

# **Influence of Foreign Policy on Nepalese Press:** A Case Study on Coverage of Tibetan Protest in Nepal

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the coverage of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal ahead of Beijing Olympics in 2008 in Nepal's national English daily newspapers: *The Rising Nepal (TRN)*, *The Kathmandu Post (TKP)* and *The Himalayan Times (THT)*. Using quantitative and qualitative content analysis and qualitative interviews with journalists, the thesis examines the influence of Nepal's foreign policy relation to China on Nepalese news media. The analysis highlights that Nepal's geopolitical location neighbouring the trouble spot of China's Tibet has significant impact on journalists in their understanding and reporting Tibetan protest. My analyses shows state policy matters in coverage of Tibetan protest. I argue that taking editorial positions, the control of content and toning down of the issues is determined by journalists which they consider doing such as national interest. However, Nepalese press does not have single face. The influence of foreign policy is highest on the state media TRN, which defends foreign policy and calls Tibetan protest as an anti China activity. Whereas, private news organizations TKP and THT do not necessarily toe the official line, where humanitarian angle of coverage can be found.



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# 1. Introduction

Nepal's foreign policy towards its northern neighbour China is guided by the policy statement that there is one China and that any anti China activities especially those related to Free Tibet movement should not be allowed in Nepalese soil. The regular protest in Nepal by the Tibetan refugees in 2008 against what they call Chinese crackdown against Tibetan protestors in Lhasa, posed a big question over the policy execution by Nepal, to huge consternation of China. Such protests in the streets of capital city, Kathmandu were first of its kind that continued for six months (March to August) against the backdrop of Beijing Olympics. The protest later turned into Free Tibet movement.

Though Nepal maintained such demonstrations as anti-China activities and considered against its policy towards China, the protest continued quite long. China expressed concerns about the demonstrations and stressed that Nepal should abide by its policy. Whereas, the Western community was not happy with Nepal government's position for not respecting the rights to freedom of expression and for suppressing peaceful demonstration of the Tibetan community.

Nepal's geo-political location between the rising Asian giants, China and India, who are competing rivals for global powers, is an important factor that makes Nepal a significant zone from regional and international politics point of view. The importance of Nepal is further justified because of its adjoining northern border with trouble spot of China, Tibet. It is because China's security concerns over Tibet is high, therefore such Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal demanding for free Tibet have cautioned China. So, China is getting increasingly concerned to it.

Nepal was and still is trapped between competing interests of China, India and the West especially in regards to Tibetan protest and Free Tibet issue. The diplomatic pressure to Nepal was high during the protest period, when the Western envoys to Nepal raised questions about human rights situations and suppression of Tibetan protest on one hand, and on the other, Nepal had to respond to China's security interests related to the issues, for which Nepal is continuously under pressure from China as well.

In this geo-political context of Nepal, the engagement of media in covering the issue of Tibetan refugee protest places an important area of study. It is the media that reports events, responses, criticisms etc. in relation to the Tibetan protests, on the basis of which various

actors and concerned people make their views about the event, Nepal's stance and diplomatic reactions to the event. As well, how reporting is done, shaped, framed; what sources have been used in news; what roles journalists play in the news coverage; and how ownership of media differs in news reporting and coverage very much reflects on whether or not and to what extent the newspapers respects Nepal's foreign policy line towards China, are interesting questions to be answered. Thus, reporting and coverage of the Tibet protests in Nepalese press is an interesting subject to be studied. To find the answers of these questions, I have formulated the following major questions: ***To what extent and how did Nepal's foreign policy to China influence the coverage of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal, What role did Nepalese journalists play in the coverage of Tibetan refugee protest? And does ownership of media affect the ways Tibetan protest is reported?***

This study that is based on the case study of the coverage of daily English newspapers, *The Rising Nepal* (TRN), *The Kathmandu Post* (TKP) and *The Himalayan Times* (THT) in Nepal finds that Nepalese press are influenced by the states, foreign policy to China to large extent. And, on how Nepalese journalists and news organisations handle news stories of Tibetan refugee protest, majority of journalists are found to have had the view that Nepal's foreign policy to China should be considered while covering Tibetan refugee protest. They consider importance of Nepal's geo-political locations and relation with China while reporting on Tibetan protest. Since most journalists consider Tibetan refugee protest as stake to Nepal and give priority to national interest of Nepal out of their own conscience, taking editorial positions and toning down the news content about Tibetan protest is common in their journalistic practices on Tibet issues.

Despite journalists are expected to serve the national interest of the state, differences can be observed in coverage, reporting and providing spaces to news and articles related to Tibet issue. This is noticeable mostly between privately owned and state owned newspapers. In the exploration of whether Nepalese press follows the states pronounced policy guidelines unquestionably or the ownership of media affects the coverage of Tibetan protest, it gets more evident that private newspapers do not necessarily toe the official policy line in coverage of the event, whereas, the government news media abide the official policy line. The government news media, *The Rising Nepal* is so proactive that it even sets an agenda by framing Tibetan protest as an anti China activity and only prioritizes sources that opposes Tibetan protest; whereas, the private news media uses diversified news sources to report on the issue. But with some exception, private news media are reluctant to present analytical

news items and do not prioritize editorial and op-ed articles in opposition line to states policy. This also supports the thesis that there are real ideological reasons why the media do not oppose the status quo, based on ideological lens grounded by the state and reporting system could rarely go against the establishments implying to the commitment to patriotism and to the nation which the government represents (Wicker, p. 19 cited in Malek and Wiegand).

## **Overview of Thesis**

The background chapter gives an overview of the historical dimension of Nepal's foreign policy towards China with respect to Tibet as central focus of study to understand Nepal's geo-political importance. It also discusses the case of Tibetan refugee status in Nepal and how the event unfolded in Nepalese press.

In chapter two, I have presented theories discussing on influence of foreign policy on media. I also discuss on the approaches whether media and journalist support the national interest with reference to small and big state relations.

Chapter three, I present the method, used in the study. I have used case study approach, qualitative and quantitative content analysis and qualitative interviews method.

The findings of the research results are presented in rest of the chapters. Chapter 4 has been divided into two sections. First section presents the findings that outline the condition of foreign policy reporting in Nepal. The second section presents coverage of Tibetan refugee protest based on the use of sources through qualitative and quantitative content analysis.

Chapter five, I present how three of the news media have framed the Tibetan protest. It is based on qualitative analysis of op-ed and editorial content. Chapter six explains findings based on interviews from the journalist. This chapter is also divided into two section based on similarities and differences on the perspectives of journalists.

Finally in chapter 7, I briefly draw conclusion of the study.

## **1.1. Historical background: Nepal's relations with China vis a vis Tibet**

Nepal's relation with China and its autonomous region Tibet is dominated by varied and complex factors which range from geography, economy, political, cultural and other dimensions. Nepal shares about 500 miles of Himalayan mountain chain border with Tibet. The passes in the Himalayas have been used by the traders and local herdsman for centuries for physical, cultural and commercial contacts between two sides (Rose, 1971).

The relation between Nepal Tibet paved the way for opening of new channel of communications between China and India across the Himalayan passes and also led to the first direct contacts between Nepal and China. Rose (1971) explains that several hundred years prior to 1900 the prosperity of Kathmandu valley and the area surrounding it dependent upon Kathmandu as a main trade route and entrepot to trans- Himalayan trade, where Nepalese elite placed a high value to preserve this trade system. Nepal served as an entrepot to Tibet for centuries. The changes in the political system, towards the second half of 1940s in the trans-Himalayan region, where India became independent from British Empire, the introduction of democracy in 1951 by overthrowing the Rana regime in Nepal and the invasion of Tibet by Communist China, changed the scenario of relations between these countries. Since then Tibet has been a dominant factor in understanding Nepal and China relations.

### **1.1.1. Significance of Nepal-Tibet affairs: Strategic Importance to China, India and the West**

Since the unification of Nepal by King Prithivi Narayan Shah in 1768 AD, his vision has been fundamental basis of Nepal's foreign policy vis-a-vis its giant neighbours, India and China. His theory of Nepal being, 'a yam between two boulders' is still considered relevant even today. He outlined in *Dibhya Upadesh*<sup>1</sup> - "maintain friendly relations with the Emperor of China. Great friendship should also be maintained with the Emperor beyond the Southern Sears, but he is clever... Do not engage in offensive acts. Fighting should be conducted on a defensive basis" (Josse, 2009, p. 40). During these early years, Nepal considered Tibet as a buffer zone between Nepal and China, where Nepal was satisfied with the privileges and enjoyed the only entrepot to Tibet. Nepal during this phase enjoyed privileged position in

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<sup>1</sup> Dibya Upadesh 'divine counsel' is a set of guidelines by King Prithivi Narayan Shah to conduct the state affairs.

Tibet. The historical account suggests that Tibet remained as a major factor to understand Nepal's foreign relations with China and its southern neighbour British India.

Nepal did not take China seriously at least up to 1951, as Nepal was content with her privileges that it enjoyed regarding trade in Tibet, whereas, China was disturbed by its own problems. However, Nepal kept China in good humour in its peculiar ways. "It stood Nepal in good stead whenever there was unbearable pressure from British India" (Parmanand, 1980, p.10-11).

Nepal's position to protect its right for entrepot to Tibet can also be accessed through wars that Nepal waged against Tibet. During this period Nepal went on war with Tibet three times citing the economic reasons. Nepal went on war with Tibet in 1788, 1792 and 1846. In the first war, Tibetans were defeated and agreed to pay an annual tribute to Nepal (Rose, 1971). But the treaty was not observed by Tibet even for a year, as Tibet sought support from China as a defence against Nepal's attack. The second invasion led to Chinese intervention and was sorted by signing of new Nepal Tibet treaty in 1792. Rose observes that the treaty was agreed upon under Chinese mediation/intimidation, according to which, Nepal would send gifts to the Chinese Imperial Court every five years. From this period on, until 1846 Nepal and Tibet did not see any significant change in bilateral or trilateral relation due to internal problems in Royal Place of Nepal (Adhikari, 2010, p.24).

In early 19<sup>th</sup> century Nepal's relation with the southern neighbour India remained cold that resulted to Anglo Nepal in 1814 AD. Nepal lost the war with British East India Company<sup>2</sup>, and signed a treaty of Sugauli. As a result British East India Company started getting momentum, whereas Nepal's relation with China and Tibet were sidelined. The later decade after the unification, showed the internal conflicts in royal court in Nepal that led to power struggle resulting to establishment of autocratic Rana regime<sup>3</sup>. The intrigues in the Royal

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<sup>2</sup> British East India Company was established to pursue trade with East Indies but ended up trading with Indian sub-continent and China and later dominating Indian sub continent. The Company governed present India which was known as British Raj. In 1947 India and Pakistan became independent after the revolution.

<sup>3</sup> Rana regime was autocratic system that ruled Kingdom of Nepal from 1846 until 1951, reducing the Shah monarch to figurehead and making Prime Minister and other government positions hereditary. Jang Bahadur Rana was first ruler who later was titled 'Shree Teen', where Kings was titled 'Shree Panch'.

palace for power led to the Kot Massacre in 1846 which brought Jung Bahadur Rana to power that heralded a century of Rana rule in Nepal.

The Rana rulers sought backing from the British resident in Kathmandu. Since then Nepal tilted towards its southern neighbour and had ignored relations with its northern neighbour.

However, Jung Bahadur Rana was not happy with the 1792 treaty with Tibet. As there were ongoing border disputes and violation of Nepalese commercial rights in Tibet to the ill-treatment of Nepalese missions en route to China. Rose (1971 p.108-109) explains that it was a favourable condition for Nepal as China was involved in a desperate struggle for survival against the Taiping rebels, and British attention was concentrated on the war with Russia in the Crimea. Neither power thus was in a position to intervene forcefully in the Himalayan area.

The Third Nepal-Tibet War was fought 1855-1856. A treaty was signed to stop the war in 1856. Upreti (1998) notes both positive and negative features about the result of the war. He outlines that Nepal did not realize the importance of annexation of border towns of Kuti and Kerong and the effort to direct the entire flow of Trans-Himalayan trade to Tibet via Kathmandu. On the positive side, the ten thousand rupees Nepal was able to extract from Tibet as tribute and the promise Nepal made to come to Tibet's help if she was invaded by foreign power had two-fold significance. First, Tibet was reduced to a semi-satellite status and secondly, in the process, Nepal too assumed the traditional Chinese role of the protector of Tibet during moments of external threats (Upreti 1998, p.191-192).

After the Chinese control over Tibet in the 1940s, its significance has ever increased viewing the international context, which now falls under China's core national interest. Friedman (2008) observed that China's national interest in retaining Tibet is because it serves as an anchor in the Himalayas. He argued that if Tibet and Xinjiang became independent, the vast buffers between China and the rest of Eurasia would break down. "They will hold both of these provinces, particularly Tibet" (Friedman, 2008).

With respect to India, as it provided refuge to the Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama, where during the 1960s China accused India of using Dalai Lama to conduct anti-Chinese activities in India (Khadka 1999, p.66). Friedman (2008) observes that the Chinese regard Dalai Lama as an Indian puppet. "They see the latest unrest (Tibetan protest) in Tibet as instigated by the Indian government, which uses the Dalai Lama to try to destabilize the Chinese hold on Tibet and open the door to Indian expansion. To put it differently, their view is that the Indians

could shut the Dalai Lama down if they wanted to, and that they don't signals Indian complicity" (Friedman, 2008).

Also Indian and American partnership since 2001, which has been focused on the Islamic world has been observed by China "as encouraging India and the Dalai Lama to probe the Chinese, partly to embarrass them over the Olympics and partly to increase the stress on the central government" (Friedman, 2008). He further argues "It is critical to understand that whatever the issues might be to the West, the Chinese see Tibet as a matter of fundamental national security, and they view pro-Tibetan agitation in the West as an attempt to strike at the heart of Chinese national security. The Chinese are therefore trapped. They are staging the Olympics in order to demonstrate Chinese cohesion and progress" (Friedman, 2008).

Such Tibetan refugee demonstration observed in Nepal was also a threat to China's security point of view. Nepal's policy stance for not allowing anti Chinese activities from its soil, and a country largely dependent upon India, if allowed demonstration that concerned China, it could be understood as destabilising China through Nepal. So, Nepal's policy towards China and China's policy towards Nepal have been mainly determined by their respective interest in Tibet. Parmanand argues that Nepal has consistently believed China can create trouble for Nepal by mobilizing its armed forces in Tibet, whereas, China has consistently believed that, because of the close connexion between Nepal and Tibet through age old trade relations and other similarities, Nepal could if it so chose to create problems for China in numerous ways (Parmanand 1980, p.10).

### **1.1.2. Changes and continuity in Nepal's foreign policy**

Nepal had adopted foreign policy to protect itself by aligning with either of its two neighbours. Only after the democratic movement of the 1950's, it has basically adopted a non-aligned foreign policy. "The basic guidelines of its foreign policy and geo-strategy remained the same for the last five decades despite the changed domestic political situation" (Bhattarai, 2005, p.1).

The following policy line clearly shows Nepal's foreign policy line towards her neighbours. "The state's foreign policy will be conducted based on the principles of the UN Charter,

Panchasheel<sup>4</sup>, and Non-alignment keeping national interest on the top. Friendly and cordial relations with neighbouring countries, particularly with India and China will be further strengthened on the basis of mutual respect, equality, co-operation and cordiality. The Nepalese territory will not be allowed to be used against any neighbouring and friendly countries.” (Policy of Nepal Government, 2009).

Experts argue that Nepal has to be sensitive towards both India and China in not allowing its land to be used by anti Indian forces and anti Tibet or anti China activities. “Nepal’s northern neighbour Tibet, the Autonomous region of China, is also a strategically important location for extending China’s relations with South Asia. Tibet is regarded as China’s trouble spot where a large number of anti-China forces have identified their interests. Therefore, Nepal needs to be sensitive about the Tibetan situation and possible misuse of Nepalese land by those anti-Chinese forces” (Bhattarai, 2005, p.9).

The period from 1950 to 1990 marked a particular shift, where Nepal tilted towards China. Researchers in Nepal foreign policy studies have pointed out that Indian influence in Nepalese politics was so dominant that Indian diplomats attended the Nepalese councils during the first half of 1950’s (Rose, 1971; Shaha, 1990; Hoftun et.al, 1999).

These influence in Nepal led to steady growth to anti Indian sentiments, which coincided with the emergence of China as balancing power in the trans-Himalayan region, where some Nepalese saw it as an alternative to India. The accession of King Mahendra in throne in 1955 led to Nepal’s new direction of foreign policy (Rose, 1971).

The political instability in Nepal and foreign issues with India and China was considered an important aspect for King Mahendra’s coup to overthrow the elected government and introduce Panchayat system. Despite the domestic reasons, Rose observed that, “Taken at their value, the King’s public statements following his coup strongly implied that foreign policy considerations had played an important part in his decision. ‘Anti-national elements,’ he proclaimed, had ‘received encouragement to a large degree’ from the Koirala government. As it is our ultimate responsibility to safeguard nationalism and sovereignty...”(Rose, 1971, p.231).

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<sup>4</sup> Principle of Panchasheel deals with five basic principle of peaceful coexistence. They are mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non aggression against anyone, mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence.

India denounced the step of overthrowing the elected government by King Mahendra, where Indian Premier Nehru expressed it as “setback” for democracy, whereas China maintained a discreet silence. There was no alternative to King Mahendra to reach out to China. China nurtured the anti Indian feelings of the King and his supporters. China’s strategy was to relieve Nepal from its obligations to India’s security system—obligations, which was imposed in by the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship<sup>5</sup> (Khadka, 1999).

International power centres like US was also concerned about communist influence in Nepal. The US was the first country to extend economic aid to Nepal and the largest donor until the mid sixties and one of the main objectives was to counter communist threats from China and USSR. Even though, US-India relation were not warm during fifties, China perceived of some sort of Indo US alliance to oust China from Tibet. The Indo China border clashes, the revolt in Tibet and the fact that the Dalai Lama fled to India and thousands of refugees entered into India and Nepal further strengthened China’s suspicion of an alliance. Similarly, US labelling China as an aggressor and pledging for military aid during Sino Indian border clash further hardened China’s anti American stance (Peking Review, 1959 cited in Khadka, 1999, p.71).

“During the cold war, China’s foreign policy was guided by the objective of safeguarding its strategic political and economic objectives, the fundamental thrust of its foreign policy was to be prepared to meet any possible threat to its position in Tibet and to keep Nepal independent and neutral so as to preserve it as a buffer that would ensure both security and stability... Both Nepal and China gained significantly from the deepening of relations between the two countries” (Khadka, 1999. p.80).

Though Nepal has consistently maintained its position towards its northern neighbour, Nepal is still considered as easy entry and transit point for Tibetan refugees to travel to India.

“Nepal government itself gets caught by surprise such as in the case of the fleeing Karmappa Lama in 2000 where he was supposed to have used a helicopter from within its territory and then travelled to India where he still lives in exile” (Pandey, 2006, p.6).

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<sup>5</sup> 1950 Indo Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship allow free movement of people and goods between the two nations and a close relationship and collaboration on matters of defence and foreign affairs. Under the 1950 Treaty India has immense influence on Nepal’s affairs, including defence and security matters. Nepal considers the treaty to be unequal and there have been discussion to review of this treaty.

Likewise, Free Tibet protest in Nepal before 2008 Olympics games, have questioned Nepal's position on anti-China activities. Chinese Ambassador to Nepal, Zheng Xiangling said that the pro-Tibet demonstration was a drama, and emphasised that the Nepal government should apply strict measures against the "anarchists", complaining that the action against the protesters, especially the quick release of those apprehended, is insufficient (Nepalnews.com, 2008).

However, Nepalese leaders continuously reiterate their commitment to one China policy. Immediately after the Constituent Election in 2008, the formation of CPN Maoist government led Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda), reassured the President of China, "about Nepal's principled stand of One-China policy, and expressed his commitment that the Government of Nepal would not allow any anti-China activities in Nepal" (The Kathmandu Post, 2008). But, Tibetan protest has continuously been observed.

Nepal's commitment to act against anti Chinese activities in its Nepalese soil can be observed ever since King Mahendra's period in 1960s. King Mahendra suppressed the voices of Tibetan refugees in Nepal, and stopped any political activities of them from Nepal against the Peoples' Republic of China. Whereas, King Birendra eliminated the Khampa rebels fighting against the Chinese rule in Tibet from the northern border of Nepal in 1970s. Nepal army suppressed the Khampa insurgents and killed the insurgent leader, which was widely appreciated by the China.

