Teaching-learning situation of journalism education among the community campuses in Kathmandu

• Shree Ram Khanal, PhD and Shashi Nath Marasini, PhD

Abstract

Despite journalism and mass communication courses being offered at Nepali community campuses for 20 years, significant gaps remain in infrastructure, human resources, and practical learning opportunities. This qualitative study examines the challenges faced by community campuses in Kathmandu valley, aiming to identify issues in teaching practices, understand instructors' difficulties, explore effective pedagogical approaches, and propose viable solutions. The study divides its findings into five thematic areas: employability, pedagogy, infrastructure, political influence, and expert recommendations. These categories are based on field interviews with educators, experts, and stakeholders. The findings show that while some campuses, like Madan Bhandari Memorial College, Janamaitri Campus, and Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus (GAMC), offer cutting-edge facilities, industry partnerships, and creative practices, the majority suffer from inadequate infrastructure, antiquated lecture-based methods, little experiential learning, and poor market alignment. Graduates' lack of professional, digital, and multimedia skills continues to create employability gaps. Further undermining effectiveness are low faculty motivation, administrative instability, and political meddling. Experts have given opinion on depoliticized governance, pedagogical innovation, faculty development, and curriculum reform. The GAMC case study demonstrates that investments in infrastructure, qualified faculty, and industry collaboration significantly improve educational outcomes. It concludes that sustainable reform depends on curriculum modernization, enhanced institutional accountability, and the integration of market-oriented training.

Keywords: Community, Community campus, Pedagogy, Communication skill, Media lab, Curriculm, etc.

Introduction

There are three types of campuses affiliated with Tribhuvan University: constituent campuses, community campuses, and campuses. Community campuses are educational institutions established by the community, for the community. They primarily aim to serve the general public, particularly those with low incomes. These campuses provide an accessible and affordable option for obtaining quality education. Despite facing economic, political, physical, and policy-related challenges, the contribution of community campuses to Nepal's education sector is important (Gupta & Shiwakoti, 2024). Tribhuvan University is the oldest and largest university in Nepal, with 60 constituent campuses, 2 institutes, and 1,053 affiliated campuses. There are around 600 community campuses. Community campuses do not have their own separate universitiesso these campuses are affiliated with TU (UGC, 2025).

In Nepal, formal journalism education began on July 17, 1976 (2033 B.S., Shrawan1) when TU's constituent Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus introduced journalism at the proficiency certificate level. Bachelor's and Master's level programs in journalism were also initiated at the same campus(Rai, 2006, & Pant, 2009). As this article focuses on community campuses, other institutions are not discussed here. Madan Bhandari Memorial College, affiliated with TU, began offering journalism and mass communication at the Bachelor's level in 2004 (2061 B.S.), encouraging other community campuses in the Kathmandu Valley to introduce the subject. Before this, in an effort to promote journalism and mass communication outside the

valley, Hetauda's Makwanpur Multiple Campus invited Associate Professor Lal Dhoj Deusa Rai to present a working paper on "The Question of Ethics in Journalism and Mass Communication." Among the few affiliated campuses, People's Campus (initially private, later trust-run) also started journalism teaching. (Khanal, 2025).

Currently, about 100 campuses across the country offer journalism and mass communication, while in Kathmandu district, only 38 campuses teach the subject. However, there is no clear record of which community campus first introduced journalism and mass communication, making this a topic for further research (UGC, 2025). Community campuses in Nepal have been facing many problems in the present context.Limited infrastructure, lack of teaching materials, absence of media labs and practical studios, poor coordination with media houses, outdated curricula, high dropout rates, shortage of skilled faculty, unstructured internships, lack of collaboration between campuses and the media industry, and the absence of a dedicated university for community campuses are major challenges. This article focuses on journalism and mass communication education in Kathmandu's community campusesparticularly those offering this subjecthighlighting the problems, challenges, and possible solutions.(Khanal,2019)

Practical learning opportunities in journalism and mass communication education are limited by the majority of Kathmandu Valley community campuses' inadequate media labs, computer facilities, and digital tools. With little use of interactive or experiential approaches like workshops, seminars, and fieldwork, teaching methods continue to be primarily lecture-based, which lowers student engagement and skill development. The market's demands for professional, digital, and multimedia skills are frequently not met by graduates, which makes them less employable and less prepared for the workforce. The overall quality of instruction is impacted by the lack of motivation, low pay, limited professional exposure, and inadequate training that instructors endure.

