'no boycotts should be made' while covering events for news. Likewise, 29 percent said such activities of the journalist have great affect on audience and that restricts readers' right to know. And 8 percent among the total testees responded with the belief that such activities of journalists prevent readers form unnecessary information.

Fig. 4.1.13 **Boycotts affect readers' right to know**

☐	No boycotts should be made
■	Affects a lot
◩	Prevents readers from unnecessary info
☐	Don't know

29% 8% 0% 63%

The number that believe in free flow of information and don't want any news boycotts also said that total editorial freedom should be given to the news room. During my survey some respondents suggested that editorial department should be given total freedom such that the press could disseminate information protecting people's right to information. In response to the question 'should the news room given total editorial freedom? 85 percent of them answer with the option 'yes'. Among the remaining, five percent said that the editorial freedom should be judged up to organization's interest and 10 percent said they can't say anything on the topic. None of the participants replied against the editorial freedom.

Fig. 4.1.14 **Respondents' view on editorial freedom**

■	Yes
◫	Up to organization's interest
◪	No
☐	Can't say anything
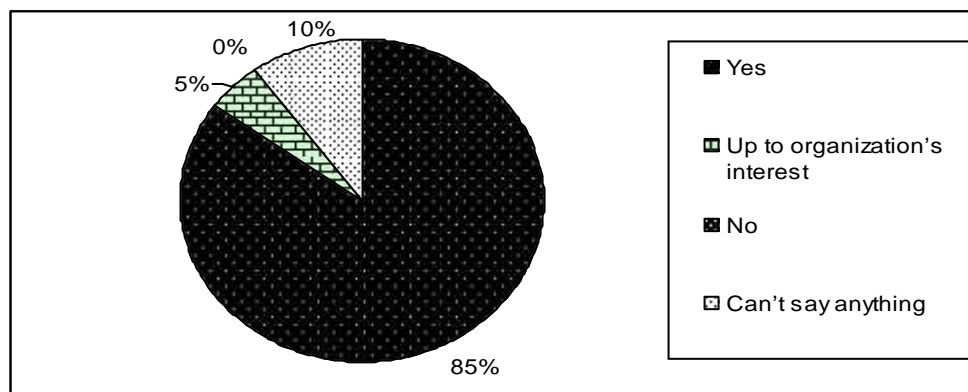
10% 0% 5% 85%

But no matters how they see the editorial freedom, almost all the respondent journalists believed that social responsibility is the main ethical factor. Mentioning that journalist

while doing journalism should not cover anything that go against people and society 60 percent of respondents said it is main ethical factor. Other 37 percent believed that it is too much related with ethics so should be considered as main ethical factor. Three percent among total respondents had defined this as the journalist's individual thinking.

Fig. 4.1.15 **Participants' view on relation between social responsibility and ethics**
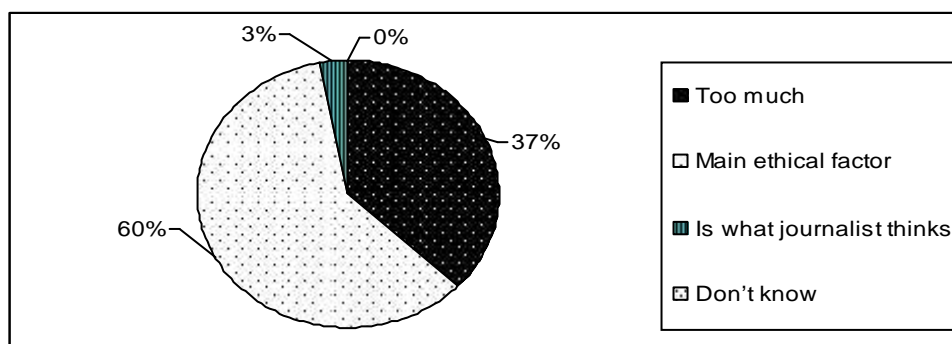
In a question asked to know how much do the journalists think necessity for timely update of ethical standards and how much they are informed about ethical developments in Nepal, more than half said they think the ethical principles are regularly followed and updated. The percent that carry affirmative response is 68. But 20 percent said no such has happened and 12 percent among the respondents think such happened as per needs.

Fig. 4.1.16 **Ethical codes are updated regularly**
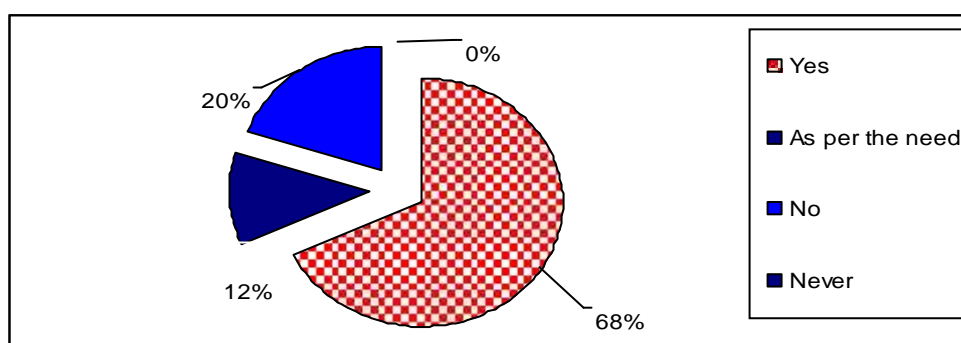
In response to item number 20, which inquires about the role of Nepali press in protection and promotion of press freedom and ethics, 43 percent said it has been always success to achieve that goal. A little less percent counting 40, said the Nepali press is able to perform the mentioned role in needs. While 12 percent said it often has

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achieved success in such cases, a nominal number of respondents said the Nepali press has never been able to protect and promote press freedom and ethics.
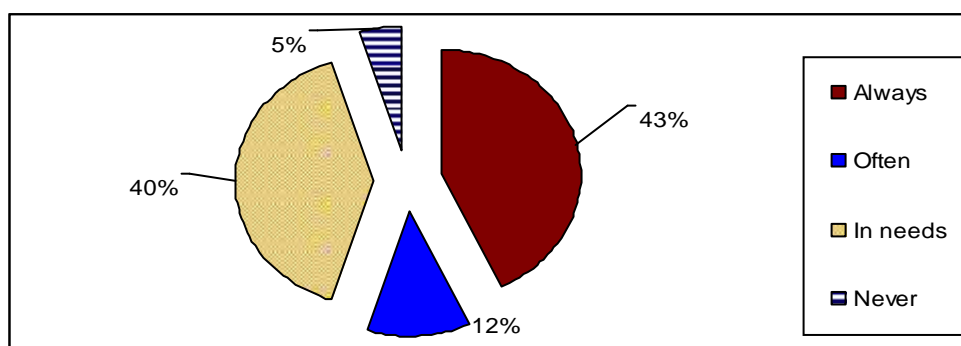
Fig. 4.1.17 Respondents believe press able to protect and promote press freedom

In response to the item number 23 that reads 'Should a journalist disclose news source?' all among the respondents replied with the option that disclosure of news source depends on the demands of news story. They said if news story are of grave concern then source are needed to make the story more authentic and credible. But if the story after publication is likely to hamper the source then news source should be protected, thus must not be disclosed.

