The role of news media in government policy formation and decision making in Nepal

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Abstract

This paper examines how news media content influences decision-makers, using decision framing and mediatization theories.The media play a crucial role in influencing government policy formation and decision-making by shaping public opinion and acting as a bridge between the state and its citizens.The framing of news content, the selection of issues, and the framing policy significantly affect how common people respond to government actions. The emergence and rapid growth of media have intensified individuals to participate actively in public discourse. It facilitates real-time discussions, increases public engagement, and amplifies diverse opinions to accelerate the formation of collective sentiment. In such a way, Nepali media plays a pivotal role in holding power to account, strengthening transparency, and fostering civic engagement. The need for media literacy among the population remains critical to ensure that the media contributes constructively to national policy discourse and democratic consolidation.For this, the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches is the procedure of data collection and the primary channel of communication; information about government policy and how the mass

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media plays a role in shaping the policy is significant. Decision-makers are interviewed, and thematic analysis is done to interpret the data. Findings reveal that the media affect decision-makers at the policymaking level. The media holdsthe power to inform, educate, and mobilize the government around policy issues. It significantly shapes decision-making in Nepal, influences public perception, policy debates, and governance.

Keywords: *Agenda-setting, decision making, engagement, mediatization, policy formation*

Introduction

Media, since its inception, has played an exceptional role in connecting people and communities. It serves as a mass communication tool to share information and influence emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. An article in *TheNew York Times* documented the point and declared: Nepal's capital Kathmandu, "long a symbol of spiritualism, is now also a center for research and innovation" (Crossette, 1999, 1). With the transformation from a supply-driven model to a demand-oriented one, the media has become more participatory, and it gives space to millions of content producers and consumers to shape discourse and policy trends. One journalist once likened the efforts of Nepali journalists to "a beacon atop the Himalayas," revealing the lives of people both within Nepal and in neighboring countries (Koirala, 1999). The Nepali press has fully lived up to its potential to addressissues of public concern at the local and national level. This trend has significantly increased the power of the media to influence public opinion in the formulation of public policy. It highlights matters of public concern and directly and indirectly impacts policy decisions (Lancester et al., 2010). The use of media across all demographics globally has especially drawn the attention of governments. It enables individuals to coordinate collective political actions rapidly and efficiently (Soares & Joia, 2015). In a broader social and political context, a free and dynamic media landscape offers essential information to enable public awareness about political and socio-

economic developments. Itscomponent to encourage democratic participation and civic responsibility (Hudock, 2003) is significant. The media can disseminate information—especially in times of crisis—also creates significant pressure for government agencies, and it reveals public dissatisfaction (Shirky, 2011; Rafiq et al., 2024).

The impact of media is unlimited to shaping general awareness and influencing individuals' beliefs, opinions, and knowledge. Bhandari, Bhattarai, and Deane (2016) conclude that "61 percent of Nepalis believe that the country's media makes government react to the needs of ordinary people" and 74 percent believe that media "helps hold government to account" (9). As the Nepali media audience continues to expand, its authority shapes cognitive and behavioral outcomes. As mass media becomes one of the most relied-upon sources for delivering information, it has increased awareness and fostered engagement, and the rise in cognitive and political awareness among the population has resulted in an increasingly vocal and participatory citizenry, whose views—expressed openly and often on media—play a crucial role in shaping political outcomes.

Policymakers, aware of the risks of ignoring prevailing public sentiment, align their policies with dominant narratives (Biswas, Ingle, & Roy, 2014). This process effectively shapes the fundamentals of governance itself. In the contextof Nepal, where democratic institutions are still consolidating, the media plays a particularly influential role. For a large segment of the population, traditional and social media are primary sources of information about government activity and forming national policies (Anam, 2002). Bhandari, Bhattarai, and Deane (2016) affirm that "media appears to be doing as much, if not more than, any other institution to publicise and expose wrongdoing in Nepal and continues to command substantial public trust" (11).This responsiveness becomes a feedback loop in which public sentiment, driven by media narratives, guides policymaker behavior. Many political leaders have risen to prominence by

effectively utilizing media to harness public support (Gionis, Terzi, & Tsaparas, 2013). The ongoing interaction between policymakers and citizens through media platforms fosters a more engaged form of democracy, and people'seffort increasingly influences governance styles and decision-making processes (Khan & Shahbaz, 2015). Effective policy-making is only about bureaucratic efficiency and meeting the evolving needs to create a politically aware society. For this, the media is a means of communication and feedback.The media plays a vital role in facilitating information about public resources and government. It allows citizens to make informed decisions and offer constructive input. This communication process enhances the policymaking process by aligning it more closely with public expectations and needs (Rafiq, Qaisar & Butt, 2022).