## **1.2. China's policy to Nepal**

Since the establishment of diplomatic relation between China and Nepal in August 1955, China's policy towards Nepal is based on basis of Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (Panchasheel). China has maintained that it will not intervene in Nepal's domestic politics and have expected Nepal's support in the issue of concerning Tibet and Taiwan as an integral part of China.

In this regard, China's major determinants of foreign policy towards Nepal have been Tibet since the Khampa rebellion in Tibet in 1959. Nayak (2009) observed that until the abolition of the monarchy in 2008, China supported the nationalistic monarchy for political stability in Nepal and adopted a soft approach towards it offering periodic economic assistance. Chinese

support to monarchy was because it felt that democratic forces and political parties were too much under Indian influence and might not take any action against Tibetans in Nepal, if they would come to power. One of such episode was closing or reopening of the Dalai Lama's office in Kathmandu and the attitude of the Nepalese authorities towards pro Dalai Lama Non Governmental Organization reflects China's influence in Nepal (Nayak 2009, p.44).

Nayak argues that China even worried about the use of external power in Nepal to its strategic interests. One of such incidents was that a Chinese envoy to Nepal, Zheng Xianling raised the issue of foreign forces actively engaged in instigating the anti-Chinese activities. He criticised the French parliamentary meeting with the Tibetan leaders in Nepal and the US Senate resolution on the Tibet issue (Nayak 2009, p.44).

All these historical background in understanding Nepal's foreign relations with China, India and other countries vis-a-vis Tibet points out that Tibet has remained central element in understanding Nepal China affairs. In the present context Tibet is considered as a core national interest of China and the issue of Tibetan refugees protest in Nepal was considered to have affected the image of China in the international arena before the Beijing Olympics.

### **1.3. Indian Factor in Nepal China relations**

Nepal's policy towards China cannot be left alone without taking into consideration its southern neighbour India. Indian writer, Rama Kant holds that Nepal's foreign policy towards China is guided by several factors. These factors are Nepal's relationship with India, Nepal's contiguity with the autonomous region of Tibet, the relationship between Sino- India relations and the domestic politics of Nepal. He points out that, "... Nepal has little significance for China except as a country lying across the Tibetan border, it assumes importance in the context of China's relations with India. It has been seen that despite being culturally, geographically and economically very close to India, Nepal's national identity finds expression in anti- Indian postures. So, long Sino- Indian relations were good, the importance of Nepal was dormant. When, however, China's relations with India deteriorated and Nepal took the initiative and brought China in as a counter weight to India, Nepal acquired a place in Chinese calculation" (Kant, 1994, p.166).

Leaders in Nepal have also used China to sustain their power from times. In his study, Parmanand concludes that since the days of King Mahendra after 1955 AD, Nepal has been trying to tilt more and more towards China and the so-called policy of 'equidistance' from its two giant neighbours has only been an attempt to hoodwink the critics of Nepalese foreign policy to silence the pro Indians in Nepal. He further argued that the institution of monarchy obtained considerable strength from this China policy (Parmanand 1980, p.15). Likewise, the crux of Nepal's foreign policy is considered as to manage relations with India. As Rama Kant pointed out King Birendra's proposal for a 'Zone of Peace' was not only aimed at nullifying 1950 Treaty, but was to seek India's support for the royal regime (Kant 1994, p.170).

However, Nepali experts maintain that the proposal was "to protect the flickering lamp of Nepal's freedom from being extinguished by the storms blowing far and near against the background of India's first atomic test in Pokhran, the annexation of Sikkim by India, the Indian military intervention to the creation of Bangladesh, the security alliance between India and USSR and India on the one hand and India and Bangladesh on the other plus a serious regional rivalry that emerged following military cooperation between China and Pakistan" (Shrestha, 2005, p.5). Except India, more than 100 countries including China, USA and Pakistan and other western countries were in support of the proposal.

Similarly, in February 1, 2005, King Gyanendra dismissed the elected government of Nepal and assumed direct power. By doing so, he offered the international community to make a choice between his regime and the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) Maoist. CPN Maoist which had launched people's war had control over most rural parts of Nepal. The political parties in Nepal were agitating against the King and had formed an alliance, which was supported by India. China maintained that it was internal affairs of Nepal. India considered the step as "serious setback to the cause of democracy in Nepal" and one that "cannot but be a grave concern to India" (Devraj, 2005a).

A leading South Asia expert, Professor S D Muni said in an interview to Inter Press Service of India that there is more to Beijing's approval of the king's actions. He sees the sudden closure of the Dalai Lama's office in Kathmandu and de-recognition of the Tibetan refugees as a sure sign of a deal with China. "Such actions were obviously made to please Beijing, which has viewed the multiparty government as pro-India and also pro-West" (Devraj, 2005b).

Likewise, King Gyanendra openly supported China during the thirteenth summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Dhaka supports Nepal's proximity to China. King Gyanendra indicated at the Dhaka summit that Nepal would veto Afghanistan's entry into SAARC unless China was simultaneously invited as an observer. Regarding China, too, there was no opposition from any country except India, which opposed the idea outright. It was only India which had opposed the proposal (Kharel, 2005).

The step of King Gyanendra resulted to Peoples Movement II<sup>6</sup> in 2006 and ultimately after the Constituent Assembly elections 2008, Nepal became first republican country in 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Constituent Assembly election in April 2008 result showed that CPN Maoist became largest party. Its party Chairman Puspa Kamal Dahal (Prachanda) became the prime minister and first visited to China to participate the closing ceremony of Olympic Games. This was one of such occasions that Nepal's prime minister breaking the tradition of choosing to visit China rather than India. This visit was seen as Nepal's China card. Before Prachanda's holding the premiership of Nepal, Maoist mouth piece, *Jandisha Daily* newspaper cites Chairman Prachanda ruled out allowing the office of Dalai Lama's representative in Kathmandu to reopen, saying his party would not condone any action that could displease China (Sarkar, 2007).

These events in Nepalese political history suggest that Nepal's geo-political location has guided Nepal's position towards China. The Tibetan refugees living in Nepal and the organised protest are considered to damage the relations between Nepal China relations. However, the international community specially the West support for peaceful protest by the Tibetans, this is how Nepal's policy towards China has developed Nepal as base for international playground. Thus, the significance of Tibet towards Nepal's foreign policy establishment has been destined by big power China. Now I will reflect on the status of Tibetan refugees living in Nepal and then explain about the coverage of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal by the daily newspapers in light of Nepal's foreign policy to China.

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<sup>6</sup> Peoples Movement II (also known as Jana Andolan II) in 2006 is a democratic movement in Nepal against the direct rule of King Gyanendra, since Feb 1 2005. Seven political parties of Nepal with support from CPN Maoist signed a 12-point understanding to reestablish multiparty democracy. The street protest continued for 19 days when finally King Gyanendra stepped down.

#### **1.4. Status of Tibetan refugees in Nepal**

Though Nepal is not a party to 1951 UN Refugee Convention, Nepal has provided refugee status to 20,000 Tibetan refugees. The refugee camps are provided with housing, drinking water facilities, schools, monasteries, cottage-industries etc. The refugees in camps are engaged in carpet-weaving, handicrafts, mobile trade and other business for their livelihood and likelihood.

Tibetans, those arriving in Nepal before 1989 AD seeking asylum have been granted permit to remain in Nepal. Those arriving in Nepal before 1989 were provided “refugee identity certificate” (RC), with limited rights. These identity cards need to be renewed every year. Tibetans having the RC are restricted to travel typically to the border near China. The refugees are also provided the travel documents to travel abroad. Though these refugees are granted freedom of religion in most parts, they are not allowed to stage political demonstration.

These rights are provided to the ones entering Nepal before 1989, but refugees continue to arrive even after Nepal ceased permit. According to the report of Tibetan Justice Centre in 2002, there are about 2500 to 3000 Tibetans escaping from Tibet via Nepal annually. This report concludes that, Tibetans residing in Nepal and their descendants live in legal limbo; they are not recognized as refugees or given any definable legal status, either by their host state or by the UNHCR. It is for those Tibetan who cross Nepal border after 1989. However, after the Tibetan Protest in Nepal in 2008, the number Tibetan refugees passing through Nepal have declined. The Tibetan advocates claim that the number is around 600 (Yardley, 2010).

With the informal arrangement or “gentleman’s agreement” between the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Nepalese government, these refugees should be able to transit safely through Nepal and seek refuge and assistance from the Tibetan government in- exile in India. Newly arriving Tibetans apprehended at the Sino-Nepal border by Nepalese authorities will be denied entry to Nepal. Those apprehended within Nepal, will be turned over to the Nepalese Department of Immigration, which then transfers them to UNHCR custody. UNHCR does not confer refugee status determination for Tibetans. They remain temporarily at the Kathmandu Tibetan Refugee Reception Centre, that provides them food, shelter and medical attention. Within two weeks these Tibetan should leave to

India. The former Home Secretary Shree Kanta Regmi<sup>7</sup> pointed out that these refugees are not allowed to use the legal exit points between Nepal and India border.

The issue of Tibetan refugees has been of wide interest to the Western countries. According to UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report, which is Nepal's first ever UPR of human rights situations in the Human Rights Council also suggests Nepal to take measures regarding the refugees situations. Many of the participant countries have suggested Nepal to rectify the Convention of Status of Refugee Rights whereas the US has recommended the Nepal government to refrain from forcibly returning Tibetan asylum seekers to China (UPR 2011, p.22.). Nepal's response was on the issue of Tibetan refugees was that, "It does not allow its territory to be used against neighbours or any country. Anyone found in violation of the immigration laws or other laws is dealt with according to the law of the land. There are no forceful deportations" (UPR, 2011, p.11).

In 2003 Nepal handed back fleeing refugees to China and received international condemnation including that from the United States senators, the State Department, members of European Parliament and the UNHCR itself. Human rights organizations, in criticising the action said, "It has set a frightening precedent for the treatment of Tibetans trying to flee to safety." The closure of Refugee Welfare Office in Nepal was denounced.

Former Home Secretary Shree Kanta Regmi explains "Nepal will not serve as a base for anti-China activities against our neighbour... It is established policy of the government not to let any anti-Chinese activities take place on our soil. If there are anti China activities in Nepal, they will not be pleased" (Tibet Justice Center, 2002, p.75).

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<sup>7</sup> Based on interview with Shree Kanta Regmi.

## **1.5. Tibetan protest and Nepalese press**

Studies over coverage of Tibetan protest and foreign policy reporting in Nepal is almost non-existent. But studies have been conducted in international front in representation of Tibet by the media. In one of such studies about the representation of Tibet by West and Chinese media, Andrew Wei- Min Lee observes that the coverage of the March 2008 riots in Lhasa and the Beijing Olympic Torch relay summarises two effects in China that are negative sentiments toward Western media and increased coverage of developments in Tibet under the Chinese administration. He observes difference in framing of Tibetan issue in Western and Chinese media (Lee 2009, p. 220-222).

He also suggested differences of framing of both Chinese and Western media's view on Tibet issues. Lee observes that Western media framed the issue of Tibet as independence, freedom, and protection of Tibetan human rights. It also portrayed Tibet as preventing a free, smaller nation from being swallowed by a larger one and supporting a weak isolated group of people from being dominated by an oppressive government and finally one holy man is fighting against the whole government. However, the Chinese media framed the issue as national sovereignty, unity and stability with the purpose of alleviating poverty and emancipation of slaves (Lee 2009, p.217).

In 2008, the protest was observed worldwide throughout the Olympic torch rally. The demonstration demanding to release the arrested monks for religious freedom in Lhasa Tibet was main reason that later resulted to attack on non-Tibetan ethnic groups. The demonstration began to mark the 49th anniversary of the failed uprising against the Chinese invasion on 10th March, 1959. This led to rioting, burning, looting and killings on March 14th 2008. In reaction the Chinese authorities deployed People's Armed Police to contend the situation. The use of security force to contain the situation received international condemnation and laid concerns about the human rights conditions. Whereas, China termed it as separatist movement orchestrated by Dalai Lama. Within a week, there were several protests in different parts of Tibet. Since the lighting of Olympic torch in Greece in 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2008, Free Tibetan campaigners protested throughout its journey across the globe.

The effect of Tibetan protest was felt in Nepal that continued towards the end of Beijing Olympics. The Tibetan refugees in Nepal gathered to protest against Chinese crackdown in Lhasa. Every year in March 10, they gather to mark 1959 uprising in Tibet and stage protest

against the invasion of China. The 2008 Free Tibet demonstration was one of such occasions that continued for six months. Specially, in Kathmandu valley, they staged protest in-front of Chinese Embassy and also in UN Office in Kathmandu, and Bouddha area.

Nepalese media also reported the news event from the very day of Tibetan protest in Nepal. As the protest in Lhasa intensified, Nepalese media also covered the event using the international wire services and its own reporters in Nepal about the daily account of the protest. International media, flocked into Nepal as the Chinese authorities had stopped the entry of foreign journalist to report about the incidence from Tibet. As there was protest in Nepal, international media started to cover issue from Nepal.

Nepalese authorities responded to the Tibetan refugee's demonstration, in a view of states China policy. The pro-Tibet protest was considered as anti-China and Nepal's policy for not allowing any anti Chinese activities from its soil, led the authorities to stop protest. The pro-Tibet protestors were arrested and released later in the same day. The security forces were considered to have acted harshly in times. The international community particularly the West, the US, UK and the international human rights organization showed concerns about the use of force by the security personnel in Nepal. They maintained that right to peaceful protest should be granted.

The former Home Secretary Umesh Mainali<sup>8</sup> observes that diplomatic pressure was high. "The Western foreign diplomats always raised question about the Tibetan refugee human rights situation and suppression of Tibetan protest in Nepal during my meeting." Mainali added that "I personally took Chinese ambassador two times to observe the security situation till the Everest base camp in helicopter where the ambassador was satisfied." He stressed that Nepal's policy was just to stop such activities but not to suppress the protestors. "The protest turned out violent. Our intention was just to stop such activities, but not to suppress them- that's why administration arrested them in the morning and released them in the evening. We used the same policy till the end. If we had suppressed, there could have been casualties."

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<sup>8</sup> Based on interview with Umesh Mainali. Mainali served as Home Secretary in 2008 the time of Tibetan protest. I talked with him about the strategy of Nepal government in handling the situation. The Chinese ambassador in 2008 had tipped the Home Secretary of some human rights activists to raise flag in the Everest base camp when the Olympic torch was to be taken to the top of Everest. It came true an American citizen was stopped at a check point that had the Tibetan flag whose intention was raise the flag at Everest base camp.

Mainali termed the framing of International media as exaggeration and even called it pro-Tibetan in several instances. His observation of national media in coverage was considered to have balance in reporting. Mainali observation of media reporting of Tibetan protest by the Nepalese press also indicates that Nepal's foreign policy to China is by and large respected by the Nepalese press. It is this point of Nepalese media coverage that needs to be explored in respect to influence of Nepal's foreign to China vis-à-vis Tibetan protest in Nepal.

## **1.6. The state of media in Nepal**

Press in Nepal has grown in terms of variety and quality over the past two decades. Several private newspapers have opened and substantially improved content. Development of Nepal's mass media environment can be divided into different phases: a) pre 1951, b) 1951-1960, c) 1960-1979 d) 1979-1990, e) 1990 and after. And 2006 marks the sixth phase (Kharel, 2010). Pre 1951 refers to institutional history of Nepalese press, which was repressive era of Rana regime. During this period the state owned newspaper, Gorkhapatra was launched 1901 AD. But the practical history of newspapers began after the fall of Ranas in 1951, when several pioneering journalists took to publishing newspapers in a transitional democracy. However, thirty years after the royal takeover of 1960 represented a repressive press system. The political parties were banned and active leadership of King prevailed where from 1979-1989 decade though the political parties were continued to be banned but newspapers became bolder and started to give alternative political views. During this time, press enjoyed limited rights and lobbied, to some extent, for a multiparty democracy that could guarantee press freedom (Kharel, 2006).

It was only after the restoration of democracy through a People's Movement-I in 1990, rights and freedom of the press were established. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) formally guaranteed the freedom of press and publication as fundamental rights in Article 12 and 13. Despite all the constitutional guarantees, violations continued. The press was gagged when King Gyanendra took direct control of power in 2005, citing that the government could not maintain law and order situation and Communist Party of Nepal Maoist which had waged People's War since 1996. The Royal government passed Media Ordinance in October, 2005 to silence media in Nepal.

The People's Movement-II of 2006 that resorted to Constituent Assembly election turned Nepal into a republican state. Now the country is governed by an Interim Constitution, which

also guarantees press freedom and freedom of expression as people's fundamental rights. But in practice, much remains to be done. However, the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990s has boosted media industry in Nepal. It was since this period media houses were granted licenses which resulted to mushrooming growth for newspapers, Frequency Modulation (FM) radio and private television channels in Nepal.

According to the report of Press Council Nepal (PCN), there are 2866 registered newspapers in Nepal in the year 2009/10. It includes daily, bi-weekly, weekly and fortnightly. Out of total registered publication only 848 which are 29.59 per cent of publications are printed on regular basic (PCN Report 2009/10, p.41).

In case of broadcasting media, there are 325 radio stations registered, where 231 stations broadcast programmes routinely (PCN Report, 2009/10). Despite their proliferation, most stations content remains the homogenous. However, in a hilly country like Nepal radio is most effective means of communication which have access to more than 70 per cent of population. There are 27 television stations which have obtained licence (PCN Report 2009/10, p.205-206), however only half a dozen of them are in operation. The government owned television station provides both entertainment and news. However, private 24 hours news television stations have come to operation.

Despite the rise in quantity in number of newspapers and media outlets, Nepalese press still suffer of accusation of being partisan and lack professionalism. Nepalese media scholars have observed that that partisan press have affected Nepalese journalists and their professionalism where Nepal continues to have partisan media because media willingly function in such manner (Aditya 1996, p. 66-67; Kharel 2010, p. 67-68). It may be because of partisan characteristics in news media they have been acquainted to its ideological guideline of party which is linked either liberal or communist philosophy, and in some respect calling pro Indian or pro Chinese newspapers.

Another problem of Nepalese media is that it has been affected by finance problem. Kharel observed that about half a dozen of broadsheet daily newspapers made their debut in Nepal after 1990s but more than half of them have folded up due to finance problem (Kharel 2006, p.158-159). However free the media tend to act, the financial problem in the press is also reflected among the working journalists. Though, very few mainstream media that operates in the capital provides salary from Rs 10,000 (\$135) to Rs. 30,000 (\$ 400) per month. But this is not the case to majority of journalist, where most of the journalists are not paid for months

and work without appointment letter. Minimum Wage Fixation Committee<sup>9</sup>, that was established to fix the journalists payment scale fixed the minimum rate to be Rs. 5000 (\$70) per month (MGFC Report., 2010). Because of minimum wages and poor investment in media sector, there have been accusations of journalists being bribed by the embassies in Nepal. Also journalists are taken to tour by the embassies in Nepal. According to the editor of Janaastha weekly, Kisor Shrestha<sup>10</sup> at least 22 journalists from Nepal visit China every year from the invitation of China. Shrestha also confirms that arranging visits for journalists are even common by India and Western countries.

With respect to freedom of press, Nepal falls in the category of partly free in the survey carried out by US based organization Freedom House in 2010 (Freedom House Report, 2010). “The media environment in Nepal remained generally constant from 2008 to 2009, with a continuation of high levels of violence and intimidation toward journalists. Nevertheless, conditions in recent years have represented an improvement over the period that ended in 2006, when massive street protests toppled the direct rule of King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev and led to a peace accord with Maoist rebels.”

Part three of the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 (See Appendix D) has the provision of Fundamental rights, where the citizens of Nepal are guaranteed the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Despite constitutional guarantee of freedom of press in Nepal, the situation of partisan and low investment in media sector and the transitional political period has largely affected freedom in Nepal.

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<sup>9</sup> Minimum Wage Fixation Committee was formed under Nepal’s Working Journalists’ Act (WJA). In its report submitted to Nepal government on November 24, pointed out that 37 percent of the country’s journalists are paid below the prescribed minimum wage, while 45 percent of journalists are working without letters of appointment. Among the media houses surveyed, 48 percent had failed to introduce basic measures such as retirement and welfare funds, medical cover and insurance.