Fig. 4.1.18 Journalist should disclose news source
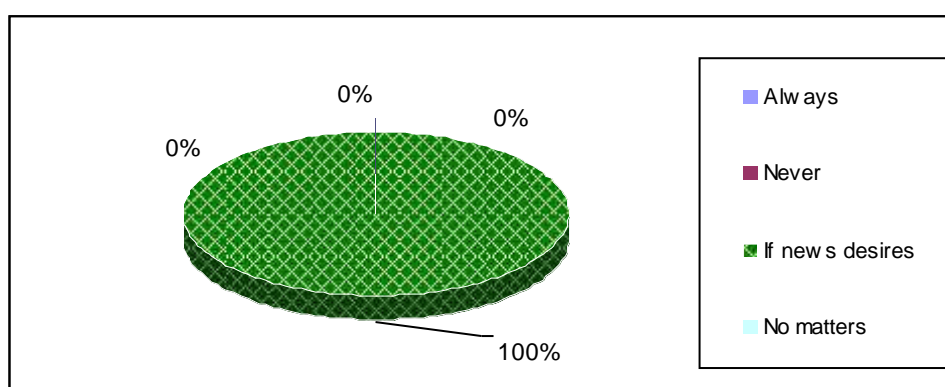
When asked what differences they find in online from other kinds of journalism almost all the respondents said that online journalism is timely and its deadline is limited as compared to other traditional media. 78 percent respondents said the online is timely and has minimal deadline while seven percent go with the option that online is only timely. Other 10 percent believed that online is the type of journalism that has limited

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deadline. Five percent among the testees said they see no such differences in online as compared to other kinds of journalism.

Fig. 4.1.19 **Respondents define online journalism**
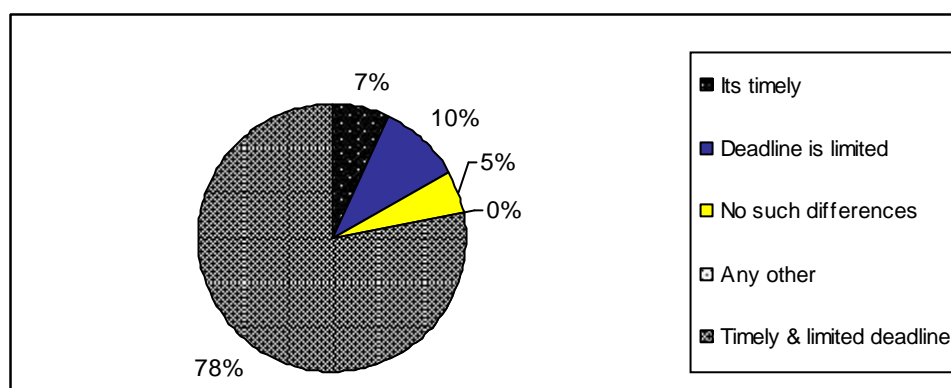
4.2   Findings

In my view the question of what the online journalism ethics is all about has been sufficiently dealt with. It is time for critical research to move on, away from the general level of functionality. It is no longer the technical possibilities that characterize the medium. Instead of, yet again, going through general possibilities my study is based on empirical data: a small-scale survey, webpages, events and personal encounters with the players in the field—both real and virtual.

The procedure of analyzing the data was on the basis of tabulating the questionnaire. The result from the study has clearly been examined and presented here.

I also applied the same method in observation and tried to present some of the outcomes through pie diagrams.

The analyses presented in this chapter are drawn from the study that had completed in 3 months from the date of endorsement of this proposal.

Though its more than a decade and half that the online has brought into general practice, majority of the respondents said here that they are in the field of online journalism for at least 3 years. Out of total 100 respondents 58 said that they had 3-4 years in the field. Likewise 23 replied they had up to two years in the online field. Only 19 respondents said they had spent 5-6 and more than 6 years in the filed. The number is 12 in case of 5-6 years working experience and 7 above 6 years.

The survey results revealed that the significant number of working online journalists were not from the same profession i.e. journalism before they joined this new genre. According to the data, a significant number of respondents who are working as online journalists were not from journalism field. Almost 63 respondents said that they had no any specific job before entering the online world. While 25 said they had works in other fields. Respondents tallied in this group relied either they work in another field or other. Among the respondents only 12 responded that they were in the journalism field but with another media.

In response to item number 3, which was asked to know how much the respondents know about journalistic purpose, all the respondents replied with similar kind of response that journalism should act as watchdog and should be accountable to the people and society. A total of 90 answerers presented them with multiple response portrayed as above and five each respondents said the journalistic purpose should be watchdog or accountable to the people and society.

When approached with the questionnaire to know the source of materials which the practitioners publish online, a majority of responders said they get materials to publish from self-reporting. 77 respondents had come up with the similar views while 18 said they obtain the materials either from self-reporting or translations from other newspapers or re-writing contents published in other media. Similarly, 5 of them said they are not specific in that case.

Respondents were asked about their reliance on materials published in other media. On which almost all the answerers said they relay on materials of other media 'sometimes'. Nonetheless, more than half of the total respondents (60) said they compile the information taken out from other media in their own words before publishing that online. 25 other respondents said they accessed the information sources themselves after

getting clue from other media while 15 said their activities depend on the gravity of subject matter.

When asked what ethics is, a considerable number of respondents (93) said it is a blend of professional law and self-regulated law while seven among them responded that ethics is only a self-regulated law.

Concerning to their knowing about journalists code of conduct all the respondents answered that they know about the Journalist Code of Conduct 2064. All of them also said that there are no any laws or ethics that guide the online journalism in particular in the country. In the pretext of the fact that the country has only journalistic code of conduct that oversees the entire journalism field, the respondent online practitioners (80) said a separate one can guide the profession much better. However, 15 see current Journalists' Code of Conduct is enough. Other five respondents said they have no idea on this.

Items 11 and 12 were designated to garner open-ended remarks from the respondents about the policies and professional guidelines that they are following and their attempts to know about the consequences of the news materials they had prepared upon audiences. Responding to which, journalists said they are abided with the current journalists' code of conduct and other Nepal laws associated with press. And their workings were also guided by the same.

On the assumption that journalists are benefited in their professional and social life after they act ethically, none of the respondents desired to say they disagree with that best guess. Many said the well practice of ethical norms have eased their every day work. Out of total answerers seven said they strongly agree that journalists were/would benefited after practicing ethically. The remaining number of respondents (93) also supports the statement with their affirmative response. They said they agree.