In a digital age the media and social media facilitate real-time dialogue. The interaction between people and government fosters a sense of political engagement and civic duty among the population to strengthenthe relationship between the state and its citizens (Conroy, Feezell, & Guerrero, 2012).It keeps institutions to enable a system where the media performs two critical functions for policymakers: it serves as a major source of information, and it provides a competitive public arena where policies, agendas, and leadership qualities are constantly evaluated (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006; Van Aelst &Walgrave, 2016). Efficient policy design and implementation rely heavily on the availability and accuracy of the media information. For politicians to remain relevant and persuasive, they must maintain visibility in the media and project their agendas clearly to the public. This paper incorporates conceptual framework (figure 1), theoretical framework, research method, analysis and findings, discussion and conclusion. For this, the objectives of the paper are:

- To examine the influence of news media content on the policymaking process and the decision-making.
- To assess the extent to which news media shape policy decisions and influence decision-makers.

- To identify which domains of decision-making-political, social, or economic-are most frequently impacted by media content.

Numerous studies have highlighted how media exposure influences public political perceptions. The process for formulating government policy is the main concern of this paper. The media's influence on policy and governance is multifaceted and deeply embedded in modern political life. It shapes how the government of Nepal grows stronger and requiresa careful and responsible policymaking process.

Review of literature

Media, as both a tool and a force, has significantly reshaped how individuals perceive and relate to observe the policy. It influences the public's interpretation of political realities and allows for the development of new policy. Prasain (2024) states that the government of Nepal had imposed a green tax on imported petroleum products to fulfill the concerns of the media in the financial budget of 2024-25. The impact of media is often predictable and can vary widely in its consequences. It fosters awareness and progressto circulate the information. Fawzi (2017) conducted quantitative surveys involving administrative officers, researchers, and individuals engaged in policymaking processes. They acknowledged that the media exerts influence at nearly every stage of policy development. From the initial agenda-setting phase to the final implementation of policies, his study demonstrated how the media acts as a driving force to frame issues about public discourse, and pressure policy makers into action. He concludes the importance of media as a continuous presence in the bureaucratic lifecycle of policy formation. Mwangi (2018) emphasizes that media attentioncan result in swift policy responses. This trend is particularly relevant in countries with weak institutional oversight like Nepal and limited access to verified information. It reinforces the idea that the media does not merely report events; it helps shape them by influencing how and when decision-makers react.

Conceptual framework and media mechanism

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in the relationship between news media, public opinion, and policy-making. Based on the research objectives, the conceptual framework provides the foundation for investigating how news media content influences policy formation and decision making. The core concept is that media serves both as an agenda-setter and as a mediator for decision making discourse. It shapes how policymakers perceive societal issues and decide on legislative or administrative action. News contents like news stories, broadcasts, and reports distributed through television, newspapers, radio, and digital platforms influence the policymakers. These contents often influence public opinion, highlight urgent societal concerns, and signal to policymakers (Fawzi, 2017; Mwangi, 2018). The decision-makingprocess includes various stages such as formulation of policy, adoption, implementation, and evaluation of policies. For this, media impacts any or all stages of this process (Fawzi, 2017; Figenschou et al., 2019). Decision makers include elected officials and bureaucrats who are responsible for shaping public policies (Schillemans & Pierre, 2016; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2016).
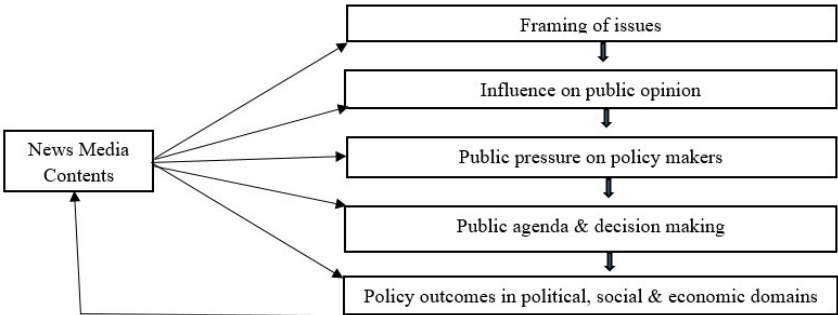

