Representation of Endangered Marginalized Ethnic Group in Media

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Abstract- Nepal's complex social structure makes identifying indigenous population particularly challenging. Indigenous are the original inhabitants of a land mass. They are not immigrants, and if they are the very first settlers of that area. They did everything to make the area inhabitable. Adivasi/ Janajati are one of the indigenous having their own mother tongue and traditional customs, distinct cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or oral history of their own. The objectives of this paper are to study about representation of endangered marginalized ethnic groups in media and to investigate their satisfaction on the media coverage regarding their ethnicity. The paper constitutes important elements of the research including the sources of information, survey, sampling methods, data presentation and data analysis. The result shows that the issue of representation of indigenous groups of people is important since they are under the threat of extinction due to lack of awareness and inability of creating the apt lifestyle in rapid changing world.

Keywords: Ethnic group, media, Nepal

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Nepal's complex social structure makes identifying indigenous population particularly challenging. Indigenous are the original inhabitants of a land mass. They are not immigrants, and if they are the very first settlers of that area. They did everything to make the area inhabitable. Hence, they cleared forests, arranged protection from wild animals and initiated economic activities that included but not limited to hunting and gathering as well as agriculture [1]. They put their energy skills and resources whatever insignificant it was to develop the very first settlements.

(Adivasi/ Janajati) are one of the indigenous having their own mother tongue and traditional customs, distinct cultural identity, distinct social structure and written or oral history of their own. They are trying to reconcile their groups with their cultural values while at the same time looking for new ways of interpretation of tradition the first argument is that of race.

In this way, the Adi Kirats, Magars, Tamangs, Gurungs, Sherpas, Tharus and many other branches of Mongol race are the Adivasis of central and eastern hills of modern Nepal covering the area between Limbuvan in the east and Magarat in the west.

The Aidi Khasas are the Adivasis of Khasas region.The Aidi Khas included present day of Matawali, Chhetri, Thakuri and Hill Dalits residing in Khasan region till today.TheKhasan region covered the hill areas of present day Karnali, Mahakali and Seti Zones [2].

The Tharus moved to several areas in the Terai as first settlers together with other Madhesis including Yadavs, Rajbanshis, and Satar etc. All of them are the Southern plains of Nepal. The Nepal Kirat's (Originally a branch of Kirat's with whom many immigrant groups assimilated afterwards), Newar's were the first inhabitants of Kathmandu Valley. Hence, the Newar's are the Adivasis of the valley.The Sherpas were the first to reside the Himali region from east to west, and they are the Adivasis of the valley.

Division of Adivasi/Janajati based on their population and socio-economic situation; there is the total of 6 ethnic groups in the endangered category. Kusunda, Surel, Hayu, Lopcha and Kushwadia are from the Himalayan region, Raute and Raji are from in between hilly and Terai and Kisan and Meche are from Terai region.

Likewise, highly marginalized category consists of 12 ethnic groups. Siyar, Lhomi, Thudam are from the himalayan region Majhi, Bote, Danuwar are from in between hilly and terai. Chepang, Thami, Baramo are from hilly region, and Dhanuk, Satar and Jhangad are from terai region [3, 4].

Similarly, marginalized category consists of 20 ethnic groups. Tapegola, Dolpa, Mugali, Larke, Walung, Bhote and Lhopa from himalayan region, Kumal, Darai from in betweenDisadvantaged category consists the total of 15

ethnic groups. Chairotan, Tangbe, Tingaule, Barhagaule, Marjali, Sherpa,Yakkha, Byansi are from Himalayan region and Gurung, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Jirel, Hyolmo.from hilly region. Advantaged category consists the total of 2 ethnic groups; Newar from hilly region and Bhattachan from himalayan region [5].

1.2 Indigenous People in Nepali Media

Only after 2046 B.S. the political change, Nepalese media flourished with more independency with the free space of the restoration of democracy. Before 2046 B.S., only few news about indigenous were published in the national dailies. During the Rana regime and Party-less Panchayat regime indigenous ethnic groups were treated as inferior groups of people. After the restoration of democracy the constitution was changed which offered liberty to all groups of people'

Though media was freed by Ranas after 2008, the representation of indigenous people were set in the margin. Media only gave emphasis on political issues. After 2047 B.S., more people have been involved in establishing different newspapers. Slowly, the news on the issues of indigenous groups of people started getting published. But the representation of them was weak because of having control of superior people.

In the matter of indigenous people, Nepalese mass media do not show their interest over them [6]. Different media workers or journalists have established organization to vocal particularly to the marginalized groups. One of the most vital organizations is 'Nepalese Indigenous Janajati Journalist Organization" in 2056. This organization raises voice of the voiceless groups.