When asked how many times such happened, though the testees were unable to reveal any exact case and number they didn't hesitate to say that such happened many times. 47 among the examinees responded that they did not remember the exact number and 33 of them said many times. The other 20 preferred to go with the option 'other'. Notwithstanding the fact they were benefited after acting within limits of ethics, the

respondents said that they had to go through pressures from various sectors to remain intact with ethical guidelines. Out of total respondents 78 replied with multiple responses that they had faced pressure from the management and political field while acting ethically. Likewise 10 and 12 respondents said they had to confront against managerial and political coerce respectively.

In response to question number 16 that has been asked to know about the respondents' treat towards the news of grave national concern, on arms and army, for instance, many of them said they don't know any particular rule to deal such topics neither they do have special reporters to cover the issue. However, respondents from sister publications of big media houses said such issues were dealt by journalists with specialization in the field.

In response to the question about behaviour of journalists to express themselves about unethical behaviour of others' 87 responded with answer "few" while 13 of them said they 'don't know' about that.

While talking about journalist's choice to news that prevents them covering any events which ultimately curtail their reader or viewers' right to know, 63 respondent journalists said 'no boycotts should be made' while covering events for news. Likewise, 29 of them said such activities of the journalist have great affect on audience and that restricts readers' right to know. And eight among the total testees responded with the belief that such activities of journalists prevent readers form unnecessary information.

The number that believe in free flow of information and don't want any news boycotts also said that total editorial freedom should be given to the news room. In response to question number 21 that asked if editorial freedom should be given, 85 respondents answer for the same. Among the remaining 15 respondents five said that the editorial freedom should be judged up to organization's interest and 10 said they can't say anything on the topic.

Responding the questions asked to know about their ethical knowledge in the country, 68 of them said that the ethical principles in the country are regularly followed and updated. With 20 respondents saying that no such had ever happened, 12 other said the works were done as per the need. In another query about the role of Nepali press in

protection and promotion of press freedom and ethics 43 gave favourable response saying it has been always success to over come that role. 40 of them, on the other hand, said the Nepali press in needs played its defensive role well. While 12 said it often has achieved success in such cases five said the Nepali press has never been able to protect and promote press freedom and ethics.

They at the same time believe that social responsibility is the main ethical factor. When asked how far the social responsibility related with press, 60 among them come up with the response that it is the main ethical factor. While 37 of them deem that it is related to press very much, only three respondents said the responsibility is what journalist thinks. On the other hand, all most all assented that they should reveal the news source if news desire. But journalist should always take care of their information sources.

Nearly all respondents say they are aware of online journalism and the journalists' ethics. According to the interview results online practitioner prefer to have some knowledge on the field before entering the profession. They said that online journalism is timely and its deadline is limited as compared to other traditional media. 78 respondents said the online is timely and has minimal deadline while seven, 10 and five testees opined that online is only timely, deadline is limited and no such differences from other kinds of journalism respectively.

Chapter 5

5.1 Summary

This study Ethical issues in online Journalism, a study of Kathmandu valley has been conducted under certain pre-set objectives as defined in sub-title 2 of Chapter 1. Being within the periphery of the objectives, the study had tried to dig out different aspects of Nepali online journalism in terms of ethical issues. After conducting studies of the related literature, interview with the concerned and opting questionnaire method, the study has revealed certain findings which I would like to say major finding of this study. The major findings that I determined after a calculation, investigation, experiment, and survey etc has been defined herewith:

1. Online journalism is new genre. Comparing to other kinds of journalism it has some distinctive features including that is more immediate, has limited deadline, interactive, among others.

2. Its already more than a decade and half since the Internet and online came in common use. And its almost a decade it entered Nepal. But till date only a handful of journalists are associated with this new genre of journalism in the country. During my survey I found only 19 journalists, out of 100 I questioned, are associated with online journalism for more than five years. During the survey and interview I found that most of journalists who made name in the genre had left the profession later in search of other lucrative jobs.

3. There are only seven journalists in the government records who have gained press passes from Department of Information to practice online journalism in the country so far.

4. Journalists working in the field are not from similar background. Survey revealed that the profession has heterogeneous blend of manpower from different field.

5. Despite that all most all the respondents during survey revealed that they knew about journalistic and ethical norms. Many of them are aware of the existing codes of conduct, constitutional and other legal provisions related to the press.

6. Online media are relayed more or less to other forms of press i.e. newspaper, radio and television, for news materials.

7. There are no any ethical norms, or other law or act or regulations that guide the online journalism in particular. And the profession is guided under other provisions defined viewing needs of other forms of journalism.

8. Journalists working in online journalism see need of separate ethics, which, according to them, will guide the profession much better.

9. Though Nepali online journalism has been able to make its own position, it is yet to develop the system that helps to know consequences of their news. There is no exact mechanism that weighs the effect of any particular news on online audiences, though feedback, comments are there. So, it's getting late for it to learn its news impact on receivers.

10. Notwithstanding the fact that good ethical practices have helped them to act proficiently, journalists are facing numerous political, managerial, and other pressures while acting ethically. This has poised a great challenge for implementing good ethical decision.

11. News boycott and censor will curtail people's right to know. Thus the editorial room should be made free from any restrictions.

12. Social responsibility is associated with the ethical performances of journalist very much, thus should be judged as main ethical factor.

13. Most of online journalists dealt with overall subject matters. They are yet to practice with the concept of beat reporting. And since most of them don't have journalists for specialized reporting, on many of the important issues, like arms and army for instance, they have to relay on reports of other big media.

14. Nepali press are able to safeguard their rights in needs.

15. To make news more authentic and credible reporter should always disclose the news source.

5.3   Conclusion

Since the birth of modern journalism in the 15th century, journalism has gradually broaden the scope of the people that it claims to serve -- from factions to specific social classes to the public of nations. The journalistic principle of "serving the public interest" has been understood, tacitly or explicitly, as serving one's own public, social class or nation. The other principles of objectivity, impartiality and editorial independence were limited by this parochial understanding of who journalism serves. For example, "impartiality" meant being impartial in one's coverage of rival groups within one's society, but not necessarily being impartial to groups outside one's national boundaries.

The word "ethics" is connected intrinsically with questions of correct conduct within society. Ethics asks what we should do in some circumstance, or what we should do as participants in some form of activity or profession. Ethics is not limited to the acts of a single person. It is also interested in the correct practices of governments, corporations, professionals and many other groups. To these questions, ethics seeks a reasoned, principled, position. An appeal to existing practice or the command of a powerful leader is not sufficient. To answer such questions in a consistent, reasoned manner may take us far a-field. Some ethical questions will require reflection on our basic values and the purpose of human society.