Figure 1: Conceptual framework developed by the author, 2025.

The media tells decision makers to think about framing issues as the agenda of policy formation (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Its basic

components are framing of issues, people's opinion, and public pressure for policymakers, public agenda, and decision making outcome. They influence policymakers (Nisbet & Fahy, 201) to prompt swift political responses (Mwangi, 2018; Figenschou et al., 2019), which influences decision makers(Walgrave & Dejaeghere, 2016).

Theoretical framework

Based on the stated research objectives, the theoretical framework is designed to link key concepts, and establish the theoretical underpinnings of the research. It offers a roadmap for a detailed articulation of a theoretical framework. To analyze the role and impact of media on decision-making, this study is grounded in two main theoretical perspectives: i.e.mediatization and decision framing theories. Mediatizationtheory refers to the process by which the media shapes and even dominates other social institutions, including politics and governance (Stromback & Aelst, 2013). The relevance of it is to support the assumption that decision-making is increasingly conducted under the logic of media visibility, immediacy, and public appeal rather than institutional norms (Figenschou et al., 2019). Its application is to understand how the media becomes a guiding force for policy formation and decision-makers (Schillemans & Pierre, 2016). The decision framing theory identifies the mechanisms through which media highlight specific issues to influence their perceived importance among both the public and decision-makers (Fawzi, 2017; Nisbet & Fahy, 2015). Its relevance is to explain how policy issues gain prominence in policy discussions due to extensive media coverage, and its application shapes political, social, or economic policy priorities (Oliver et al., 2014; Rafiq, Kamran & Afzal, 2024). At the center of the framework is news media content, which uses an agenda for framing mechanisms to highlight specific societal issues. These issues resonate with the public, whose reactionscreate pressure on decision-makers. Depending on the salience and urgency, policymakers incorporate

these issues into the decision-making process (Nisbet & Fahy, 2015; Schillemans & Pierre, 2016; Van Aelst & Walgrave, 2016; Fawzi, 2017; and Mwangi, 2018).

The first objective of this paper is addressed through mediatization and decision framing theories. It shows that the media influences both the public and policymakers. The second objective is approached by applying questionnaires/interviews (Figenschou et al. 2019) to explore the extent of influence. The third objective uses insights from Korthagen (2015) and Nisbet & Fahy (2015) to differentiate between political, social, and economic policy domains and assess which are most influenced. This integrated conceptual and theoretical framework combines decision framing and mediatization to offer a multi-dimensional view of the media's role in policy formulation and decision-making. It provides the foundation for answering the research questions and achieving the stated objectives, especially in the context of developing democracies like Nepal.

Expanding on these themes, Figenschou, Karlsen, Kolltveit, and Schillemans (2019) investigated how policy decisions in public bureaucracies, which traditionally rely on rules and evidence-based assessments, are increasingly shaped by media narratives. The trend of mediatization was critically examined by Stromback and Aelst (2013), who argued that political actors have become increasingly dependent on media to the extent that politics itself is now defined by media logic. Political messaging, campaign strategies, and even governance routines are being adapted to align with how the media operates and how audiences consume information. In this sense, the media has only become a platform for political communication and an active player in the political strategy and decision-making process.

