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Abstract

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Role of Local Media in the Governance System: A Study of Pokhara Metropolitan City, Nepal

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This paper is about the functional and participatory relationship between local media and local governance in the context of Pokhara Metropolitan city. It explores how the local media particularly Samadhan National Daily and Adarsha Samaj National Daily contribute to process the role and responsibilities of local media in the context of new governing system . During this action, it follows the transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement within the local governance system. The study is grounded in the agenda-setting watchdog theories of journalism emphasizing the media's capacity to monitor governmental performance at the grassroots level. Agenda Setting Theory is a communication theory developed in 1972 by MC Combs and Shaw. It explains the public perception and public support on something is shaped on the basis of agendas raised by the media . It means the most the issues is flowed by media the most the public believe that issue. The paper uses the descriptive and exploratory research design integrating qualitative and quantitative method including content analysis of published news items and in-depth interviews with local journalists and officials. Data were collected from the two leading daily newspapers of Pokhara over over one month. It is analyzed according to thematic categories such as governance, infrastructure, development and civic participation. As the findings reveal, the watchdog role of local media is comparatively underdeveloped. According to it, local newspapers actively disseminate developmental and local news but the numbers of investigative, critical analysis and in-depth stories are relatively less. Much of the coverage tends to be event-based or focused on official remarks only. The study concludes that the the local media's capacity to strengthen democratic practice is significant but requires capacity building, professional autonomy, and institutional collaboration with

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local government. The paper contributes to the broader discourse on media governance in Nepal by emphasizing the importance of localized journalism in ensuring participatory democracy and sustainable development at the community level.

IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES, media plays a vital role and has long been regarded as one of the basic pillars of democracy—often referred to as the "Fourth estate"—for its indispensable role in maintaining transparency, accountability and civic participation (McNair, 2017; Schudson, 2008). In democratic societies, media functions as a channel of flowing information aiming to educate, inspire, inform, socialize, and entertain, bridging between citizens and the government. Through journalism, citizens become informed of their rights and responsibilities, pressuring the state mechanism to be accountable, transparent and responsible to the people it serves (Glasser, 1999).

In Nepal, media has played an influential role in transforming the nation from long-driven Rana autocracy to the current People's Republic democracy. It supported democratic transitions, particularly during political upheavals such as the 1990 people's movement and the subsequent restoration of democracy. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) opened the way to private media ownership, which contributed to a dynamic transformation in the national communication landscape. After the promulgation of the Nepal Constitution 2015, Nepal was transformed to a federal democratic republic, ultimately leading Nepali media to have renewed significance, particularly at the local level, where governance now operates closest to the people.

The *Constitution of Nepal (2015)* envisions a decentralized system of governance where local bodies—metropolitan cities, municipalities, and rural municipalities—are empowered to make decisions for local development, deliver public services, and engage citizens in participatory democracy. This constitutional arrangement recognizes that development and democracy must be nurtured from the grassroots upward. Consequently, local media outlets, such as community radio stations, newspapers, and digital platforms, are expected to act as mediators between citizens and local governments.

Pokhara Metropolitan City, as the largest city in terms of geographical area in Nepal, provides a fertile ground to study this interrelationship between local governance and media. Local newspapers such as *Adarsha Samaj National Daily* and *Samadhan National Daily* are central players in information dissemination and public awareness here. Their coverage of local issues, civic events, and governance activities helps to shape the public's understanding of municipal affairs. Yet, questions remain about how effectively local media perform their watchdog role and whether their reporting extends beyond event coverage into investigative and analytical journalism.

Globally, journalism theory—particularly *agenda-setting* (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and the *watchdog model* (Waisbord, 2000)—emphasizes the media's influence in determining the public agenda and its responsibility in monitoring the power. When applied locally, these theories suggest that local media not only inform communities about government initiatives but also shape civic priorities and hold leaders to account. Understanding this role in Nepal's local governance context is vital. The increasing number of local media outlets following federalization creates pressure to the need for ethical, responsible, and participatory journalism at the local level.

Problem Statement

Since the implementation of Nepal's federal system in 2017, the number of local media houses—particularly in districts like Kaski—has grown dramatically. However, this growth has not been reflected in the actions, activities, and existing working manners of those media. It has not necessarily translated into qualitative improvements in news content or journalistic professionalism.

Reports from the Department of Information and broadcasting (2024) show that while over 200 newspapers are registered in the district, only a small fraction maintain regular publication and renewal.

Furthermore, *Media Action Nepal (2025)* notes that mainstream and local outlets often adopt partisan stances, focusing either on government praise or criticism rather than balanced, evidence-based reporting. This polarization limits the media's ability to fulfill its democratic obligations.

Similarly, Dahal (2013) observed that Nepali journalists often prioritize the dissemination of official statements over investigative reporting or giving voice to ordinary citizens. As a result, issues directly affecting local communities—such as municipal budget transparency, citizen friendly planning procedure, development project monitoring, and service delivery—receive limited critical attention.