The questions arise most typically in cases where there is genuine puzzlement about what should be done in various types of situations. There is usually some practical importance or urgency to such questions. Is it ethical for journalists to reveal their sources to the courts, despite their promises of confidentiality? Is it ethical of journalists to invade the privacy of politicians to investigate allegations of misbehaviour? One inquires ethically because one is puzzled about how existing principles might apply in a concrete situation.

Rules say an action is either right or wrong. This over-simplifies ethics. Ethical thinking requires the guidance of principles but it should not be shackled to them. Instead, we should evaluate principles according to whether they are useful in dealing with ethical concerns. Principles and their interpretations change over time. No principle can anticipate all possible situations, and principles may conflict. Ethics should focus on

how people interpret, apply, balance and modify their principles in light of new facts, new technology, new social attitudes and changing economic and political conditions.

As journalism is the profession that has direct relation with the society and people, it is expected to be more sincere. A minor mistake by a journalist could harm in large scale. Journalism is rightly called the fourth estate of the government. Endowed with special privileges by the Constitution, journalism has a rich and varied history of both disseminating information about current events to the populace and keeping a watchful eye on those with power. However, without the unique code of ethics the media would not have the trust, access or responsibility that they need to enjoy.

The rules of journalism ethics are both strict and subject to interpretation, because the journalist needs to develop the self-reliance and understanding of the principles in order to apply this set of ethics to the unpredictable situations they encounter with. Journalism rests on these concepts: conflict of interest (which includes both impropriety and undue influence by advertisers and corporate owners); sensationalism; objectivity and its counterpart, fairness; and accuracy. Only with the broad knowledge and reasoned practice of the code, journalism continues to be an important and influential part of the country's cultural and political landscape.

5.2   Recommendation

Its true that online journalism is the new genre of journalism. But with its rapid expansion within short span of time that traditional media (paper, radio and television) have never witnessed, we at the time cannot ignore it citing only new genre. The impacts and effects the online journalism able to left within few minutes of its postings is the main thing that should be studied. We know that journalism or say mass communication of which the journalism is a part, has power to inform, educate, entertain and persuade its widespread audience at once. Considering the features, journalists while posting any news items, should think twice if they missed to publish the best matters.

As experts say, knowing that an action is legal doesn't always mean it's the path we should follow, journalists should never overlook the impacts of news on society and people. Since ethics or code of conducts is not mandatory, no one can oblige other to follow that. Subsequently no one would be punished for the reason that he/she didn't follow ethical paths as compared to violation of other laws. Also, journalists are bestowed with some extra privileges to fulfill their responsibility as fourth organ of the state. But this doesn't mean that journalists are free to publish anything and on any subject. There are some ethical guidelines prescribed for journalism profession and journalists to make the profession responsible, which all journalists must follow, though not obligatory.

After conducting study in the online field and after analyzing the data collected, I concluded that Nepali online journalism field has a lot to do for dissemination of better quality information. Though we have decade long history of online journalism in the country, its wee side could easily been unveiled from the data available. So far only a handful of journalists are serving the field with more than 5 years of experience. All have left the profession in search of other lucrative jobs. So to lure better quality professionals the field itself has to adopt professionalism. Facts like only few online portals are registered to the government authority, only seven journalists have owned up press pass as online journalists, etc do not reflect professional superiority. So the publishers who are running and wish to run online news sites must mull over these facts. Besides, government should make it mandatory for the online news portals register and thereby provide facilities as designated to other forms of media. In the same way the concerned bodies like Press Council Nepal should keep it vigil towards the profession.

The ethics of online journalism are, ultimately, no different than the ethics of journalism, but because of its distinctive features (i.e interactive, involvement, immediacy, integration and in-depth opportunities among others), it is different to other traditional media in some way. So, the journalists involved in online should work keeping such in mind. Since the study revealed that the considerable number of working online journalists are not from the media background, question would be raised on the quality of contents they present. Though we can set the experience as condition for that, many of such journalists are beginners. Those who garnered long working experience in the field have left the profession for another lucrative jobs or the other. With the backdrop of such facts I suggest for further studies on the educational background of online journalists and effect of experiences in their works.

Likewise further studies could be done on the validity of online news sources. Because during my study, though respondent journalists hesitate to say they relied on matters published on other media, I found many of them using materials published in one portal to their own without any verification. Journalists prefer to shovelware the contents, even passing the mistakes of one to all.

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Appendix A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

*This questionnaire is to understand the **Ethical Issues in Online** for a MA Thesis. Participation in this thesis is completely voluntary. You can stop your participation at any time. You can choose not to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. As a participant, you run no known physical, psychological or legal risks by participating. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.*

PERSONAL PROFILE:

Name (Optional):   Age: Sex:

Profession: Designation:

Address (Optional) :   Ward. no.:   Street :

Telephone/Fax: E-mail :

Working Media house/ Name of Media:

1. How long have you been in this field?

   a) 1-2 year

   b) 3-4 years

   c) 5-6 years

   d) More than 6 years

2. What did you do before that?

   a) Work in same field but with different media

   b) Work in another field

   c) Other

   d) Not specific

3. How do you define the journalistic purpose?

   a) To act as watchdog

   b) Accountable to the people and society

   c) A job of a journalist

   d) Not specific

4. How do you get materials to publish?

   a) From self reporting

   b) Translations from other newspapers

   c) Re-writing contents published in other media

   d) Not specific

5.   How much your portal relay on materials published in other media?

      a) Sometime

      b) Often

      c) Always

      d) Never use contents from other media

6.   While rewriting contents from other media how much you pass on original text?

      a) Totally or use shovelware materials

      b) Information are complied in own words

      c) Self access to the sources after knowing the information

      d) Depends on the gravity of subject matter

7.   What is ethics?

      a) Professional law   b) Self-regulated law

      c) Both   d) Others

8.   Do you know about Journalist code of conduct 2064?

      a) Yes

      b) No

      c)   Don't care

9.   Are there any ethical norms or code of conduct that guide online journalism in the country?

      a) Yes   b) No

10.   How much you see the need of separate ethics for online journalists?

      a) Current Journalists' Ethics is enough
      b) Separate one can guide the profession much better
      c) No ethics are needed
      d) Don't know

11.   What organizational policies and professional guidelines you are following? (Mention if any)

12.   Have you ever tried to learn the consequences of your news? (On what impact does the particular news left among audiences?)

13. You have benefited in your professional and social life after admiring the ethical norms.

    a) Strongly agree   b) Agree

    c) Disagree   d) Strongly disagree

14. If yes how many times such happened?
    a) Many times   b) Quite often
    c) Don't remember   d) Other

15. What are the problems you face while acting ethically?
    a) Pressure from management   b) Social Pressure
    c) Political Pressure   d) Other

16. How do you cover news on army and arms? (Should the news media accept everything said by the military during a war, or should they investigate and report information that might even be damaging to the war effort?)

