

3GJ322: Theoretical MA Thesis

**Challenges of Investigative Journalism
in Nepal: The case of *Kantipur Daily*,
Nagarik Daily, and *Nayapatrika Daily***

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Abstract

This research is about the challenges of investigative journalism in Nepal. This thesis has explored the challenges, and experiences of investigative journalists working in three different print media outlets: *Kantipur Daily*, *Nagarik Daily*, and *Nayapatrika Daily*.

This qualitative research is prepared on the basis of in-depth interviews with ten informants. The research is focused on challenges and experiences of investigative journalists and the processes they use while doing investigative reporting. The findings are analyzed using the 'muckraking model' of investigative journalism.

The lack of a separate bureau of investigative journalism in the media outlets, low investment in the media for investigative journalism and deadline pressure to do investigative reporting are the basic challenges. Moreover, the impact of commercialization in the media, and the media's alliance with interest groups have impacted investigative journalism in Nepal.

To improve the quality of investigative journalism in Nepal, it is needed to assure professional safety and security of journalists and establish a separate bureau of investigative journalism. Trainings and guidance should be provided to journalists to refine their skills of investigative reporting.

Acronyms

CIJ, Nepal: Centre for Investigative Journalism

FNJ: Federation of Nepalese Journalists

IJ: investigative Journalism

NIC: National Information Commission

NSD: Norwegian Centre for Research Data

PCN: Press Council Nepal

RQ: Research Question

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Chapter I: Introduction

This thesis seeks to explore the challenges, and experiences of investigative journalists working in Nepal. The idea of doing research on Challenges of Investigative Journalism in Nepal originated because of my own fascination towards investigative journalism. I have been reading vibrant investigative stories produced in many national and international media outlets. I was always curious to know how those stories were investigated and produced, and what the challenges were of producing such groundbreaking stories. The whole research is more focused on challenges, and experiences of investigative journalists, and mechanisms they use while doing investigative reporting in Nepal.

Investigative journalism (IJ) is about the exploration of truth, checking on wrongdoings, and revealing the hidden secrets by any individual or interests group (Moreno, 2005). The Dutch investigative reporters group VVOJ defines investigative reporting simply as “critical and thorough journalism” (Kaplan, 2007, p.10). Likewise, UNESCO has defined IJ as:

“Investigative journalism involves exposing to the public matters that are concealed—either deliberately by someone in a position of power, or accidentally, behind a chaotic mass of facts and circumstances that obscure understanding. It requires using both secret and open sources and documents” (Kaplan, 2007, p.10).

The worldwide practice of investigative reporting has grown dramatically since the fall of communism began in 1989 (Kaplan, 2007) whereas the formal practice of Investigative Journalism took place in Nepal since 1996 with the establishment of CIJ (Centre for Investigative Journalism) Nepal. Investigative journalism has a significant impact on the emerging democracies like Nepal. And, it requires a perfect methodology, relies on primary news source, and demands more effort on fact checking (Patterson, 2000). In addition, if reported carefully, the consequences of an investigative reporting can act as an instrument for media development, accountability of government and strengthening of democracy (Peters, 2003). The investigative journalists play crucial roles in fostering accountability and transparency, fighting corruption, exposing organized crime, strengthening civil society, fueling reform, and calling for justice (Nogara, 2009).

Feldstein (2006) in a research, *A muckraking model: Investigative reporting cycles in American history*, defines, investigative journalism as the reporting, through one’s own work product and initiative, matters of importance which some person or group want to keep secret. Investigative journalism is not a gift, and it is required community resource in a democratic society. So, it is also considered as “in-depth reporting”. The investigative journalism is

rooted from America. The heart of investigative journalism lies in its use of fact gathering to challenge and muckrake the abuse of power that may be political or corporate. A serious and significant investigative reporting remains one of the crucial responsibilities and functions of free press, a bulwark of democracy that is most for bringing societal change peacefully. Intervening factors such as the existence of social movements, the presence of quick-witted legislative systems, and political situation that doesn't restrict investigative journalism, are catalyst for change (Soderlund, 2016).

Realizing the strengths of IJ that it brings out information that is not publicly available, and contributes for the nurturing of an informed society, I finally confirmed to conduct a qualitative research aiming to explore the challenges experienced of investigative journalists in Nepal. According to the annual report of Press Council Nepal (2018), 147 daily newspapers are published regularly in Nepal. The restoration of democracy in 1990, and peace process of 2006 in Nepal has provided the fertile space for the mushrooming of the media outlets in Nepal. However, I have chosen only three daily broadsheets published from Kathmandu. They are *Kantipur Daily*, *Nayapatrika Daily*, and *Nagarik Daily*, because these national daily broadsheets are highly circulated newspapers in Nepal.

To examine the emerging threats and challenges that revolve around investigative journalism, ten participants have been selected with a background in investigative journalism. In-depth interviews have been conducted to gather data from informants. Inductive approach of Muckraking models has been deployed to analyze the risks and challenges investigative reporters have to face while doing their jobs.

This research, basically, attempts to answer four key questions. They are:

Research Questions

RQ1. What do they regard as the major challenges for doing investigative journalism in Nepal?

RQ2. What resources are set aside in *Kantipur National Daily*, *Nayapatrika National Daily*, and *Nagarik Daily* for investigative journalism?

RQ3. What are the experiences of journalists from *Kantipur National Daily*, *Nayapatrika National Daily*, and *Nagarik Daily*, pursuing investigative stories?

RQ4. What is the criterion for being an investigative journalist?

1.1 Statement of the problem

Nepal is a developing country where democracy is flourishing and the institutions aren't matured. The rampant corruption, crimes, human rights abuses, unaccountability and violation of press freedom are some of the prevailing issues that have weakened the institutions (Trionfi, 2012). Transparency international's report 2018 has revealed that Nepal is in 124 out of 180 countries, and scores 31 out of 100, in the corruption perception index-2018. Investigative journalism plays a significant role exploring the details of such wrongdoings. And, investigative journalists scrutinize governmental bodies, political parties, and stakeholders to hold accountability to the public (Peters, 2003). The practice of professional journalism nevertheless in Nepal is not developed yet. Press freedom in Nepal is limited (Paudel, 2017), and the risk of reporting the issues which an interest group or government tends to keep secret, is still a daunting task in Nepal.

