

**TRANSITION OF NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM FROM PARTISANSHIP TO
COMMERCIALISM IN POST-1990 NEPAL**

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By

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that Mr. Kundan Aryal has made necessary corrections in his dissertation entitled **TRANSITION OF NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM FROM PARTISANSHIP TO COMMERCIALISM IN POST-1990 NEPAL**. We hereby recommend this corrected version of the dissertation for final acceptance to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in JOURNALISM.

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APPROVAL LETTER

This dissertation entitled **Transition of Newspaper Journalism from Partisanship to Commercialism in Post-1990 Nepal** was submitted by **Mr. Kundan Aryal** for final examination to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in JOURNALISM. I, hereby, certify that the Research Committee of the Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has, therefore, accepted it for the degree.

Prof. Chinta Mani Pokharel, PhD
Dean and Chairman
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Ph.D. dissertation entitled **TRANSITION OF NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM FROM PARTISANSHIP TO COMMERCIALISM IN POST-1990 NEPAL** submitted to the Office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, is an entirely original work prepared under the supervision of Prof. P. Kharel. I have made due acknowledgement to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of writing this dissertation. The results presented in this dissertation have not been presented or submitted anywhere else seeking the award of any degree or for any other reasons. No part of the content of this dissertation has ever been published in any form before. I shall be solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.

Kundan Aryal

Date: February, 2016

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ABSTRACT

The study is focused on examination of the state of professionalism in Nepal's newspaper journalism before 1990. It evaluates the newspaper landscape during twenty-five years (1990-2015) of multiparty democracy. It examines the impact of 1990 political change on politics-laden weeklies known for their partisan leanings. The study also compare the state of political communication based on newspapers prior to and after 1990. It examines the state of the commercialism in the Nepali newspapers in post-1990 Nepal.

Since historical survey research design approach is implied in order to review constitutional and legal provisions related to newspaper journalism prior to and post-1990 Nepal, related books, journals, websites and other literatures were examined. To evaluate the policy of government regarding the print media, the evolutionary process of legal framework, regulations, and related documents for policy analysis have also been analyzed with an exploratory approach. Primary, secondary and tertiary as well as quantitative and qualitative data were collected through more than one techniques such as FGD, key informant interview, case-study, content analysis and survey in order to find the answers to the research questions. Based mainly on exploratory approach, the research, thus applies triangulation method.

Within half a decade of restoration of multiparty democracy the Nepali newspapers were transformed into mass newspapers with diverse range of contents. Prior to 1990, the dominant trend of the Nepali newspapers was of partisan leaning. In the changed political atmosphere the politics-laden weeklies that had played a catalytic role during the pro-democracy movement throughout the period of Panchayat rule, began to lag behind the broadsheet dailies.

Just as political system of any country would shape the media system, the upheavals of political life in Nepal molded the Nepali newspaper landscape during different time frames of history. With each political changes right from the year 1951 to 1960, 1980, 1990 and 2005-6, Nepali newspapers encountered different political atmosphere. As the current political transition that started in 2006 concludes with the promulgation of the new constitution by the Constituent Assembly in September 2015, the Nepali newspaper landscape is destined to take yet another turn.

By 1990, the Nepali newspapers entered the age of conversation, establishing themselves as "a nation talking to itself." The privately owned broadsheet dailies that emerged after 1990, proved to be an effective public domain. They were not seen in allegiance with the political parties in an overt manner. They began to create discourse on the issues of public concerns. Within the time frame of less than a decade, different privately owned daily newspapers created a sizable market for the general public and dependable platform for the advertisers.

Running a newspaper before 1990 was almost a philanthropic work. The newspapers were not profit oriented, rather in most of the cases they were linked with the publicity mission of certain political parties or factions. They were primitive in terms of content, technology, human resources, mode of functioning and management, as well as reach and impact in comparison to the newspapers in post-1990 Nepal. After 1990 with emergence of private sector, role of the government and political factions have been reduced in functioning of a newspaper. Transition of the nation's polity from partyless Panchayat regime to the multiparty democracy resulted in the emergence of broadsheet dailies in private sector that were different in terms of investment, ownership and management, form, content and mode of dissemination. The transition of the newspapers underwent changes in terms of human resources, management and overall get-ups.

Greater competition in the field of news and other journalistic materials is another distinct phenomena among post-1990 newspapers. Besides the competition among several privately owned dailies, emergence of radio and television from the private sector enhance the process of dissemination of news and information. The country witnessed the inter-media competition for the first time. The tough competition for immediacy, accuracy and human interest aspects pushed the Nepali newspapers to shift the paradigm in terms of practice. Professional practices started to be the dominant trend.

In the course of time the levers of control over the newspapers goes to the commercial and corporate circles. The market-driven trend triggered the deviation from professionalism to commercialism. Hence, prior to 1990 partisan leaning was the major stumbling block to the quest of professionalism in the Nepali newspapers. Whereas, in the aftermath of the political changes of 1990, crass commercialism is the stumbling block to the process of establishing the newspapers as vibrant public sphere.

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ACRONYM AND ABBREVIATION

ACC Audit Committee of Circulation

AD Anno Domini (Year of our Lord)

APCA Asia Pacific Communication Associates

ASNE American Society of Newspaper Editors

BS *Bikram Sambat* (Nepali Calendar)

CDO Chief District Officer

CPN Communist Party of Nepal

FGD Focus Group Discussion

FDI Foreign Direct Investment

FM Frequency Modulation

GDP Gross Domestic Product

NC Nepali Congress

NGO Non Governmental Organization

PCN Press Council Nepal

RSS *Rastriya Samachar Samiti* [National News Agency]

SPSS Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

USA United States of America

USSR Union of Soviet Socialist Republic

VAT Value Added Tax