Community campuses' academic focus, sustainability, and accountability are compromised by overly politicized campuses, erratic administrations, and inadequate institutional governance (Chimariya, 2024). There is a dis-connect between theoretical education and real-world industry demands because Tribhuvan University's curriculum has not been updated to reflect global media trends. There are gaps in the quality of journalism education because most campuses struggle with scarce resources, while a select few (like Madan Bhandari Memorial, Janamaitri, and GAMC) flourish with superior facilities and practices.

This study is based on an analytical research design and followed purposive sampling for the case study. This study has followed qualitative data derived from key informant interview and case study method. There are eight participants for the interview and two cases from the popular college of Kathmandu have been used for indepth study.

Research question

- a) What is the current state of teaching-learning practices in community campuses in Kathmandu?
- b) Why are the teaching-learning practices of journalism education in community campuses in Kathmandu important?
- c) In what ways are journalism-related issues integrated into the teaching-learning practices of community campuses in Kathmandu?

Objective of the study

- a) To assess the current teaching–learning practices in community campuses of Kathmandu.
- b) To evaluate the significance of journalism education in these institutions.
- c) To explore how key challenges and issues are addressed within the teaching-learning process.

Field observations & stakeholder's views

A journalism instructor at Pashupati Multiple Campus, Chabahil, shared that while efforts are underway to establish a media lab, practical facilities remain limited—few computers, minimal use of digital tools, and scarce field opportunities. Despite offering competitive salaries, the campus lacks its own media outlet, relying on external internships and occasional guest lectures by journalists. Coordination with media houses supports practical learning, but TU provides no regular training or workshops for faculty, leading to outdated lecture-based methods. He emphasized the need for market-oriented strategies and broader career preparation, including roles in PR, communication, and policymaking (NavarajChalise, Personal Interview, August 15, 2025).

Participants from various community campuses highlighted significant gaps in journalism education. At Ganeshman Multiple Campus, a media lab is absent, and available tools like smart boards go unused. In contrast, Janamaitri Campus offers a radio lab, online publication, and internship programs, which have helped students enter media careers (SudipRaila, Personal Interview, August 16, 2025).

At Kavre Multiple Campus, despite TU's inclusion of practical components in the curriculum, there is no mandatory fieldwork. The campus organizes annual excursions and partners with local media for internships. However, declining student interest is linked to poor promotion, lack of government support, and limited job prospects (Shailendra Sharma, Personal Interview, August 15, 2025).

Libraries often lack journalism-specific resources, and campuses fail to equip students with skills demanded by media houses, such as camera operation, multimedia editing, and digital tools. Political influence in some campuses and low teacher salaries further hinder motivation and the overall quality of journalism education.

Madan Bhandari Memorial College, a QAA-accredited institution, is well-equipped with a media lab, radio and audio-visual studios, internet access, an online library, and a departmental library. The department head highlights the urgent need for TU to revise its curriculum and for colleges to introduce new programs to strengthen journalism education (Yam Bahadur Dura, Personal Interview, August 16, 2025).

GraminAdarsha Campus in Tarkeshwor also claims to have comprehensive facilities, including an advanced radio lab, smart board, computer lab, conference hall, internet, and library. However, political interference continues to hinder academic progress. Senior journalist ShreeramPudasainee emphasizes the importance of aligning campuses with community needs, prioritizing practical learning over theory, and training teachers to be more tech-savvy (Personal Interview, August 16, 2025).