Adhikari (2016) states that despite the democratic political practice in Nepal, series of scandals of corruption and irregularities, especially in bureaucracy, academia, and health sectors are rampant. Investigative reporting on these issues is most required. However, genuine investigative journalists are outliers, and there are not that many. Adhikari (2016) further justifies that shallow, event oriented journalism is the journalism trend till today in Nepal. In-depth stories with breadth and context are rare, largely because the investigative methods has not been internalized in newsrooms and many outlets struggle financially and lack skills, if not access, required for new platforms. In addition, lacks of resources, monetary as well as professional competencies, and lack of collaboration within newsroom, are additional challenges of IJ. Lack of zeal in reporters, in contrast, is another challenge.

Partisan political fidelity, in one hand, curves journalist's freedom to write freely and fearlessly. Reporters, on the other hand, don't gamble to tread on the commercial interests of their own publishers (IMS, 2014). As consequences, truth remains masked, and so the irregularities and wrongdoings do. The armchair culture of "he said/she said", on the other hand, prevails Nepali media landscape. IJ today is distinguished by passion for the craft, collaborative and technical skills such as data analysis, graphics and arguments (Adhikari, 2016).

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to explore the challenges experienced by the investigative journalists contributing for *Kantipur National daily*, and *Nayapatrika National Daily*, and *Nagarik Daily* in Nepal.

1.3 Background of the study

Access to information and free speech must be a global practice but the non-democratic regimes persistently oppress the free press across the world (IMS, 2014). Journalists working on investigative stories face more pressure than the rest and Nepal isn't an exception. Authorities selectively target the journalists working on investigative stories that often involve corruption and misuse of power by the rulers and politicians. According to *Constitution of Nepal 2015*, Nepal is recently a federal democratic republic country. The existing government, led by two-third communist party, is the first government after implementation of Constitution. *Constitution of Nepal 2015* has guaranteed press freedom. However, the government attempts to curb the press freedom time and again. And, the year 2018 has been noted as the challenging year for the freedom of press (Service, 2019). According to Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), Communication Monitoring Unit of FNJ has recorded as many as 58 cases of press freedom violations in 2018. Safety of journalists and growing concerns among local reporters has become a matter of great concern among Nepali media practitioners. Local investigative reporters and country's leading newspapers like *Kantipur National Daily*, *Nagarik National Daily*, and *Nagarik National Daily*, which still have maintained their position for bringing difficult stories are at risk more than ever they had been. The chief justice of country's highest court in February 2018 threatened to jail and detains journalists of *Kantipur National Daily* if they dare to criticize him. He [Chief Justice of Supreme court] directed the Press Council to ensure that the leading daily refrains from bringing any story that could harm his reputation. The Paris based press freedom watchdog 'Reporters without the Borders (RSF)' denounced the act and called it 'misuse of the judicial apparatus' (RSF, 2018). Top officials of the government and opposition leaders don't only publically intimidate journalists working on investigative stories but they also violate the principle of press freedom guaranteed by *Constitution of Nepal 2015* (House, 2016). The state, which is responsible for ensuring safety of journalists, is often blamed by the investigative reports for bullying and threatening them. Kunda Dixit, the founder of Center for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) in Nepal had to change his physical appearance in a bid to exit the country (Butler, 2016). The Committee to Protect Journalists (2016) reported that Dixit had to flee from the country because of a possible 'witch hunt' in which he was afraid of being detained and imprisoned because of a fake and fabricated case against him that blamed him for owning wealth beyond his earnings. Mr. Dixit has termed the allegations against him as politically motivated by Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority.

“Ten years civil war” (1996-2006) shook Nepali peoples’ lives leaving them in a woeful conditions, thousands of women widowed, children bereaved, parents disconsolate, and dreams incomplete. A book compiled of investigative stories named “*Mantha Daraeko Jug*” meaning “people living in fear” serves the stories of people’s lives in war-affected zone during civil war (Adhikari, 2017). Similarly, Padilla (2018), in an article, *This is not just a story anymore, when journalists break the objectivity rule*, writes immediately after the civil war ended in 2006, another book, “*A People war: Images of the Nepal Conflict 1996-2007*” was published. That was the book with more than 3000 photos, which reveals the stories of cathartic feeling of people during civil war period.

1.4 Challenges of IJ in Nepal

Onta (2001), in his research paper, *The print media in Nepal since 1990: Impressive growth and institutional challenges*, stated that the mushrooming of print media began in early 1990s when the private media organizations *Kantipur Daily*, *The Kathmandu Post* and followed by other broadsheet dailies were flourished. It has been nurturing the IJ although their huge investment needs and the small size of the political-financial elite set in Nepal. Despite an occasional in-depth report were done at the initiative of an individual journalist, the big newspapers have been unable to undertake ground-breaking investigative journalism on the tie between business, corruption, politics and crime in Nepal on a regular basis. In spite of these constrains, investigative journalism in Nepal is increasing in both qualitative and quantitative regards. Lack of research and analytical skills yet have limited even magazines relatively free of the financial-political constraints discussed above from substantially improving the quality of investigative journalism in Nepal.

Dixit (2011), in his article, *Real Investigative Journalism in a Virtual World*, explains that IJ was highly restricted by government and revolutionary forces indirectly in ten years (1996-2006) conflict and the restriction was continuing even on transitional peace process. By product of this restriction, a lot of groundbreaking novel, story, fiction, essays, photo-story and documentary films were written by journalist, reporter and civil activist (Dixit, 2011). On the basis of these clues, it can be said that the practices of IJ in Nepal has been taking place beyond the prevailing journalism rules of today. Dixit (2011) further mentions that journalism schools established later after 1990 tutored journalists to be observers, and not to get too involved, or to keep a distance. But some practices of interference and involvement in finding a solution to the conflict, make revolutionist guilty against their brutal activities, speak with victims’ favor was happening during the war. Also, hidden camera recording to dishonest officers while corruption is rampant, disclosed of high secret news during investigative story

that goes in-depth and behind the scenes will actually strengthen the democracy, free press, and peace.

Corporate media houses, these days, are suffered with “copy/paste” journalism. Copying news either from another new media or from print media outlets has become a key challenge in Nepali journalism (Dixit, 2011). Following journalistic code of conducts, and media ethics to foster healthy journalism practice have become a debatable issues these days (PCN, 2018). In average, journalists themselves have failed in doing what are expected to do to meet professional standards. The study indicates that self-censorship, including other factors, is playing a decisive role for avoidance of watchdog function and holdback from investigative reporting by the journalist (Adhikari 2005).

PCN (2018) reports that the popular jargon “*things shouldn't be published*” is paid less attention, and is violated through new media associated with social sites including blogs, Twitter and Facebook. In the year of 2018, 57 cases of violation of press freedom have been registered. Among those 57 cases, 19 journalists were arrested, 19 were threatened, 15 were suffered from attacked, and 13 were mistreating (PCN, 2018). This also represents the challenging situation for journalists in Nepal.