<sup>10</sup> Based on interview with Kisor Shrestha editor of Janastha weekly at his office.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Nepal's foreign policy towards its northern neighbour China has consistently remained stable since it officially started diplomatic relations. This chapter explains how Nepalese press functions with regards to Nepal's foreign policy to China through the coverage of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal.

### **2.1. Understanding relation between Media and Foreign Policy Analysis**

The relationship between the role of media and foreign policy discourse has been contested towards the degree of influencing one another. Different scholars have argued over the thesis of foreign policy influences media or media influences foreign policy. These arguments have been researched and debated over time but "the issue remains undecided" (Malek and Wiegand 1997, p.21).

Piers Robinson pointed out about the two schools of thought in understanding media influencing policy or policy influencing media. He argued reviewing the theory of manufacturing consent and role of media in conflict of different researches concluded that two models should be taken together to provide "a starting point for a two-way understanding of direction of influence between media and the state that builds upon rather than rejecting existing theoretical account" (Robinson, 2001, p.541).

Malek and Wiegand (1997) in their chapter *News Media and Foreign Policy: An integrated review* explained that there are three ways of media influence. They have pointed out the influence to be active, passive and neutral. Explaining works about different researches conducted by different scholars they pointed out that that media play a highly active role in influencing decisions made in the foreign policy arena, where media is viewed as watchdog and an independent observer. Some scholars view media as a pawn in the political game, where media serve as an instrument in the actual implementation of foreign policy. Similarly, third aspect of media influence is that neither media nor the government or political force are manipulative as extreme positions do not suggest nor do they work together to manipulate public opinion (Malek and Wiegand 1997, p.4).

In this thesis, I have focused on the theoretical dimension of foreign policy influencing media to understand the how Nepal's foreign policy to China played a role in coverage of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal.

## **2.2. Influence of Foreign Policy on Media**

The theoretical dimensions of influence of foreign policy on media have based their studies on three major factors, they are: the relationship between government and media and ideology factor that affects in the framing and using of sources to bring out the influence of foreign policy in representing the news story.

Different scholars on the basis of empirical findings have argued that the influence of foreign policy on media is because of manipulation of news media by government to serve their purpose (Malek and Weigand, 1997, p.6; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Rourke, 1961). It is even argued that government influences media even about how the story is written as media depends highly upon government sources. Rourke (1961) explained that the government is capable of gratifying "the hunger of the communications media for news about public affairs" (cited in Malek and Weigand, 1997, p. 6). Malek and Wiegand (1997, p.6) assert that executive branch manipulates media in such way that government policy are presented positively to public.

According to Robinson (2001) the manipulation of government occurs when journalists are influenced. Robinson maintains that given the political and economic positioning of major news media institutions news accounts tend to support the dominant perspectives, i.e. the ability of government to influence the output of journalists and the tendency of journalists to both self censor and perceive event through cultural and political prisms of their respective political and social elites (Robinson 2001, p.525). As mostly the journalists are middle class citizens that share similar societal values as those with power. Gans discussed that this similarity is journalist's tendency to support the elite, especially favouring those with the most power, the foreign policy establishment (Gans, 1979 cited in Malek, 1997, p. 7).

Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's work published in 1988 on the media and US foreign policy titled *Manufacturing Consent*, represents on US media-elite relations which they consider media play a 'propaganda role'. The ownership of news media and use of powerful

sources by the journalists have a major role in setting the propaganda. They view that media's societal role as both representing a 'tolerably realistic portrayal of the world' and simultaneously meeting the requirements and interests of those who dominate the media- the corporate world and the government (Herman and Chomsky 1988, p.303). Their writing pointed out that journalists rely overwhelmingly on elite sources to making news supply a steady and rapid flow of important news stories combined with the vast public relations apparatus of government and powerful interests (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

Analyzing the theory of 'manufacturing consent' Robinson (2001) identified two versions i.e. executive version and elite version. The executive version emphasizes the extent to which news media content conforms to the agendas and frames of reference of government officials where officials are understood as members of the executive. Whereas, the elite version of the manufacturing consent paradigm hold that news media coverage conforms to the interests of political elites in general whether they are the executive, legislative or any other politically powerful position in society (Robinson 2001, p.525-526). Some note that foreign policy establishment represents the most elite group within the government (Malek and Wiegand 1997, p.7).

Scholars argue that Executive branch dominates the foreign policy process using the scholars in the field as spinning a story (Serfaty, 1990; Melanson, 1991). In the book 'The Media and Foreign Policy' edited by Simon Serfaty, which includes works by several writers from journalists to those who served for government agreed that media heavily rely on government sources and the government used the method of spin control to manage the flow of information (Serfaty,1990). This is where public relations and marketing techniques are used, "the method of promoting domestic consensus by forcing officials to sell almost every policy initiative to the general public" (Melanson, 1991 cited in Bennett and Paletz, 1994, p. 14-15).

In the study by Jonathan Mermin, the case of US intervention in Somalia in 1992, the study points out that government wield power to influence media. "Television is clearly a player in the foreign policy arena, but the evidences from Somalia is that journalists set the news agenda and frame the stories they report in close collaboration with actors in Washington. In the case of Somalia, television turns out not to be independent, driving force that much of the commentary on its influence would lead one to believe" (Merim, 1997, p.403).

However, some scholars contend that influence of foreign policy on media is limited, but focus on power of media to influence foreign policy. Some scholars point out that media is powerful to set the foreign policy agenda. News media are viewed as the opinion makers, king makers, shadow government or the third presence which recognise and accept critical power that media have in foreign policy process (Malek 1997, p.13).

Though media do not attempt to influence the government in foreign policy making process the policy makers still depend on the media on a daily basis to measure public opinion about their foreign policies. The media represent that the strongest link assess the media's publications on regular basis in order to be able to "build effective political support among the public" (Chang, 1993, p. 27 cited in Malek, 1997, p. 14).

In the context of global media coverage of news and the influence of television, proponents of the CNN effect theory explains function of media as a policy agenda setting agent, an impediment to the achievement of desired policy goals and an accelerant to policy decision making (Livingston 1997, p.2).

However, research conducted about media influence in foreign policy direction have also observed that CNN effect is less prominent. Piers Robinson (2002) in *The CNN Effect: The myth of news, foreign policy and intervention*, suggests that the CNN effect is less prominent. Providing six case studies of humanitarian interventions used to test his model, including conflicts in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Rwanda, he concludes that the effects of media coverage are only one of a series of factors contributing to policy decisions, and are likely to be related to the type of policy and context within which it is introduced.

He argued that influence of media on foreign policy decision making cannot be ignored. In his paper, *Theorizing the influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Influence on Foreign Policy*, he pointed out that though manufacturing of consent theory calls about elite consensus over an issue, news media are unlikely to produce coverage that challenges the consensus, but when there is dissensus with respect to an issue. "It is in this scenario that news media has potential, at least, to start to play a more active and influential role in policy debate and formulation because the possibility exists for news media coverage to actually take sides in the elite debate" (Robinson, 2001, p-531).

In case of Nepal's stable position on China of not allowing anti China activities from Nepalese soil is a policy statement. This position of Nepal of not antagonising China has been

observed as basic consensus among the elite groups. As discussed in the background, foreign policy decision makers during the reign of monarch to the present day of Republican Nepal have always given higher status to China vying the southern neighbour India. However it is still matter of investigation about the influence of Nepal's foreign policy towards media in Nepal. This study focuses on the framing and use of sources in the Nepalese news media to cover Tibetan refugee protest to understand the influence of foreign policy.

### **2.3. Media and National Interest: Role of Journalists**

Scholars have stated their point of using the media to align with the international image and its national identity and interest. Ebo (1997) considered that media operating within the states are controlled to promote the national interest, while nations with global media will have the best chance to shape their international image. "Every nation will have some power to construct its national identity and internally by exerting control over domestic forces, including national media, nations with dominant global media advantage will have a better chance of shaping their internal image and placement in the global political hierarchy" (Ebo, 1997, p.54).

With regards to the small and weak state, which does not have media of global reach, how could they wield power in formation of international image? Gokul Pokhrel, a senior journalist in Nepal argues that global media from developed countries wield tremendous power. Pokhrel points out, "By virtue of their economic resources that sustain the global media apparatus, they also exercise monopoly on the flow of information, resulting thereupon manipulation of interests and values to the detriment of the interests of smaller nations" (cited in Kharel, 2009, p.80-81). It is not only the disadvantage in creating the international image that it lacks, but also in exhibition of its foreign policy.

The general characteristics of small state foreign policy behaviour summarized by Hey (2003, p.5) explains, "...small states tend to exhibit address a narrow scope of foreign policy issues, limit their behaviour to their immediate geographic arena, employ diplomatic and economic foreign policy instruments-as opposed to military instruments... choose neutral positions, rely on superpowers for protection, partnership and resources, aim to cooperate and avoid conflict with other..." Hey observed this behaviour conforms to a theoretical approach that sees small

states as insecure, limited in foreign policy resources and seeing to maintain their influence as best they can in a realist world in which they are at disadvantage. However, these notions of small states have been considered irrelevant. Hey observes that “Small states today enjoy more international prestige and visibility than at any time in history. In most cases, their physical security is ensured...”(Hey, 2003, p.1).

However, foreign policy of small state like Nepal cannot put aside the geographical factors. Rose observed that “topographical and geographical factors have had a tremendous influence in establishing the parameters of policy formulation...”(Rose, 1975, p.277). Nepal’s foreign policy today is based on the principles of UN Charter, Panchasheel, and Non-alignment. It focuses on maintaining friendly and cordial relations with neighbouring countries, particularly with India and China, where it clearly mentions Nepalese territory will not be allowed to be used against any neighbouring and friendly countries.

Some Nepalese scholars maintain that there is a need to redefine Nepal’s national interest in the changed scenario after the April uprising 2006 and the establishment of democratic Republic. Professor at the Department of Political Science of Tribhuvan University of Nepal, Sushil Raj Pandey argues in his paper that Nepal has the challenging task to secure its independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty in a very strategic location. “A white paper explaining the national security doctrine is a necessity for ‘New Nepal’ so that it can enter the twenty-first century and travel safely on the strategic highway of global security” (Pandey, 2009, p. 125). Other Nepalese writer even warns of disintegration of Nepal. ‘If regional and global powers fail to demonstrate conscience and wisdom in their behaviour, and if the ruling parties and party elites fail to serve the interest of the nation, South Asia, in the near future, may witness major changes in its geography and its political map’ (Dahal, 2010, p. 89).

So in this context, the functioning of media can be questioned with regards to its operation within a boundary of the state. Can it ignore the national interest of the state? The countries which have absolute political systems, governments tend to own media or at least control them. Pointing out the examples of absolute government in Africa, Bosah Ebo and other writers have mentioned that governments argue news media must and directly serve the interests of the nation and are legitimate official forums to articulate and promote foreign policy initiatives and the adversarial role of media is considered to be not fitting the national development. Whereas, libertarian concept of media and government is considered to have

adversarial role. Here media are considered to play the role of watchdog, and fourth estate and are expected to oversee the activities of government (Ebo 1997, p.46).

In a libertarian society like the US, media is often accused on of affecting the national interest issues and being unpatriotic. In an editorial published by The New York Times in June 2006, clarifies its position when it published news report about how the US government tracking international financial transfers to pinpoint terrorists. The New York Times had twice published reports about secret antiterrorism programs being run by the Bush administration, where in both times, critics have claimed that the paper was being unpatriotic or even aiding the terrorists. The editorial clarified that the free press has a central place in the Constitution because it can provide information the public needs to make things right again. “Even if it runs the risk of being labelled unpatriotic in the process” (The New York Times, 2006).

A study on comparing the US and Japanese media coverage of Chinese Students protest at Tiananmen Square by Lee and Yang argues national interest cum dominant ideology may powerfully shape the “journalistic paradigm” of international media. In their conclusion they postulate that national interest considerations outweigh the import of press ideology in international coverage (Lee and Yang 1996, p.15).

While in the case of Nepal, Professor of Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Tribhuvan University of Nepal, Parsuram Kharel argues that the role of media should be to promote national interest as an ultimate goal. “For pluralism, competing thoughts and diversity in the media contribute to greater participation by different sections of society, which in turn helps create social harmony and, with it, promote Nepal’s interest first and foremost” (Kharel, 2009, p.102).

The partisan press in Nepal as discussed in the state of media where “the media have continuously exhibited desperate urge to just survive by holding on to coattails of particular political groups... A genuinely free and independent news outlet in Nepal is rare and suspect phenomenon” (Kharel, 2010, p.68). In this scenario of journalism in Nepal, the background of journalists plays a role.

He is of the view that there are national interest biases among the journalists; it is because of the laws, customs, traditions, faith and national culture that shape the individual thinking of journalist. Kharel points out that the trend of pursuing national interest as newspaper policy.

“The policies are broadly laid down within the constitutional and legal framework of the nation in question. What is treason to the country is also treason to the newspaper and journalist in question. The same may not appear treacherous to another country, which does not share the same interests. In other words, there are national interest biases among journalists and media outlets” (Kharel, 2010, p. 173).

In case of Tibetan protest in Nepal, Nepal’s position of pro Tibet demonstration is anti China, so stopping such demonstration can be interpreted as national interest of Nepal. So, is it the same to the Nepalese journalist? Kharel holds that journalists and media scholars raise their eyebrows when issues of national interest are brought up. “While most of them would not mind being sensitive to what they perceive as their national interest, they have little sympathy for some other countries ‘national interest’. They withhold news considered ‘detrimental’ to their national interest and would not have any hesitation in carrying stories and comments that might affect the vital national interest of some other member of the international community” (Kharel, 2010, p. 173-174).

### **3. Research Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodologies that I have used in this research. After contextualizing the study through the background information and a theoretical perspective, the rest of the thesis focuses on the findings of the study. Before getting into the findings of the study, let me explain the methodology that I adopted to answer the questions of the study

#### **3.1. Case Study**

The reason for selecting this approach in the present study is to analyse Nepalese press reporting on China through case of Tibetan protest in Nepal. The case being a sensitive issue for China and Nepal, the case study approach is helpful means to understand the influences of Nepal's foreign policy in Nepalese press. Journalists and news editors' perspective is also considered as core part of the inquiry.

Yin (1989), describes a case study as an empirical inquiry that: (a) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which (c) multiple sources of evidence are used. Various types of case studies have been identified, including exploratory, explanatory and descriptive (Yin, 1989). This study lies within the explanatory and exploratory typologies, which seeks not only to record and describe behaviour and phenomena surrounding foreign policy influences on media, but also explains the wider aspect of media and foreign policy relations.

According to Hartley, "Case study research is a heterogeneous activity covering a range of research methods and techniques, a range of coverage (from single case study through carefully matched pairs up to multiple cases), varied levels of analysis (individuals, groups, organizations, organizational fields or social policies), and differing lengths and levels of involvement in organizational functioning" (Hartley, 2004, p.332). Case studies usually help to demarcate a unit of analysis within a wider subject.

This study uses a single case of Tibetan refugee protest to bring in the perspective of Nepalese press coverage on the issue and explains 'how' foreign policy influence in reporting. Yin points out case study is preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are

being posed, when investigator has little control over events and then the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within the real life context (Yin 1989, p.13).

As this study is multi perspective analyses, the study has considered not just the voice and perspectives of the actors, but also of the interviewee and the interaction between them, which is one of the salient feature in the characteristic of case studies. I have collected evidences through different sources directly related to the case from policy makers to experts in the area.

### **3.2. Triangulation and Validity**

In order to address my research questions, I have used multiple research methods to minimize weaknesses associated with a single case method. To do that, I have employed quantitative and qualitative content analysis and qualitative interviews. Though each of these methods has strength of its own, but it provides partial understanding so combination of all these will provide a holistic picture. So, triangulation is general strategy for gaining several perspectives on same phenomenon which helps to verify and validate findings to address both reliability and validity (Jensen 2002, p.272).

Case study method employs triangulation as their research strategy which is a way to enhance construct validity and external validity. Construct validity refers to the establishing correct operational measure for the concepts being studied (Yin 1989, p.40). However, variables never exclusively measure the construct of the researcher's interest; other irrelevant characteristics are measured as well, referred to as constructs of disinterest. This is the reason behind triangulation as it helps to examine a situation in multiple ways using multiple sources of evidences are required. The use of multiple research methods, such as quantitative and qualitative content analysis and semi-structured interviews allows better understanding for the study. Here, I have employed this method.

In this case study, using the inter-method triangular research that involved interviews, qualitative and quantitative content analysis, I have obtained reliable data.

### **3.3. Content Analysis**

Content analysis is by definition a quantitative method. Berelson (1952) description of content analysis is strictly quantitative. According to him, content analysis research is a technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication. The purpose of the method is to identify and count the occurrences of specified characteristics or dimensions of texts, and through this, to be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such text and their wider social significance (Hansen et al 1998, p.95).

It is considered that content analysis should not be limited to traditional analysis pattern terming it as purely quantitative. Krippendorff (1980) has provided alternative and influential definition: Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context (Krippendorff, 1980 cited in Jensen, 2002, p.104). Krippendorff agreed that content analysis must be replicable but saw no reason to be restrictive to quantitative and dismissed the exclusion of latent meanings from the researcher's legitimate horizon of interests. Jensen says with a cautious interpretation one might suggest that this definition of content analysis implies constructivist reconceptualization of quantitative measurement, as such Krippendorff intervention represents one specification of the sometimes rather abstract acknowledgement that quantitative and qualitative approaches, also to media texts are complementary in that they produce different analytical version of reality as an input to public debate about social reality (Jensen 2002, p.104). Thus there are inherent qualitative aspects also in quantitative content analysis.

To bring in how the Nepalese press covered the issue of Tibetan protest and China affairs news, only dealing with the quantitative coverage would not have much meaning, so, the qualitative meaning of the content helps in understanding how the news has been constructed. So I have employed qualitative content analysis method as well.

#### **3.3.1. Quantitative Content Analysis**

In quantitative content analysis, I measured the volume of news stories published by three English Daily newspapers of Nepal, *The Rising Nepal (TRN)*, *The Kathmandu Post (TKP)* and *The Himalayan Times*. The reason for choosing the three English daily newspapers is because they belong to the group of news publication house, which have the largest

circulation. TKP belongs to a sister publication of Nepali language Kantipur daily which is the largest selling daily in Nepal. TRN is the sister publication of Gorkhapatra daily which is the oldest newspaper in Nepal and The Himalayan Times is considered the largest selling English daily newspaper in Nepal compared to TRN and TKP. Another reason for choosing these newspapers was because of their ownership pattern. TRN is government owned news organization, TKP is private owned and THT is private owned but foreign investment.

The general tendency of publishing English newspapers in Nepal is to make international community understand the Nepalese perspective. It is not basically targeted to the general local Nepalese citizenry because of low literacy rate and also because of the demand for news is full filled by journalism in Nepali language and other radio and television medium, but it has immense importance to the diplomatic community and elite English readers. So, reporting the foreign policy issues are considered widely important to the English Daily.

The quantitative content analyses have focused on the coverage of three newspapers between March to August of the year 2008. This six month period was chosen because the Tibetan protest started in the month of March and continued till the end of Olympic games in August.

As Tibetan refugee protest was a global event in 2008. But, I have selected the news event of the coverage provided by these newspapers that happened within Nepal. Though, these three newspapers dealt with international news events coverage of Tibetan protest, I have limited the coverage of the newspapers with the dateline from Nepal. The reporting not only have dealt with the issue of protest but also news items of Nepal and China related issues. The study excludes the economic affairs news items. With regards to the op-ed articles, I have chosen all the articles that represent the issues of Tibetan protest and Nepal China relations which have been written by Nepali and even the foreign writers. Similarly, news reports of international wire services are also chosen if the news events were covered from Nepal.

### **3.3.2. Defining Variables in Content Analysis**

To conduct the quantitative content analysis I have used following variable:

- **Foreign policy news:** Coverage of news events that particularly deals with the topic of Nepal China affairs, Tibetan refugees' issues and news about protests within Nepal. The statements of Nepalese officials, Chinese officials and other organizations that

dealt with the issue of Tibetan protest in Nepal. The news of Tibetan refugees protest events that originated outside Nepal does not fall under this category.