A researcher notes that private colleges tend to avoid hiring unqualified teachers, whereas many community campuses—especially those lacking QAA—struggle with faculty competency. He stresses the need for a complete curriculum overhaul aligned with global market demands, periodic updates, and job guarantees for journalism graduates (Madhu Sudan Neupane, Personal Interview, August 15, 2025).

Experts highlight poor teacher-student interaction and advocate for contextualized, creative teaching that encourages multiperspective analysis (Raghu Mainali, Personal Interview, August 17, 2025). Associate Professor Kiran Ram Ranjitkar recommends active methods like group discussions, seminars, field visits, and performance-based training, along with orientation programs for teachers unfamiliar with modern pedagogy (Personal Interview, August 17, 2025).

Community campuses, under TU's strict curriculum and policies, face disruptions from political strikes, administrative interference, and lack of faculty job security. Declining student numbers, irregular general assemblies, and instability have left some campuses on the

brink of closure (Kiran Ram Ranjitkar, Personal Interview, August 16, 2025).

Analysis

The field interviews with instructors, experts, and stakeholders from different community campuses in Nepal provide rich insights into the current state of journalism and mass communication education. The findings are categorized under key thematic areas: infrastructure, pedagogy, employability, political influence, and expert recommendations.

Infrastructure and technological facilities

Most community campuses face serious infrastructural challenges. Respondents from Pashupati and Ganeshman Multiple Campuses noted the absence of media labs, insufficient computers, and underutilization of digital tools such as smart boards. Even where smart boards exist, teachers often lack the motivation or training to use them effectively.

By contrast, positive examples highlight the potential impact of adequate facilities. Janamaitri Campus runs a radio lab and online publication, enabling students to secure internships and subsequent employment in media houses. Madan Bhandari Memorial College, accredited under the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) framework, offers a radio studio, audio-visual studio, online library, and well-equipped departmental library. Similarly, Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus (GAMC) claims to provide advanced facilities including a radio lab, computer lab, smart boards, and a conference hall. The contrast underscores a growing infrastructure divide: while minorities of campuses are evolving into resource-rich centers of excellence, the majority remains under-equipped, hampering effective practical training.

Pedagogy and teaching practices

Teaching practices in most campuses remain lecture-based and outdated. Respondents pointed out that Tribhuvan University

(TU) does not organize regular workshops, seminars, or teacherorientation programs. Consequently, instructors lack exposure to modern pedagogical practices.

Although TU has incorporated practical elements into the curriculum, there is no mandatory fieldwork requirement, leading to minimal experiential learning opportunities. Kavre Multiple Campus, for example, compensates for this gap by organizing at least one annual educational excursion and arranging internships through local media houses. Experts further stressed that weak teacher-student interaction remains a core problem, as classrooms fail to contextualize knowledge or encourage multi-perspective discussions. Associate professors and researchers highlighted the need for active teaching methods -- group discussions, seminars, field visits, and performance-based trainingas essential for journalism education.

Employability and market relevance

Employability emerged as a central concern. Media houses today demand graduates proficient in camera operation, editing, photoshop, animation, multimedia tools, internet use, and language skills. However, campuses are failing to equip students with these skills, leaving a gap between education and labor market requirements. Several respondents also emphasized that journalism graduates should not only be trained for reporting but also for broader professional roles such as spokespersons, information officers, public relations officers, and even policy-making positions. This reflects a need to broaden the vision of journalism education beyond traditional newsroom roles. Campuses with stronger industry linkages, such as Janamaitri and Madan Bhandari, demonstrated better student outcomes, suggesting that structured internships and practical exposure directly improve graduate employability.