Trionfi (2012) reports that the core problems affecting the media in Nepal are inadequate legal guarantees for press freedom, access to information, climate of violence against journalists, lack of transparency in media owner structures, and political influence in media content, lack of professionalism and inadequate trainings for journalist. These lacks have marked the poor journalism in Nepal. IMS (2014) reports that the threats from power holders are not the only challenge of doing investigative reporting experienced in south Asian countries such as India, Nepal, Thailand, and China. The commercialization of media, in additions, is another major challenge despite the lack of resources. Journalists and editors in mainstream media are scared of what they will find when they dig too deep, and afraid of publishing stories of wrongdoings and irregularities happening inside, which could mean a loss of advertising (IMS, 2014).

Shiva Gaunle, an investigative journalist, and editor of CIJ, says that the Security for investigative journalist, in Nepal, is questioned time and again (Republica, 2017). Similarly, the drive to reach to the root of the information is absent in Nepali journalism practice. This trend prevents us from coming up with an in-depth reporting on many issues, which are yet to be covered (Republica, 2017).

1.4 Current status of investigative reporting in Nepal

Most of the investigative stories in Nepal are concerned on politics and parliamentary issues. “Accommodation allowance for landlord lawmakers”, is one example of investigative stories related to parliament. Mainstream media, especially, daily broadsheets, and some weekly magazines are producing investigative stories. For example, *Annapurna Post daily*, *Nagarik Daily*, *Kantipur Daily*, *Nayapatrika Daily*, *Kathmandu post*, are the broadsheet dailies that have been doing investigative reporting. Similarly, *Himal Saptahik*, and *Nepal Saptahik*, are also bringing investigative stories occasionally.

In addition, new media, for example, *setopati.com*, *nepallive.com*, and *pahilopost.com* also have started producing investigative stories these days. Interestingly, these new media are covering quite different but interesting issues that are being covered less by mainstream broadsheets and weekly magazines. “The series of rape and murder of Nirmala”, by *pahilopost.com*, “Series of sexual exploitation and violence in Bomjon’s ashram” by *setopati.com* and “Contract Irregularities: sale and purchase of land of Tara Goan, Hyatt Regency hotel”, etc. are some of the examples of series of the investigative stories produced by new media in Nepal.

Besides, CIJ (Centre for investigative journalism) Nepal has been working, especially, in the field of investigative journalism since 1996. It has been playing a significant role in preparing investigative journalists in Nepal. It organizes workshops and training program in collaboration with some international projects such as International Centre for Investigative Journalism (ICIJ). However, CIJ Nepal doesn’t have its own journalists. It calls for short-term fellowship and traineeship in investigative journalism. And, journalists from other mainstream print media have been grabbing those opportunities of fellowship and traineeship to do investigative stories. Interestingly, it has been carrying investigative stories in different social issues besides corruption, for example, human trafficking and smuggling, medical mafia; problems migrant workers are facing in case of foreign employment, etc.

HUTT (2001-02) explains about the censorship and self-censorship in Nepali Press Media regarding major political and national issues, for example, the ‘Royal Massacre’, “Maoists Civil War & Emergency”, “Nirmala -Rape & Murder”. These issues are famous in national and international level. These issues were not covered with deep investigation though these were the issues of public interest. Hutt further explains, this may be due to the tolerance or intolerance of the state authorities, dislike and like of the government, sanctions they are prepared to apply, journalistic honesty and competence.

1.5 Ethical considerations

The Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) has been notified that the personal information of the informants will be kept confidential. Also, any part of the information they do not want to get published will not be disclosed without their prior consent. And, the confidentiality of their personal information has been strictly maintained throughout thesis writing process. Only the concerned people, for example, my thesis supervisor, program coordinator and administrative body at NLA/University College will be provided access to the data collected during the fieldwork in Kathmandu, Nepal if only they asked the researcher to present the data.

The researcher doesn't have any personal connection with the organization that she has chosen informants from. In addition, this is an independent research with self-funding of the researcher. This is a theoretical research based on in-depth interviews with four senior investigative journalists, and six active investigative journalists contributing for *Kantipur National Daily*, *Nagaril Daily* and *Naya Patrika Daily*.

Chapter II: Literature reviews and theoretical framework

In previous chapter, it has been discussed what the research is about, what the RQ are, what the background of the study is, and how the current status of the investigative journalism in Nepal. In this chapter, many literatures have been reviewed on several topics regarding global challenges of IJ, global practice of investigative journalism, and the theories of journalism.

2.1 Media development through investigative Journalism

Sullivan (2013) in the article, *Investigative Reporting in Emerging Democracies: Model, Challenges, and Lessons Learned*, talks about the media development through investigative journalism. Media implementers consider investigative journalism as a tool that can be applied as their effort to improve the media landscapes in emerging democracies. Investigative journalism has been considered as a fundamental pillar to democracy for it is accredited for the most changes, and reforms in the country. Investigative reporters cover a very tiny portion of the total staff in the media organization, or sometime there may not be any investigative reporter for a media outlet. And, it could not have been practiced much, as it is required.

According to a research conducted in Sub-Saharan, Africa, investigative journalist were found of four types (Lublinski, et al., 2016, p. 8). The first type is ‘getting an important issues on the public agenda’, meaning that investigative journalist writes a news story with the aim of getting an important issues on the public agenda. It helps public know about what is happening in the society. The second is ‘helping to solve an immediate problem’. It means that investigative journalists write news stories to help government or stakeholders to solve the problem. Similarly, the third is ‘triggering structural change’ which means an investigative story help to achieve structural changes by pressurizing government to reform the policy. Lastly, the fourth is ‘supporting the science uptake’. Investigative stories helped to convey scientific information to the public, in terms of weather forecast, as an example. Media organizations and investigative journalism can contribute to solving problem in the society (Lublinski, et al., 2016, p. 8).

Kunda Dixit, editor of *Nepalitimes weekly*, in *Reinventing Muckraking*, marks that journalists need to be highly committed and determined while doing investigative way of reporting because they will be confronted with many restraints and pressures (Robie, 2011). The pressure may be from publishers and editorial board due to time and resource limitations, or threats from those under scrutiny, as well as legal complications after publishing the

stories. Therefore, an investigative journalist must be good at selling the stories to their boss and public as well.

Rosenthal (2011) argues that sustaining investigative journalism means finding a new model in journalism. Likewise, Feldstein (2006), on “*Challenges of Investigative Journalism*”, argues that accepting investigative journalism is the first requisite to sustain it. Along with muckraking of corruption in public and corporate sector, investigative journalism should also bring other stories, for instances, labor issues, environmental degradation, famine, military and police violations, and rural problems, social justice and peace (Soderlund, 2016).