The importance of information was emphasized by Oliver et al. (2014), who explored how evidence—particularly when technical and complex—is being transmitted through media to decision-makers. Their systematic review found that such evidence can either support or hinder decision-making. These findings were echoed

by Rafiq, Kamran, and Afzal (2024), who noted that the media is the messenger, and the technical nature of policy evidence can influence the issues for meaningful policy formulation.Korthagen (2015) conducted a quantitative content analysis that explored both the benefits and risks of media influence in governance. Nisbet and Fahy (2015) offered a more optimistic perspective by highlighting how news media include perspectives from various stakeholders. It facilitates a more inclusive and collaborative decision-making process. They argue that the media can act as a bridge, linking politicians, political parties, and the public, even across ideological and physical divides.

Walgrave and Dejaeghere (2016) addressed the challenge of information overload in politics. With an overabundance of media content, decision-makers face difficulty distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information. The constant barrage of news forces politicians to be highly selective in the information they prioritize to impact the depth and direction of policy discussions. Information dissemination is a fundamental component of democracy, enabling citizens to participate meaningfully in decision-making (Dahal, 2013). An accountable government ensures public access while monitoring power sources and upholding democratic norms to address emerging challenges (Cook, 2005). Together, this literature underscores the pervasive and multifaceted role of media in decision-making. From shaping agendas and public opinion to influencing institutional behavior and decision-making processes, the media operates as both a mirror and a motor of governance. This dynamic is especially relevant in developing contexts like Nepal, where the evolving media landscape holds immense potential—and responsibility—in promoting transparent, inclusive, and effective governance.

Research method

The research employed a quantitative research systematically uses numerical data and statistical methods to measure issues,

and identifies variable relationships. It generalizes findings through objective, structured approaches like surveys and experiments(Bryman, 2007 & 2016). Aqualitative methodology uses in-depth interviews as the primary data collection method. Its independent variable: News media (e.g., media content, frequency of coverage, framing of issues, media pressure, public agenda setting) and dependent variable: government policy formation and decision making (e.g., formulation of policies, responsiveness of policymakers, timing and direction of decisions, inclusion of public concerns).

Quantitative design covers Likert Scale questionnaires with political leaders (elected representatives), policymakers, and journalists. For this, the Provincial Government of Gandaki Province, Bharatpur Metropolitan City, and Pokhara Metropolitan City are research sites. As for the questionnaires,8 Provincial Members, 6 elected representatives (Ward Chairs and Members) from each Metropolitan City, 4 bureaucrats from Gandaki Province, and 4 local government (LG) officials each from LG. Similarly, 10 journalists working in Pokhara and Bharatpur are the primary respondents. Qualitative design is characterized by its use of flexible, open-ended questioning that enables researchers to explore complex social phenomena in depth (Deterding & Waters, 2021). In this study, interviews were conducted with bureaucrats (3) and Ministersfrom Gandaki Province (2), and journalists working in Kathmandu (5) and 5 University Professors teaching in Kathmandu. Their positions in the decision-making process made them suitable respondents for exploring the influence of news media content on governance. Similarly, the university professors and journalists shared detailed perceptions relevant to the research paper. The data collected were then examined through descriptive analysis, which helped uncover recurring themes and patterns regarding media influence on decision-making. The choice of study sites provided a range of diverse perspectives within a politically significant region.

Analysis and findings

Twenty elective representatives including Gandaki Province and two Metropolitan Cities of research sites, twelve bureaucrats involved in policy formulation and decision-making; and ten journalists responded to the study. Two ministers, three bureaucrats, five journalists, and five university professors were interviewed. Identities were kept anonymous to ensure candid responses. As public officials, their demographics were considered non-essential for analyzing media influence on decision-making and were excluded for brevity. The analysis of the first objective reveals the following key themes. The first objective of this paper was to examine the influence of news media content on the policymaking process and the decisions of policymakers.

Table 1: **Mean Scores on Perceived Influence of News Media by Category**

Category	Mean Score
Political representatives (N = 20)	4.03
Bureaucrats (N = 12)	4.15
Journalists (N = 10)	3.75

Source: Questionnaires, 2025.