Political influence and administrative challenges

A recurring theme was the politicization of community campuses. Some campuses function as political training grounds, creating

challenges for students who are not aligned with political parties. Administrative instability, political strikes, and lack of transparent governance have weakened institutional credibility. Faculty members often face low pay, lack of job security, and minimal career growth opportunities, reducing motivation and performance. Some campuses, as noted by respondents, do not even conduct regular general assemblies, undermining institutional accountability. A few community campuses are reportedly on the verge of closure due to declining student numbers and unstable management. These structural weaknesses, combined with political interference, threaten the sustainability of community-based journalism education.

Expert recommendations and insights

Experts strongly advocate for a complete reassessment of the TU journalism curriculum, arguing that it is outdated and misaligned with global market trends. Periodic curriculum updates, integration of digital media, and introduction of specialized courses such as data journalism and multimedia reporting were emphasized.

Concerns were raised about the quality of teaching faculty, especially in community campuses lacking QAA accreditation. Private colleges, by contrast, tend to avoid hiring unqualified teachers, leading to relatively higher teaching quality.

The findings reflect a dual reality in Nepal's community campuses. On one hand, a majority struggle with inadequate infrastructure, outdated pedagogy, political interference, and declining enrollments. On the other hand, a few campusessuch as Madan Bhandari Memorial College, Janamaitri Campus, and GAMCshow that with investment in facilities, accreditation, and industry partnerships, journalism education can thrive.

The overarching challenge lies in bridging the gap between theoretical curricula and market demands, while simultaneously addressing structural and administrative weaknesses. Sustainable reform requires not only TU-level curriculum modernization but also faculty development, infrastructural investment, and depoliticization of campus governance.

Case study: Madan Bhandari Memorial College

Madan Bhandari Memorial College was established in 2001 as a non-profit academic institution with the objective of providing quality education at affordable fees. It is also the first community college to introduce Journalism and Mass Communication at the undergraduate level. From the academic year 2066/67 (2010/11), the college started offering Bachelor's programs in Social Work and English Literature, which quickly gained popularity. Other academic programs offered by the college such as Management, Humanities, Education, Science, as well as Master's programs in Sociology, Political Science, and Social Work are equally popular. With the motto "Education for Social Transformation," the college has produced a large number of skilled professionals in journalism who are now working in various media organizations across Nepal. (Madan Bhandari Memorial College, n.d.).

For the teaching of Journalism and Mass Communication, the college provides opportunities such as media house visits, daily writing practice, seminar paper writing exercises, IT labs, an educational radio named ShwetaShardul FM, audio-visual labs, as well as regular workshops and guest lectures by media professionals and experts. It also organizes academic conferences, interaction programs, research-based training, and capacity-building workshops. Additionally, the college conducts teacher training, orientations, and journalism-related skill development programs.

Analysis

Madan Bhandari Memorial College stands out as a pioneering institution in Nepal's community-based higher education sector, particularly for introducing Journalism and Mass Communication at the undergraduate level. Its establishment as a non-profit in 2001 with the mission of delivering affordable yet quality education reflects a commitment to social inclusion and academic accessibility. The diversification of its programs into Social Work, English Literature, Management, Humanities, Education, Science, and advanced studies in Sociology and Political Science illustrates

its responsiveness to both societal needs and student demand. By embracing the motto "Education for Social Transformation," the college positions itself not just as an educational institution but as a catalyst for social change and professional empowerment, especially in journalism and related fields.

At the practical level, the college emphasizes hands-on learning and professional readiness through activities such as media house visits, radio broadcasting via ShwetaShardul FM, audiovisual labs, and seminar writing exercises. Such initiatives bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling students to develop applied skills that are directly relevant to the media and communication industries. Moreover, its investment in teacher training, capacity-building workshops, and academic conferences reflects a holistic approach to institutional developmentstrengthening both student learning and faculty competence. Overall, the case illustrates how community colleges, through innovation and resourcefulness, can create pathways for affordable, practice-oriented higher education that produces skilled graduates contributing to Nepal's sociopolitical and media landscape.