In Pokhara, where the local government operates through 33 wards, the expectation is that local newspapers will bridge the communication gap between citizens and municipal authorities. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that much of the reporting remains formalistic and event-oriented. The crucial questions, therefore, are:

1. What is the current status and focus of local media in Pokhara?
2. To what extent do local media collaborate with local government initiatives?
3. What differences exist between major local newspapers in representing local governance issues through their watchdog role?

These questions underscore a broader concern — that despite Nepal's constitutional guarantees of press freedom and decentralization, local media may not yet be fully aligned with the goals of participatory governance and democratic accountability.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this research is to examine the role of local media in the local governance system of Pokhara Metropolitan City. The study aims to:

1. Identify the current status of local media in terms of aligning it to the federalism in Nepal.
2. Identify the thematic areas covered by local newspapers in relation to local governance.
3. Evaluate the level of cooperation and engagement between local media and municipal authorities.
4. Compare the reporting approaches of most experienced media houses of Pokhara, *Adarsha Samaj National Daily* and *Samadhan National Daily* concerning governance issues as well as in-depth stories to find local status local media.
5. Examine the extent to which local media in Pokhara fulfill their watchdog function.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant for multiple stakeholders: policymakers, media professionals, academics, and local citizens. For government officials and elected representatives, the study highlights how media engagement can enhance transparency, strengthen trust, and encourage citizen participation. For journalists and media institutions, the findings reveal areas for professional improvement and suggest opportunities for reinforcing media ethics and public service journalism.

At a broader level, the study contributes to Nepal's evolving discourse on governance, freedom of expression, and democracy. As Bhusal and Acharya (2023) note, local corruption often persists due to

informal practices, weak oversight, and limited transparency. The *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16)*, which emphasize the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies.

By situating the role of local media within this context, the research provides insights into how communication and information dissemination can serve as catalysts for inclusive governance.

Limitations of the Study

While comprehensive in its scope, this research is subject to certain limitations. It focuses on two primary newspapers in Pokhara *Adarsha Samaj National Daily* and *Samadhan National Daily* as representative samples of local media. The data analyzed covers a one-month period, corresponding to the end of the fiscal year, when governance-related news tends to peak.

The study does not extend to electronic or online-only media, nor does it evaluate policy-level challenges or ownership dynamics in depth.

These limitations, however, do not diminish the relevance of the findings; rather, they underscore the need for future research incorporating longitudinal data, multi-platform media analysis, and comparative studies across different provinces of Nepal.

Literature Review

Theoretical Context

The relationship between media and governance has long been examined through the lenses of communication theory, democratic participation, and political accountability. The present study draws primarily upon two frameworks—the agenda-setting theory and the watchdog theory while situating them within broader discussions of good governance and local democracy.

Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda-setting theory, introduced by McCombs and Shaw (1972), posits that the media significantly influences what the people think about. Through selective emphasis and prioritization of topics, media shape the public's perception of issue's importance. Subsequent research (McCombs, 2004; Rogers & Dearing, 1988) has shown that sustained coverage of specific themes contributes to shaping public and political agendas alike.

What the local media highlight, that is more likely to receive public's attention. For example, if media highlight issues such as sanitation, road construction, or corruption, these matters are more likely to receive public inquiry and governmental response. Conversely, the neglect of critical topics leads to diminished civic attention leading to weakened public participation and accountability.

The application of agenda-setting theory in this study underscores the influence of local media in framing governance narratives.

Watchdog Theory of the Press

The watchdog theory positions the media as a guardian of democracy responsible for monitoring those in power and exposing misconduct or inefficiency (Waisbord, 2000; Norris, 2014). This role focuses the investigative journalism but extends to the consistent evaluation of public policies and the behavior of political leaders. Scholars such as Pathak (2019) and Poudel (2021) emphasize that the media were instrumental in mobilizing public opinion during Nepal's democratic movements. However, in the post-2015 era, the challenge lies in transforming that political activism into sustained oversight at the local level.

The watchdog role requires professional independence, investigative capacity, and ethical commitment attributes that are still evolving within Nepal’s local journalism ecosystem. By analyzing Pokhara-based newspapers, this research evaluates the extent to which local media perform this crucial democratic function.

Concept of Media and Governance

The term *media* derives from the Latin *medius*, meaning “middle” or “intermediary.” Media serve as channels through which information flows between institutions and the public (JGU, 2024). In democratic governance, this intermediary function is fundamental, as it facilitates communication between citizens and their representatives.

Globally, media have evolved through three primary stages — print, broadcast, and digital. Print media, originating with the *Acta Diurna* of ancient Rome, remain an important form of public record and local identity (Acharya, 2018). Broadcast media, which began with radio and television in the 20th century, extended this influence through sound and visual storytelling. The 21st century has been marked by digital transformation, allowing audiences to both consume and produce content (McNair, 2017).

In governance, media act as both informers and influencers. The Council of Europe (2022) identifies transparency, inclusiveness, and independence as core procedural principles guiding media’s role in democratic institutions. Similarly, UNESCO (2013) highlights that the strength of democracy is directly proportional to the quality of public communication and the accessibility of reliable information.