One of the main immediate causes of vulnerability for marginalized groups is lack of education. Many marginalized groups face problems in maintaining their language and cultural identity, either due to their small size or because they have been forced to give up essential elements of their cultural and ways of life to access government services or avoid discrimination. A recent report published by Nepal's Department for International Development (DFID) said that its indigenous movement centers mainly on issues of governance and political representation. According to the report, indigenous peoples seek greater equality in linguistic rights and guarantees of access to common property and resources.

OBJECTIVES

- To study about representation of endangered marginalized ethnic groups in media.
- To find out their satisfaction on the media coverage regarding their ethnicity.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS
It is assumed that media has largely ignored the coverage of the issues of indigenous groups.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to the 2011 census, the indigenous nationalities Adivasi/ Janajati Nepal comprise 35.81% of the total population of 26,494,504, although indigenous peoples' organizations claim a larger figure of more than 50%. The 2011 census listed the population as belonging to 125 caste and ethnic groups, including 63 indigenous peoples, 59 castes, among them there are 15 Dalit castes, and 3 religious groups, including Muslim groups [7].

According to Ram Babu Shah, Marginalized groups are lagging behind in education due to which they are facing problems in maintaining their cultural identity.

2.1 Nepali Mass Media and Indigenous People
There are not much journalists or workers working for indigenous people. The number is still limited. Though different journals writers, book writers, activists have written about the historical, political, social, cultural and linguistic problems of these groups, media does not take this issue of representation seriously. But in today's context, the representation of issues of indigenous groups of people is increasing, but still not much as needed.

2.2 Presentation of Endangered Castes and Other Marginalized Groups in Media
Before 2063 B.S., there was rare news based on the issues of the indigenous groups of people. Lots of commercial news got larger space rather than the issues of the marginalized groups [8, 9]. If the news existed about them, they were commercialized. Only the commercial news about them was published instead of their problems and sufferings.

"Indigenous people's communities have relatively little access, voice and participation in the mainstream media. By and large, Nepal's media is owned and controlled by more socially and economically powerful groups or influenced by political parties. Indigenous peoples and other excluded groups have low representation in the media. Their demands are not always well represented or acknowledged" (UNDP).

"Despite a number of existing community radio stations in Nepal, indigenous peoples' issues are inadequately covered and often politicized. Little of the local news and programming related to IPs is produced by local radio stations" [10].

Not only are IPs under-represented in Nepal's media, they are not always properly and positively portrayed. During the assessment respondents from all IPs groups indicated that the lack of or negative coverage of issue related to their group was due to lack of journalists.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter constitutes important elements of the research including the sources of information, survey, sampling methods, data presentation and data analysis.

3.1 Sources of Data Collection
To know about the media representation of marginalized groups, researchers used both primary and secondary sources of information.

3.1.1 Primary Source
To meet the goals of the research, primary data were taken from various people according to their ethnicity. For the collection of data, questionnaire was given to 50 respondents to get them filled with their opinions.

3.1.2 Secondary Source
- Previously done researchers were viewed.
- Important information from research reports was duly noted.
- Newspapers and books were studied for further information.

3.2 Survey
Survey was also one of the techniques used for the research. The concrete reason for the usage of survey method was to study about their views, perceptions and critics on media coverage regarding their ethnicity particularly. The questionnaires were the tools for data collection for this study.

3. 2.1 Sample Size
For Sample Size, researchers choose 50 respondents. Researchers gave them to various respondents of their localities and other people Age group from 18 and above were taken since young children are likely to have not enough knowledge and update about media coverage regarding their particular ethnicity.

3.2 Sampling Method
Purposive Sampling Method was used for this survey method. Since researchers had selected special number of people of certain types and judgments (i.e. their ethnicity)

3.3 Tools and Techniques of Data Collection
The data for this research were collected from the questionnaires researchers regained from the respondents. Questionnaires were printed out and respondents were selected using purposive sampling method. Researchers collected their responses and data were systematically analyzed.

3.4 Data Presentation
Survey and questionnaires had been taken as the main sources of necessary data for the research. The data collected from 50 different respondents aging 18 above. From the responses and gained, data were systematically analyzed and then tabulated, converted into percentage and represented in the form of pie chart respectively.

3.5 Data Analysis
Data collected were systematically analyzed for the accuracy and verified conclusion. Every close ended question was presented in numerical facts and open ended were analyzed descriptively. For the finding of education status, current situation and their opinion on media coverage, this study applied the methodology like questionnaire, discussion previously done researchers on this topic.