Case study:GraminAdarsha Multiple Campus

Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus (GAMC), established in 1994 in Tarakeshwar Municipality, is a community-based higher education institution located in the northern belt of Kathmandu Valley. Managed by educationists, professionals, and social workers, it reflects strong community ownership and commitment to affordable quality education. The campus offers Bachelor's and Master's programs in Humanities, Management, and Education. A significant milestone was the introduction of the Bachelor's program in Journalism and Mass Communication in 2004 under Tribhuvan University, following its earlier offering of Mass Communication at the 10+2 level (Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus, n.d.).

GAMC emphasizes both academic excellence and practical exposure. It provides facilities such as field visits, project works, seminars, workshops, excursions, guest lectures, internships, and a well-

equipped audio-visual lab. Faculty members are experienced and dynamic, maintaining a balance between theory and practice, while students are actively engaged in extracurricular activities. Despite these achievements, GAMC operates in a competitive and resource-constrained environment. As journalism education evolves with digitalization and technological innovations, the campus faces the challenge of keeping pace with industry standards while upholding academic rigor and community values.

Analysis

Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus (GAMC) benefits from a number of notable strengths that distinguish it within Nepal's community campus landscape. It has a team of qualified faculty members who are experienced, dynamic, and specialized in their respective fields, enabling them to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical applications. The campus adopts a balanced pedagogical approach, placing equal emphasis on conceptual clarity and hands-on training. This is further supported by a range of practical learning opportunities, including field visits, project works, internships, workshops, seminars, guest lectures, and excursions. In addition, GAMC has invested in technological resources, notably a wellequipped audio-visual laboratory that supports media education and training. Students are also actively engaged in extracurricular activities, which include cultural, creative, and social events that foster holistic development. The institution's strong foundation in community ownershipbeing managed by educationists and social workersfurther enhances trust, credibility, and long-term sustainability.

Despite its progress, GAMC continues to face several challenges. Limited funding and infrastructure restrict its capacity to compete with private institutions that are often better resourced. As a community campus under Tribhuvan University affiliation, it has little flexibility to update or reform curricula independently, which can delay adaptation to changing industry needs. Recognition and visibility beyond its immediate community also remain limited, affecting its ability to attract students from wider

regions. Furthermore, the campus has not yet prioritized academic publications, research, and innovation, resulting in a significant research gap. Rapid advancements in digital technology and media tools also create pressure to update facilities and curricula, a task that remains only partially addressed.

At the same time, GAMC has substantial opportunities for growth. Nepal's growing media industry is creating increased demand for skilled journalists, offering graduates strong prospects in the job market. The campus has the potential to integrate digital journalism, social media strategies, and even artificial intelligence applications into its curriculum to align with global trends. There are also opportunities to collaborate with national and international universities, media houses, and NGOs, thereby enhancing practical training and exposure. Its strong base of community ownership enhances sustainability and credibility, while policy-level support from the government and donor agencies can be leveraged to strengthen its infrastructure and resources.

However, GAMC also faces external threats that could undermine its progress. Increasing competition from private institutions with advanced infrastructure, global partnerships, and modern curricula is a major challenge. The rapidly changing media landscape means that traditional curricula risk becoming outdated if innovation does not keep pace. Additionally, many students opt to migrate abroad or join well-established private colleges in Nepal, leading to the risk of declining enrollment in community campuses.

Overall, Gramin Adarsha Multiple Campus has evolved into a reputable community-based institution with a strong commitment to journalism and mass communication education. Its strengths in faculty expertise, pedagogy, and community ownership provide a strong foundation for growth. However, resource constraints, competition, and technological gaps remain pressing challenges. By embracing curriculum innovation, fostering research, enhancing collaborations, and mobilizing resources, GAMC has the potential to transform itself into a leading institution in journalism and higher education in Nepal. Its future success will depend on balancing its

community-based ethos with the need to meet global standards of academic and professional excellence.