Local Governance: Concept and Evolution

The exercise of authority at the closest administrative level to citizen is generally known as local governance. It encompasses mechanisms for service delivery, public participation, and community development (UNDP, 2024). It embodies principles of decentralization, autonomy, and responsiveness ensuring that decision-making processes reflect local priorities.

Globally, the concept of local governance evolved in the 19th century as a response to centralized administrative models. In Britain, Europe, and the United States, local governments emerged as self-governing units managing taxation, welfare, and public infrastructure (Robson, 1937; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024).

In Nepal, the roots of local governance can be traced back to traditional systems of village assemblies and community councils. However, formal decentralization began only after the 1990 democratic restoration. The *Local Self-Governance Act (1999)* marked a milestone, granting municipalities and village bodies the authority to plan and execute development activities. This legislative framework was later strengthened by the *Constitution of Nepal (2015)* and the *Local Government Operation Act (2017)*, which institutionalized 753 local units across the country.

Under these provisions, local governments are entrusted with diverse responsibilities, including education, health, agriculture, infrastructure, and social justice (Government of Nepal, 2017). The decentralization process also mandates participatory planning and citizen oversight — areas where the role of media becomes essential. Local newspapers and radio outlets are expected to ensure transparency in budgeting, disseminate policy information, disseminating all the actions and performances and provide a forum for community voices.

Media and Good Governance

The term *good governance* encompasses transparency, accountability, rule of law, equity, and responsiveness in public administration (Shah, 2006). Effective governance depends not only on institutional frameworks but also on the availability of credible information. The media serve as the primary mechanism for such information flow, ensuring that governance processes are visible and open to change existing status.

Wilson (2000) emphasizes that good local governance extends beyond service delivery to include civic dialogue and participatory decision-making. Similarly, the World Bank (1994) identified poor governance characterized by corruption and lack of accountability as a key obstacle to development. By functioning as a civic educator and monitor, the media strengthen institutional integrity and empower citizens to demand better performance from public officials.

In the Nepalese scenario, Freedom Forum (n.d.) and Media Action Nepal (2025) reiterate that an independent press is integral to realizing these ideals. However, challenges such as ownership concentration, political influence, and inadequate resources often compromise editorial independence. This study therefore situates the role of Pokhara's local media within this ongoing quest for accountable and responsive governance.

Empirical Review

Empirical research on media and governance in Nepal remains limited, though several notable studies provide relevant insights. Several past studies found that Nepalese journalists strongly endorse democracy-oriented roles such as information dissemination, interpretation of complex issues, investigative scrutiny of government, and mobilizing citizens for public participation (Ramprasad and Kelly, 2003). They conducted a survey of Nepalese journalists to understand their perceived professional roles. It concludes- "Most journalists prioritized the dissemination of accurate information and the interpretation of complex issues but devoted less attention to investigative or they perform populist mobilizer roles". This suggests a preference for descriptive over critical journalism

Similarly, Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) suggest that journalists prioritize roles aligned with democratic development. However, Dahal (2013) demonstrates that adversarial and advocacy roles are less prominently reflected in actual news coverage, revealing a discrepancy between professional ideals and newsroom practice. He analyzed local news coverage and concluded that Nepali journalists focus more on formal reporting than on probing governmental accountability. According to him, while democratic values are upheld in principle, adversarial journalism remains underdeveloped.

Studies on local governance by Bhusal (2018) and Bhusal and Acharya (2024) further show that although institutional mechanisms for public participation have expanded particularly after the Constitution of 2015 elected local bodies have not consistently demonstrated higher responsiveness than their unelected predecessors. As they writes, journalists' perceived roles with the following variables such as information dissemination role with providing accurate information in a timely manner; interpreting role analyzing with complex problem; watchdog or investigative role investigating claims and statements made by the governments as well as populist mobilizer or activist role giving people a chance to express views to public affairs. Bhusal and Acharya (2023, 2024) examined the evolution of local governance in Nepal, noting that political reforms over seven decades expanded opportunities for citizen participation. However, these studies also revealed that elected officials at the local level tend to be less responsive to the public. This paradox underscores the need for vigilant local media as a mechanism of accountability. So this research intends to find, how the local media are doing to preserve the right they got through crossing national insurgencies in terms of enjoying local governance system, an indicator of well implemented democracy. It has gathered

evidence on how local governance in Nepal has evolved through different political systems over the last seven decades. Each political system exercised in the last seven decades offered distinctive avenues to ordinary people of diverse interests, capacities, and identities for local democracy to thrive.

Meanwhile, Adhikari (2016, 2020) highlights weak civic culture and bureaucratic corruption as key democratic challenge. He argues – "public-oriented journalism could strengthen accountability, yet without sufficiently addressing structural constraints faced by local media". He emphasized the importance of public-oriented journalism in strengthening Nepal's democratic culture. His work illustrated that while Kathmandu-based media often engage in policy-level analysis, local outlets struggle with limited resources and lack of investigative depth. In such a context, however, the available literature show that Nepalese journalists give more importance to democracy building roles such as disseminator, interpreter, investigator and populist mobilizer.