From this analysis of the data, bureaucrats showed the highest mean, indicating strong acknowledgment of the media's role in policy formulation and decision-making. Political representatives also rated media influence high, though slightly less than the mean of bureaucrats. Journalists, while recognizing media's influence, were slightly more reserved—possibly reflecting challenges they face (like data access and pressures).The analysis reveals that news media significantly influence decision-making in Nepal. Bureaucrats (mean = 4.15) and political representatives (mean =

4.03) acknowledge the media's strong role in shaping decisions and public opinion. Journalists (mean = 3.75) also recognize their impact but highlight challenges such as limited access to information. McCombs and Shaw (1972) introduced decision framing theory, which has since expanded into six key areas: basic effects, conditions influencing those effects, attribute policy issues, media agenda origins, consequences for public attitudes and behavior, and network setting. They reflect the wider broader influence on communication and decision-making. Drawing on the works of Krotz (2007), Schulz (2004), and Thompson (1995), this article uses mediatization as a central concept to theorize media's influence on society and culture, proposing an institutional approach to better understand the dynamics of the mediatization process.

These findings justify the first objective by demonstrating that media content informs and shapes the policy discourses. The higher means among policymakers confirm that media narratives, trends, and public reactionsdirectly affect policy formulation, implementation, and legislative priorities in Nepal. Both policy attention and actions are crucial for testing media effects on decision-making (Yanovitzky, 2002). Policy attention reflects policymakers' cognitive responses to media signals. The policy actions represent behavioral responses, institutional constraints, and procedural limitations, like framing budgets or policy legislation.

The second objective—to assess the extent to which news media shape policy decisions and influence decision-makers—is justified through a mixed-methods approach using questionnaires and interviews, as outlined by Figenschou et al. (2019). Interviews were conducted with 3 bureaucrats, 2 ministers from Gandaki Province, 5 Kathmandu-based journalists, and 5 university professors. Their direct involvement in policy and communication processes made them credible informants.

Table 2: **Perceived positive influence of news media on policy making**

Respondent Category	Positive Responses	Mean (Proportion)
Bureaucrats (N =3)	2	0.67
Ministers (Gandaki) (N =2)	2	1.00
Journalists (N =5)	4	0.80
University professors (N =5)	3	0.60

Source: In-depth interview, 2025

The mean perception score across all respondent groups is 0.**77**, indicating that **77**% of the participants believe the news media play a significant role in shaping policy decisions and influencing policymakers. Ministers show unanimous agreement (1.00), reflecting strong political acknowledgment of media influence. Journalists (0.80) and bureaucrats (0.67) also reported high levels of influence, though the slightly lower score among university professors (0.60) suggests a more critical or academic perspective. These results support the second objective by providing clear, evidence-based insights from diverse policy actors. The data confirms that media influence is both recognized and impactful across governance structures in Nepal. Figenschou, Karlsen, Kolltveit, and Schillemans (2019) claim that media attention creates pressure on policymakers, and affects how issues are prioritized and decisions are made.

The third objective—to identify which domains of decision-making (political, social, or economic) are most frequently impacted by media content—is fulfilled by integrating interview insights and questionnaire responses with the analytical framework of Korthagen (2015) and Nisbet & Fahy (2015). These scholars emphasize the need to categorize policy areas to assess media influence more accurately. Respondents across categories indicated that policymaking is most

frequently shaped by media narratives, particularly in response to public criticism, legislative debates, and political scandals. Social policy—especially related to education, health, and inclusion—also showed high sensitivity to media framing, as journalists and professors noted its emotional and public appeal. In contrast, economic policies were seen as less influential, often due to their technical nature and lower media visibility. These findings confirm that media content frequently affects political and social domains for decision-making. It supports the objective and highlights where media can exert the most significant governance impact in Nepal.

Discussion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the influence of news media on the decision-making process in Nepal by integrating the theoretical frameworks of mediatization and decision framing theories. The combination of these theories offers a robust and multi-dimensional understanding of how media content affects both the cognitive and behavioral responses of decision-makers. As McCombs and Shaw (1972) argued, the media always dictate what people think, and they significantly influence what people think about. This foundational decision-making concept, along with Krotz's (2007) mediatization theory—which explains how media increasingly shape institutional practices and social interactions—creates a relevant lens for exploring media's role in governance within a developing democracy like Nepal.By incorporating these viewpoints, the media has the potential to support democratic values and improve the legitimacy and sustainability of policies. Schillemans and Pierre (2016) noted that modern governance actors often adapt their routines to media expectations. Shakya (2004) views that to establish a hospital to serve cancer patients, his media campaign and writing was fruitful. Due to the influence of the media, he writes that the government of Nepal introduced a health tax of one paisa per cigarette stick to earmarkthe revenue for disease prevention and treatment, such as cancer and tuberculosis

in 1993/94 budget. Decision-makers are increasingly altering their behavior to remain favorable in the media spotlight. This shift only reflects the power of media to shape public perception and also suggests that media narratives now heavily influence policy issues that receive attention (Rafiq, Khadim, & Afzal, 2023).