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

Indigenous groups are estimated to speak their language fluently and their numbers are slowly been eroded. They have been forced to give their ways of life to access and foundations for Development of Indigenous Nationalities to coordinate supporting initiatives by formulating and implementing programmers' related to their social economic and cultural development. Loss of traditional livelihood, deforestation, impacts of climate change and lack of access to basic services result in their displacement and forced migration and these groups in particular is often not implemented and are deprived of political participation from decision making process and are no representation in public service.

Indigenous groups that are either very small in size or live far away from any town and did not integrate with the larger society through schooling, service. Even today many in these groups are in subservient relationships with their dominant patron neighbor who though their linkages to ruler economic status and higher education level dominate these groups.

A significant cluster of underlying causes for the vulnerability of marginalized groups stems from the legal framework and lack of political representation. They are deprived of political participation and are marginalized from decision making process. They have almost no representation in public service**.**

4.1 Answering the Research Questions
The questions were asked in the questionnaire consisting of basic and brief questions as well as some open ended questions, with the objective of researchers getting the clear idea of what the respondents could convey.

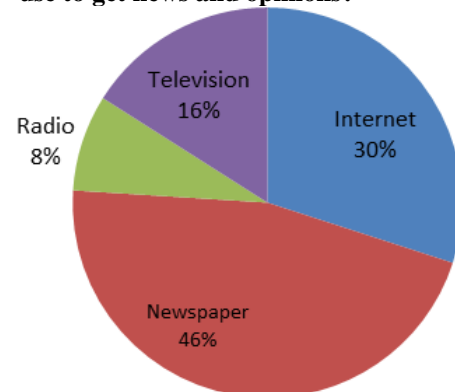**1.1.1   Research question 1: Which medium do you use to get news and opinions?**

Fig.1
Source: Field Survey, 2019

➢ **Distribution of the Responses according to the Mediums they use to get news.**

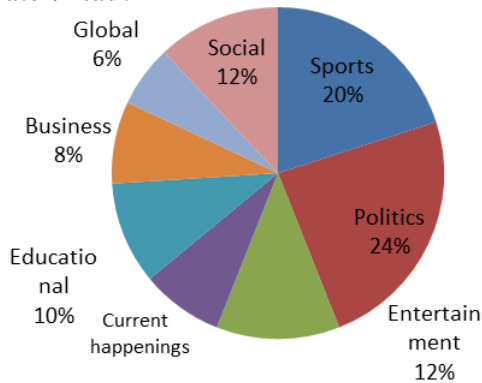**4.1.2 Research question 2: What types of news do you listen/ watch/ read?**

Fig.2
Source: Field Survey 2019

➢ **Distribution of the responses according to the type of News they prefer.**

4.3 Research question 3: Do you listen/watch/news regarding your ethnicity?
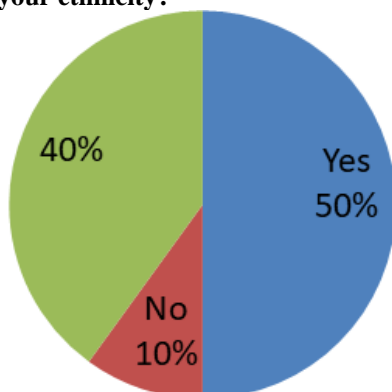

Fig.3
Source: Field Report 2019

➢ **Distribution of Responses according to their ethnicity news.**

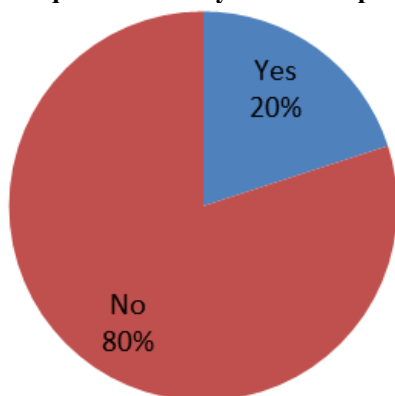**4.4 Research question 4: Do you feel less privileged?**

Fig.4
Source: Field Report 2019

➢ **Distribution of the Responses according to their feeling.**

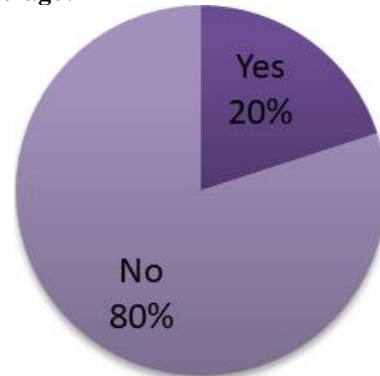**4.5 Research question 5: Are you satisfied with the media coverage?**