In Nepal's post-federalization context, local journalism has become a key player in development communication (Poudel, 2021). He observed that in Yet, most outlets rely heavily on official sources and press releases rather than independent reporting. This pattern mirrors global findings where local news ecosystems face pressures from resource scarcity and political alignment (Nielsen, 2015).

Internationally, Norris (2014) and Waisbord (2000) have documented the critical role of media in enabling democratic governance, but they also warn of "mediated populism," where sensationalism replaces substantive debate.

These findings resonate with Nepal's current media environment, where commercialization and political patronage pose serious ethical dilemmas. Collectively, these empirical findings suggest that while Nepalese journalism normatively supports democratic functions, its practical performance particularly at the local level remains constrained and underexplored, warranting further investigation.

The reviewed literature collectively underscores the importance of media in strengthening democracy, ensuring transparency, and mobilizing citizens for good governance. However, a number of gaps remain in terms of finding core contribution of local media to have strong governance system.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical and empirical insights discussed above, the conceptual framework for this study positions local media as a mediating agent between citizens and local government. The news content counting, enlisting observing, analyzing and finally relating them to the norms and ethics of people's participation and watchdog role of media respectively. News contents are selected from two experienced Daily newspapers of Pokhara and analyzed those as different types and categories of news they published. To make the primary data more authentic interview with a senior journalist, ward chair and local government Press department have been taken. The motive of talking to ward committee is to find the status of community outreach through the news contents.

The framework integrates two key dimensions as follows :

1. Information Flow: Local media disseminate governance-related information (policies, programs, development updates) to citizens, shaping public perception and participation.
2. Accountability Mechanism: Through their watchdog role, local media monitor public officials and expose inefficiencies or malpractices, promoting transparency and responsiveness.

These functions are supported by the agenda-setting process, which determines issue salience in public discourse. When functioning effectively, this triadic relationship *citizens, media, government* fosters participatory governance and enhances local democracy.

First, few studies have empirically analyzed the content of local newspapers in relation to local governance issues. Most research has focused on national-level media or theoretical discussions of democracy and press freedom.

Second, there is limited examination of local media performance after Nepal's transition to federalism, despite the proliferation of local outlets since 2017.

Third, existing studies often overlook the practical collaboration between local governments and media institutions relationship that is crucial for effective information dissemination and citizen engagement. Finally, the geographical focus of many studies leans toward the Kathmandu Valley, leaving provincial and metropolitan areas like Pokhara underrepresented in academic discourse.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill these gaps by providing a localized, data-driven analysis of two major newspapers in Pokhara. It aims to evaluate not only the quantity and type of news coverage but also the qualitative implications for participatory governance and democratic accountability.

Research Design

The large numbers of media houses registered but the less number of 'renewation' of local media houses even in new ruling system made to undertake the research on the role of them. So, the objective of the research is to find some issues such as the status of local media in Pokhara, areas that local media cover local news, local media cooperation to local level government activities, the major differences of two big media houses in serving local government, the implementation of 'watchdog' role of local media in Pokhara. The research applies primary and secondary data taken through counting of each and every news published in sampled newspapers and the secondary data is taken from documents and interviews. The information found from different sources are analyzed through pie charts and interlinking it to the qualitative overview of the data obtained from in-depth open-ended interviews as well.

This study employs a descriptive and exploratory research design. It describes the functioning of local media in Pokhara Metropolitan City, while the exploratory approach investigates how these media institutions interact with the local governance system. This dual strategy is appropriate because the research not only quantifies patterns of media coverage but also seeks to uncover underlying dynamics influencing media performance and collaboration with local governments.

The descriptive design allows for systematic observation of existing conditions, whereas the exploratory approach enables to interpret findings beyond surface-level patterns. Together, these frameworks offer a holistic understanding of how local media act as communication intermediaries in governance processes.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study includes all active media houses in Pokhara Metropolitan City. According to records from the *Regional Post Office, Pokhara (2024)*, there are approximately 14 registered and renewed media outlets, encompassing print, broadcast, and online platforms. Among these, print media remain the most established and consistent in publication frequency. For the purpose of this research, two daily newspapers *Adarsha Samaj National Daily* and *Samadhan National Daily* were selected as samples using purposive sampling. This non-probability sampling technique was chosen because it allows for the deliberate selection of cases that best represent the characteristics and objectives of the study.

These two newspapers were selected for the following reasons:

1. Both have been continuously published for over two decades, with wide readership across Gandaki Province.
2. They maintain both print and digital versions, ensuring accessibility and documentation of issues.
3. They are recognized by the Press Council Nepal as “A-category” newspapers, indicating journalistic credibility and operational consistency.

Thus, the sampling ensures reliability while focusing on representative media institutions that significantly influence local public discourse.