- **News articles** denotes total number of printed news articles which fall under the following genre: news story, op-ed, editorial, photographs published during the period of six months of coverage of Tibetan protest and Nepal- China affairs issues. *News story* deals with events news items with by-line and dateline, op-ed deals with opinions published in the opinion page published under different writers, *editorial* deals with the newspaper's editorial piece that defines the voice of the newspaper. Interview deals with newspaper reporter interviewing diplomats presented in questions and answers format.
- **Page numbers** denotes reported news published on different pages, which is divided from page one to eight to understand the placement of the coverage. Front page stories normally reflect priority in terms of story ranking and how a given medium prioritises an issue on its agenda. The number of front page stories might thus indicate the commitment each of the three publications has towards highlighting news of China affairs. I have divided the page number from one till eight because I found the published news article from these pages. Supplementary pages of newspapers have not been considered.
- **Tone of Article:** This variable deals with the tone of the news articles. The portrayal of the news story, op-ed and editorial under the category of positive, negative, mixed-tone and shows the stance or justification to the states foreign policy. Here *positive* tone article indicates Nepal's foreign policy to China which points out the essence of not allowing anti China activities like free Tibet movement, protest, demonstration, considering Tibet and Taiwan as an integral part of China and the articles that deal with good relationship between Nepal and China. *Negative tone* means essence of instigating Free Tibet movement, protest demonstration, human rights issue, identifying use of force by the Nepalese authorities on Tibetan demonstration, and calling peaceful Tibetan demonstration should be allowed. *Mixed tone* means aspect of having both the negative and positive tone, and the account of balanced view point. Another definition used is the *stance and clarification*, which means the essence of the articles that clarifies the position which deals with the aspect that demonstration

was right or wrong. And finally, *Not identified* is defined as the article which has been difficult to consider while coding.

- **Photographs** have been categorised with the appeal that it portrays. The appeals have been categorized as four different variables. *Violence* in photographs refers to the essence of police using force i.e. baton charge the refugees in protest, dragging the protestors, hurt monks and refugees which portray violent activity. *Demonstration* is defined as pictures which deals with peaceful protests, rally on the street where there is no intervention. *Figure* is defined as photographs of officials of Nepal or China. Specially, the official figure hands shake, political personality like the President, Prime Minister other public figure. *Other* pictures mean those photographs do not fall under the three categories above.
- **News Source** means information in a news story which has been attributed to identifiable source. It has been divided as single and multiple news sources, where *single source* deals with only one source used per news story, whereas, *multiple source* deals with attribution to more than two sources.
- **Types of news source** refer to particular attribution to the source. They are *government source* that deals with the Nepal government officials, ministry officials, security personnel and others which have ties with official line. *Political Parties* refer to political parties in Nepal. *Chinese officials* denote the diplomat in Nepal, visiting Chinese officials and Chinese government sources. *Western government* refers to the US, UK and other EU members' officials or embassy officials' statements used as source. The *UN and Human Rights* denotes the UN organizations and Human rights organizations operating in Nepal. *Refugees* means the Tibetan refugees in Nepal who are protesting. *Local people* refers to Nepalese people, those who have observed the event. *China media* refers to Chinese news media and wire service. *International media* refers to international wire service as AP, AFP, CNN, BBC which have international news coverage. *Nepali organization* deals with organizations established and that operates within Nepal.

### 3.3.3. Coding and Analysis

On the basis of variables defined, coding scheme was developed to bring out the quantitative analysis of the data. I had prepared a coding sheet to code the data. It was done for two times. In the first phase I tested my coding scheme, and the through the correction of first phase, I

finally started the final coding process. Regarding one of the aspect of identifying *Tone of Articles*, I sought support of my friend<sup>11</sup>, when I was confused to evaluate the tone of article. There were 20 news items which I was not able to identify, with his support we decided to put them in a certain criteria. This was done to minimize error. The data obtained were analysed using the computer software, SPSS for the quantitative analysis of the data.

#### **3.3.4. Qualitative Content Analysis**

As there were total 229 news articles on the Tibetan protest and Nepal China affairs, it was not possible to analyse all the news articles. I selected 32 news articles to conduct the qualitative analysis based on a set of news genres as news stories, editorials and opinions. The qualitative content analysis is based on framing and use of sources of the content. For analysing the news stories, the use of source and framing or the angle of the news stories was considered. Whereas, for the op-ed and editorial, the framing of was only used for analysis. This analysis explains how the sources have been used and how the Tibetan protest was framed by the news media.

Out of 32 news articles, 26 news stories were selected based on theme of analysis. During the course of Tibetan protest, there were different issues raised on the content, which have been used as a theme, and thus were analysed on the framing and use of sources by the government and private sector news media. Likewise, four op-ed articles were selected from three different newspapers. Among the four selected op-ed articles, I decided to choose, two op-eds from TKP and one from each TRN and THT. The op-ed articles published in the private news media were mostly based on Nepal China affairs rather than Tibetan protest theme. The articles published in TRN were positive to state policy so I decided to choose one. There was only one op-ed article on THT related to the issue and two op-ed of TKP with positive tone to Nepal's policy and other with negative tone to state's policy. I selected two editorials from the TRN as the TKP and THT did not have editorial based on Tibetan protest.

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<sup>11</sup> Using my friend for the valuing the content of the news was useful. Bhuwan KC was chosen as he is former colleague of mine meets my level understanding the issue. Only for the 20 news items, his support was sought.

### **3.4. Qualitative interview**

The qualitative interview method was adopted to understand the informants' perspectives about Nepal's foreign policy towards China and the coverage of Tibetan protest. In this way, I found out how foreign policy affects the news production. This research favoured the interview method because of its flexibility, ability to gather more information, control of the environment and interview process (Sarantakos 1998, p. 266). Semi-structured interview method was used, as this method is less formal and a better way of catching the point of view of the people and getting inside information. Unlike structured interview, semi structured interviews are both qualitative and quantitative (Sarantakos 1998, p. 247). It is flexible and allows new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says.

#### **3.4.1. Selection of respondents**

I selected seventeen working journalists from different newspaper publications in Nepal. Among them, the key interviews were conducted with the editors of the three daily newspapers, who were directly involved in the decision making process. However, I was unable to interview the former editor in chief of TKP. But some questions that dealt with the decision during that time were discussed with the editor of The Republica who had served as deputy editor at TKP during 2008. And the interviewed journalists worked in magazines, weekly newspapers, party newspapers and daily newspapers. Among them, I interviewed 11 news editors and six foreign affairs correspondents. The reason for having more interviews with journalists was that interviewing three editors would not have been enough to understand the influence of foreign policy at large so, larger sample was chosen. Likewise more editors were chosen for the interview because out of my own experience of reporting foreign affairs issue in Nepal, I can say that editors are more responsible and are directly involved in deciding the news on foreign policy. Similarly, foreign affairs news correspondents' role in understanding the Nepal's foreign policy and those reporting on the Tibetan protest and Nepal China affairs, their version of how they report and write the news stories, and the editorial controls that they face could only be understood from the interviews with the correspondent. For interviews of journalists and editors I had used the same questionnaire guide (See appendix B), which guided me in the process of interview. Similarly, in order to bring out the background study of the case, and to explore foreign policy dilemma and external pressure to Nepal, I had conducted 5 different interviews with

media experts, China experts and former Home Secretary of Nepal. The background information was very helpful to bring out first hand information.

### **3.5. My Field Work**

The fieldwork for the research was carried out between August to first week of November. It involved collection of newspaper content of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal, collecting relevant literatures and studying the background study and interviewing with the journalists. I also collected data that dealt with the Nepal's foreign relations, the documents that dealt with media environment and met China and media experts for the background study, which helped me to strengthen in understanding the case. I collected the newspaper content and articles from Martin Chautari, a research centre dedicated to media research, where I had photocopied all the news that were published in three of the newspaper for the duration of six months from March to August 2008. I spend almost one month (August-2010) period for the collection of newspaper content in Martin Chautari library.

I had recorded 17 interviews with the journalists for accuracy and transcribed them later, which were more than 150 pages of transcribed text. The interview was conducted in Nepalese language among them 3 interviews were conducted in English language. The average time for each interview was 50 minutes. During the course of interview, notes were also taken. I had asked permission from the interviewee to use the recorder; the respondents had no problems while they were taped. However, due to technical reasons, one of the interviewees record was deleted, but I could cover it up because I had fortunately noted down most of his important statements. For my background study, I had conducted five interviews; among them I only recorded two of them. The interview was taken in different settings in the interviewees residence, office and some at restaurants. This is because I had let respondent decide the convenient venue for the interview.

The main challenging task was to set the time with the interviewees because of their busy schedule. I even had to use some of my journalist friends to meet with the former home secretaries. But the interviewees were very welcoming to talk on the issue. Unfortunately, I was not able to meet with the editor in chief of Nargarik Daily Narayan Wagle, because of time constraints. He had promised me to give online interview but instead recommended some other person, which I believed would not have been much useful. Also another important thing that I need to mention is about the clause that was put on to me by an editor

of Himal South Asia for an interview. The clause was that I had to write an article about the study for any of the newspapers in Nepal. It was one of my thought to write an opinion so, I agreed. Nevertheless, I am convinced that I obtained valuable information from the different News Editors and correspondents who have been involved in reporting Nepal's foreign affairs beat for more than a decade.

### **3.6. Philosophical orientation and Ethical challenges**

With my background of journalism and reporting on Nepal's foreign affairs issues for the past five years as a television journalist, my interest has led me to choose the particular research topic. This tells that I have an experience and perspective and that my professional background may have influenced during my research process. However, as a researcher I was aware of my position and the influences that could affect the research questions, methods and ways of answering the questions to the outcome of the research. While dealing with a very sensitive topic of foreign policy of Nepal with China that dealt with Tibetan protest in Nepal, there were number of ethical challenge that needed to resolves before conducting a study. Despite the openness among the interviewees to talk about the issue, it was important not to overstep and solicit personal stories.

It was also important that given the information on experience of journalists, the information quoted in this research could even create adverse effect. I thus set up guidelines to take their permission to quote the journalists before I go for publication. After accomplishing my writing on interview section, I e-mailed the entire journalist that I had quoted with their names despite I had signed evidence of consent to quote any part of the interview. In the e-mail I had mentioned that I would accept their consent if they don't have problems with the quotes. About seven of them replied my email. During the course of my interview all the participants had accepted to be named in this study without anonymity for this research. Presenting my methodology details, the next step is to present my findings that were obtained using these tools.

## **4. Coverage of Tibetan Protest and China affairs news: Use of Source and Framing News Stories**

This chapter explores on the findings of my study. The first section deals with foreign policy reporting in Nepal and the later on influence of Nepal's foreign policy on Nepalese newspaper coverage of Tibetan protest and China affairs based on quantitative and qualitative analysis. The analysis is based on the use of news sources and framing of the news stories.

### **4.1. Foreign policy reporting in Nepal**

Generally, the trend of reporting foreign policy news in Nepal is dominated by the issues related to bilateral relations of Nepal with its neighbouring countries India and China. The geopolitical settings, security issues, trade and cultural ties with these countries are the major reasons behind providing more coverage compared to other countries. The issues that emerged in relation with neighbouring countries India and China plus other countries like United State, European Union, United Kingdom, European Union, Japan, Gulf countries are covered by Nepalese press. Apart from these United Nations and other development partners of Nepal and the activities of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal are in focus.

Presently, different media house have established foreign affairs reporting as a beat reporting deputing at least one reporter in daily newspapers to cover events that happen in Nepal and abroad. There is also trend of deputing foreign correspondent based in India and China. The trend started towards the end of 1980s by government news organizations National News Agency (RSS) and Gorkhapatra Corporations (Nepal Monitor, 2010). However, presently three of national daily, The Himalayan Times, The Kathmandu Post and The Republica have their special correspondent in New Delhi. With regards to China, The Republica has deputed a correspondent, who reports from Hong Kong.

Foreign affairs reporting have received much attention since 1990's after the restoration of multiparty democracy and the constitutional guarantee of freedom of press and expression. However, covering external affairs issues was not to print strategies by the authorities, which can be observed through the documented laws and decree in Nepal. Towards the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, to manage the printing of the weekly newspaper *Gorkhapatra*, a special decree

known as *Sanad*, was guiding principles of what it could and could not publish. In one of its provision, it states that *stories about strategies paths along Nepal-Tibet border ...* should not be printed (Pokhrel & Koirala 1995, p.24). This was guiding principles of Nepal's oldest newspapers, of self censoring the Nepal's external relations activities.

Even after the introduction of democracy in 1950s, Nepalese press faced legal action by the authorities on publishing news items sensitive to external affairs. The Press and Publication Act 1962, in Section 30 authorises His Majesty's Government of Nepal to ban any publications... disturbing the peace and harmony of the country or its relations with friendly nations or international organizations or acts against public welfare (Pokhrel & Koirala 1995, p.28).

Several newspapers were acted upon citing that the news published would affect the friendly relations between Nepal and other countries. As such during 1960's newspapers like Samaj Daily, Nepal Samachar, Everest News, Halkhabar, Diyalo, and the Motherland Daily etc. were shut down by the authorities (Devkota 1967, p.239-519).

In one of such instances, The Motherland Daily in June 15, 1963 published front page news entitled "Khamapas become restive Indian help alleged"... writes "*What is disturbing however is the growing strength of these men who are being regularly supplied with money and materials, even modern automatic weapons. These have been reports of aerial droppings of supplies... Our unimpeachable source adds that recently a senior official of the Indian Embassy went there and distributed a large amount of money believed to be about Rs. 300,000 in Indian currency*"(Devkota, 1967, p.359). The publication of this news items, was acted upon by the government of Nepal by not only declining the reports but also banning the newspaper account of creating misunderstanding in Nepal's relations with friendly nations.

The provision as such is not found in the Press and Publication Act 1991, which guides the Nepalese press. Section 14 of the Act has the provision of prohibition for publication, where it states, ... acts impairing the integrity and sovereignty of the nation, acts causing breach of security, peace and order of Nepal, and acts causing enmity and communal hatred among persons belonging to various races, ethnic groups, religions, areas or communities (Pokhrel and Koirala 1995, p.84-97).

However, the constitutional guarantee of newspaper and press of not closing, seizing or cancelling the registration for printing and publishing any news items, articles, editorial,

writings or other reading materials is one of the most important aspect that recognises freedom in writing the news regarding Nepal's external affairs. Though there are constitutional guarantees of freedom of press, there are varieties of problems that still exist in practices.

Despite such constitutional guarantees, the Communication Policy towards state run media like Gorkhpatra Corporation has set up the basic guidelines of not to engage in publishing materials that are contrary to foreign policy. Long-term Policy on Information and Communication, 2003 has the provision which stated, "Not to publish news or articles or features of such kind as are contrary to the foreign policy pursued by the nation" (Ministry of Information and Communications).

Journalists also argue that the basic tenant of reporting foreign policy issues in Nepal is based on verification of the issue and is presented in such a way that relations of Nepal with other countries do not get affected. This is how Nepalese news media reporting has been functioning while reporting issues regarding foreign affairs issues.

## **4.2. Coverage of Tibetan Protest and China affairs**

This section explains the coverage of Tibetan protest and China affairs news in Nepal and discusses on the use of sources and framing of the news content through quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The first section provides an overview of total coverage and space provided by the three daily newspaper of Nepal which helps to explain how much importance was attached to the stories. The later section discusses on how news sources were used and framed in the news stories.

### **4.2.1. Importance attached to coverage of Tibetan Protest and China affairs**

This section explains coverage pattern, focus of news events and space provided by *The Rising Nepal* (TRN), *The Kathmandu Post* (TKP) and *The Himalayan Times* (THT) of Nepal. Based on the quantitative content analysis shows that the issue of Tibetan protest and China affairs has received attention by the three newspapers.

#### 4.2.1.1. Distribution of Coverage by month

**Table 1**

Name of Newspapers	Total selected articles						
	March	April	May	June	July	August	Total
The Rising Nepal	15	9	8	13	8	23	76
The Kathmandu Post	18	15	15	12	7	10	77
The Himalayan Times	19	17	13	7	7	13	76
<b>Total</b>	52	41	36	32	22	46	229

Table-1 shows that there are 229<sup>12</sup> news items published in six months period of the coverage of Tibetan refugees protest and Nepal China affairs in three of daily newspapers. The variation can be observed in monthly coverage, but the total scenario of coverage is similar. The table clearly describes the similar pattern of coverage in three of the newspapers, i.e. TRN has 76, TKP has 77 and THT has 76 in total number of coverage of news items. This shows that in terms of space, all the newspapers have given equal space for the news articles related to Tibetan protest and China affairs. That is, there is at least one news item during the six months period either in the form of news story, editorial, op-ed and photographs.

#### 4.2.1.2. Focus on News event

**Table 2**

Name of Newspapers	Distribution of news articles by genres					
	News Story	Op-ed	Editorial	Interview	Others	Total
The Rising Nepal	59	12	4	1	1	76
The Kathmandu Post	63	6	1	0	0	70
The Himalayan Times	55	1	1	1	0	58
<b>Total</b>	177	19	6	2	1	204
<b>Percentage (%)</b>	76.9	9.3	2.9	1.0	0.5	100

<sup>12</sup> 229 news items include the news stories, editorial, opinions and photographs which accounts to total number of news items published. Though the total number of news stories, editorial and opinions published number is 204, other item is photographs which have been published without news that is 206. However, it does not mean that there are only 26 photographs published. These photo items are only news items without any news stories.

Table 2 explains the distribution of coverage based on the news genres. Nepal China affairs and Tibetan protest news story comprises of 76.9 per cent, which is based on the day to day news events. Likewise, editorial comprises of 2.9 per cent and 9.3 per cent of op-ed articles. *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Himalayan Times* have only one editorial each in the six months period. The figure also points out that TRN has in total of 12 opinions which is double of the published op-ed articles to the TKP and THT has only 1 op-ed in the issue relating to Tibetan protest and Nepal China affairs during the study time frame. TRN's editorial and op-ed articles based on Tibetan protest are representative to state policy.

I had asked the editor of THT, Ajay Bhadra Khanal and former deputy editor of TKP, Ameet Dhakal, the reasons behind providing less space to editorial and op-ed. Khanal said, *“there was more or less consensus in Nepal in order that the Olympic games in China be successful because it is neighbouring country. All Nepalese have goodwill towards China. So, in this context, there was consensus in people, it was not felt necessary to write in this regard because of positive feelings towards China.”* He further added *“there was problem for the government, the negative portrayal of Nepal in international media.”* Likewise, Dhakal, said that, *“I don't exactly remember why there was no editorial, but we had consistently the same policy of not raising the issue of Tibet, I think that we had avoided it.”* Generally, it shows that there is a consensus among the news organisations regarding state's foreign policy. TRN's the state owned media provides more op-ed and editorial that supports Nepal's policy to China, whereas, the private news media, TKP and THT do not emphasis op-ed and editorial on Tibetan protest.

#### 4.2.1.3. Tibetan Protest and Nepal China affairs news are front page news stories

**Table 3**

Name of Newspapers	Page Numbers								
	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight	Total
The Rising Nepal	44	0	9	16	0	7	0	0	76
The Kathmandu Post	18	31	19	5	2	0	1	1	77
The Himalayan Times	27	12	22	5	7	2	0	1	76
<b>Total</b>	89	43	50	26	9	9	1	2	229
<b>Percentage (%)</b>	38.9	18.8	21.8	11.4	3.9	3.9	0.4	0.9	100

Tibetan refugee protest and China affairs news have received most of the space in the front page. The table clearly shows that total 38.9 per cent of the news stories are front page stories. Except TKP and THT, TRN considers the issue as front page news stories. However, it is interesting to note that TRN has the highest number i.e. 44 news stories as front page coverage. But TRN considered Tibetan protest as anti China activities. The coverage of event of protest has been avoided by TRN. Whereas, the private newspapers have covered the protest. The government media have prioritised the news as a front page than the private newspapers. This shows similarities on placement of the news story based on the states policy, where state owned TRN has provided pro state policy news to set an agenda in the first page whereas the private owned news media places it as an inside page story.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up, the quantitative content analysis shows the importance attached to the stories in covering the Tibetan protest and China affairs issues. The priority of coverage as a front page news story and an average daily coverage of one news articles per day in six months period also signifies the news value of Tibetan refugee protest and China affairs news.