The first objective was to examine the general influence of news media on the policymaking process. Table 1 presents the mean scores for perceived media influence by category: bureaucrats (4.15), political representatives (4.03), and journalists (3.75). Bureaucrats reported the highest mean score, indicating a strong recognition of the media's influence on policy formulation and implementation. Political representatives also acknowledged this impact, highlighting how media narratives and public discourse shape legislative priorities. Journalists, while acknowledging the media's role, were somewhat more reserved in their responses. This hesitancy stem from professional challenges such as restricted access to government data, editorial pressure, or political interference—factors commonly cited in Nepal's media landscape. Thisanalysis supports the theoretical foundations of both decision-makingconcept and mediatization. It confirms that media function as active messengers and participate in the governance process by framing issues, prioritizing public concerns, and indirectly pressuring decision-makers. As Yanovitzky (2002) explains, policy attention and policy action are two important indicators of media influence. The former reflects a cognitive response—when decision-makers begin to focus on issues highlighted by the media.

The second objective focused on assessing the extentto which media influence policymaking. This was addressed using a mixed-methods approach, as suggested by Figenschou et al. (2019), combining both surveys and qualitative interviews. Table 2 outlines the proportion of positive responses from different respondent categories: ministers (1.00), journalists (0.80), bureaucrats (0.67), and university professors (0.60), resulting in an overall mean

perception score of 0.77. These values demonstrate that more than three-quarters of the participants acknowledged a significant role of the media in shaping decision-making. The unanimous agreement from ministers reinforces the notion that political actors are highly responsive to media coverage—particularly during times of crisis, public protest, or electoral cycles. Journalists and bureaucrats indicated high recognition and suggested that media narratives are monitored and strategically considered in administrative decision-making. Professors, though slightly more critical, still acknowledged moderate influence, perhaps reflecting a more analytical view of media's structural limitations.

The third objective was to identify which domains—political, social, or economic—are most impacted by media content. This analysis used the frameworks of Korthagen (2015) and Nisbet & Fahy (2015), who emphasize domain-specific media influence. Interviews revealed that political decision-making is most frequently affected by media coverage. It concerns scandals, party conflicts, or legislative debates. Social policy issues, such as education, health, and gender inclusion, were also found to be highly media-sensitive. Economic policies received the least media attention and were seen as less influenced. This was attributed to the technical nature of economic matters and the lack of specialized economic reporting in Nepal's mainstream media. These distinctions underscore the importance of considering policy domains when evaluating media influence, as each area responds differently to media exposure.

Conclusion

This paper's integrated framework—melding decision-making and mediatization theories—provides a nuanced understanding of the complex role of news media in decision-making in Nepal. The findings demonstrate that media exert significant influence by shaping public perception and actively directing policy debates, especially within political and social policy domains. Policymakers increasingly view the media as a channel for communication and

a strategic actor to impact governance processes. This dynamic process has important implications for the development of democracy, media freedom, and institutional accountability in Nepal's evolving political landscape. It further reveals that media influence is particularly pronounced among policymakers in citizen-facing roles, such as elected officials and bureaucrats directly engaged with the public. These actors tend to rely on media content as a critical barometer of building public opinionto gauge societal reactions and adjust policy accordingly. Policies that receive media coverage or public approval often gain public sentiment. Officials in more technical or closed departments report lower engagement with media, highlighting how the degree of media influence varies based on the nature of decision-making responsibilities.