Nature and Sources of Data

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The Primary Data were derived from content analysis of published news articles from *Adarsha Samaj National Daily* and *Samadhan National Daily* over a one-month period (Shrawan 1–30, 2081 B.S.). Similarly, In-depth interviews have been taken with key stakeholders, including local journalists, editors, and government communication officials from Pokhara Metropolitan City. Likewise, the Secondary Data were collected from reports and policy documents of the *Ministry of Communication and Information Technology* and *Press Council Nepal*, Research publications, journal articles, and government reports on local governance and media, and relevant literature on media theories, governance frameworks, and Nepal’s constitutional provisions. The data collection process was conducted systematically in three stages. The first stage is Identification and Selection of Materials, for which a complete archive of *Adarsha Samaj National Daily* and *Samadhan National Daily* for the Nepali month of Shrawan 2081 (July 15–August 15, 2024) was collected. This period was purposefully chosen because it coincides with the end of Nepal’s fiscal year, a time when local governments intensify development and policy-related activities hence yielding richer governance-related coverage. Similarly the stage second is Content Categorization, in which each news item was manually reviewed and categorized according to its relevance to local governance. The categories included the topics like local governance and administration, development and infrastructure, education and health, environment, sanitation and tourism, agriculture and economy, policy and public remarks, investigative reporting, other general or entertainment news.

This classification provided the foundation for quantitative tabulation of news frequencies and qualitative interpretation of reporting trends. Similarly the stage three consists of Interviews. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted to The Press Coordinator of *Pokhara Metropolitan City*, A *ward chairperson* representing local government leadership and a *senior journalist* with over three decades of local reporting experience. These participants were selected purposively to represent different perspectives within the local media–governance interface. The interviews were conducted in person at their respective offices, recorded with consent, and transcribed for thematic analysis. The open-ended questions encouraged reflection on topics such as: Media’s cooperation with local government, challenges in maintaining investigative reporting, institutional efforts to promote transparency and participation and professional capacity and ethical standards in local journalism.

Research Instruments

The study used two key instruments for data collection:

1. Content Analysis Checklist – designed to record variables such as publication date, topic category, source (original or copied), placement (front page or inside page), and tone (informative, analytical, or critical). This checklist ensured consistency and comparability between the two newspapers.

2. Interview Schedule – a semi-structured guide focusing on the respondent’s professional experiences, perceptions of media–government relations, and opinions on the role of media in local governance. The open-ended nature of the schedule allowed respondents to elaborate on key points, offering valid qualitative data.

Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis involved both **quantitative tabulation** and **qualitative interpretation**.

1. Quantitative Analysis
 - News items were counted and categorized based on their thematic relevance and type.
 - Tables and figures were created to show the distribution of news across categories such as investigative, feature, and official coverage.
 - Percentages were used to illustrate proportions of governance-related content versus other general topics.
2. Qualitative Analysis
 - Interview transcripts were coded manually to identify recurring themes.
 - Statements were grouped under categories such as collaboration, accountability, professional ethics, and watchdog performance.
 - The findings from interviews were integrated with content analysis results to provide contextual understanding.
3. Triangulation
 - The integration of quantitative data from newspaper analysis and qualitative insights from interviews ensured methodological rigor and enhanced the validity of the conclusions.

Ethical Considerations

All research activities adhered to ethical standards for academic inquiry. Participants were informed of the study’s purpose, and verbal consent was obtained prior to interviews. Confidentiality was maintained throughout, and data were used strictly for academic purposes. Proper acknowledgment was given to all secondary sources in accordance with APA citation norms.

Reliability and Validity

The study ensured reliability through a consistent coding process in the content analysis phase. Both newspapers were analyzed under identical parameters and time frames, ensuring uniformity in comparison.

Validity was enhanced by triangulating findings from different data sources (content, interviews, and documents). The convergence of these sources substantiates the credibility of the interpretations and mitigates researcher bias.

Scope and Delimitation

While the findings of this study provide meaningful insights into the role of local media in Pokhara Metropolitan City, the scope remains geographically and temporally limited. The analysis covers only two print newspapers within a single metropolitan area and focuses on a one-month publication window.

However, the study offers a strong foundation for future comparative research across provinces or different forms of media, such as radio, television, and online portals. It also highlights the need for extended longitudinal studies that examine how local media engagement evolves over time in Nepal’s federal governance context.

Results

The result has been obtained analyzing the primary and secondary data taken from valid sources. The major source of primary data are the news content of Adarsha Samaj National Daily and Samadhan National Daily, one of the high coverage and oldest newspapers published in Pokhara. To analyze the content, news published in between Shrawan 1st to 30th Shrawan 2081 BS has been taken. The time duration was selected assuming the issues of news are more connected to local governance system as this month is closing of fiscal year and also beginning of new fiscal year in Nepal. The data is presented as different topics – total number of news, categories of news as

As the research discloses, the Samadhan Daily published total of 469 news in which news of Pokhara valley is comparatively more than of other areas. However, those news includes only few numbers of Pokhara's news as main news, feature news, investigative news and local governance news. The Samadhan Daily consists 87 news as local government, 17 news as investigative and 48 news as feature news. Among those local government news, only 8 news are related to Pokhara metropolitan in which topic of tourism, agriculture, construction, culture, health, disaster and crime are given more coverage respectively. Similarly, 17 news out of total are investigative in which only 8 news are of Pokhara. The areas it focuses for investigation are found construction, Municipality, disaster, policy respectively. Likewise, while observing the issues and coverage of 'Main News' published in this daily, only 6 news are given as 'Main News' as related to Pokhara in which news related to the remarks of political leaders occupies more numbers.