The traditional journalism has shifted from manually written and calculated journalism to the era of data computation and quantification (Baack, 2015). “*Journalism in an era of big data*” is a way of seeing journalism as introduced through the conceptual and methodological approaches of computation and quantification (Lewis, 2015). Data has been considered as a prerequisite for generating knowledge, and transferring that knowledge to input raw data in the system. And, raw data (facts and opinion) allow people to make their own interpretation, and to generate their own knowledge. In this way, open data has articulated the notion of democracy, and participation in journalism. Moreover, Data journalism is newly an emerging form of story telling, which incorporates both traditional journalistic working methods and modern programming data analysis techniques (Appelgren & Nygren, 2014). Data journalism stories are usually based on the data sets often consists of public data or data collected from “crowdsourcing”. This type of journalism has facilitated journalists to calculate the monetary irregularities done by corporate and public group, which is interest of society. In addition, it has helped the journalist reducing the time consumption to produce a story and to get accurate calculations quickly. The practice of data journalism has eased investigative journalism in many parts of the world, for example, in Sweden and America.

International Alert (2013), Federation of Nepali Journalists, and Equal Access Nepal, jointly published the review of media-related policies and laws in Nepal in 2013. This review focuses in challenges and opportunities for media professionalism in Nepal on the basis of existing and relevant media-related policies and laws in Nepal, including international conventions and declarations to which Nepal is a signatory party. This report suggests that government must form new laws and amends old policies and law, focusing the improvement on administrative sector and its thorough implementation.

Alert (2013) in its report *Media in Nepal, Opportunities for peace building*, widely reviews the roles of Nepali journalists in peace building in Nepal. Also, the report has revealed that media companies are more concerned about the security of equipment and physical assets than about the safety of journalists, leaving journalist vulnerable to external

risks. Journalist's dishonesty while writing the stories, on the contrary, loses the audience's trust over news stories. Study has shown that journalists distort the facts while writing about political parties, and people involved in criminal works of smuggling and illegal activities and mafia. These sorts of challenges in doing investigative stories, in fact, may undermine the quality of reporting.

A cultural shift is required in the way we approach and compose the story. Many journalists do not reach the public. We need good investigative journalists to work with digital devices, and turn the arcane survey data into stories. Investigative journalism is more about techniques and tools for laborious writing on issues of public interest. The impact of the stories establishes it as the investigative stories indeed (Adhikari, 2016).

The Watergate scandal of USA is one of the powerful examples of investigative journalism in the world. Although the story of Watergate scandal faced skepticisms in the initial stage, it developed its long-lasting credibility and the depth of the reporting of the Washington Post when it successfully brought down a corrupt government (Moreno, 2005).

2.2 Legal provisions, rules and regulations in Nepali media

After the new *Constitution of Nepal 2015* promulgated, many more Acts, rules and regulations came into implementation. The constitutional guarantee of civil rights and freedom of the press has fueled healthy journalism so far. Right to Freedom (Article 17. 2, a), Right to Communicate (Article 19), Right to Information (article 27), Right to Privacy (article 28) are some provisions which guarantee freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of free press under the constitution of Nepal 2015. The working Journalist Act, Press and Publication Act, Press Council Act, National Broadcasting Act, Working Journalist Act, Right to Information Act, Electronic Transaction Act, Copyright Act, Secrecy of Document Act, Nation News Agency Act, Gorkhaptra Corporation Act and Communication Corporation Act are the instrumental law to regulate the media in Nepal (NIC, 2016).

Under the press council Act, Nepal press council enforced the journalism code of conduct, 2016 to make the exercise of decent, accountable and responsible, professional journalism (Journalist Code of Conduct, 2016). Likewise, Code of Journalistic Ethics, 2003 has been amended and revised, brought into effect under Section 7(b) of the Press Council Act. Protection and promotion of press freedom, safeguard and enforce the right to information, respect for right to privacy, imparting true and factual information, respect for right to privacy, readiness to rectify errors, not adversely affect social justice or goodwill, not to encourage violence, terrorism and crime, not to disclose confidential sources of news, etc. are the code of conducts that every Nepali journalist should follow while doing journalism.

2.2.1 Right to Information (RTI)

Nord (2007) in his article, *Investigative Journalism in Sweden*, claims that Sweden is the first country in the world to introduce RTI Act in its constitution. He further explains that regarding the practice and challenges of investigative journalism in Sweden, more commercialized media and their delivery of less informative news and soft news have been observed as major challenge. Similarly, existed routines of news organization that mostly favor mainstream and inexpensive news are recognized as additional challenges of IJ. To investigate government claims is perceived as a cornerstone in journalistic practices and less uncontroversial function of watchdog journalism in democratic society. However, effective government press sometimes can hinder the investigative news reporting, too. Journalists had to spend a long time to “go around” to meet the press officers to get information of governmental activities.

According to National Information Commission (Fiscal Year 2015-16), article number 27 of the Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal promises every citizen’s right to demand and receive information on any matter of his/her interest or of public interest without any condition (Commissions, 2014-2015). The RTI Act 2007, Clause (11), provides for the establishment of an independent National Information Commission. The main objective of this commission is protection, promotion and enforcement of Right To Information in partnership with chiefs of public bodies, information commissioners, RTI campaigners, media fraternity and frontline civil society activists. Under this legal and official base, Nepali journalist, media reporters, correspondent and others freelancer reporter get their information form different sources.

Baskota (2018) in his article, *Right To Information: A tool to strengthen democracy* discusses about the history and status of RTI in Nepal. RTI is perceived as synonym of democracy. Sweden is the first country to enact RTI law in 1976 whereas it came into effect in Nepal from 2008 after the promulgation of *Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007*. Journalists are first to use RTI in Nepal. It inspires people to seek information from the government and public organizations and ask for government documents and their copies. When journalist’ do not have easy access to governmental and organizational documents, they can file RTI in Nepal. Through the RTI, citizens know about government decisions and the limitations of the country and the government. In addition, it promotes accountability, and plays a crucial role in combatting corruption and establishing good governance in the country (Baskota, 2018).