5. Findings

- Infrastructure divide Most community campuses lack adequate facilities such as media labs, smart boards, and computers, while a few (e.g., Madan Bhandari Memorial College, GAMC, Janamaitri) have developed advanced labs, radio stations, and digital tools.
- Outdated pedagogy Teaching remains heavily lecture-based due to the absence of TU-organized workshops, orientations, and training, leaving teachers unprepared for modern, studentcentered pedagogies.
- Weak practical exposure Though TU's curriculum includes some practical components, fieldwork is not mandatory. A few campuses supplement this with excursions, internships, and guest lectures, but overall practical learning remains limited.
- **Employability gap** Graduates often lack essential technical and digital skills (e.g., camera handling, editing, multimedia tools), creating a mismatch between market demand and academic preparation.
- **Broader career roles** Experts suggest journalism education should prepare students for multiple professions (e.g., PR officers, spokespersons, policy advisors), not just newsroom reporting, but campuses have not sufficiently adapted to this need.
- Political interference Many campuses act as political training grounds, suffer from strikes, and face administrative instability, undermining credibility and discouraging non-affiliated students.
- Faculty challenges Low pay, lack of job security, and weak career advancement opportunities reduce faculty motivation, while non-QAA campuses often hire underqualified teachers.
- **Positive institutional models** Madan Bhandari Memorial College and GAMC showcase how community colleges, with

strong facilities, active pedagogy, and community ownership, can balance theory and practice and produce employable graduates.

- Opportunities for growth Community campuses can leverage demand in Nepal's expanding media industry by integrating digital journalism, social media, and AI into curricula, alongside collaborations with media houses and global institutions.
- **Need for reform** Sustainable improvement requires curriculum modernization at TU, regular faculty development, investment in digital infrastructure, stronger industry linkages, and depoliticization of campus governance.

6.Conclusion

Community campuses in Nepal continue to face significant challenges, including limited faculty motivation for research, lack of study leave, insufficient recognition from Tribhuvan University, and inadequate infrastructure. Political interference and outdated teaching methods further weaken their effectiveness and appeal. Despite their important role in expanding access to higher education, many campuses struggle with low class attendance, frequent strikes, a shortage of textbooks, and students from disadvantaged backgrounds who cannot afford basic learning resources.

To remain viable, these institutions must modernize their curricula, enhance research capacity, improve infrastructure, and establish stronger partnerships with local governments and industry. Pursuing Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) is essential for building credibility and long-term sustainability. Amid these challenges, Madan Bhandari Memorial College and GraminAdarsha Multiple Campus (GAMC) stand out for their qualified faculty, integration of theory and practice, and strong community engagement. However, even these institutions must address ongoing resource limitations and adapt to rapid technological advancements to maintain their reputation and emerge as leaders in journalism education in Nepal.

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Annex 1

Interview List

- Mr. Shailendra Sharma, Kavre Multiple Campus, Banepa, Kavre. (August 15, 2025)
- Mr. Navaraj Chalise, Pashupati Multiple Campus, Kathmandu, (August 15, 2025)
- Mr. ShreeramPudasainee, GraminAdarsha Multiple Campus, Tarkeshwar, Kathmandu., (August 16, 2025)
- Mr. Kiran Ram Ranjitkar, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur (August 17, 2025)
- Mr.Yam Bahadur Dura, Head of Department, Madan Bhandari Memorial College, Kathmandu. (August 16, 2025)
- Mr. Him Bista, Janamaitri Multiple Campus, Kathmandu (August 15,2025)
- Dr. Madhusudan Neupane, Communication Expert / Researcher, Kathmandu.(August 18, 2025)
- Dr. Raghu Mainali, Communication Expert and Lecturer, Kathmandu.(August 17, 2025)
- Mr. SudipRaila, Ganeshman Singh Multiple Campus, Kathmandu. (August 16, 2025)