On the other, another news paper the Adarsha Samaj Daily also has been found almost the similar tendency in terms of giving coverage and priority for the news. Out of total 418 news, local government related news occupies 62 numbers, Investigative 9 and feature news 27. Similarly, among the total news of local government, only 35 news are of Pokhara in which more news are related to remarks following by agriculture, sanitation, environment, agriculture and construction. At the sametime, out of 9 investigative news, 4 are of Pokhara. Then, this news paper made coverage of 20 feature news of Pokhara out of total 27 feature news. The main news occupies 34 news of Pokhara in Adarsha Samaj Daily in which more than half percent are remarks related news.

News Content Overview of Samadhan and Adarsha Samaj National Daily

Table 1

Quantity Overview of News

Name of Media	Total News	Numbers of News of Pokhara Valley	Numbers of News Out of Valley
Samadhan Daily	469	386 (82 %)	83 (18 %)
Adarsha Samaj Daily	418	342 (82 %)	76 (18 %)

Note. Field Work Survey, 2024

The above drafted table shows, the numbers of news published in Samadhan National Daily and Adarsha Samaj National Daily categorizing that news only as local and non-local. *Samadhan National Daily* for Shrawan 2081 BS indicated that out of 469 total news items, 386 (82%) were focused on Pokhara Metropolitan, while 83 (18%) covered other districts, and 28 items were copied from Rastriya Samachar Samiti (RSS) (Field Work Survey, 2081). Similarly, during the same period, *Adarsha Samaj* published 418 news items, with 342 (82%) focused on Pokhara and 76 (18%) covering other districts (Field Work Survey, 2081).

Table 2

Qualitative Overview of News

Name of Media	Local Government News	Feature News	Investigative News
Samadhan Daily	87 (23 %)	48 (12 %)	17 (4%)
Adarsha Samaj Daily	62 (15 %)	27 (6%)	9 (2 %)

Note. Field Work Survey, 2024

News categorizations presented in above drafted table revealed that local government-related news accounted for 87 items (23%), feature news for 48 items (12%), and investigative news for 17 items (4%) (Field Work Survey, 2081).

The quantitative data collected through the breakdown of those specific topics has been recorded as the coverage of local government topics prioritized construction (15 items), agriculture (9), and governance issues (5) (Field Work Survey, 2081). Investigative news focused on construction, municipality, policy, and disaster, whereas the feature news concentrated on tourism, agriculture, and development-related topics (Field Work Survey, 2081). Main news coverage primarily consisted of speeches and remarks rather than critical reporting (Field Work Survey, 2081).

At the same time, Local government-related news accounted for 62 items (15%), feature news 27 items (6%), and investigative news 9 items (2%) (Field Work Survey, 2081). Investigative coverage emphasized provincial ministry actions, crime, disaster, and agriculture, while feature news addressed tourism, construction, sanitation, and health (Field Work Survey, 2081). Main news reporting was largely formal, relying on speeches and remarks rather than issue-based scrutiny (Field Work Survey, 2081).

Comparative Analysis of Pokhara-Based News

Table 3

Overview of Pokhara Based Local News

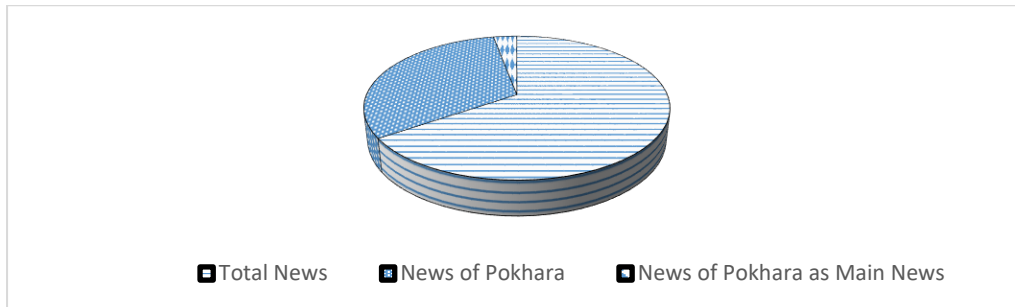
Total News	Pokhara Based (Local news)	Main News	Pokhara based Local Government	Feature	Investigative
887	45 %	10 %	20 %	7 %	3 %

Note. Field Work Survey, 2024

Combining both newspapers, 887 news items were analyzed. Only 45% were Pokhara-based, with merely 10% published as main news (Field Work Survey, 2081). Local government-related news totaled 149 items, of which only 43 specifically addressed Pokhara Metropolitan City (Field Work Survey, 2081). Feature and investigative news represented 112 and 26 items, respectively, with emphasis on infrastructure, construction, tourism, and agriculture. Topics requiring accountability and critical inquiry were minimally covered (Field Work Survey, 2081). This is reflected in the pie charts too as below :