Fig.5
Source: Field Report 2019

➢ **It is Distribution of Responses according to their satisfaction on media coverage.**

4.6 Research question 6: What are the challenges you are facing as a less privileged group?

This is an open ended question which elicited many varied responses. The most frequent ones are as follows:

➢ 3% of the respondents do not feel any challenges and gave positive response of it
 ▪ They are been treated well and good.
 ▪ Do not have to face any challenges.
➢ 10% of the respondents gave negative views
 ▪ Lack of participants in higher position.
 ▪ Politically not represented.
 ▪ No recognition or support from government.
 ▪ Loosing opportunity on every field

4.7 Research question 7: How are media covering the current issues regarding your ethnicity?
➢ 20% of the respondents fell that
 ▪ Their ethnicity is never addressed by the media.
 ▪ Media just make propaganda for the headlines only.
 ▪ Only in times of festival media do cover them.
 ▪ Media are not giving the required amount of priority.
➢ 2% of respondents yet donot know about their ethnicity covered by the media.

4.8 Research question 8: What kind of action do you expect from media?

➢ 28% of the respondents expect that
 ▪ Media must introduce caste and rituals.
 ▪ Media should prioritize the extinctions.
 ▪ Expect them to cover all minorities equally.
➢ 2% of the respondents expect
 ▪ Media to cover the factual news and maintain their credibility.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Indigenous groups of people are less privilege basically. They are deprived of their social rights and justice often they are mistreated and also misrepresented. There becomes biasness somehow. As a conclusion of our survey I have found out that indigenous groups of people are not much satisfied with the media coverage regarding their ethnicity and the privilege they are getting in society.

In the case of representation of indigenous groups of people, there werehardly 8 media coverage regarding them in the year 2074 B.S. However, news regarding the privileges and opportunities they are getting can be rarely seen or heard.

There was a news report in the Kantipur daily on 1st of Bharda 2073B.S which was about a Bankariya girl getting the opportunity to pursuit higher studies given by the "Panchakanya Group" of Kathmandu" she was given the opportunity.

5.2 Recommendations

The issue of representation of indigenous groups of people is important since they are under the threat of extinction due to lack of awareness and inability of creating the apt lifestyle in rapid changing world. Media can play a vital role for it but very little space has been provided to them in media. Hence, we recommend the followings:

✓ Recognition should be given to the indigenous people by the government also.
✓ Rules should be implemented for the publication or broadcast of news regarding the ethnic tribes.
✓ Issues of indigenous groups are not being able to get exposed due to commercialization. So they should be more prioritized.
✓ It is also that the indigenous groups do not want to expose themselves; in most of the cases close observation should be done to solve this type of problems.

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ANNEX

Questionnaire

1. Which medium do you use to get news and opinions?
2. What types of news do you listen/ watch/ read?
3. Do you listen/ watch/ news regarding your ethnicity?
4. Do you feel less privileged?
5. Are you satisfied with the media coverage?
6. What are the challenges you are facing as a less privileged group?
7. How are media covering the current issues regarding your ethnicity?
8. What kind of action do you expect from media?

Brief profile

Dr. Gajendra Sharma completed doctoral degree in Information Systems Engineering from Harbin Institute of Technology, China. He received the degree of Masters of Engineering in Electronics and Communication in 1997 from Moscow Technical University of Telecommunication and Informatics, Russia. During the following years, he was employed in different IT companies and corporate organizations in Nepal as a professional engineer. He had also worked in a managerial and academic position in different companies and engineering institutions. He also served as a chief of engineering campus in Nepal for six years from 2005 to 2011. Besides managerial and technical work experience, he has been engaged in academic activities for more than twenty years. His research and teaching interest is focused on information systems, e-commerce (including e-business), strategic management of information technology (IT), IT adoption, design and evaluation of IT infrastructure, strategic management of IT as well as e-governance and ethics. Moreover, he has research interest on public administration, conflict management and emergency management. He published research papers in some of the top-tier information systems and IT journals such as *Information Systems Frontiers, Internet Research, Information Technology and People, Telecommunications Policy, International Journal of Web Based Communities and Electronic Commerce Research*. He is a reviewer and technical editor of a number of peer review journals relating to information systems and IT. He worked in Liaoning Technical University, China at the department of Information Systems as an Associate Professor from 2011-2014. He completed postdoctoral research on technology philosophy (e-government and ethics) from Dalian University of Technology, China coordinating with Delft University of Technology, Netherlands. In the meantime, he has been working in Kathmandu University, Nepal.

Ms. Silwal is Masters student at Himalayan White House College, affiliated to Purbanchal University, Nepal. Her area of research is media and human rights and strategic management.