17. To what extent are journalists engaged in a "double standard" when it comes to criticizing the unethical behavior of others?
    a) Totally
    b) Few
    c) According to the need
    d) Don't know

18. How have boycotts affected readers' right to know?
    a) No boycotts should be made
    b) Affects a lot
    c) Prevents readers from unnecessary information
    d) Don't know

19. Do you think the ethical principles are regularly followed and updated?
    a) Yes
    b) As per the need
    c) No
    d) Never

20. How often you find the press able to protect and promote press freedom?
    a) Always
    b) Often
    c) In needs
    d) Never

21. Should the news room given total editorial freedom?
    a) Yes

b) Up to organization's interest

c) No

d) Can't say anything

22. How far the social responsibility related with Press?
    a) Too much
    b) Main ethical factor
    c) Is what journalist thinks
    d) Don't know

23. Should a journalist disclose news source?
    a) Always
    b) Never
    c) If news desires
    d) No matters

24. What differences you find in online from other kinds of journalism?
    a) Its timely
    b) Deadline is limited
    c) No such differences
    d) Any other

Appendix B

Code of Journalistic Ethics-2003
(Amended and revised – 2008)

3. The journalists and media institutions shall perform the following duties:
(1) Protection and promotion of press freedom: The freedom of expression being a basic right of the citizen, journalists and media will always remain firm, vigilant and alert in its protection and promotion.

(2) Respect for humanitarianism, human rights and international relations: Enhance the protection and promotion of democracy, justice, equality, humanitarianism, peace and international understanding and fraternity among friendly nations, while at the same time respecting the rights, interests, principles, norms and practices guaranteed by international instruments concerned with human rights.

(3) Safeguard and enforce the right to information: Always remain active and dedicated to safeguarding the right of people to be well-informed.

(4) Imparting true and factual information: Journalists media should impart true, factual, balanced information that is faithfully objective, citing sources and also setting out the basis for such information.

(5) Editorial freedom and accountability: As per the universally accepted principle of editorial freedom, the final responsibility and authority for the production and dissemination of material produced-published-broadcast by media lies with the editor. Media should guarantee editorial independence within itself.

(6) Respect for right to privacy: Respect personal and professional secrecy except in cases where this may have an adverse impact on the public interest.

(7) Professionalism of a high order: Faithfully exercise professionalism of a high order so as to be responsible, accountable and reliable, and dedicated to the basic norms and principles of journalism.

(8) Decent behavior: Remain alert towards working style and use of language that are moral, courteous and characterized by decency, while at the same time observing social courtesy in one's professional conduct.

(9) Readiness to rectify errors: Upon receiving information of any error or mistake in a publication or broadcast, to rectify such error or mistake as soon as possible, and give proper place to any refutation or response that comes accompanied by evidence, publishing-broadcasting the same in clear language.

(10) Social responsibility: Journalists and media shall bear a social responsibility to render special assistance, through the dissemination of information and opinions, toward the uplift and development of the disabled, the helpless, the incapacitated, women, children and people from backward classes, sectors, nationalities and minority communities.

(11) Respect mutual relations: Relations between journalists and media should be professional, healthy, restrained, courteous and harmonious. Media organizations should guarantee editorial freedom in their media.

4. The journalists and media institutions shall not carry out the following acts:
(1) Not undermine national integrity: Not publish, broadcast or produce-disseminate any news and opinion that may undermine the sovereignty and integrity of multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-religious Nepal or jeopardize the harmonious relations subsisting among people of various castes, tribes or communities, or contains any act of defamation or contempt of court or is contrary to decent public behavior or morality.

(2) Not adversely affect social justice or goodwill: Not publish, broadcast or produce-disseminate such deformed and provocative material as may have adverse impact on social justice and goodwill and be contrary to professional dignity.

(3) Not disclose confidential sources of news: Sources should be quoted in presenting any news, for the sake of the authenticity and reliability thereof; but protecting a confidential source being a duty of the journalist, the name and identity of such a source should not be disclosed, except in case permission is given by the source.

(4) Not use news material for fulfillment of personal interests: News media or journalists are not to use the information they acquire for the fulfillment of personal interests or the interests of the organization. They should use the information material obtained for publication-broadcast or distribution only for the public consumption.

(5) No discrimination: Not impart any news or opinion in such a manner as to discriminate on grounds of race, gender, religion, region, language, color and the like.

(6) Do not penalize the victims: Not publish, broadcast or produce-distribute any news or opinion with the use of language, sound, picture, figure, scene or the like in such a way as to make the victim suffer further pain.

(7) Non disclosure: Not publish, broadcast or produce-distribute any news, picture or scene in such a manner as to disclose the name, address and identity of a victim in a sexual crime or in an event or context that evokes hate or brings social contempt, without the consciously given consent of the victim.

(8) Not encourage violence, terrorism and crime: Not present any news, opinion, picture, opinion survey, sound or scene in such a manner as to encourage destructive activity, violence, terrorism and crime, or exaggerate such activity.

(9) Not publish or broadcast scenes of nudity or pictures in a manner that spreads hatred, fear and provocation: Not publish any nude or horrific scene or picture or depiction of carnage in such a manner to spread hatred, terror, provocation or the pornographic in society, and do so out of context.

(10) Not mention the name of a person not related to the event: In publishing-broadcasting news relating to any event, do not attach the name of a relative or someone close who is not related with the event, in such a manner as to undermine the dignity or defame the character of that person.

(11) Not distort facts: Not publish-broadcast or produce-distribute news material with the reworking of pictures, video visuals, sound or facts without any comment or clarity and in such a manner as to change the impression, give the wrong impression or convey a wrong meaning.

(12) Not present advertisement as news: Neither present an advertisement as news nor refute a news item through an advertisement; communications media shall generally not refute any news published or broadcast by another media.

(13) Not re-use without citing the source: With regard to news or publishing-broadcast material that has already been used by any other news agency or media, one shall not publish, broadcast or distribute the same again without citing the original source. While citing the original source the permission of the original source is generally required.

(14) Relations with news sources: Journalists or media should not have improper ties with news sources that exceed professional norms and parameters, or abuse the news media out of personal or institutional vested interests.

Appendix C

Constitutional Provision on Press

The Interim Constitution 2007 of Nepal, under its preamble, has expressed commitment to "full freedom of press, independent of judiciary and concept of rule of law."

The Interim Constitution guarantees freedom of expression to every citizen under Fundamental Rights in Part 3.
Article 12 (3) (a) freedom of opinion and expression
b. freedom to assemble peaceable and without arms
c. freedom to form political party or organizations
d. freedom to form unions and associations
Provided that,
Nothing in sub-clause (a) shall be deemed to prevent the making of laws to impose reasonable restrictions on any act which may undermine the sovereignty and integrity of Nepal, or which may jeopardize the harmonious relations subsisting among the peoples of various castes, tribes, religion or communities, or on any act of defamation, contempt of court or incitement to an offence; or on any act which may be contrary to decent public behavior or morality. Similarly, the Interim Constitution under Article 15 has guaranteed the following publication, broadcasting and press rights:

15. Right Regarding Publication, Broadcasting and Press: (1) No publication and broadcasting or printing of any news items, editorial, article, writings or other readings, audio-visual materials, by any means including electronic publication, broadcasting and press, shall be censored.