Figure 1

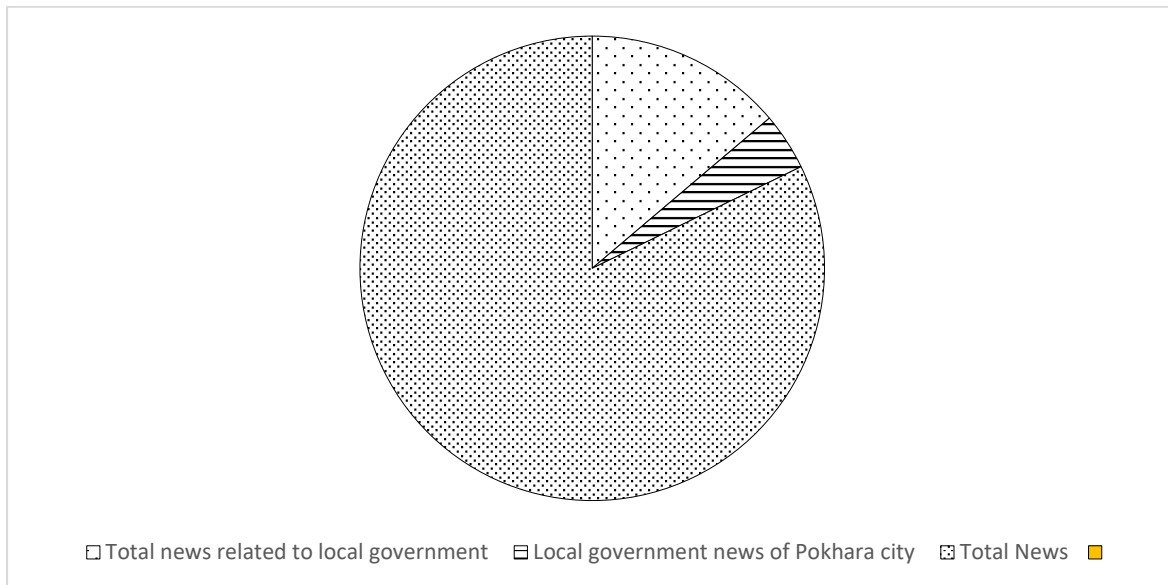
Local News as Main News



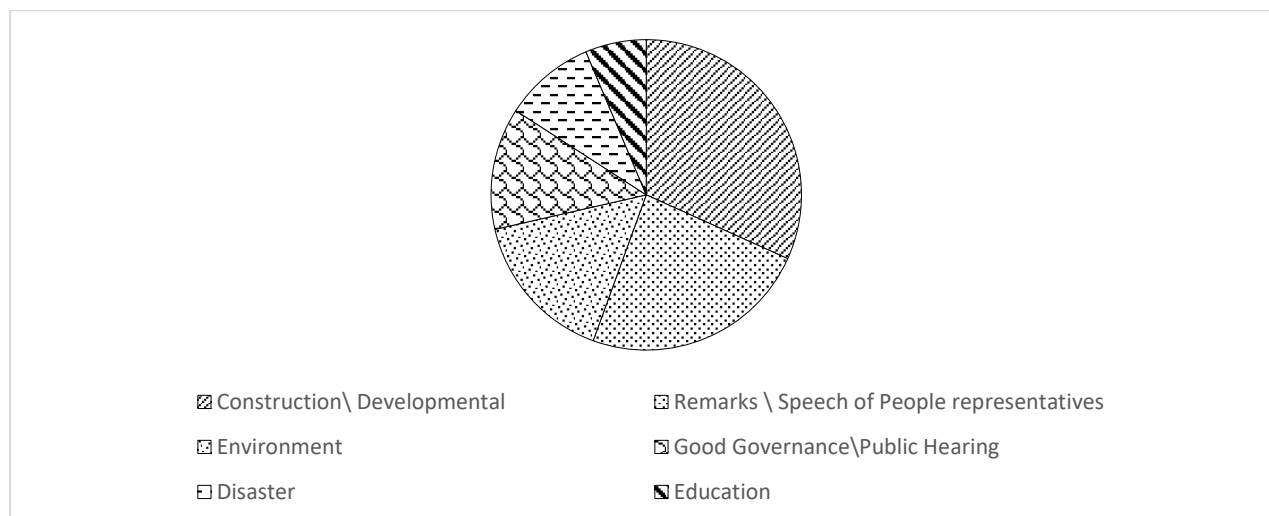
The above drafted pie chart projects the preferences of the news that is exploring tiny portion of local news published as main news . The large coverage is shown as total news, middle is News of Pokhara and similarly , the smallest portion is disclosed as local news as main news .

Figure 2

Coverage of Local Government related News of Pokhara Metropolitan



The pie chart is about the presentation of the news related to local government bodies. It shows, smallest portion of local governance related news of Pokhara is used to be given preference. The biggest portion is total news and in which middle size portin projects the total news related to local government.