Despite this recognition of media's importance, concerns about credibility and sensationalism are widespread among policymakers. Many expressed skepticism about the quality of reporting cite instances of misinformation and inadequate fact-checking in certain outlets. Credible media sources maintain substantial power in shaping policy agendas, especially when they accurately reflect public concerns and hold institutions accountable. The study highlights the strategic value of decision-makers position on maintaining open channels of communication with media organizations. Active media engagement is seen as essential to maintaining public trust, visibility, and legitimacy. Without it, decision-makers risk becoming disconnected from their constituencies to undermine effective governance and policy implementation. Media engagement also fosters transparency and inclusivity, ensures that governance remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of the population. Ultimately, this study confirms that the media, when upholding high standards of credibility, serves as a vital partner in democratic governance. Through constructive media and decision-makers interaction, a more transparent, accountable, and citizen-centered policycan be fostered to addresses public concerns and promote sustainable development in Nepal.

Recommendations

1. **Implement quantitative methods** to systematically measure the extent of media influence across different government departments and official roles, allowing for precise comparative analysis.

2. **Prioritize in-person interviews** in future studies to capture deeper, more detailed perspectives and richer qualitative data from decision-makers.

3. **Categorize policymakers by department** to better understand how specific job functions and responsibilities shape their interactions with and responses to media.

4. **Separate analysis of digital/social media** from traditional media channels to accurately assess their distinct impacts on decision-making in today's communication environment.

5. **Enhance media literacy and uphold journalistic ethics** to restore and strengthen trust between media organizations and decision-makers, fostering more transparent and accountable governance.

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Appendix 1: Quantitative Questionnaire

SN	Questionnaires	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	For political representatives (N =20)					
1.	The media coverage has a direct influence on political decisions regarding public policy.	3	2	3	5	7
2.	I use media platforms to communicate and justify policy positions.	1	3	2	6	8
3.	Negative media coverage has forced the political parties to rethink certain policies.	2	1	3	7	7
4.	The media acts as a vital link between common people and policymakers.	0	2	3	7	8
5.	The media narratives sometimes mislead the public on policy matters.	3	2	2	7	6
6.	Journalists should play a more active role in monitoring policy performance.	1	3	4	5	7
7.	Political leaders rely on media trends to decide legislative priorities.	2	1	3	7	7
8.	Social media is becoming more influential than traditional media in shaping policy debates.	0	2	2	7	9
9.	There is a need for stronger collaboration between the media and political institutions.	1	1	3	7	8
10.	The media plays a constructive role in promoting democratic policy discourse.	0	0	2	9	11
	For bureaucrats (N =12)					

1.	The news media play a significant role in shaping public opinion on government policies.	1	1	2	3	6
2.	I regularly follow news media to stay updated on public reactions to policy decisions.	0	0	2	5	5
3.	Policy changes in my department have been influenced by media reports.	3	2	1	3	3
4.	The media coverage helps highlight issues that deserve policy attention.	2	3	1	2	4
5.	The media often oversimplifies complex policy matters.	1	1	1	4	5
6.	Constructive media reporting helps improve policy implementation.	2	3	1	3	3
7.	Public pressure from media coverage affects the timing of policy decisions.	1	1	2	4	4
8.	The media acts as a bridge between the government and the public in the policy process.	0	0	1	5	6
9.	There is effective coordination between the bureaucracy and the media during major policy announcements.	0	0	1	6	5
10.	The influence of media on policymaking is growing in Nepal.	2	2	0	4	4
For journalists (N =10)						
1.	The news media play a critical role in influencing government policy decisions.	0	0	0	5	5
2.	My reporting has helped bring policy issues to the forefront of public debate.	1	1	1	3	4

3.	Journalists have adequate access to government data for policy reporting.	4	2	0	2	2
4.	The government responds to media-reported policy issues promptly.	4	2	1	2	1
5.	There is growing pressure from political and business groups on policy-related journalism.	1	1	1	3	4
6.	Journalistic coverage can directly influence policy change in Nepal.	1	1	0	3	5
7.	The media houses prioritize policy issues that affect public interest.	3	2	0	2	3
8.	I feel confident in covering complex policy matters with accuracy.	1	1	0	4	4
9.	The media has a responsibility to hold policymakers accountable.	1	1	1	3	4
10.	The media is a powerful tool for inclusive and evidence-based policymaking.	1	1	0	3	5