Provided that nothing shall be deemed to prevent the making of laws to impose reasonable restrictions on any act which may undermine the sovereignty or integrity of Nepal, or which may jeopardise the harmonious relations subsisting among the peoples of various castes, tribes or communities; or on any act of sedition, defamation, contempt of court or incitement to an offence; or on any act which may be contrary to decent public behaviour or morality.

(2) No radio, television, online or any other types of digital or electronic means, press or any other communication media shall be closed, seized or be cancelled the registration because of publishing and broadcasting or printing any material by such means of audio, audio-visual or electronic equipments, (3) No newspaper, periodical or press shall be closed, seized or be cancelled the registration for printing and publishing any news items, articles, editorial, writings or other reading materials, (4) No communication means including press, electronic broadcasting and telephone shall be obstructed except in accordance with law.

27. Right to Information: (1) Every citizen shall have the right to demand or obtain information on any matters of his/her own or of public importance.

Provided that nothing shall compel any person to provide information on any matter about which secrecy is to be maintained by law.

28. Right to privacy: (1) Except on the circumstance as provided by law, the privacy of the person, residence, property, document, statistics, correspondence and character of anyone is inviolable.

Cyber Law

The electronic transaction and digital signature act 2061, known as the cyber law, has been issued by the then His Majesty's Government (now Government of Nepal) through an ordinance. Notwithstanding the fact that the law is fully centered to the electronic transaction and the cyber crime, it did not include any single word regarding the online media and online journalism.

Till the date, anyone can run a website on his own. The government has not bothered it to enact any law that makes it mandatory for such sites before making their public appearances. To register an online news site or any kind of other sites, one don't have to inform to government. Any one can publish anything in the Internet. Its worldwide concern that terrorists can share their information, there are so many incidents of sexual abusing through Internet. Prone sites and other cyber crime are increasing day by day.

The challenge of the Internet is a thing in a country is legally accepted whereas the same thing in another country highly restricted.

It's very difficult to manage and control Internet information. If it is banded in a country it can be published from another country. During the period of insurgency government in Nepal has banded some Maoist related and other many sites with the help of Internet service Providers, but those could be retrieved from outside Nepal (Adhikari 2006).

Appendix D

International Federation of Journalists

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON THE CONDUCT OF JOURNALISTS

Adopted by the Second World Congress of the International Federation of Journalists at Bordeaux on 25-28 April 1954 and amended by the 18th IFJ World Congress in Helsingör on 2-6 June 1986.

This international Declaration is proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for journalists engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information and in describing events.

1. Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist.
2. In pursuance of this duty, the journalist shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right of fair comment and criticism.
3. The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/ she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.
4. The journalist shall use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents.
5. The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate.
6. The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.
7. The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins.
8. The journalist shall regard as grave professional offences the following:

   - plagiarism
   - malicious misrepresentation
   - calumny, slander, libel, unfounded accusations
   - the acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression.

9. Journalists worthy of that name shall deem in their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country the journalist shall recognize in professional matters the jurisdiction of colleagues only, to the exclusion of every kind of interference by governments or others.

Appendix E

Issued by the Fourth Consultative Meeting of International and Regional Organizations of Journalists in Paris on 20 November 1983.

International and regional organizations of professional journalists, representing altogether 400 000 working journalists in all parts of the World, have held since 1978 consultative meetings under the auspices of UNESCO.

The second consultative meeting (Mexico City, 1980) expressed its support to the UNESCO Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, Apartheid and Incitement to War. Moreover, the meeting adopted the "Mexico Declaration" with a set of principles which represent common grounds of existing national and regional codes of journalistic ethics as well as relevant provisions contained in various international instruments of a legal nature.

The fourth consultative meeting (Prague and Paris, 1983) noted the lasting value of the UNESCO Declaration in which it is stated inter alia that "the exercise of freedom of opinion, expression and information, recognized as an integral part of human rights and fundamental freedoms, is a vital factor in the strengthening of peace and international understanding". Furthermore, the meeting recognized the important role which information and communication play in the contemporary world, both in national and international spheres, with a growing social responsibility being placed upon the mass media and journalists.

The International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism were prepared by several consultative meetings of international and regional organizations of journalists between 19 78 and 1983. The following organizations participated.

International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), International Catholic Union of the Press (UCIP), Latin-American Federation of Journalists (FELAP), Latin-American Federation of Press Workers (FELATRAP), Union of African Journalists (UJA), Confederation of ASEAN Journalists (CAJ). The International Federation of Journalists did not participate in the conclusive meeting of this process in Paris, in November 1983, which agreed the document.

On this basis the following principles of professional ethics in journalism were prepared as an international common ground and as a source of inspiration for national and regional codes of ethics. This set of principles is intended to be promoted autonomously by each professional organization through ways and means most adequate to its members.

Principle I: Peoples's right to true information

People and individuals have the right to acquire an objective picture of reality by means of accurate and comprehensive information as well as to express themselves freely through the various media of culture and communication.

Principle II: The journalist's dedication to objective reality

The foremost task of the journalist is to serve the people's right to true and authentic information through an honest dedication to objective reality whereby facts are reported conscientiously in their proper context, pointing out their essential connections and without causing distortions, with due deployment of the creative capacity of the journalist, so that the public is provided with adequate material to facilitate the formation of an accurate and comprehensive picture of the world in which the origin, nature and essence of events, processes and states of affairs are understood as objectively as possible.

Principle III: The journalist's social responsibility

Information in journalism is understood as social good and not as a commodity, which means that the journalist shares responsibility for the information transmitted and is thus accountable not only to those controlling the media but ultimately to the public at large, including various social interests. The journalist's social responsibility requires that he or she will act under all circumstances in conformity with a personal ethical consciousness.

Principle IV: The journalist's professional integrity

The social role of the journalist demands that the profession maintain high standards of integrity, including the journalist's right to refrain from working against his or her conviction or from disclosing sources of information as well as the right to participate in the decision-making of the medium in which he or she is employed. The integrity of the profession does not permit the journalist to accept any form of bribe or the promotion of any private interest contrary to the general welfare. Likewise it belongs to professional ethics to respect intellectual property and, in particular, to refrain from plagiarism.

Principle V: Public access and participation

The nature of the profession demands that the journalist promote access by the public to information and participation of the public in the media, including the right of correction or rectification and the right of reply.

Principle VI: Respect for privacy and human dignity

An integral part of the professional standards of the journalist is respect for the right of the individual to privacy and human dignity, in conformity with provisions of international and national law concerning protection of the rights and the reputation of others, prohibiting libel, calumny, slander and defamation.