However, general agreement can be observed towards Nepal's foreign policy in all the newspapers, where TRN's coverage prioritising news stories, op-ed and editorial tilts towards state policy and setting an agenda calling the protest as anti China, but the private news media TKP and THT have published news stories as inside page story and don't emphasis op-ed and editorial on Tibetan protest stories.

### **4.3. Use of News Sources**

In this section, I have presented the use of source and framing of news stories by the three newspapers, which helps to understand the value given to type of source to explain the influence of Nepal's foreign policy to China while reporting Tibetan refugee protest.

Different news studies have demonstrated that the kind of source or authority cited to back up news stories does tend to influence the implicit direction of content even when it is supposed to be neutral. The practice of validating news reports generally gives most weight to established authority and conventional wisdom. This is an almost inevitable form of bias, concealed behind the mask of objectivity (McQuail 2000, p.287-288).

Some theorists maintain that professional practice determines how a news source depends upon hierarchy and credibility. Becker’s model suggests that higher up in society are more likely to be asked to present their knowledge than are subordinate groups because of their access to the inner workings of society’s bureaucratic organizations: “any tale told by those at the top intrinsically deserves to be regarded as the most credible account...Thus, credibility and the right to be heard are differentially distributed through the ranks of the system” (Atton and Wickenden, 2005, p.348 cited in Becker, 1967, p.241).

As Becker notes in his study, the pressure of deadlines and the professional demands of objectivity combine to produce an over assessment of elite sources and thus a reiteration and perpetuation of dominant ideologies. This determinism ensures that primary definers are consequently drawn from elite groups and institutions who are both easily found and considered credible through their structural positioning and representative status: “journalists [are] very likely to take the frameworks for understanding events offered by such institutions as a starting point for their reports” (Atton & Wickenden, 2005, p.348 cited in Manning, 2001, p.15).

The study of use of sources and framing of news stories is important means to judge the influence of Nepal’s foreign policy to China to explain how the sources have been used and how the news stories have been covered by all the newspapers.

### Use of News Source

**Table 4**

Name of Newspapers	Sources		
	Single	Multiple	Total
The Rising Nepal	53	6	59
The Kathmandu Post	44	19	63
The Himalayan Times	38	18	56
<b>Total</b>	135	43	178
<b>Percentage(%)</b>	78.8	24.2	100

## Most used news sources

**Table 5**

Types of News Source	Name of Newspapers			
	TRN	TKP	THT	Total
Government	24	38	39	101
Political Parties	11	4	2	17
Chinese Officials	22	9	10	41
Western Government Officials	0	3	3	6
UN & Human Rights Organisation	0	6	4	10
Tibetan Refugees	0	8	10	18
Local people	1	1	0	2
Chinese media	0	0	3	3
International media	1	1	2	4
Nepali Organisations	5	6	2	13
Others	0	0	2	2
Not clear	0	3	0	3
<b>Total</b>	64	79	77	220

Table 4 represents the number of news sources used in presenting a news story. It is evident that the newspapers are mostly dependent on the single source in reporting the news events. This shows that one-source journalism is widely present in reporting news events. Among the three, TRN has 53 news stories based on the single news sources, whereas TKP and THT have used multiple news sources in coverage of the news event. It can be inferred that private news media have the tendency to balance the news stories by using multiple news sources, whereas, it is not the case with TRN. This can be further explained by the sources used by the private and government owned news media in Table 5.

Table 5 shows the use of news sources by type. It is evident that government sources are widely used by three newspapers. There is also tendency to prove what McQuail said that high level news sources, in this case, government officials and Chinese officials are referred as legitimate news source in reporting Tibetan protest. However, Tibetan refugees, who are protesting, have only been used as source of information for 18 times in the news reports. It also indicates that Tibetan protest issue in Nepal is basically considered to have political dimension where government and Chinese sources are cited often by the journalists.

However, the choice of news sources differs in the government and private news newspapers. The government news media, TRN has used news sources like government officials, political parties, Chinese officials; but it is not the Western government officials, UN or Human Rights groups, and the Tibetans refugees. These were never quoted as these sources were sympathetic to the Tibetan protest. Whereas, the government were determined to stop the protest and Chinese officials were urging the government to stop anti China protest in Nepal. The TKP and THT however have tried to maintain balance citing the news sources by using the supportive sources who call to allow peaceful Tibetan protest.

This shows that presentation of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal, with regards to government news media use sources that defend the Nepal's policy to China of not allowing anti China activities, which are basically the government officials, Chinese officials. This can be observed as a mission journalism. This aspect of reporting news event is further explained through qualitative content analysis.

#### **4.3.1. Uses of news sources and framing of Tibetan refugee protest in presenting news stories**

This section analyses the use of news sources and framing of Tibetan protest in Nepal on the basis of qualitative content analysis method. It explains how TRN represented the news stories and framed the Tibetan protest, and how TKP and THT the private newspapers used the news sources and framed the news stories.

##### **4.3.1.1. Use of anti and pro Tibetan news sources**

In my observation of 59 news story published by The Rising Nepal (TRN), over the period of six months, there was not even a single coverage that dealt how the Tibetan refugee had protested in the streets. Instead the coverage was based on condemnation of the protest. TRN used the statements of organizations and institutions considered as pro-China in Nepal to stress the Tibetan protest was an anti China activity and the government should stop such illegal activities from Nepalese soil. TRN uses Nepalese organizations like China Study Centre (CSC), Campaign for Unity of Patriotic Republic and Nepal China Friendship Society and Editors Society Nepal statements in making the news.

On May 8, 2008 headline: *Govt urged to control anti China activities*  
*Submitting a memorandum to Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala Wednesday, the China Study Center (CSC) demanded the Nepal government to control ongoing anti China or Tibetans' separatist activities from Nepalese soil (TRN).*

On May 20, 2008 headline: *Campaign seeks action against anti China stir*  
*... Some people who call themselves Tibetans have been carrying out activities against our neighbour China and the government seems to be permitting the activities. All this is against Nepal's pronounced foreign policy of non-alignment and one China policy (TRN).*

However, private newspapers TKP and THT don't have any coverage of such pro China organizations. Instead, they have used the sources like human rights organizations, UN, foreign mission in Nepal to assert that Nepal should allow peaceful demonstration. On April 20, 2008 headline: *Stop illegal detention of Tibetan: HRW*  
*Human Rights Watch on Sunday urged the Nepal government to stop detaining Tibetans illegally, and to respect their rights to peaceful expression and assembly (TKP).*

On June 28, 2008 headline: *Mission flays detention of 3 Tibetans*  
*Police today arrested over 50 Tibetan protesters in Kathmandu even as seven nations of the European Union and the United States condemned the police crackdown on the protesters... We would like to express our concern about Nepal government's recent detention without charge of three members of the Tibetan community in Nepal Kalsang Chung, Ngwang Sangmo and Tashi Domla, the statement read...(THT)*

This shows the differences about how government and private media differ in choice of using the news source. As I mentioned, there was no coverage in TRN describing the protest whereas, the private newspapers have routinely published the event report. The commonality among the coverage of private news media was their similar way of presenting the news story. The theme in all the event report of protest by TKP and THT is based on for e.g. Tibetan refugees protestors clash with police, detention of protestors, the Nepalese authority's crackdown and protestors released. The report basically describes about the event, and police are the main source of information to update about the event on the numbers of protestors detained and released.

On March 17, 2008 headline: *Nine Tibetans hurt, 5 dozen held, freed*

*At least nine Tibetan protestors were injured in a clash between the police and agitators gathered in front of the UN House in Pulchowk, Monday. Tibetan protestors reached the UN building to submit a memorandum at the UN seeking international pressure on China against the crackdown in Lhasa. ...Police resorted to baton charge and fired tear gas shells to disperse protestors... (TKP)*

On August 9, 2008 headline: *1,400 Tibetans detained*

*Police said they detained about 1,400 Tibetan protesting near Chinese embassy buildings today, hours ahead of the opening of the Beijing Olympics... (THT)*

Compared to the TRN, the private newspapers report shows diversity in using sources and do not dismiss the event news as done by TRN. Yubanath Lamsal, editor-in-chief of TRN accepted that he had taken positions in covering Tibetan refugee protest. He said, “*You may say that I have taken position that was true. To be honest I accept that. There are two things, if you support their protest, it would be against our foreign policy, against our government law and if you oppose them that will be against (I don’t want to say it is freedom of expression) their humanitarian cause. That’s why I did not want to encourage and I did not want to discourage.*”

Lamsal indicated that government media has certain restraints not to publish news that is against the foreign policy of the Nepal. It is safe to conclude that TRN’s framing of the news reports call the Tibetan protest as anti China activities and stand for government policy. It defends the state policy either by using the government sources or the Chinese official sources or the institution that are close to China. However, there is difference in coverage from the private media organizations. They have coverage of the event and use diverse sources but not necessarily frame the Tibetan protest as anti China activities. But still, private media lack critical analysis or commentary, or in-depth reporting about the event. It is even noticed that the protest related op-ed articles are negligible and editorial on protest is nil.

#### **4.3.1.2. Newspapers focus on Nepal government position to China**

Three of the newspapers have dealt with the issue of the Nepal's stance to One-China policy. The major thrust of the news is not to allow anti China activities. TRN, TKP and THT have published news stories on Nepal's stance for one China policy. They used the government of Nepal and political parties as sources to assert it. Let's look at what they write:

On 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March TRN and TKP have used the political parties CPN UML and CPN Maoist condemning the anti China activities. Both the news reports are based on press releases issued by the concerned political parties.

17<sup>th</sup> March 2008. Headline: *UML blasts anti China activities*. The report reads:

*The CPN UML has said that it was shocked over the news report that anti China protests took place in the Nepali territory... Alerting against the danger of an adverse impact on the relations between the two countries as a result of such activities carried out under various pretexts, the Party has also demanded the Government to take necessary steps in this regard (TRN).*

The report refers to the condemnation of political party's about the anti China activities. Though TKP has news reports, it has asserted its own line. In its report on 17<sup>th</sup> March, headline: *UML concerned over 'anti China protest'*, TKP's own concern can be visible. TKP writes, *The press release, however, is conspicuously silent over the death of at least 10 people in the crackdown by Chinese military and police in Lhasa....*

Likewise, the report on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2008 headline; *Maoists condemn Tibet uprising*: also has the same thrust i.e. *CPN Maoist has expressed its solidarity with China over the recent protests, organised by Tibetans, against Chinese authorities in Lhasa.... It said CPN Maoist has always maintained the view that Tibet is China's indivisible body. "The statement is, however silent over the human rights violation in Lhasa."*

It leads us to the fact that TKP takes a different note from TRN about human rights violation, which it tries to put that political party like Maoist and UML are not concerned about human rights violation that happen in China. These sentences have been used towards the end of the news story. Though the angle of the news story indicates about parties stance not to allow anti China activities, TKP assertion about human rights violation is noteworthy.

TKP's report on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2008, headline –*Nepal won't allow anti-China activities: PM*, clearly asserts that Nepal will not allow anti activities from Nepalese soil. The statement was made during the meeting between the PM and Chinese ambassador to Nepal.

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on Monday said Nepal will not allow any anti- China activities on Nepali soil.*

Likewise, THT report on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2008, headline- *Nepal to stick to one-China policy: PM, US envoy calls for restraint against protesting Tibetans*. The statement of PM was reiterated during the meeting with US ambassador to Nepal Nancy J Powell.

*Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala reiterated today that Nepal cannot deviate from its 'one-China' policy and cannot allow anti China activities to take place in the Nepali territory... "Ambassador Powell expressed official US concern about the treatment of Tibetans by Nepali authorities," embassy in Kathmandu said. "She urged the PM to ensure that the right to peaceful protest was maintained and that the human rights of Tibetans in Nepal are respected."*

Despite the fact that, newspapers have emphasised the news stories to stop anti China activities by citing high level news sources, the concern shown by private news media like TKP about the human rights violation in their news reports also indicates that they are also somehow concerned about humanitarian cause.

#### **4.3.1.3. Newspapers stress on Statement from Chinese envoy**

Chinese official's statement has been given priority by three of the newspapers. I have chosen two event news stories published in three newspapers.

On April 3, 2008, TRN, TKP and THT have covered news reports of press conference of Chinese ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianling. TRN headline reads: *China urges Nepal to act against Tibet independence group*; TKP headline is *China urges check on Tibetan 'illegal political activity'* and THT headline reads as *Tibetans are misguided: China*.

Three of the newspapers have reported the statement of Chinese ambassador. The report of TRN and TKP is almost the same, where the news is dependent upon one source, the Chinese envoy. And the essence of the news is not to allow anti China activities.

*The Chinese government Wednesday has requested the Nepal government to uphold justice, safeguard dignity of law and take severe measures to prevent political organizations like 'Tibet Independence' from operating in Nepal. (TRN)*

*We hope government of Nepal adheres to one-China policy and does not allow anti –China forces here. Our Long term friendly relations should not be undermined by these forces...(TKP)*

Even though THT reports on what the Chinese envoy mentions as that of TRN and TKP, it uses another pro Tibetan source to balance the news story.

*Sherpa Association of Nepal expressed concern about the use of force to control the peaceful demonstration of the Tibetan refugees... They have requested the government to treat Bhutanese and Tibetan refugees equally.*

In similar news stories published by three newspapers about the Chinese ambassadors interaction programme, on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2008, TRN's angle of news reporting is different than the TKP and THT.

TRN's headline: *China honours choice of Nepali people: Envoy.* TKP headline: *China not happy with handling of Tibetan protests* and THT headline: *Government lax with Tibetan, says China.*

The angle of news story from TRN focuses on the election results, in which it mentions that China honours the Nepalese people's choice. The story has been used from the National News Agency (RSS). It does not point out the dissatisfaction of the Chinese government on handling the Tibetan protest. However, the angle of the reports of TKP and THT based on the same event, is expression of dissatisfaction from China.

*Expressing serious dissatisfaction over the ongoing anti-China protests unleashed by Tibetans in Kathmandu, Chinese ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin on Monday urged the Nepal government to adopt strict measures to curb such "separatist activities". (TKP)*

*... "There is no meaning of arresting demonstrators in the afternoon and releasing them in the evening," he said... (THT)*

The above news stories points out the difference of approach taken by the government and private news media. TRN did not utter a single sentence that says the government's action is insufficient in handling the Tibetan protest, whereas, the private press focuses on it.

#### **4.3.1.4. Dalai lama recruits religious army: Copying a news report**

This news story is about accusation of Dalai Lama recruiting the Nepali youths as religious army. It is interesting to note that both the news stories origin is from the place, Sankhuwasabha<sup>13</sup> and bears the same information with similar news source. TKP reported the news a week ahead than TRN, it is copy news of TKP. On June 10 TKP headlined story: *Over 500 Nepali join Dalai Lama's 'religious force'*, whereas TRN on 17<sup>th</sup> June headline is: *Dalai Lama recruiting religious army in Nepal's eastern hill.*

*Over 500 people in Sankhuwasabha have allegedly joined the "religious army" for free Tibet Movement spearheaded by Tibetan religious leader Dalai Lama. It has been learnt that these people also get monthly pay of IRs(Indian rupees) 14,000. "Only those who can speak and write Tibetan are recruited in the army," said Chhewang Bhotey, a local teacher at Chepuwa 7.(TKP)*

But the question is why does this news gets priority as a first page news in TRN after one week that had been published as an inside page story at TKP?

TRN's report of such copying news shows they are in search of such news item, which deals with anti Tibetan protest. However, one thing is noticeable there is no follow up of the issue.

#### **4.3.1.5. Ban on climbing Mount Everest: What is truth?**

The issue of banning on climbing Mt. Everest<sup>14</sup> was raised that is linked with the Tibetan refugees protest. The issue was raised in the pretext of taking the Olympic torch to the top of

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<sup>13</sup> Sankhuwasabha is eastern district of Nepal which is one of the borders to Tibet in the north. It is about 400 km away from capital Kathmandu.

<sup>14</sup> Mt. Everest, is the highest mountain in the world with 8850 meters. It can be climbed from Nepal and China's Tibet. The issue of raising Tibetan flag in Everest was linked with the image of China as it was holding Olympic Games. China had already been criticised by the international community throughout the Olympic torch rally with regards to protest in Lhasa. It did not want Tibetan flag to be raised from Everest. China had

Everest from Tibet, where China had asked the Nepal government to stop climbing of Everest until the torch was taken on top of Mt. Everest.

On March 15, 2008 TKP and THT uses the international wires service AFP and AP respectively on banning the Everest until the Olympic torch is taken on top Everest.

Headline: *China tells Nepal: Halt Everest trips till May*

*China has asked Nepal not to allow climbers to scale Mount Everest during the popular spring season, officials said today, as Beijing grows increasingly concerned over possible Olympic protests on the world's highest peak... Nepal officials said a decision should be reached soon on whether to approve Beijing's request to shut down climbing on Everest until May 10... (THT).*

Headline: *Nepal to close Everest for Olympic torch*

*Nepal will block the access to Mount Everest in May to prevent pro-Tibetan protests while China takes the Olympic torch to the roof of the world, the tourism minister said on Friday... "Expedition team will not be allowed to move from Nepal's base camp from May 1 to May 10," said the minister, Prithivi Subba Gurung (TKP).*

It is noted that both the private newspapers have used the international wire services. However, after three days of the report being filed by wires services, TRN counters these wire reports as false and writes expedition for Everest is not banned.

On March 18, 2008 headline- *Everest Expeditions Not Banned : MoCTCA*

*The government of Nepal Monday denied the claim that mountaineering expeditions on Mt. Everest would be suspended for ten days from May 1 to 10 following the request of the Chinese government. According to the Ministry of Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) spokesperson and Joint Secretary Prem Rai said that news about the 'Everest expedition ban' was a rumour and the government had not received any formal request concerning the ban from the Chinese government.... Replying to the queries related to the press statement for Minister for Culture Tourism and Civil Aviation Prithivi Subba Gurung confirming the ban, Ang Tshering Sherpa, president of Nepal Mountaineering Association*

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already blocked climbing Everest from Tibetan sides, whereas it was only Nepal where such activity could have been possible.

*(NMA) told TRN that he had spoken to the minister about the claim and the minister had denied talking to the media on the issue.*

In conclusion, TRN news reports completely denies the ban on Everest, and indicates that there has not been any such requests as reported by the wire services. As Nepal's image had been affected by the continuous Tibetan protest, it was natural to have such pressure for state media to deny such reports. Here, TRN using its own reporter have shown the government stance that the international wire service has given a wrong report using both the government official and Mountaineering Association. Whereas, wire services report were also dependent upon the government source, the concerned minister himself. Private newspapers were not interested in using its own reporter to work on the news story, rather they preferred to trust the wire service because it is considered objective. Editor of The Himalayan Times Ajay Bhadra Khanal said, *“Mostly we give preference to international news service like AP, AFP and Reuters rather than Xinhua or Press Trust of India (PTI) because they are more objective. That is our policy to prioritize. As Xinhua or PTI censors the anti China news”*. If a reader compared the reports, it would put them in confusion and question on the credibility of news report.

#### **4.3.1.6. Chinese security forces in Nepalese soil**

In the context of ongoing Tibetan protest in Nepal, the entrance of Chinese security in Nepalese soil also came into debate. THT used the wire service to state that Chinese security forces entered Nepal, whereas TRN, using the RSS news story declined such reports.

On March 17, 2008 headline: *Chinese cops ‘deployed inside Nepal’ after Tibetan unrest’ China has deployed security personnel inside Nepal to keep an eye for protests by pro-Tibetan groups, Nepali officials have said... An AFP photographer was challenged by the 10 Chinese security officials in civilian clothing and uniform more than 200 meters inside Nepali territory, and ordered to erase images... “They’ve put up more barriers on teh road and there are lot more army and police around,” said Keshab Timilsina, a Nepali truck driver who plies the road between Nepal and China.*

*Subheadline: Home Ministry’s denial*

*A senior home ministry official, currently out of Kathmandu, dismissed the report about Chinese security personnel entering Nepal’s territory.*

The report of AFP published by THT files the news based on anonymous military source. But THT uses its own Home Ministry's source to clarify on the issue. THT has both the voices of allegation and denial.

On March 30, 2008 TRN headline: *Ministry denies activities of Chinese security agencies Nepal*  
*Government of Nepal has unequivocally denied the news reports regarding purported activities of the security agencies of People's Republic of China inside the territory of Nepal in the border area.*

The state owned TRN just refutes such stories with no evidences presented through the field reporting by the media itself. However, it has reported that security was tightened in the Nepal China border.