The efforts to establish Right To Information have been made along with the enactment of *Muluki Ain* – the Civil Code – in Nepal in 1963. It is found to have become

successful only after 1990. Article 16 of *Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal* (1990) enshrined the right to information in it. Likewise Article 27 of *Interim Constitution of Nepal* (2007) has clearly stated “Every citizen shall have the right to demand or obtain information on any matters of concern to himself or herself or to the public”. Article 27 of the new *Constitution of Nepal* 2015 has retained the spirit of the very provision, with some changes made: “Every citizen shall have the right to demand and receive information on any matter of his or her interest or of public interest”. There is a legal provision for the person to lodge complaint or make appeals at the National Information Commission (NIC) against the concerned public institutions in case they have denied providing the information that has been sought or provided unclear or incomplete information. With this, the number of people lodging complaints or making appeals to the Commission against the institutions that deny information has been increasing every year. The growing consciousness among the people regarding right to information and the campaigns led by Right To Information activists can be considered to be the key factors behind this.

Rai (2017) explain the unique history of Nepali journalism under the title of “Nepal media role: Matter for debate” on News Paper *The Himalayan Times*. The first publication of the newspaper in Nepal was in Nepali language in the first year of the 20th century. English language journalism in Nepal, however, was practiced only after the overthrow of Rana regime 1950 (Rai, 2017). Rai further stresses that in the context of media power and media markets, the nature and significance of media institutions and media policy cannot be undermined. Although developing countries in the world do have similar struggle for the freedom of expression and institutionalization of the press, Nepal experienced quite different one, as Nepal was never colonized in the history of Nepali politics.

2.2.2 Press freedom situation in Nepal

Adhikari (2005) describes, transparent politics and independent media go hand in hand. Democracy and press freedom are two sides of the same coin. Curtailing press freedom hurts democracy and vice-versa (Dixit, 2011). History of democracy in this developing nation Nepal has been occasionally endangered even democratic electoral participation is a recent culture in Nepal. Despite the *Interim Constitution Assembly of Nepal 2007* has guaranteed press freedom, the incidents of press freedom violation are recorded every year (Paudel, 2017). Some organizations concerned with media freedom and performance paralleled with the government’s institutional initiatives to nurture the hard-won democracy in 1990 and later on. In this scenario, young Nepali print, digital and online media cannot do groundbreaking investigative reporting that would rock the power equations of Nepali society.

Dixit (2011) has argued that press freedom and democracy are considered as two sides of a same coin. Restraining press freedom, and suppressing content undermines democracy and democratic practices of a country. That is why it is substantial to unleash the full power of investigative journalism. It is believed that every investigative story that goes in-depth and behind the scenes plays a vital role in strengthening democracy and the free press of the country. However, the professional hazards for journalists in Nepal have got so serious that reporters risk their lives to investigate stories of corruption, and illegal lobbying. Journalists get threats not only from tyrants and dictators; even their owners, who suppose media organization just as their business, do not secure them (Dixit, 2011).

2.3 Historical background of Nepali journalism

The history of Nepali mass media began with the traditional means of communication. Hundreds of years ago people used to beat drums and blow conch in order to gather together and then to share information. Public communicator (Katuwal) and folk singers (Gandharvas) were also assigned to spread the message of public importance in the community (Bhandari, 2008, p.63). Katuwals used to inform villagers by speaking loudly, while Gandharvas, who are still found roaming around the rural areas of Nepal, used to walk from door to door singing songs and playing their own musical instruments (Sarangies). Gandharvas, the traditional singing caste, fulfilled the role of mass media in the past. They familiarized people with not only the current affairs, but also social, cultural, and political situation of the country. It is said that they had also made a great contribution for the establishment of modern Nepal by spreading the message of unification under the guidance of Prithvinarayan Shah (first king of Shah Dynasty in Nepal). All these traditional means and methods were based on folk, verbal and group communication. However, the formal history of modern mass media in Nepal takes place during the Rana regime, an autocratic rule that lasted for one hundred and four years (Dahal, 2013). The first Rana Prime Minister of Nepal, Jung Bahadur Rana brought a printing press to the Nepal from his trip to England in 1851. The press gifted by Queen Victoria was the first modern technology of mass communication operated in the country.

During Rana Period (1847-1951) there was only one print media '*Gorkhapatra*' (1901). It was a state-owned newspaper under the control of the autocratic Rana regime. Function of journalists in this half-century period after '*Gorkhapatra*' (1901-1951) was basically to disseminate government notices and information.

The first Nepali magazine that was published in Nepali language from Nepal was *Sudhasagar* (NPI, 2010). It was a monthly literary magazine and the second publication in

Nepali language. Likewise, the history of Nepali journalism moved on with the publication of *Gorakhapatra* weekly. The concept of news value rooted for the first time in a notice issued as government order by then Prime Minister in order to establish the *Gorakhapatra* weekly. The notice, which was known as ‘*Sanad*’, incorporated the concept of news and news value and the same time advertisement was distinguished clearly (NPI, 2010).

2.3.1 Media in Nepal after the establishment of democracy in 1950:

The establishment of democracy in 1950 turned to be golden days in the history of Nepali journalism. After 1950, numbers of print media as well as electronic media, state-owned 'the *Radio Nepal*' (1951) aired in the country (Bhandari, 2008). The period after 1950, i.e. after the establishment of democracy, was the time when Nepali press started to enjoy political freedom as well as freedom of speech and expression. Many newspapers came into publication from the capital city, Kathmandu, and also from different parts of the country outside of Kathmandu. *Samaj*, *The motherland*, *Dainik Samachar*, *Everest*, etc, are some instances (Bhandari, 2008). Newspapers published during that period were highly dominated by political contents. Nepali journalism entered into the new phase of political writing and reporting from its non-political and literary background.

In the autocratic rule before 1950, Nepali journalism had to struggle for the press freedom till the end of the regime. However, it was the time when Nepali mass media made significant progress from the infrastructural point of view. Within a short period after the declaration of the Panchayat System, *Gorakhapatra* the first newspaper of the nation declared daily in 1960.

Film Media, National News Agency, multi color printing press, Ministry of Information and Communication, Nepal Telecommunications, Ratna Recording Studio, Cultural Corporation, Sajha Publications and Janak Education Materials publication Ltd were the institutions, established during the Panchayat era (Bhandari, 2008, p. 68 & 69). However, the fact that should not be forgotten in spite of significant infrastructural development of mass media was Panchayat regime did not allow journalism to enjoy press freedom; rather it curbed the press in a subtle way.

Until early 1990, when the king-led Panchayat System gasped for its final breath, the most powerful media in Nepal were all state-owned (Onta, 2001). The two daily newspapers, *Gorakhapatra Dainik* (in Nepali), and *The Rising Nepal* (in English) were published by Gorakhapatra Sansthan, a ‘corporation’ under government control. Similarly, *Radio Nepal* and *Nepal Television* (NTV), both also were owned by the state, and the state had complete monopoly over the broadcasting media.