Principle VII: Respect for public interest

The professional standards of the journalist prescribe due respect for the national community, its democratic institutions and public morals.

Principle VIII: Respect for universal values and diversity of cultures

A true journalist stands for the universal values of humanism, above all peace, democracy, human rights, social progress and national liberation, while respecting the distinctive character, value and dignity of each culture, as well as the right of each people freely to choose and develop its political, social, economic and cultural systems. Thus, the journalist participates actively in the social transformation towards democratic betterment of society and contributes through dialogue to a climate of confidence in international relations conducive to peace and justice everywhere, to détente, disarmament and national development. It belongs to the ethics of the profession that the journalist be aware of relevant provisions contained in international conventions, declarations and resolutions.
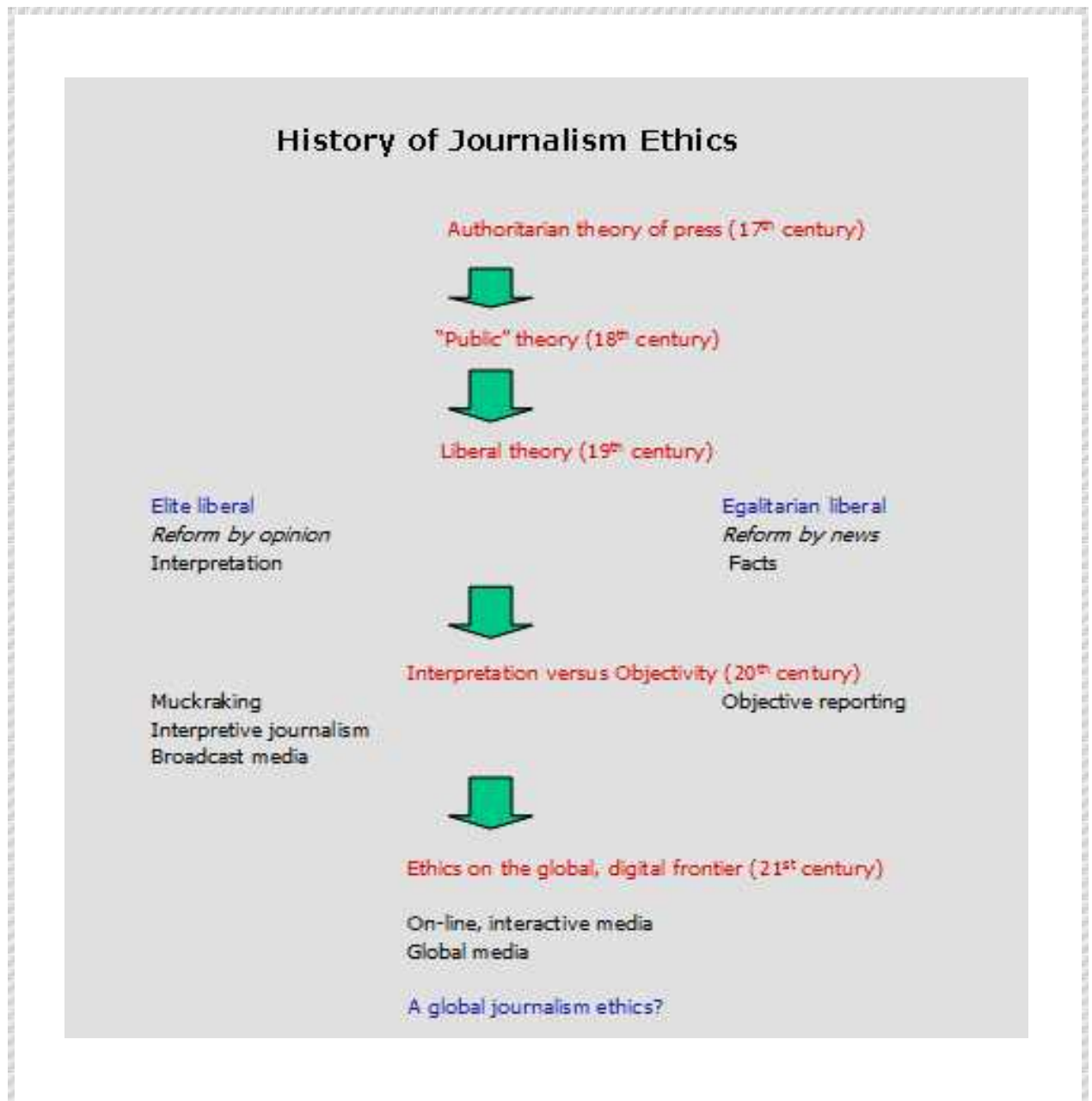
Principle IX: Elimination of war and other great evils confronting humanity

The ethical commitment to the universal values of humanism calls for the journalist to abstain from any justification for, or incitement to, wars of aggression and the arms race, especially in nuclear weapons, and all other forms of violence, hatred or discrimination, especially racialism and apartheid, oppression by tyrannic regimes, colonialism and neocolonialism, as well as other great evils which afflict humanity, such as poverty, malnutrition and diseases. By so doing, the journalist can help eliminate ignorance and misunderstanding among peoples, make nationals of a country sensitive to the needs and desires of others, ensure the respect for the rights and dignity of all nations, all peoples and all individuals without distinction of race, sex, language, nationality, religion or philosophical conviction.

Principle X: Promotion of a new world information and communication order

The journalist operates in the contemporary world within the framework of a movement towards new international relations in general and a new information order in particular. This new order, understood as an integral part of the New International Economic Order, is aimed at the decolonization and democratization of the field of information and communication, both nationally and internationally, on the basis of peaceful coexistence among peoples and with full respect for their cultural identity. The journalist has a special obligation to promote the process of democratization of international relations in the field of information, in particular by safeguarding and fostering peaceful and friendly relations among States and peoples.

Appendix F

History of Journalism Ethics

Authoritarian theory of press (17th century)

"Public" theory (18th century)

Liberal theory (19th century)

Elite liberal
Reform by opinion
Interpretation

Egalitarian liberal
Reform by news
Facts

Interpretation versus Objectivity (20th century)

Muckraking
Interpretive journalism
Broadcast media

Objective reporting

Ethics on the global, digital frontier (21st century)

On-line, interactive media
Global media

A global journalism ethics?

Appendix G

Nepali Online sites

According to the Gaurab Raj Updhya, in his book "Internet and Nepali Media 2060" 'The Nepal Digest' (TND) and the website name www.thenepaldigest.com was the first Nepal related e newspaper which was hosted from outside Nepal. It was hosted from United States of America on 1992. The objectives of the newspaper are to inform US based Nepali about the activities of Nepal. This electronic newspaper edited and established by Rajpal Singh and it was popular among the Nepali people who were staying aboard. After the online publishing of the TND, Kathmandu Post was the first newspaper that was published in the Internet on 1995. Rajendra Shrestha, (who was staying in America) Mercantile Communications and post itself jointly complete the work. In the beginning Mercantile used to send all the contents of kathmandu post through its mail service and Rajendra used to upload it from America. After sometime, Mercantile published kathmandu post for the first time from Nepal via its portal site www.south-asia.com.