Figure 3*Local Paper's Preference of Covering News in Terms of Issues*

The above drafted pie chart explores, the local paper prefer developmental and construction related topic to publish more that is follows the remarks related news as second priority . In which , the least priority is given to education and good governance respectively .

Discussion

Discussion made upon the result and data presentation, the numbers and categories of in-depth news coverage in those both newspapers creates the questions to the local media regarding their activeness, sincerity, responsibility and facilities in local governance system . The study observed the ' Features' and 'Investigative' and ' local coverage' news the newspapers covered and tendency of giving priority is not satisfactory as per the need of local governing mechanism.

While analyzing the data, Investigative news comprised only 2–4% of total coverage, while feature news represented approximately 15%, indicating a preference for descriptive rather than critical reporting. Main news coverage predominantly featured speeches and remarks, underscoring limited oversight of local governance.

Despite their historical contribution to democratic movements in Nepal (Schudson, 2008), local newspapers currently favor coverage of infrastructural and development topics, such as construction and tourism, over exposing governance issues. Interviews corroborate these findings, highlighting financial constraints and lack of incentives as barriers to proactive investigative reporting (Press Department, Pokhara Metropolitan City, 2024; Poudel, 2024).

The near absence of follow-up reporting underscores a lack of sustained scrutiny of local government actions. Although Pokhara Metropolitan City disseminates substantial information, media houses often replicate content without in-depth analysis, limiting public awareness and accountability (Media Action Nepal, 2021). Overall, local media are present and partially informative but remain underutilized as instruments for promoting transparency and civic oversight.

The research found those newspapers have less 'watchdog role' and more 'inspirational role'. Because, the coverage of investigative news is no more than 3 percentage of total news which is leading those papers to be less concerned on it's major role as 'watchdog' for local development. .So,

the study findings suggest that local media in Pokhara demonstrate limited engagement in their watchdog role. The status of local media has been found less strong to support the pillars of existing ruling mechanism. Media are found more concerned to make good coverage of local news. But at the same time, are less determined to carry the worth of that news in terms of playing the role as partner of significant changes in city. During the period of a month, local Medias are seen to make superficial coverage of news instead of making in-depth stories. While comparing the content and coverage of both newspapers, both are almost in similar pattern of coverage, topic or issues of news content because the numbers of local news as 'Main news', 'Feature' and 'Investigative' are almost same. There is only slight difference in the Numbers of news, pattern, topic and coverage between both newspapers. It clarifies, their role as media seem less active in local development. As the information get through analysis of interview with personnel of Press Department of Pokhara Metropolitan City, People's representative and senior local journalist, there is lack of proper concern of both "Media" and "Local Government "in improving each other's status. This research indeed has created insights to find the real worth of both partners as the service provider to the voice of voiceless.

As the previous researches have proved, the more the media disseminate the news written by doing inquiry and follow up, the more it is able to create pressure to the concerned people or authorities to correct their misdeeds (Dahal, 2013). Follow up news always seek the cause, reason and effect.. Feature news and Investigative news are important to keep the watchdog role of media strengthened.

Conclusion

Local media in Pokhara exhibit a formalistic reporting pattern, prioritizing development-oriented topics while neglecting investigative and issue-based journalism. Coverage of main news, which guides public attention, remains dominated by speeches and formal announcements, reflecting minimal engagement with accountability functions.

Feature and investigative news, although present, are insufficient to hold local authorities responsible or fully inform citizens about governance issues. Consequently, local media disseminate information but underperform in fostering transparency, accountability, and civic oversight. Strengthening local media capacity through supportive policies, financial resources, and institutional frameworks is essential to enhance their role in local governance and ensure effective dissemination of information to the public (Olowu, 1988; Wilson, 2000).

Local media seems not to focus on their responsibility to cooperate to their respective local government. As well, the news on the topic that could bring their area to be developed fast also has not been cared. For example Pokhara is city having high resources of biodiversity and tourism infrastructures, but news on those topic are quite little in compare to other major indicators of development. They lacks dedication to bring local issues as main news. Rather, they have given more space to the news of other districts in which people of Pokhara may have less concerned.

There is the lacking in the trend of making inquiries on any clue of news topic. The number of follow up news is almost zero within a month. It clarifies media as just run just for formalities. Media seems to avoid conflict and discussions with people representative instead of searching questions on their actions. Likewise, local government also found quite ignoring to make media realm strongest.

The research implies the theme of encouraging local media and local government both in getting highest returns of existing ruling system. This research is expected to bring positive changes

for the betterment of both sector through finding out the problems behind the obstacles if they have been facing any. This research will help local government to use local media as prominent tool to make their activities reach to grass roots easily. The activeness of local media in relations to local government, can enhance the reliability of local people to the people representatives. Likewise, it is expected to have emergence of media monitoring actions as well as the media development. It is because, communication strategies in local government is needed in the way of ensuring good governance through people's participation as directed in Constitution of Nepal (2015) .

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