On March 20, 2008. Headline: *Mustang office tightens security in Lomanthang District Administration Office, Mustang has tightened the security of Lomanthang, located close to the border of Nepal and Tibet fearing untoward incident in Nepal from ongoing violence in Tibet for the past few days.*

The presentation of Chinese security personnel entrance to Nepalese soil shows sensitivity of Tibetan protest issue to China and Nepal. The news reports of wire services have been used by both the news media. In order to balance the news story, THT used the government source. However, the framing of THT news story is that, Chinese security forces did enter Nepal and government officials deny such report. On the other hand, TRN, using only the government source completely denies on such activities had ever happened.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion towards this section of the quantitative analysis shows all newspapers depend upon high level sources. The qualitative analysis also draws valid reference to the fact elite sources, that is high level and government officials and authority for e.g. Prime Minister, political parties and the Chinese sources are most likely to be chosen as their sources in

reporting the issues of Tibetan protest as McQuail puts there is tendency of validating the news reports giving weight to established authority (McQuail 2000, p.287-288).

To understand the influence of foreign policy of Nepal to China with regards to the coverage of Tibetan protest in Nepal, which is considered as anti China activities by Nepal government, the choice of source in representation of the Tibetan protest needs to be analysed. My findings points out that the choice of news source also depends upon the ownership pattern of news media.

There are two approaches in understanding the media output of the news events by three of the national dailies in covering the Tibetan refugee protest. The policy statement of the Nepal government of not allowing anti China activities from Nepalese soil is given strength by the government news media. The use of news source by TRN and its framing of the news story also proved that government news media is not able to report beyond the government official line and dependent upon government sources and the sources that favour China. Whereas, the private news media like TKP and THT uses diversity of sources. Along with the government sources, they also use sources that advocate for peaceful Tibetan protest to balance the news stories.

With regards to the framing of the news stories, even when similar events are covered, there is possibility to draw out differences in framing. However, in some instances the reporting of private newspapers version is similar to TRN. Nepal's policy to China has had influence framing the story in most of the cases, however, the private news media do not necessarily report as that of government news media. They have observation of understanding and representing it on humanitarian grounds.

## 5. Framing of Tibetan Protest vis-a-vis reporting on China

This section explains the framing of the news articles to determine the influence of Nepal's foreign policy to China vis-a-vis Tibetan protest news coverage by the daily newspapers. It deals with both the quantitative and qualitative analysis in understanding the framing of the issue.

Framing helps in understanding on how news is valued. In a journalistic context, stories are given meaning by reference to some particular 'news values' that connects one event with other similar ones (McQuail 2000, p. 343). The reporting of protest and Nepal China affairs needs to be observed on the basis of how the stories are referred and the prominence given to the report whether it Nepal's foreign policy is reflected in framing the news.

Willam A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld argue in their paper that movements and media are both in the business of interpreting events, along with other non-movement actors who have stake in them. The events do not speak for themselves but must be woven into some larger story line or frame. They take their meaning form the frame in which they are embedded. "A frame is a central organizing idea, suggesting what an issue is"(Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993, p.117-118).

### 5.1. Tone of Article

**Table 6**

Name of Newspapers	Tone of Article					
	Positive	Negative	Mixed	Clarification and stance	Not Identified	Total
The Rising Nepal	69	0	0	4	3	76
The Kathmandu Post	32	16	10	1	10	69
The Himalayan Times	33	17	7	0	2	59
<b>Total</b>	134	33	17	5	15	204
<b>Percentage (%)</b>	65.7	16.2	8.3	2.5	7.4	100

The tone of content of three of the newspapers article has *Positive* essence of Nepal's policy to China i.e. 65.7 percent. It leads us to the fact that the three newspapers reporting on Tibetan protest and the Nepal China affairs take the state's position in presentation of the issues. The state run media, TRN is an example which points out that, it is clearly in line with the states policy while presenting news article. In some cases, it even clearly stands by the states position even in defending the government decision and showing the government stance. However, the private-run newspapers stories and op-ed that have negative approach which accounts to 16.2 per cent and the number of news articles is almost the same. TKP has 16 and THT has 17 news article of coverage, which my coding shows to have negative tone. This also means that private news organisations are reluctant to foreign policy statement of Nepal to China. This might be because of humanitarian understanding of private news media where government uses force to stop Tibetan protest. This can be observed even in the presentation of photographs by the private news media.

## 5.2. Presentation of Photographs

Table 7

Name of Newspaper	Photographs				
	Demonstration	Violence	Figure	Others	Total
The Rising Nepal	0	0	10	2	12
The Kathmandu Post	4	9	5	2	20
The Himalayan Times	9	23	4	1	37
<b>Total</b>	13	32	19	5	69
<b>Percentage (%)</b>	18.8	46.4	27.5	7.2	100

Presentation of photographs (Appendix E) represents 46.4 per cent of the coverage depicting violence<sup>15</sup>. And 18.8 per cent of photographs have coverage of demonstration. It points out that the street protest of Tibetan refugees in Kathmandu that is in combination of violence and demonstration category is 55.2 per cent of coverage in total. This category of coverage is only depicted in the private newspaper TKP and THT. THT has provided most space to photo placements than other newspapers. It is interesting to see that TRN has no photographs that deal with Tibetan demonstration and violence.

<sup>15</sup> Violence means (here) essence of pictures where police i.e. Nepalese authorities use force against pro Tibetan activists and refugees.

To sum up, the use of photographs indicate that framing of violence of the events have been widely covered by the private newspapers, whereas, the government paper refrains from such publishing. This might be because portrayals of protesting Tibetans were harshly treated by the security personnel.

Framing of Tibetan protest in Nepal is further explained in the qualitative content analysis of the editorial and opinion articles.

### **5.3. Framing of Op-ed**

This section discusses on the framing of op-ed and the type of opinion articles which are provided space in the three newspapers. To analyse op-ed, I have chosen four op-ed articles i.e. two from TKP and one each from THT and TRN. As I have read through all 19 op-ed articles, I have chosen three articles based on four major category of tone of articles that are supportive to Nepal's foreign policy and stance of Nepal government. The next that is negative to Nepal's foreign policy that is supportive to peaceful Tibetan protest and finally the mixed form of op-ed.

In the op-ed article by A.K Sherpa *Tibet turmoil and Nepal* published in THT on May, 27, 2008, provides perspective underlying problems of Tibetan issues in Nepal. Providing the historical account of Tibet and its relation with Nepal and the undergoing physical development in Tibet, the author points out that the issue of Tibet should not viewed only with the view of physical development and money that has been poured down. According to Sherpa, *Tibetans will continue to see the Chinese authorities as invaders till the Dalai Lama's demand of full autonomy is guaranteed.*

Sherpa judges that *the intensity of recent uprisings in Tibet and the support it has received worldwide, it is clear that the Tibetans will not let up and it is up to China to start negotiations with the Dalai Lama for an early settlement of this issue.*

He also paints the picture on the representation of Tibet by the Nepalese journalist. *Nepali media person who visited Tibet seem impressed with the development there. Even the journalists of reputed national dailies do not tire of showering praises for this.*

His opinion is Nepal cannot support or oppose the issue. *Nepal too has become entangled in the Tibetan issue. It should be clear to all that due to its own compulsions Nepal is in no position either to support or oppose this issue. I hope China, the Tibetan community in Nepal and the internal agencies concerned will respect this sensibility of Nepal and not draw it further into this vortex. Unfortunately, for the moment, playing hardball seems to be the only solution. But all the sides should be able to see the larger perspective.*

Another op-ed of TRN by Praveen Upadhyaya published on April 9, 2008 entitled *No Dragons Deadly Dance in Nepal* calls to stop anti China activities from Nepalese soil. The op-ed summarizes that Nepal should not fall into any activities that are anti China and ask the government to take actions those involved in such activities.

*Nepal has time and again expressed its steadfast commitment to the notion of a “One China policy”. But the country has failed to effectively curb the recent dramatic rise of anti China activities on Nepalese soil. Some observers say that Nepal in the past had granted the Tibetan refugees asylum only on humanitarian grounds. But this does not mean that the country must not take tough action against them if they openly venture into anti-China activities.*

The op-ed article stresses on Western interest in Tibetan protest in Nepal.

*...A rash of exaggerated and falsified reports that the western media covered about the recent mayhem in Lhasa with the aim of breaking up China just a few months before the Olympics celebration gives some reason to believe that a plot is being hatched to add fuel the demonstrations being staged for a “Free Tibet” in Nepal.*

While going through the article, it looks as if a Chinese advocate has written the opinion article. It is interesting that half of his writing are cited from the statements made by the Chinese ambassador to Nepal to draw the conclusions.

*The bottom line is: Nepal must not fall into an anti-China plot, certainly not to please the anti China ‘Free Tibet’ lobby.*

Likewise, another article of senior journalist and regular columnist at TKP also has similar theme. The op-ed article of Shyam KC published in TKP on July 7, 2008 entitled *Double*

*standards by rich and powerful opinion about the Tibetan protest is an abuse of hospitality.*

He puts:

*The Tibetan refugees in Nepal enjoy almost the same rights and privileges as Nepali citizens but it is incumbent on them to understand that they are not Nepali citizens. In any country, distinction is made between citizens. The kind of anti- China protests being undertaken by the Tibetan refugees in Nepal, which firmly pursues one-China policy, is gross abuse of hospitality and should be seen as such by the international community.*

KC pointed out the reason for protest is that – *the refugee leaders are taking advantage of the fluid political situation and the weak law enforcement machinery.* However, KC argues that rich and powerful countries have shown double standards and suggests to take stand based on principles. Citing the problem of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, where more than 100,000 of them are living contrary to estimated 20,000 Tibetan refugees- he opines there hasn't been equal treatment by the international community (means US and UN) to Bhutanese than that of Tibetans.

*If they feel so strongly for the Tibetan refugees, who should have staged protests like they did in Nepal in India where they have the largest number of Tibetan refugees and where they have their government in exile—then these very international community should take a similar attitude towards the Bhutanese refugees too.*

KC blames the international media instigating the protest and also talked only about police brutality. *The refugees in an effort to grab international – rather than Nepali –media attention continued their protest... Some were, of course, dragged to the standing police vehicles, much to the relief of international photo journalists who would, otherwise, have nothing to do except to talk about the “police brutality”.*

Another op-ed of Ghanashyam Ojha<sup>16</sup> published on March 19, 2008 in TKP entitled *Why the deafening silence?* is the only article that calls for peaceful demonstration of Tibetan refugees should be allowed. This opinion article of Senior Correspondent of The Kathmandu Post, reflects that the principles of human rights does not have geographical boundaries and the

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<sup>16</sup> Ojha followed the human rights as a special beat reporting and later joined Carter Centre in Nepal.

crackdown in the case of Tibetan protest in Kathmandu and Tibet is gross violation of human rights where international and national human rights organizations have remained silent.

The article starts with the statement- *No argument can justify the deafening silence being maintained by the national human rights organizations and Nepal's political parties over the brutal crackdown in Tibet by Chinese security personnel in order to 'maintain order'.*

Ojha justifies his statement by pointing out that there were no statements made by any of the human rights organizations in Nepal and accuses them of being inclined to political motives.

*The silence of rights bodies and parties is not difficult to understand. Most human rights organizations in this country are run by individuals whose ideological inclination is by large towards the CPN –UML- a party which advocates communism and a one-China policy.*

He further criticizes the government of not being committed to the human rights, instead calls to stop crack down on the Tibetan demonstration.

*Worse, Nepal's government, instead of expressing, concern over rights violations in Tibet, has detained over a hundred Tibetans who protested against the repressive action in Tibet. The lathi-charge (meaning baton charge) on dozens of monks at the UN office in Kathmandu the other day was yet another public shame for this government.*

The op-ed articles discussed, reflect that three of newspapers have provided space to op-ed which focus on the need to stop Tibetan protest. However, private newspaper like TKP shows concern of steps to use force to stop peaceful protest in Nepal. This humanitarian angle of framing the issue has also been provided space by private TKP. It indicates two faces of Nepalese press framing, one is to stop anti-China activity and other is considering humanitarian cause.

#### **5.4. Framing of Editorial**

Editorial generally refers to an article in a newspaper or other periodical presenting the opinion of the publisher, editor, or editors. Editorial reflects the voice of the newspaper and specially it takes sides. It also points out the policy of newspaper on a certain issue. It is general tendency to write an editorial, about the major event that is happening or about an issue of public importance. As my focus is to understand framing of Tibetan protest in relation to Nepal's foreign policy to China, I have chosen two editorials from TRN as other two newspapers have not dealt with Tibetan protest issue in their editorial.

The editorial of TRN entitled *Quake And Ill-intentioned Protest* published on May 16, 2008, sympathises China first due to earthquake devastation and secondly call the Tibetan protest as "ill-intentioned". The editorial starts with the description of earthquake and then describes about the devastation that the earthquake and the deployment of security personnel in relief efforts. Saying that the Nepalese government and people are grieved by the sufferings cause by the earthquake, the editorial links it with the Tibetan protest that has been continuing in Kathmandu.

*While all Nepali people are saddened by the massive damages caused by the earthquake in China, the continuing protests launched by the Tibetans living in Kathmandu against China even the wake of the earthquake have made the Nepalese as well as the government weary.*

TRN urges the government to crackdown on the Tibetan protests in Kathmandu, who have been engaged in anti China activities.

*Considering the timing of the protests, one is bound to conclude that they were ill-intentioned and staged by anti China elements active in Nepal. In fact, Nepal has been reiterating its commitment to the one-China policy, yet some are using Nepali soil to engage in anti-China activities. As such it is urgent that the government crack down on any such protest which may in the long run damage the age old ties between the two countries.*

This editorial shows the stance of TRN for the state's position, playing sympathy card with China in the wake of earthquake and urging that the state should act against such protests.

Another editorial of TRN entitled *Grand Olympic Edition* published on August 10, 2008 shows another example of TRN's positive stance to Nepal's foreign policy towards China.

Praising China for grand opening of Olympics games, the editorial satires the West instigating Tibetan protest.

*Through the grand opening ceremony with cultural shows expressing special traits of the Chinese culture of both ancient and modern times the Chinese people have sent the entire world a message of their growing economic strength putting aside all the political controversies and pollution concerns raised by the West in the recent months. Indeed, the Chinese government as well the people have succeeded to free the Olympics from politics not only by successfully holding the opening ceremony but also by being host to world leaders including US President George Bush in the opening ceremony.*

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the framing of op-ed and editorial of TRN- the state run media, acts as vanguard that is it keeps in line with Nepal's foreign policy to China in presenting Tibetan protest. Even the private newspapers have also provided space to such op-ed articles that supports the official Nepal's foreign policy. However, an op-ed article of TKP that talks entirely about human rights and holds the theme that Tibetan should be allowed to hold peaceful demonstration are also provided space. It indicates that private newspaper like TKP does not necessarily reflect the states policy in building up the opinion. However, this is only a single op-ed different from the other articles, but it also points out that they are also concerned about humanitarian issue.

Likewise, the quantitative content analysis of photographs also represent humanitarian angle of private newspapers. Portraying violence shows that Nepali authorities have resorted to violence in controlling the Tibetan protest in Nepal. This point out that private newspaper does not necessarily keep up with the Nepal's policy to China in presentation of the protest. However, in general the quantitative content analysis presents that three of the national daily newspapers tone of news articles is positive to Nepal's policy to China.

## **6. Findings from Interviews with Journalists: Understanding Similarities and Differences**

This chapter focuses on the findings based on interviews with journalists. It identifies similarities and differences of approach and importance of reporting China in the context of Tibetan refugee protest and changes in political scenario in the trans-Himalayan region.

### **6.1. Understanding Similarities: Perspective of Nepalese Journalists in covering Tibetan Protest and China affairs**

All journalists that I have interviewed viewed that there is importance attached to reporting Nepal China affairs. The importance of reporting Nepal China affairs are based on different factors. I present the essence of what journalists perceived during the whole session of interview. Journalists pointed out Nepal's geo political location i.e. Nepal's proximity with Tibet, the security concerns, India plus international (West) community role and the economy and development partner are the major aspects taken into consideration in reporting Nepal China relations. They also have similar views towards Tibetan refugees, which they call it as humanitarian and political issue and they point out that they enjoy freedom to write, however freedom is constrained in covering Tibetan protest.

#### **6.1.1. Regional politics, security, economy and Nepal's internal affair issues**

Journalists maintain that Nepal's geo political location landlocked between India and China has been an important aspect for the regional and security concern. Likewise, Nepal bordering most sensitive region of China 'Tibet' is also another reason for security concern for China. Geo-politically, Nepal's significance has received much attention now than in 1950's because of security concerns to China and India. The concern of anti China activity in Nepal has cautioned China. Similarly, the role of India in Nepal towards management of internal affairs of Nepali politics has been understood as strategic steps by China. Also role played by India in deposing the monarch by bringing the communist Maoist in the peace process, signing the 12 points agreement with the Political parties in Indian soil and Tarai movement are other reasons, which China considers to be a threat to its own security.

Nepal is considered as buffer zone between China and India, but the Tarai movement<sup>17</sup> in the southern belt of Nepal which joins India was considered as a strategic step of India to create another buffer zone. Likewise, Indian support behind abolition of monarch in the aftermath of 2006 the April movement and increased pro Tibet movement led to high Chinese presence in Nepal.

Journalists even maintain that Nepal should be aware of its northern neighbour, that China wants nothing more than a guarantee of stopping anti China activities from Nepalese soil, specially the Tibet issue. Nepal has not been able to convince China in this regard. So, these events in Nepal led to more coverage of geo-political reporting and the importance of reporting Tibetan protest as a concern to China. And these kind of reporting are conducted as an analytical news reporting.

Likewise, the economic importance of China is another aspect that Nepalese journalists have common understanding. China's economic power in world and also increasing trade with Nepal has also been a major aspect of reporting in news media. Ram Humagain, a journalist at Gorkhapatra observes that Nepal's dependency towards north is increasing. He analyses that day to day relation between Nepal and China has increased than ever before. He feels that China has become a supply route to Nepal and even foresees that even Nepal's relation with India diminishes the supply network with China will increase in the future.

The importance attached to reporting Nepal China affairs leads to China's major concern towards its sensitivity of Tibet. Different factors, Nepal's internal problems since 2006, the role of India and international community, rivalry between the India and China has made Nepalese journalist serious in reporting Nepal China affairs. Journalists even pointed out that, though Nepal considers one-China policy, it has not been able to keep up with the policy of not allowing anti China activities from Nepalese soil. The policy seems to have been not clear as Nepal has to appease China and also other international community. So, reporting China affairs news with respect to Tibetan protest and China affairs is determined by regional politics, security and economic importance. But journalists feel investigative, in-depth and

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<sup>17</sup> Tarai Movement is an ethnic movement in January – February 2007 by the people living in Tarai belt, the southern region of Nepal, which holds more than 50 per cent of population living in Nepal. The movement is considered to have ethnic relevance in the national context against the suppression of ethnic Madeshi group (Indian origin) living in Tarai region by the powerful elite living in the capital and hilly regions. It is also considered that this movement was supported by India to counter the influence of Maoist party in Tarai region.

analytical news reporting should be used, in some case it has been done, but not in all cases because of lack of resources in the media house<sup>18</sup>.

### **6.1.2. Journalists consider Tibetan refugee issue as Political and Humanitarian**

Journalists maintain that the Tibetan refugees issue has the impetus of both humanitarian and political. However, reporting the political side of Tibetan refugee is heavier than the humanitarian angle. Journalists' defining the political aspect of Tibetan refugees is based on the free Tibet protest, which is against Nepal's position of not allowing anti China activities. Likewise, they seem to see the political aspect of the story has been instigated by the Western powerful countries such as the US, UK and EU countries.

One of the journalists pointed out the insensitivity act of US senator of not granting support to Nepal in the wake of not allowing Tibetan movement in Nepal, which Nepal cannot afford to do that. Majority of journalists place their argument that the humanitarian aspect of Tibetan refugee issues has been raised by the West, and is thus politicized to check China. There are also journalists that consider that Tibetan refugees themselves have politicised the issue. However, at large the Tibetan refugee issue is a humanitarian issue<sup>19</sup>. It is humanitarian issue as long as it does not get politicized by Dharmasala government, the Western NGO's and human rights organisations demanding a free Tibet.