Journalism was considered a volunteer profession until the emergence of big media houses after 1990, which led to the development of media commercialization (Acharya, 2017). Many young people with a journalism degree entered media looking at it as a career rather than just a writing hobby. This created a heterogeneous mixture in the journalistic community, with senior journalists carrying political ideologies, and younger generations largely following journalistic principles. However the political transition and turmoil in Nepal for the last two and a half decades have forced everyone to become political, and journalists are not exceptions. The majority of journalists are members of journalist unions, which are formed as wings of political parties, and their affiliation is often reflected in the contents they produce (Acharya, 2017).

2.3.2 Media situation in after the restoration of democracy in 1990:

Kharel (2006) in his report *Media in Nepal: A study of Journalism* writes since the 1990s, about a dozen of broadsheet daily newspapers made their debut in Nepal. Nearly half of them have folded up. Pluralism in terms of number of newspapers is making a steady progress. Regulations on issues such as media concentration, monopoly and advertisement distribution are inadequate. It has become almost a fashion in some narrow circles in the capital city to talk of writing an article on newspapers in Nepal. The most prominent media outlets in Nepal in the present are still prints- including *Kantipur Daily*, *Kathmandu Post*, *Nagarik Daily*, *Annapurna Post*, *Republica Daily*, *Nayapatrika Daily*, *Himalayan Times* among others.

While talking about the features of media outlets, we should consider on some important aspects on Nepali mass media. Nepal's media landscape is characterized by two important factors. First, the high number of radio stations that are spread across the country at a local level and have a greater reach to the overall population. As a media researcher Badri Paudyal noted in the 2013 in his article, *Radio Broadcasting: Access and Functioning*, the overall radio service in Nepal is established as a strong, popular and credible medium of information with a large following of listeners (BBC, 2017). In 2008, in an article titled *Radio and the Recent Political Changes in Nepal*, media commentator Pratyoush Onta has stated that radio's large coverage, citizens' access to radio, and the plurality in terms of language of broadcast as the main reasons for the popularity of radio as a mass media.

2.3.3 Turning point in Nepali media history:

The growing number of television stations and the digital news outlets are all set to change the dynamics of the media landscape in Nepal (Acharya, 2017). More than a hundred televisions channels have received licenses for operation in a country of 29 million

populations. Although Nepal lacks reliable data on television viewership, many believe that televisions, especially the primetime news bulletins of 8 to 9 pm in the evening, have a large audience, yet they only receive around 20 percent of total advertising expenditures. Most of the television stations focus on news-based programming, as they are relatively cheaper and easier to produce in the studio.

Online media outlets have received a lot of attention lately. The Internet penetration has increased dramatically in recent years, and the online news consumption has seen a similar rise because of the popularity of social media and the availability of smartphones. In recent years, some senior and well-known editors have invested in digital media outlets, which have increased the impact of those media among political and social elites (Acharya, 2017).

The Kathmandu Post started its online version's publication on 1995 AD. *Kantipur* Publication claims it to be the first online version of newspaper in the entire south Asian sub-continent. The publication was available on website: www.southasia.com. Similarly, the first Nepalese online page to host on its own domain is *Himal South Asia* under www.himalmag.com, which started publishing in 1997. Many Nepalese publication houses were still indifferent to web at the moment when *Himal South Asia* came. Afterwards *Kantipur* publication moved to web on the domain of www.kantipuronline.com and later www.ekantipur.com. Nowadays, mainstream print media outlets also have started their online version (Anjaan, 2011).

Onta (2001) in his research, *The print media in Nepal since 1990: Impressive growth and institutional challenges*, states that most media houses continue to be situated in Kathmandu. The country's media has faced the challenge of covering a ten-year long armed conflict between the Maoists and the government of Nepal. The overthrow of the monarchy finally let the beginning of the peace process in 2006, has given way to the mushrooming of vibrant media houses with a diversity of voices in this newly democratic climate (IFJ, 2015). The constitution, promises equal representation of all castes, ethnic groups, genders and regions in 'New' Nepal. Nonetheless there are still challenges for all industries in Nepal – including the media. Since the government has no clear media policy, there is no official recognition of the essential pre-requisites for independent media to flourish. Under the circumstances, some media houses in Nepal today are run by politically aligned individuals and operate as mouthpieces of particular political parties. Government has failed to introduce clear policies to enhance the quality of media house. Political intervention in the media sector has also led to the non-implementation of minimum wage regulations.

2.4 Current demographic status of Nepali media

According to the annual report of the *Press Council Nepal 2018*, total 7905 newspapers are officially registered. However, only 953 out of 7905 papers are actively publishing. Among them 211 are dailies, 6 bi-weekly papers, 639 are weekly papers, and 26 are monthly magazines. Most of the outlets are published from capital city; Kathmandu and some of them are published from other main cities such as Pokhara, Butwal, Biratnagar. Likewise, 840 FM radios and 153 televisions have received approval letter to broadcast ahead. Moreover, 1380 online media are registered on press council, and have been continuing their regular broadcast. The number of the journalist involved in Nepali media (print, broadcast and online) is about 25000 (PCN, 2018).

One of the biggest alliances of Nepali journalists is FNJ (federations of Nepali journalists). It is a professional representative body of more than 13,000 media persons working in all areas of print, digital and modern online media across the country (FNJ, 2018). This umbrella organization is working on behalf of professional and physical security of the journalists and is associated with many international organizations. Violence against journalists has emerged as a worldwide human rights problem. The two common saying, “Unity is strength” & “unity is diversity”, are applicable in Nepali journalism. Hence, journalists in Nepal help each other and together they fight, struggle and tackle the negative forces. All most all Nepali journalist & press institute have their organization and they are somehow protected under their umbrella organizations. Federation of Nepali Journalists, Nepal Journalists Association, Nepal Press Institute, National Union of Journalists, Nepal, Nepal Press Union, Centre for Investigative Journalism, Nepal, Sancharika Samuha - Forum of Women Journalists and Communicators, Photojournalist Club Nepal, Working Women Journalist, Freedom Forum, Nepal Forum For Environmental Journalist, Press Chautari Nepal, Jagaran Media Center, are some of the active and popular domestic network/union working on behalf of journalists. Similarly, in international level, there are some global networks where journalists are associated in a way or another for the safety and security reason. Those international networks of journalists are Reporters Without Borders, The International Federation of Journalists, and South Asia Media Solidarity Network, Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma, and Freedom Forum.