Till 1998 www.south-asia.com hosted only a few publications and they were not updated on a daily basis. At that time only two persons were responsible for updating the site and the contract with the publications were generally vague. In the third quarter or 1999, Mercantile decided that it would put more resources into making this site more professional.

According to Divesh JB Rana Nepalnews Manager, "Contracts were signed with about 7 publications, which allowed Mercantile to host the publications in nepalnews.com 7 days a week. Since then, nepalnews.com host 21 publications and other sections like BBC Nepali Service, weekly pools, chat, Zodiac, Weather and others. Internet connection and website development cost was high. Most of the publications could not afford that much price to be in the Internet. At that time Mercantile has played the valuable and unforgettable role by publishing these publications by paying the amount and providing free Internet connection in Nepalese online history. Major publications products such as Gorkhapatra Corporation, Kantipur Publications, Kamana Publications, Dhristi, Bimarsha, Deshantar, Jana aastha, Gatibidi, Budhabar, Janadharana, Telegraph, Nispakshya, Spotlight, Sandhya Times, New business age, BBC Nepali Service and News bulletins and other programs of Nepal Television was first started their presence through nepalnews.com (Mercantile). Now nepalnews has its own content development team and other main publications started their own news portals."

Few years back, there were no newspapers and news sites published online. Publications felt pride while nepalnews published their papers. They were excited to publish their Internet address in front page of the paper. Now the situation has been simplified and almost all dailies are in the Internet. If one has computer and Internet access, he/she don't have to buy different newspapers. They easily can search and read news as per your choice without paying the amount.

Another popular online www.kantipuronline.com was stared on 2057 B.S. owned by Kantipur Publications. It has its own content development team and used to update as news comes. It has great support from the manpower of kantipur daily, kathmandu post, FM and Television. District-based reporters serve news and features for the online. This site has added more value by broadcasting KTV News bulletin and all current affair shows and can even get connected with most popular FM station of the Nation, Kantipur FM's website directly. To go a step further, the site has sections like emusic, ebazaar, model watch, photo-features, city -lifestyles etc to cater the local market.

Started on the joint drive of Cho-you Trekking Pvt. Ltd and Italian National Research Council (Ev-k2-Cnr), Nepal Mountain News has been providing its viewers with quality news, views

and reviews with its professional team for the last three years. Started with an aim to deal only with tourism and mountaineering news, the website after one year of its establishment began to deal with general news contents.

The other main news site of Nepal are www.thethimalayantimes.com, www.nepalmountainnews.com, www.ana.com.np, and www.onlinekhabar.com. Likewise, www.newsofnepal.com, was started on 2002. It has been publishing in both English and Nepali language. We can read its other products such as Nepal Samacharpatra, Mahanagar, Kamana, Sadhana, Saugat, Chetana and people's review through this site. This site also supported from its manpower of publications.

Himal South Asian was another foremost and notable newspaper of Nepal been appeared in Internet. It was published on 1997 with its own domain name. It was very difficult to register the own domain name at that time.

Country code .np domain name could be registered from Australia later Mercantile got this opportunity to register this domain name. It can be registered free of cost by submitting a government registration copy even till now. This is also a encouraging factor that Mercantile is doing. This can help to increase the number of websites hosting and development. More domain name registration shows more practice of online medium/ journalism. Currently the total number of registered .np country code Top Level Domain name are more than 10 thousands in Nepal. We cannot say the numbers that has been registered from outside Nepal.

The Internet technology has entered into Nepal on 1994 and it's been most popular medium in a very short time period. It's not been so much long time of its establishment even in the highly developed country. Tim Berner Lee, a British scientist, introduced html codes that was useful to develop websites is the key starting point of the development of websites. He develops these codes at the time of 1990 and speeded rapidly all over the world. Now we can see the thousands of such websites in the Internet and there are about more than twenty million estimated registered domains in the world. The list of domains and websites grows increasingly day-by-day. We only can guess that how many web pages have been hosted throughout the world. It brought the dramatic changes in the field of Internet world within this 10/ 15 years of period. Finally new media (online) developed as a combination of print audio and video.

Traditional form of the mass communication is, as we know print and broadcasting media known as Radio and Television. Now people turned to visit websites to read news and find the information. Computer became intimate friend for the people who are using Internet to share information and news. They used to spend their more time in front of Personal Computers and laptops.

Online news, with text and multimedia is dynamic as well as interactive. Online is a generic term often used loosely to describe digital information access, retrieval of dissemination. If you sit your home or office and access the Internet via your modem and telephone line, you are automatically going 'online' Similarly, if a newspaper has a web site to complement its published paper editions, this is seen as an 'online' version of the paper.

We can find the hundreds of year's print media development history, and there is a half a century radio and television development history in the world but within these ten/fifteen years, we can see the highly developed new media/ online media. This is because of the heavily increasing usage of Internet and computer.

In Nepalese context, currently huge number of KA division and KHA division newspapers has been published in the Internet as the copy of newspaper version. Some of them are regularly updated and rests of them are just fulfilling their formality to be present in the Internet.

Broadcasting media also published their official site with the brochure type information along with some news bulletins and talks show discussion programs.

The usage of Internet is increasing day by day, the business of computer is expanding and information technology is growing rapidly. The developments of electricity and by the other necessary infrastructure make possible this NEW MEDIA even in our underdeveloped country. Along with the development of technology and competitive decreasing price, people can afford to have their own personal computer and Internet access in their office and home. Especially Nepal followed the open market and liberal economic policy after 1990.

Although basic infrastructures, that are needed for the development of information communication technology such as computers, Internet, telecommunication and electricity etc are limited in the urban area. Rural people are far from these facilities. Lack of computer education and capacity to purchase all these are not possible due to their existing poverty.

Internet itself is a huge store of information. Any one can store his information as per his wishes in it by registering a domain name or using a folder inside the domain name. Now a days many companies, organizations, governments, educational institutes, business houses, making their sites.

Internet magazine: www.cybernepal.com.np is an entertainment related Internet magazine published by Dreams & Ideas Pvt. Ltd in association with Worldlink Communications. This magazine is most popular among the youth and its per day hits is around 5 thousands according to Dipankar Kasajoo founder of this e-magazine.

Online video provider of Nepal: www.himalnews.com is a news and video service provider private agency especially to the foreign news portals and online medias such as CNN, BBC etc. This is the new concept for the first time in Nepal. Likewise, www.nepalnews.com, www.ana.com.np, www.nagariknews.com are other similar news site those also provides news materials in audio and video formats.