As Nepal government has granted refugee to Tibetans on humanitarian grounds, the demonstration as such of Free Tibet movement will be counter-productive and against Nepal's national interest and will increase stake with China. However, some journalists even view that demonstrating inside the refugee camp could be allowed but not in the streets of Nepal.

Prashant Aryal, editor of Nepal Magazine agrees that representing Tibetan issue in the Nepalese media in humanitarian angle is diminished, whereas, Sudhir Sharma editor of Kantipur Daily clearly stands for not publishing separatist movement activities, which Tibetan protest is one of such indications.

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<sup>18</sup> Based on interview with Ameet Dhakal, Ajay Bhadra Khanal, Kanak Mani Dixit, Yubaraj Ghimire, Sudhir Sharma, Bishnu Rijal, Gopal Khanal and Devendra Bhattarai.

<sup>19</sup> Based on interview with Kanak Mani Dixit, Sudhir Sharma, Akhilesh Upadhaya, Bishnu Rijal, Gopal Khanal, Yubaraj Ghimire, Prashant Aryal and Manarishi Dhital.

## **6.2. Difference on-What Nepalese Journalists say on reporting Tibetan protest and China Affairs**

This section focuses on differences of perspectives on journalists reporting Nepal China affairs. Journalists have different approaches of understanding on national interest and editorial independence, about the sources used by them, the organizational policy and the ethical aspects in reporting on this issue.

### **6.2.1. Policy in handling Tibetan protest stories**

There are variation in approaches of journalists on reporting and handling Tibetan protest stories. Some journalists maintain that Nepal and China have good ties, it is not good to antagonise China by reporting Tibetan protest in Nepal, whereas, others say that Tibetan protest is an event so it must not go unreported. Regarding the matters of internal media policy of the newspaper, for government media it is the government policy directives, whereas, there is no such written policy as such for the party press and private news media house. However, editors define the policy in certain context to highlight or tone down the coverage.

And, government and party affiliated journalists don't present news that antagonises China. Though they don't have written policy, they define the Tibetan protest in Nepal are anti China activities. They have the tendency to ignore the issue or to write in favour of government or party line.

Journalists working in the government media house argue that they cannot legally and morally go against foreign policy of the state<sup>20</sup>. Ram Humagain's understanding is that, *"It is our clear cut non written but understood policy. Though it is not said that we need to do as such but if we go against that policy- government will take action against us because it is government controlled newspaper. But it does not mean that we have been imposed. We are self guided, as our national policy is this and we should follow it."*

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<sup>20</sup> Based on interview with Yubanath Lamsal and Ram Humagain.

Even party affiliated journalists<sup>21</sup> mention that Nepal's policy in viewing Tibetan protest is their newspaper policy, however, the political party's play a dominant role in developing a policy towards presentation. In case of China, Manarishi Dhital, editor of Janadesh weekly said that party line is used in defining their understanding of Nepal China affairs. *"We have concerns about the problems and challenges that China is facing and if there are any anti China activities, we write to discourage such activities, it is our basic understanding."*

It means besides government policy of influence of foreign policy reporting in government owned and partisan press, the role of political parties guideline also matters while considering the issue relating to policy towards China.

However, journalists enrolled in private newspapers don't necessarily toe the line of state policy or the political parties in handling the Tibetan stories. Even though some journalists, that work in private news media also have similar tendency of approaching China through the prism of state's foreign policy.

Journalists working in private newspapers have different views regarding how the issue should be reported. Some journalists maintain that calling for free Tibetan protest will increase the stake with China and newspapers should be sensitive towards China, whereas others maintain that news values and its effect in bilateral ties should be determinant factor than giving special treatment to any issue<sup>22</sup>.

However, one of the journalists said that he is confused whether his newspapers has a policy in handling Tibetan protest and China affairs news. Devendra Bhattari, a correspondent at Kantipur Daily shares his experience that he was asked not to report on China affairs by his editor for a month after some controversial news were published in 2009. He said that he was confused whether there is such thing as policy in handling Tibetan issue. Investigating the issue is not a piece of cake for journalist in this issue, because it will lead them to nowhere, he added. He is of the feeling that his newspaper's internal policy is ad hoc, that is not to write anything against China and India for a month in the sense of not giving critical news was internal policy.

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<sup>21</sup> Based on interview with Bishu Rijal and Manarishi Dhital.

<sup>22</sup> Based on interview with Ameet Dhakal, Kiran Chapagain and Keshav Poudel.

Sudheer Sharma, editor of Kantipur daily points out that Nepalese press handling Tibetan issue is covered in three ways:

*“First when there is simple protest, that becomes news. Secondly, Tibetan community has lived in Nepal for a long period of time and are linked with Nepali culture. Third, separatist movement in Nepal, though we don’t much highlight, as our states policy is not to accept any sort of separatist movement from Nepal so being a part of state, we should follow it. But humanitarian approach and democratic movement, or their genuine concern, which they raise coming in the street. As we cover the issue of other community- we also provide space to Tibetan cause. As Tibetan issue is a concern inside Nepal and also internationally, it falls under our priority.”*

However, one of the journalist even argue that there should not be policy as such in handling reporting of China or foreign policy in general but should have independent and professional approach. Kanakmani Dixit points out that the issue must be treated case by case.

*“One should go as much as professional independence spirit, and in that sense with India of course there is absolutely no bar. Coverage of China is limited by the diffident of Nepali intelligentsia. Nepali intelligentsia feels as ease criticizing India, but it does not feel at ease critiquing China. There are two reasons for that- one reason is that overall, Nepali national world view is so overwhelmed by India, that we have to make China very important in our life as balance as a counter weight. And we even exaggerate the importance of China like a geo political tool, to balance India’s overwhelming presence. As a result it is, Kathmandu intelligentsia and media have evolved therefore, in giving China a very privileged place, where it is not critiqued.”*

Generally, journalists have commonality that they don’t have institutional policy in handling issues such as Tibetan refugee protests or foreign affairs news reporting at large. Most of the journalists have more or less consensus over state’s policy influences them handling Tibetan refugee protest issues. However, party affiliated newspapers have their own perspective of being guided by the political parties rather than the state policy. Whereas, other journalists maintain the issue should be handled independently.

### 6.2.2. Freedom in Reporting: Editorial position and national interest

It is interesting to note that all the journalists say that they report freely. Journalists' point out that government is in no condition to direct the Nepalese press in what to report and what not to. They are free to report on any issues they feel like. However, freedom of press cannot remain absolute. Reporting the issue of China and Tibetan protest in Nepal is a delicate case, where one can assume to have enjoyed freedom on one hand, but on the other, there is some sort of control within self which journalists don't seem to have noticed in the name of state's interest. This is where the editorial position and control of the content is visible and where journalists face constraints.

Majority of journalists have commonality in saying that states interest is the most important. Some even consider that for the sake of national interest one should be biased and needs guidance of the state. Others points out that state policy have an influence upon journalists and journalists should follow it<sup>23</sup>.

However, there are journalists who defends that state policy does not have influence. Ameet Dhakal calls it's a decision of conscience of journalist. His argument is:

*“In an authoritarian state, they may say not to write this story, but in our case no minister of PM has said us not to publish such news of Tibetan issue. If that is said then it means that state policy has dictated and has coerced it. But, when we have decided that our national stake is more with China and we have decided not to write about it, it is decision of our conscience. As in the past as China was less assertive, there was lose policy, as China is more assertive, I think state and political parties, and the media, it is believed that in issue of Tibet China's sensitivity should be addressed and seen as a unanimity. That's why I don't think that state policy has influenced us.”*

Likewise, Akhilesh Upadhaya assert,

*“We are free press, and press of democratic country. If my position and the foreign secretary views are the same, I may not be the editor of TKP but TRN. I feel so deeply in my democratic values, I don't live in authoritarian society.”*

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<sup>23</sup> Based on interview with Lekhnath Adhikari and Sudheer Sharma.

Kanamani Dixit points out two reasons for having less coverage about the issue of Tibet. One of the reasons behind is that there is too much happening in Nepal and the other is influence from the Nepalese intelligentsia in how they perceive China thinking that China should not be made unhappy. But he explains that media is not directed by the government not to write about Tibetan protest.

*“It is not that media have not been able to write but they do not. The point is nobody is stopping them, we have not reached such a level of lack of freedom of press, that if anybody wrote about with this angle, that the Nepali government will stop it. “No”. It is more that the media being influenced by weak intelligentsia feels that it is the duty not to challenge the Chinese too much. So, it is more of a philosophical mindset of various individuals in a media, rather than our government telling our media don’t. It is a kind of self censorship, it is not there all the time, you find it coming up so often, media don’t write about.”*

But the issue of national interest has questioned the freedom that journalists enjoy. The issue of whether a journalist should be nationalist and safeguard the state interest or be independent in its reporting is debatable. Some journalists have their point that there is nothing wrong to keep up with the state's interest and it is the world phenomenon, where media tends to reflect the national interest. If so, the journalistic professionalism of being independent based on neutrality and objectivity can be questioned. In case of reporting on Tibetan refugee protest and China affairs, majority of journalists points out that editorial independence should fall under the umbrella of broader national interest concept. However, some journalists maintain that editorial independence is a must and the issue must be identified and reported case by case.

Journalists tend to be more nationalist in this regard of serving the national interest. Senior journalist, Manaranjan Josse argues that in the context of reporting Nepal, China and India, Nepalese journalist should be nationalist and press should function to protect Nepal. He argues in the statement:

*“Press should be nationalist because, we are not in middle of Pacific Ocean and in luxury. India and China opposing philosophy destined by geography, demography, cartography and long time rivalry in our relationship.”*

Journalists supportive to this notion argue that serving the national interest does not mean compromising the editorial independence. Prashant Aryal does not believe that journalism freedom has no boundary and is internationalism. He said, *“I have a different theory*

*towards it. “What internationalism!!!” When we have to stay in this country, and pay tax and it provides us food to eat what internationalism. It is all nonsense. There may be theory, people may follow it, but we should first see our country.”*

However, Kanakmani Dixit rejects the idea that journalist should be nationalist. He maintains that journalist should remain independent. He argues, “ *Journalist should not be nationalist, not at all- journalist should look after their social economic interest of the people, and nationalism to certain extent as if gives people to certain cultural identity is a good thing. When nationalism is chauvinistic and brings down other people, whether it is Chinese or Indian in the Nepali context, that is wrong. So, journalist should, tend to measure what the state demand, not in the government but the state but that is not appropriate. The journalism should be independent of the national blinder.”*

However there are journalists who think pragmatic approach is the best way while reporting Nepal China affairs that are not to engage in sensitizing the issue.

This diversity of approaches of Nepalese journalists and the freedom to report on Tibetan refugees and Chinese affairs have been controlled by the journalist themselves rather than the coercion of state. Though journalists are lenient to state policy and control over the content in the name of national interest, this position of journalist in times questions the editorial independence. On one hand journalists tend to be nationalist, on the other, they take the position that editorial independence is important than the national interest, and even some journalist suggests taking a middle path to deal with such kind of reporting.

### **6.2.3. Journalistic Ethics and Pro Chinese tag**

Journalism ethics basically deals with professional standards of set of principles of professional conduct which are controlled by journalist themselves. Most frequently found principles in journalistic codes are truthfulness of information, clarity of information, defence of the public’s rights, responsibilities in forming public opinion, standards in gathering and presenting information and respecting the integrity of the sources (Laitila, 1995 cited in McQuail, 2010, p.173).

Studying to what extent Nepalese journalists are committed to ethics of journalism is exiting subject. Journalists agree that they are ethically committed to report truthful information,

however, they are biased when it comes to national interest issue. Let's take an example. As discussed above, government owned newspapers, party affiliated newspapers and even some private newspapers have their policy of ignoring the issue of Tibetan protest. Even if they write the news, the angle of the news story calls the protest as anti China and demands for not to allow such activities from Nepalese soil.

So, is ethical consideration of journalism limited reporting the internal affairs or is it ethically right to defend the national interest? It needs a broader perspective of understanding in the context of why Nepalese journalists call it ethically appropriate in defence of the national interest.

Some journalists argue that defending national interest is not contradictory to ethics of journalism<sup>24</sup>. They argue that there are difference between the citizens and aliens. They point that civil rights, political rights, freedom are only enjoyed by Nepalese citizens in Nepal but the other countries citizens when they arrive in Nepal can only live on humanitarian grounds. Nepal is not bound to give other rights to aliens except support on humanitarian grounds.

Despite journalists ethical consideration is questioned of being biased for the sake of national interest, they consider it ethically right to carry on the ways that they have been reporting. However, there is also tendency of journalist being tagged as pro China. Some journalists maintain that it is not right to label them, others consider it as reflection of society. Akhilesh Upadhaya said that he does not feel good but thinks it is reflection of society. He said that:

*“If you sit with Chinese embassy you are called pro China and with Indian ambassador you become pro Indian and write against the Indian ambassador you are anti Indian. Every Nepali and the editors should maintain to protect certain degree of national interest otherwise it will be difficult.”*

According to experience of Ajaya Bhadra Khanal, he holds that there is tendency of journalist being pro China or Indian. *“There is a tendency labelling journalists and on the other hand there is tendency among the journalist to work as pro Chinese and pro Indian. In pro Chinese newspapers, there is always India bashing. In such newspapers, news on Tibetan issues is*

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<sup>24</sup> Based on interview with Bishnu Rijal and Ameet Dhakal.

*always pro to China or no news of such Tibetan protest. There are pro Indian and pro Chinese journalists.”*

However there are journalists who say that writing for national interest is connoted to have supported a particular country, it is because Nepal not allowing anti China activities is also the China's interest. It is thought to have been Nepalese press supporting China. So, journalists say that it should rather be pro-Nepal rather than labelling as pro China or pro India.

## **Conclusion**

There are different perspectives among journalist in reporting Nepal China affairs with regards to Tibetan protest. There is no written policy as such in any of the news organizations that specially deals with China affairs. However, journalists tend to agree that they look upon states policy in reporting China affairs. Reporting Tibetan protest in Nepal is linked with national interest of state. Nepalese journalists lend themselves to serve the national interest while reporting Tibetan protest. Most of the journalists value national interest as first priority and argue that editorial independence should be enjoyed serving the national interest. However, there are journalists who value editorial independence, agrees that journalistic values is considered important aspect rather than journalist turning out to be nationalist and serving the national interest.

To say that there is freedom of reporting on China affairs is a lip-service. Journalists are biased to national interest. Editorial positions, control over the content by toning down the issues and influences from the states policy that is seen as national interest have affected journalists. Journalists perceive that journalistic ethics should not be viewed as acceptable principles, it should be viewed as in a broader perspective of national interest and context and place where journalist are operating.

## 7. Chapter Seven – Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined the influence of Nepal's foreign policy to China in coverage of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal. Based on my findings, from the data that I gathered there is evidence to support that Nepal's foreign policy to China is a guiding factor in coverage of Tibetan protest. The reporting on three of national daily newspapers *The Rising Nepal*, *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Himalayan Times* coverage of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal attach significant importance towards Nepal's policy statement of foreign policy. The result of quantitative content analysis shows that significant priority has been given to the news related to Tibetan protest and China affairs because they have been published as a front page news story.

To identify the influence of the foreign policy, the evidences also points out that Nepalese press do not have single face. The ownership of the newspaper does matter in this regard. The government owned *The Rising Nepal* represents the Tibetan protest in Nepal as anti China activities and refrains from coverage of the street protest. The news story, op-ed articles and editorial of TRN framing largely defends Nepal's policy to China in reporting Tibetan protest. Their major news sources are the government and Chinese sources and even calls the government to take stern actions to stop such demonstration. The government news media is influenced by the foreign policy of Nepal considering the Tibetan protest as anti China activities.

However, in the private news organisation, *The Kathmandu Post* and *The Himalayan Times*, one way flow of information as that of government news media is not observed. These newspapers have covered the street protest of Tibetan refugee and also have negative tone news articles against the state policy. This is evident through the use of sources, where they use the dissident sources that calls for peaceful protest by Tibetan refugees. Sources such as US envoy and the publishing of op-ed that calls for government of Nepal to deal humanly with the Tibetan protestors are some examples that show private news media try to create debate on the news front to allow peaceful demonstration to the Tibetan refugees. Also the use of photographs in representing the government's use of force to stop anti China activities against the Tibetan protestors. The depiction of violence in using photographs is high where, private newspapers have mostly used pictures that dealt with police brutality where police baton the protestors, dragging the protestor to police van etc. My findings shows except one op-ed articles dissident voice is not much prioritized. They are engaged in more event news

reporting rather than creating a debate or presenting analytical and in-depth news stories. This is further evident as these private newspapers did not have a single editorial to create a debate in this respect.

Apart from this, the use of sources unlike government newspapers, the Tibetan protest is not represented as anti China activities by private news media. But, the private newspapers even cannot ignore the Nepal's policy to China while reporting Tibetan protest. The quantitative analysis evidently shows that the government and Chinese officials are major news sources and they are frequently cited in making the news. The qualitative analysis also draws valid reference to the fact that high level government officials and authority for e.g. the PM, political parties and the Chinese sources are chosen as news sources in reporting the issues of Nepal China affairs and Tibetan protest. These sources have the perspective demanding to prevent Tibetan refugee protest.

With regards to the framing of the news stories Nepal's policy to China cannot be ignored in most of the cases, however, the private news media does not necessarily report as that of government news media. But the framing of op-ed and editorial of TRN- the state run media, acts as vanguard that is it keeps in line with Nepal's foreign policy to China in presenting Tibetan protest. Even the private newspapers have also provided space to such op-ed articles that supports Nepal's official foreign policy but still private news media like TKP and THT also report on the issue with humanitarian perspective.

The theoretical discussion on influence of foreign policy on media in (chapter three) about manipulation of government to portray positive image in the media and the use of spin doctors to influence media does not correspond to my finding. My findings through the interviews with journalists however show that Nepal government does not interfere or manipulate about what journalists' report. Government's requests to refrain from publishing or highlight news of Tibetan protest or on the issues that is related to China affairs are nominal. Journalist agree that the state and Chinese officials do show concern about the issue of Tibetan protest being published in their newspaper, but it is not the situation that the state intervenes or dictates on what the press should or should not write.

This study finds much consensus among journalist in understanding the issue of Tibetan protest and reporting on China affairs. The issue of Tibet protest cannot be observed independently it is reported in the context of Nepal's geo political locations and relation with China. The findings from the interview reveals that journalists do not want to antagonise

China in the case of Tibet. They consider Nepal has stake with China and it is in the national interest of Nepal. Freedom of reporting in this context is not hindered by the state, but is dependent upon how journalist considers what their national interests are. That is why taking editorial position; control over the content and toning down the issues is determined by the journalists themselves, where the state need not necessarily have to act upon, when press voluntarily serves their purpose.

Journalist have consensus over the importance of China, due to Nepal's geo political location and proximity with Tibet, the security concerns, India plus international (West) communities interest and role, and Nepal's economy and development dependency. One of the reasons behind such consensus is lack of newspapers in-house policy in dealing with sensitive issue, where journalists tend to look upon the state policy as guiding principles in reporting Tibetan protest and Nepal-China affairs. Though journalist dissent on having a newspapers own policy on reporting foreign affairs, the journalists affiliated to political party consider to value party guideline. However, some journalists values editorial independence rather than journalist turning out to be nationalist and serving the national interest.

This is how media output gets affected when journalists value national interest as the first priority and point out editorial independence should be enjoyed serving the national interest. This study finds that government has its policy of not presenting the news about Tibetan protest; but, even the private newspapers have had consensus of not to prioritise the op-ed and editorials though they were involved in reporting the event of Tibetan refugee protest in Nepal. This is also an indication that Nepal's foreign policy does have influence on the policy level of private newspapers, where some journalists consider it a need of time.

This study explores that the influence of the foreign policy of the country on Nepalese news media is high when the issue of Tibet is reported. It is highly unlikely that news media can hardly avoid the sensitivity of the country's foreign relationship with its immediate neighbours and Nepal's geo-political situation. Under these circumstances, it might be difficult for Nepalese press to do away with its responsibility towards the country and to be objective in reporting the events related to Tibet - this is the dilemma facing them. Without being the Tibet issue resolved permanently by China and Tibetan refugees, such dilemma is likely to remain in Nepalese press as well as the Nepal's government in handling the issue. In this context, it will be supportive if Nepalese media bring the Tibet issue into serious discussion on international public domain and thereby try to sort out sustainable solution to it,

although, it is a highly ambitious task. However, while doing this, they need to be equally careful and sensitive towards the danger of the issue being politicized by various interest groups that want to destabilize Tibet and get their interests pursued. They should also be daring to denounce any such attempts, if found, to politicize or support by such groups.