The characteristic of a political system of a country plays a crucial role in the functioning of the media in that country (Adhikari, 2005). Nepal experienced a lot of political changes from 1950 to 2006. In 1990 Nepal emerged from an autocratic regime, which under the direct rule of a single-party government, exercised the total control of the state over media (Onta, 2001). Government was not liberal and supportive to private media. However, a

popular peoples' movement in 1990 led to the dawn of a multi-party democratic framework which is relatively more liberal towards the media, including private media organizations. Nonetheless, Maoist insurgency for a decade (1996-2006) badly affected the flourishing of media and democracy. Social insecurity, murder, kidnapping, violence, corruption, human trafficking, price hiking, immorality, etc. occurred during Maoist insurgency, which indeed have badly affected the democratic practice of Nepal. Fortunately, after the end of political insurgency in 2006, Nepal entered into the peace process, which gradually offered a fertile platform for the blooming of media outlets.

Kantipur National Daily in Nepali, and *Kathmandu Post* in English medium established in 1993, whose production quality and editorial standards set them accredited for their leading role for the institutionalization of free press and professional journalism in Nepal (Rijal, 2014). Similarly, *Annapurna Post* daily with its sister publication, *The Himalayan Times*, established in May 2002, *Nagarik Daily* with its sister publication, *My Republica daily* by 2008, *Naya Patrika Daily* by 2007, and many other daily, weekly, bi-weekly, and monthly magazines published after Nepal entered into the peace process by 2006. With the mushroom like growth in media outlets, journalism practice in Nepal gradually became competitive, and professional.

Acharya (2017), in addition, mentions that the state is a prime player in Nepal's media landscape. It owns a major publication house, the *Gorkhapatra Corporation* that publishes two dailies and magazines; the national television network with three channels – *Nepal Television*, *NTV Plus* and *NTV News*; the national shortwave radio with regional broadcasts and an FM radio; as well as a news-only agency, the *National News Agency* (RSS). There is ongoing effort to incorporate radio and television into the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), but it remains only in the policy documents. However, the state is also the regulator requiring all print newspapers to register before publication. And, the media outlets get subsidies from the government. It's Public Welfare Advertising (PWA) scheme, managed by the Department of Information (DoI), is major advertising revenue for small media outlets.

Adhikary (2016) has explored the status of Nepali media and Journalist, in terms of their safety, both physical and physiological. In case of Nepal, currently, there is no shortage of journalist willing to work as an investigative reporter. But many have neither the skills nor the training that investigative reporting requires. Investigative reporting requires some basic skill and whole reporting depends on the ability of journalist to access, gather, process, crosscheck, accurately furnish and published the information (Adhikary, 2016). Moreover, even the corporate media outlets may not be willing to invest in time & finance, resources for follow-up and the development of investigative reporting capacity that investigative

journalism must have. On the other hand, if reported carefully, investigative reporting also embarrasses the comfortable relationships between media owners and interest group (politics and business), and turn off revenue from advertisement donors. The struggle of Nepali journalists and reporter, in different media houses for getting minimum wages for their work as prescribed by government is also the bitter reality (Paudel, 2017). In Nepal, nearly half of the journalists have no job contract letter and suffering from low wages, irregular payment and poor working condition.

Acharya (2018), in his report *Media Landscapes in Nepal*, he has presented the overview of Nepali media. The numbers of media outlets, print, online, and broadcast, in the capital city, Kathmandu, and in regional parts have been growing rapidly after the restoration of democracy in 1990 in Nepal. Interestingly, growing number of TV stations and digital news media outlets are set to change the subtleties of media landscape in Nepal. This has caused the competition of quality and immediacy in media landscapes, which of course is a good opportunity for journalism graduates. All the media outlets that are registered in National information Commission get subsidy from the government. Likewise, Press Council Nepal (PCN) issues the Journalistic Code of Conduct in an alliance with Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ).

Dahal (2013), in his research, *Nepalese Journalists' Democracy Building Roles and News Coverage Practices* explains the role of private media and journalism to build democracy. Privatization and commercialization on media system in Nepal has created an environment where journalists' activities of news producing are established as a competitive profession in the country. Besides, this act of commercialization in media has challenged the journalistic professionalism in Nepali journalism. Market and audience are more prioritized than the quality of media content in this system. Henceforth, media outlets, especially the online media or online bulletin of print media, on the name of maintaining immediacy, care less about the quality of media content they are serving to the mass audience (Dahal, 2013).

(Coronel, 2003) in a research paper, *Corruption and the watchdog role of the news media*, writes about the investigative reporting, democracy and press freedom with comparison of Latin American and South Asian countries. Investigative reporting and a free press are possible only where professional safeties are guaranteed for the journalists. A fledgling democracy like Nepal has different constitutional and legal provisions to combat the press theoretically. But, in practice, it is challenging for media to write fearlessly. In addition, investigative reporting on political-setting, corruption, human trafficking, murdered, human rights violations and other forms of wrongdoing has helped build a culture of accountability in government, administration and supported the fledgling democracies of the country.

2.5 Gender representation in media:

IFJ (2015) reports an interesting finding that media industry in Nepal is overwhelmingly male dominated. Based on research done in Kathmandu, only 24 percent of journalists are women. Men dominate the leading level management of most media organizations. Almost all editors and owners of media houses are men. The environment and policies of media workplaces are not yet conducive for women to advance in their professional careers. In terms of women in journalism in Nepal, it took almost 50 years for women-centric journalism to strike roots from the opening of the first media outlet (IFJ, 2015). Nepal was, and still is, a patriarchal society where men are expected to be the bread earners of the family and women are expected to remain at home and get busy on household works.

2.6 Muckraking scandal and scam in Nepal

Paude (2017) in his research, *Critical Analysis of Press Freedom in Nepal after the Peace Agreement 2006* discusses about the growth of media's endeavor in bringing vibrant stories. After peace process of 2006, media became quite critical to government, political parties, and interest group. Especially, print media outlets have been playing crucial role in revealing the issues related to crime, murder, fraud, human trafficking, social evils, and corruption through reporting. However, most of the stories are focused on the issues related to public corruption and irregularities. Investigative stories on multi-million-dollar Sudan Scam, one of the high-profile corruption cases in Nepal (Post, 2017), which involved top military officials who embezzled money kept for Nepali soldiers engaged in UN peace mission. This is an international scandal, which has questioned the reputation of Nepal Police in peacekeeping process. Similarly, "33 kg gold smuggling" case was another case of corruption where the gold was smuggled using Tribhuvan International, and 293 persons including high-level police officers were involved in the racket (Post, 2018).