It is deem necessary to acknowledge that the independent role of news media also depends on the betterment of human kind, either it is Nepalese citizen or foreigners like Tibetan refugees in Nepal. It will also not be within the ethics of professional journalism to just turn the blind eyes towards the humanitarian side of Tibetan refugees. Giving space to the news related to any brutal suppression or treatment towards their peaceful demonstration might not do any serious harm to the Nepalese press and the country itself - this will rather ensure people's trust on the press on its independency and objectivity maintained.



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## Appendix I

### List of interviews

#### a. Background Study

Date	Name	Position/ Organization
9 <sup>th</sup> August, 2010	Bhek Bahadur Thapa	Former Minister for Foreign Affairs Nepal
10 <sup>th</sup> August, 2010	Shree Kanta Regmi	Former Home Secretary
16 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	M.R. Jossee	Former Editor The Rising Nepal and Deputy Ambassador to UN Security Council (1985-1990)
24 <sup>th</sup> October, 2010	Umesh Mainali	Former Home Secretary
30 <sup>th</sup> October, 2010	Chiran Sumsher Thapa	Former Press and Principal Private Secretary of King Birendra (1972- 1990s)

#### b. Interview with Journalists and editors

Date	Name	Position/ Organization
25 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Manarishi Dhital	Editor/ Janadesh Weekly
27 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Prashant Aryal	Editor/Nepal Magazine
26 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Kiran Chapagain	Correspondent/ The Republica Daily
28 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Akhilesh Upadhaya	Editor/ The Kathmandu Post
28 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Sudheer Sharma	Editor/ Kantipur Daily
29 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Gopal Khanal	Chief reporter/ Kantipur Daily
27 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Lekhnath Adhikari	Sr. Assistant Editor/ Nepal Samacharpatra
27 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Yubaraj Ghimire	Senior Journalist
28 <sup>th</sup> September, 2010	Yubanath Lamsal	Former Editor/ The Rising Nepal
1 <sup>st</sup> October, 2010	Keshab Poudyal	Editor/ Spotlight Magazine
4 <sup>st</sup> October, 2010	Devendra Bhattarai	Correspondent/ Kantipur Daily
5 <sup>th</sup> October, 2010	Ram Humagain	Assistant Editor/

		Gorkhapatra Daily
22 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2010	Bishnu Rijal	Editor/ Budhavar Weekly and Press Advisor to Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal 2010.
22 <sup>nd</sup> October, 2010	Kisor Shrestha	Editor/ Janastha Weekly
3 <sup>rd</sup> October, 2010	Ajaya Bhadra Khanal	Editor/ The Himalyan Times
2 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2010	Ameet Dhakal	Editor/ The Republica Daily
3 <sup>rd</sup> November, 2010	Kanak Mani Dixit	Editor/ Himal South Asia Magazine

## Appendix II

### Interview Guide

#### *General*

- Could you explain how your organisation has been reporting on foreign affairs issue?
- Are there any challenges and problems in reporting foreign affairs issues?
- Do you have internal policy on reporting foreign affairs issue?
- Do you have any policy regarding, what protest or demonstration you would like to cover and what you would refrain from coverage?

#### *Reporting Nepal China Affairs*

- What importance or relevance is attached to stories on Nepal China relations issue?
- Policy- Do you have any policy that you follow while handling stories related to Tibetan refugees in Nepal when you report on China and Nepal affairs?
- How different is it to report on Nepal's China affairs in respect to Tibetan protest in Nepal to other newsworthy issues?
- How do you view the Tibetan refugee issue? Do you see it as a humanitarian or political issue? *Why so?*
- In case of Tibetan refugee protest, does it fall under your priority? *(If yes or no Why?)*

#### *Experience*

- Have you written any opinion or commentary articles or have you asked your reporter to write on these issues lately?
- What strategies are used (just report the event or provide a commentary or an editorial or provide space in opinion page or refrain from publishing)?
- Do you believe your reporting of incidents and news on China/Nepal relationships is different from others?

#### *Influence*

- Do you face constraints in reporting on Chinese affairs especially when you are dealing with Tibetan refugee's protests? Do you think it is problem?
- In this respect, do you think there is an influence in you when you report on the China affairs? (Like as you know about the anti Indian sentiments makes you feel secure if you support China or something like that)

- Is there any incidence that you can share with me regarding Tibetan protest on government or political parties calling you not to provide space to protest news or even by the Chinese embassy in Kathmandu or even by the refugees themselves?
- Will it be an exaggeration, if I say that newspapers and its editors are directly or indirectly influenced by the states policy in reporting the issue of Tibet in relation to China? Or you believe there is nothing to do with states policy when you report on such issues.

#### *Editorial Position*

- Do you take on particular positions in times?  
(Cross Questions) *What if you take position (instead of being absolute neutral and objective, or trying to be) how does that influence reporting of incidents.*
- While reporting such protest of Tibetan refugee in Nepal, do you take positions or just report on the event?

#### *National Interest and Editorial Independence (Editors Only)*

- How do you go about on states interests?
- Could you tell me, what is most important- national interest or journalistic freedom in the context Nepal's policy to China?
- How important is editorial independence while reporting on national interest issues?
- What level of freedom do you enjoy while reporting (dealing with ownership to ask to editors, in case of party press what freedom from party)?

#### *Ethics*

- What level of ethics and commitment do journalists have when it comes to reporting Nepal China relations especially on Tibet?
- How do you view when journalists or your have been put into the category of pro Chinese or anti Chinese?

#### *Feedback*

- What kind of feedback have you received from various sides, including your readers, on your coverage of the issue?

## Appendix III

### Code-sheet for quantitative content analysis

#### General Information

##### I. Name of Newspaper

1. The Rising Nepal
2. The Kathmandu Post
3. The Himalayan Times

##### II. Published month

1. March
2. April
3. May
4. June
5. July
6. August

##### III. Location of article published ( Page Number)

Page Number 1 to Eight (Jump news from front news is also considered as first page news)

##### IV. Type of Article

1. News Story (News format/ with authors name/ byline/ dateline)
2. Op-ed Articles (Opinion articles by different writers)
3. Editorial (Opinion of the newspaper)
4. News Analysis (Events that have been analysed or commentary)
5. Interview (Interview with person)
6. Others.... (Culture and life style)

##### V. Tone of Content

1. Positive: (Indicates Nepal's policy to China which outlines the essence of not allowing anti China activities like free Tibet movement, protest, demonstration/ considering Tibet and Taiwan as an integral part of China/ good relationship between Nepal and China)
2. Negative: (Essence of instigating free Tibet movement, protest, demonstration/ Identifying use of forces by the Nepalese authorities on Tibetan demonstrators/

asking for Tibetan's have right to peaceful protest/ message that deals with Tibet uprising)

3. Mixed: (Essence of having both the qualities of above 1 and 2)
4. Clarification: (Essence that clarifies the position of the country in the case of an event)
5. Not identified

VI. Number of News Source

How many sources used to prepare a news report?

1. Single Source (one person/ organisation quote used in the news)
2. Multiple Source (more than one person or organisation used as source)

VII. News Source by types

1. Nepal Government: (Prime Minister/ Ministers/ Spokesperson of concerned Ministry/ Police/ Chief District Office/ and other government officials and their statements)
2. Political Parties (Political Parties in Nepal, their statement)
3. Chinese Officials: (Chinese President/ Prime Minister/ Chinese Embassy/ Ambassador/ Their statements/
4. Foreign Government(West based Diplomatic Mission in Nepal countries that have Embassy in Nepal like US, UK, France, Germany, European Union, Denmark, Norway etc)
5. Human rights Organisations: (International Human Rights Organisations and other Human rights group, it can also be Nepal's Human rights group)
6. Refugees: (Tibetan Government in exile/ Dalai Lama/ Tibetan refugees/ Refugee leaders
7. Local People: (Local people witnessing the event)
8. Chinese Media or wire service
9. International Media or wire service
10. Press Release
11. Others...
12. Not identified

VIII. Photographs

1. Demonstration: (Pictures that deals with Tibetan refugees protests, rally on the street)
2. Violence: (Essence of pictures that deals with police using force i.e. baton charge the refugees in protest, hurt monks and refugees)
3. Figure: (Picture of Chinese Officials and Nepalese officials visit to China or Nepal, Hand shaking, political personality like president, prime minister etc.)
4. Others

## **Appendix IV**

### **Provision of Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007**

#### **Article 12. Right to Freedom:**

(1) Every person shall have the right to live with dignity, and no law shall be made which provides for capital punishment.

(2) No person shall be deprived of his/her personal liberty save in accordance with law.

(3) Every citizen shall have the following freedoms:

(a) freedom of opinion and expression;

(b) freedom to assemble peaceably and without arms;

(c) freedom to form political party or organisations;

(d) freedom to form unions and associations;

(e) freedom to move and reside in any part of Nepal; and

(f) freedom to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, industry, or trade.

Provided that,

(1) nothing in sub-clause (a) shall be deemed to prevent the making of laws to impose reasonable restrictions on any act which may undermine the sovereignty and integrity of Nepal, or which may jeopardize the harmonious relations subsisting among the peoples of various castes, tribes, religion or communities, or on any act of defamation, contempt of court or incitement to an offence; or on any act which may be contrary to decent public behaviour or morality.

#### **Article 15 Right Regarding Publication, Broadcasting and Press:**

(1) No publication and broadcasting or printing of any news items, editorial, article, writings or other readings, audio-visual materials, by any means including electronic publication, broadcasting and press, shall be censored. Provided that nothing shall be deemed to prevent the making of laws to impose reasonable restrictions on any act which may undermine the sovereignty or integrity of Nepal, or which may jeopardise the harmonious relations subsisting among the peoples of various castes, tribes or communities; or on any act of sedition, defamation, contempt of court or

incitement to an offence; or on any act which may be contrary to decent public behaviour or morality.

(2) No radio, television, online or any other types of digital or electronic means, press or any other communication media shall be closed, seized or be cancelled the registration because of publishing and broadcasting or printing any material by such means of audio, audio-visual or electronic equipments.

(3) No newspaper, periodical or press shall be closed, seized or be cancelled the registration for printing and publishing any news items, articles, editorial, writings or other reading materials.

(4) No communication means including press, electronic broadcasting and telephone shall be obstructed except in accordance with law.

## Appendix V

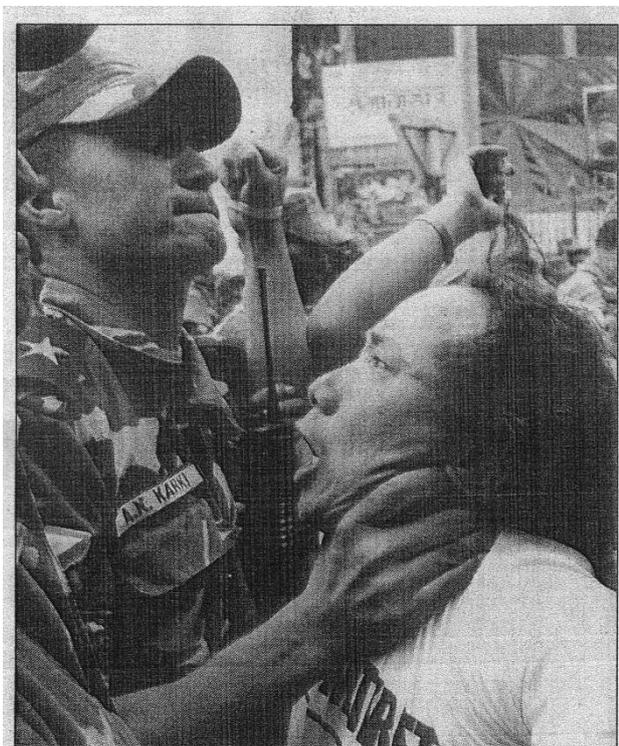
### Selected Photographs of Tibetan Protest in Nepal

a. Published in The Himalayan Times on March 21, 2008.



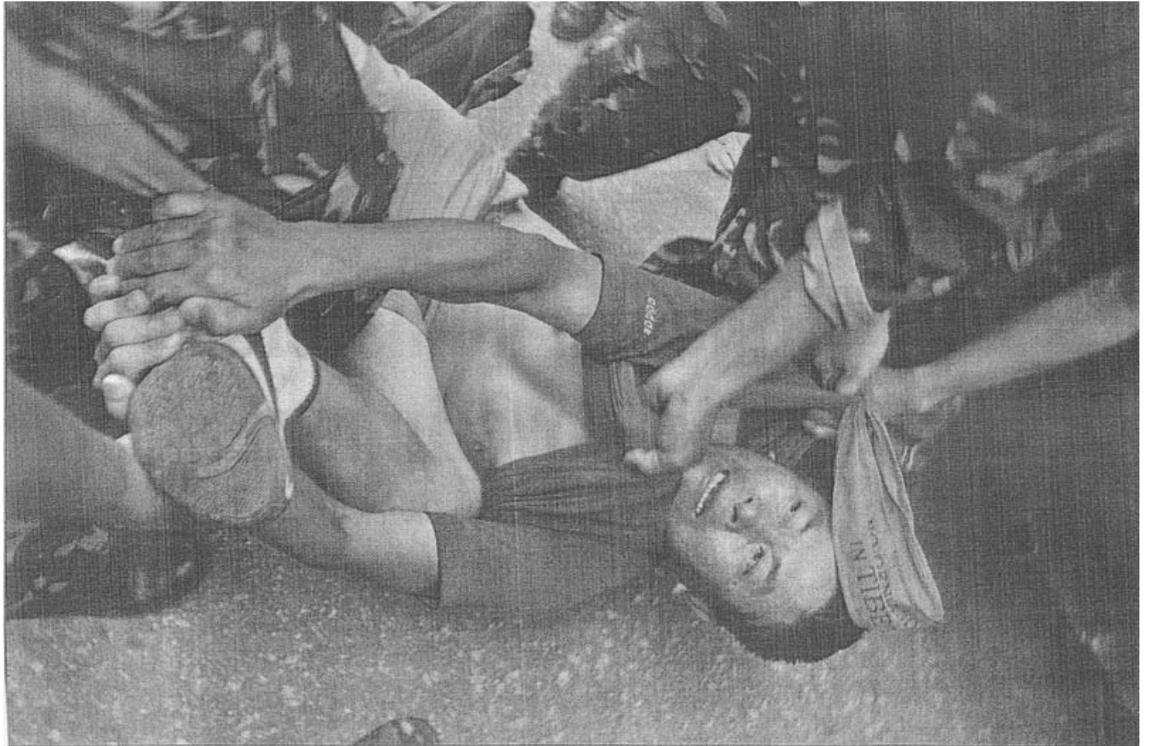
Police personnel detaining Tibetan protesters during an anti-Chinese demonstration near the UN complex in Kathmandu on Thursday.

b. Published in The Himalayan Times on June 2, 2008.



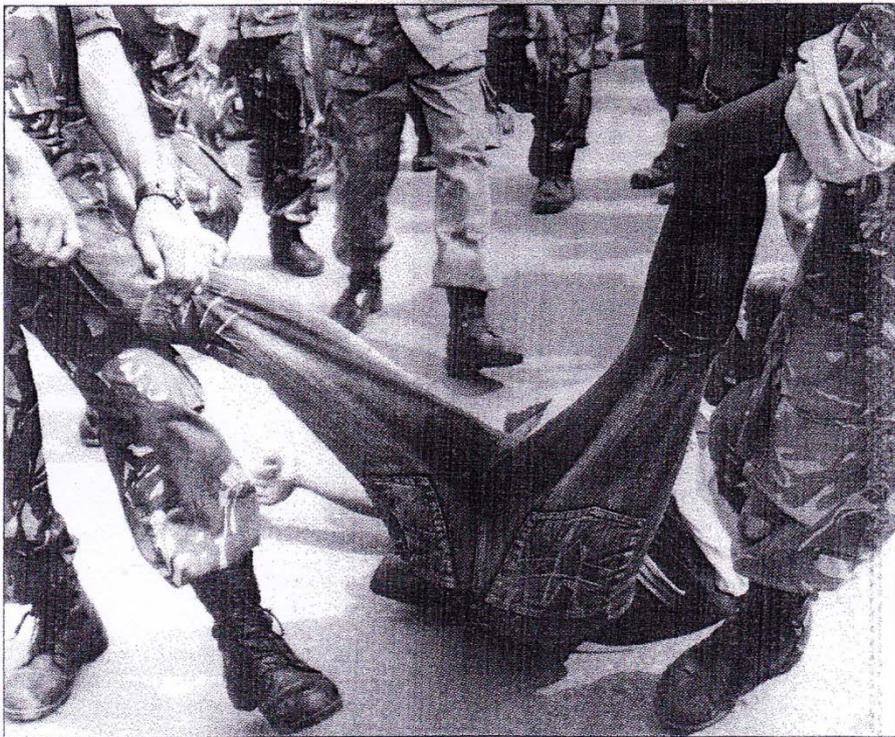
A Tibetan protester being arrested in front of the visa section of the Chinese Embassy in Hattisar, Kathmandu, on Thursday.

c. Published in The Himalayan Times on June 13, 2008.



Policemen arresting a Tibetan protester in front of the Chinese Embassy's visa section in Hattisar, Kathmandu, on Thursday.

d. Published in The Himalayan Times on June 6, 2008



Policemen arresting a Tibetan protester in front of the Chinese Embassy's visa section in Hattisar, Kathmandu, on Thursday.

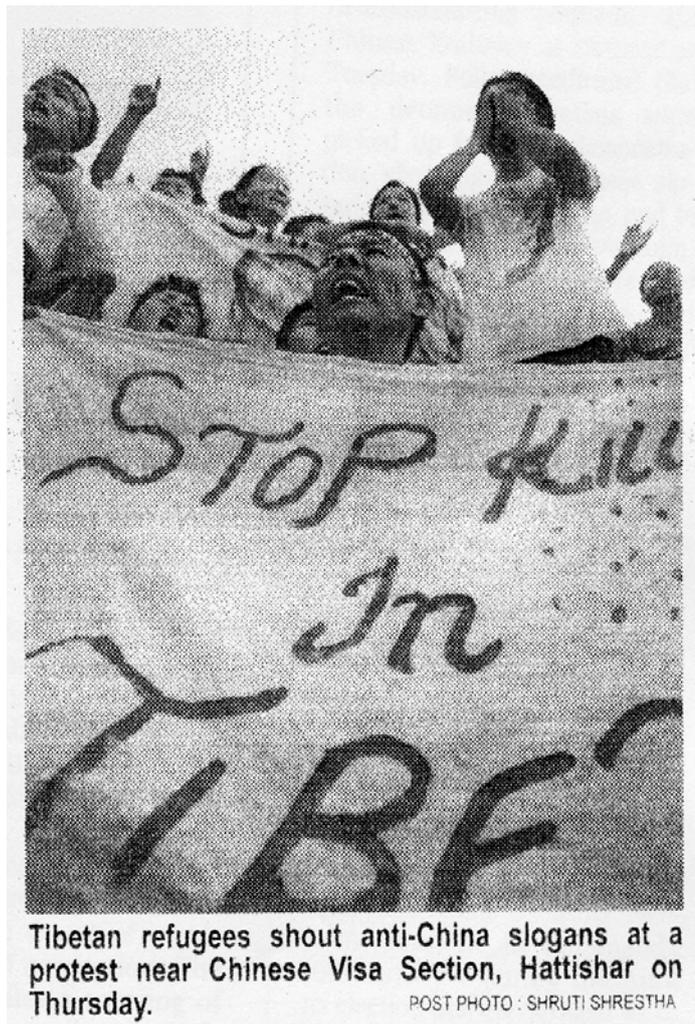
e. Published in The Kathmandu Post on June 3, 2008.



f. Published in The Kathmandu Post on April 21, 2008.



g. Published in The Kathmandu Post on August 15, 2008.



h. Published in The Rising Nepal on May 12, 2008.



Caption: Chinese Ambassador to Nepal Zheng Xianglin and other guests at an interaction in Kathmandu, Monday. Photo: Bikash Dware /TRN