Despite the challenges, for example, jailing of journalists, fear of losing jobs, and death threats still exist in Nepal (Acharya, 2015), country's leading broadsheet dailies, *Kantipur National Daily*, *Nagarik daily*, and *Naya Patrika National Daily*, have continued to muckrake difficult stories, in which political leaders, and government bodies holding responsible posts are involved. To illustrate more examples, "wide body aircraft scam of 2018" is one, where over four billion Nepali rupees was misappropriated while purchasing the two wide body aircrafts. And, many political leaders including late tourism minister Rabindra Adhikari and, president of Nepali Congress, Sher Bahadur Deuba were also suspected to have involved in this scam (Review, 2019).

Maharjan (2018), in an article, *Corruption, Corruption, Everywhere*, has summed up the biggest corruption scandals that are happened in Nepal. The defunct Tax Settlement Commission scam of 2017, where member secretary of the commission himself was involved, was another big corruption where 30 billion Nepali rupees was to be settled, and in Nepal. Similarly, the plots of land procurement by Nepal Oil Corporation's in the name of constructing fuel storage facilities was another vibrating investigative stories. Nepal Oil Corporation was found buying land through middleman, and have shown the bills of purchasing which was 54 times more than the real price of the land. And, corruption increases when political influence sides with it (Maharjan, 2018). These were the potential scandals that shocked the country.

2.7 Theories of Journalism

Benson (2008) in his research, *Journalism: Normative Theory* talks about what the press should do for the betterment of society. Normative theory clusters the special idea that the press should be of representation, and accountability, on news value, standards of news and journalist's role perception. However, normative theory of the press remained just as an artificial construct because no one from politicians to ordinary citizens remained consistently believer to the idea of accountability and representation. Though the journalistic practice doesn't parallel with the ideas of normative theory, normative theory has secured its position on discussion of professional journalism such as in journalism education and training.

Similarly, Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm (1956) introduced *Four Theories of the Press* on the basis of 'what press should do and be'. The four theories are: Authoritarian theory, libertarian theory, social responsibility theory, and Soviet Communist theory. "The Four Theories are a linear combination of two analytical sub dimensions based on state systems: authoritarian and libertarian" (Ostini & Ostini, 2002, p. 42). The authoritarian dimension was considered as the key protocol and was pervasive of all the dimensions. This means authoritarian dimension remains dominant and influential no matter what others dimensions the government subscribes. Likewise, libertarian theory revolves round the idea that distrusts of the role of the government. And, government and state surveillance is considered as the major role of the media (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). Soviet Communist model, on the other hand is observed as the total practice of authoritarian model that media are strictly subordinated and controlled by the state and government. And, Social responsibility theory, in contrast, talks about the citizen's rights to be informed and the press should serve them with right information.

Nordenstreng (2006) in his research paper, *Four Theories of the Press reconsidered*, writes that although the four theories of the press fulfilled the gap among communication academics and professionals, many have criticized it for its oversimplified history and systematic inadequacy. The political and cultural biases the four theories of the press embody have been recognized early in 1960, i.e. after four years of its publication. Similarly, Ostini & Ostini (2002) in their article, “*Beyond Four Theories of the Press*” discuss about the empirical failure of the four theories of the press. With the fall of Communism in the world, the social norms, media and society have been reinterpreted or are in the verge of reinterpretation using new theory and framework. The central idea of *Four Theories of the Press* that ‘what press should do and be’ (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956), on the basis of political situation of a country, sustains as the new order has already annulled their power. Despite the fact that *Four Theory of the Press*, is widely taught globally as an introductory course of theories of the press, those four theories have been considered as an obsolete and inappropriate theory for the analysis of contemporary media situation in the world. It has been further discussed that new ideas are required to internalize the media system and journalism of current time. Also, the new idea must be something those are beyond any political persistence.

Christians, Glasser, McQuail, Nordenstreng, & White (2010) authored a joint project, *Normative theories of the media: Journalism in democratic societies* from University of Illinois Press. This book has clearly set the demarcation among three basic typologies: philosophical traditions, political systems, and media roles. At the same time, the set of these three ideas are described interrelating to one another. The corporatist, libertarian, social responsibility and citizen participation, are four typical philosophical traditions discussed in the *Normative theories of the media: Journalism in democratic societies*. Similarly, Pluralist, Administrative, Deliberative and Direct are the models of democracy categorized under heading of political systems. Likewise, the roles of journalism, has been classified into four sub headings as Monitorial, Facilitative, Collaborative and Radical. The media roles practiced and political systems of a country might be different. However, these three typologies offered a choice to choose the best while describing the scenario of journalism and media of any country in the world (Nordenstreng, 2006) and minimize the variation at each level of analysis.

Hallin & Mancini (2011) in their book, *Comparing media systems beyond the Western world*, discuss about the three models of the press with four particular typologies. Those three models of the press are: Polarized Pluralist Model, Democratic Corporatist Model, and Liberal American Model, and four typologies comprise of market economy, journalistic professionalism, political parallelism, and role of the state, over media. Despite it is said that these three models of the press are developed comparing media systems beyond

the western world, Hallin & Mancini themselves admit that it is not the “Universal Models of Media System”. Hence, these three models of the press unfits in the Nepali media system where democracy is just growing up.

Moreover, Hanitzsch & Vos (2018) in their research paper, *Journalism beyond democracy: A new look into journalistic roles in political and everyday life*, complain that journalistic roles have been studied from within Western framework angled towards the media’s contribution to democracy and citizenship. Observing journalism from only Western framework fails to account for the realities in non-Western and non-democratic contexts. Therefore, journalistic roles as discursive constructions of journalism identity have been conceptualized subjecting on the (re)creation, (re)interpretation, appropriation and contestation roles of the journalism and the media (Hanitzsch & Vos, 2018). Also they argue that journalists exercise crucial roles in political and everyday life of people. On behalf of political life, journalists perform roles that instruct, analyze, monitor, educate, and facilitate the state and the government. Similarly, in terms of everyday life, journalists carry out roles that exposes the consumption, identity, and emotion of people’ lives.

To investigate a story, a journalist is needed to be an inquirer of the change making story, rather than a simply a reporter and an editor (Dixit, 2011). Besides, the investigative journalism requires a good cost to produce at a time when most publishers, especially, media owners are seeking to reduce the cost. This is also a substantial challenge of investigative journalism. But, IJ is a form of journalism that puts significant impact on creating public transparency of powerful institutions, strengthens publication’s brand, and develops the foundation where resolutions of public interest issues can be explored. Similarly, Bill Birnbauer, a renowned Australian investigative journalism and journalism educator claims that the ‘absence of corporate interference, government control, daily deadline pressures or the need to attract advertising’ puts quality investigative journalism in higher position (Robie, 2011).

Coronel (2010) in a research paper, *Corruption and the watchdog role of news media*, states that the notion of the press as watchdog is more than 200 years old, but yet the idea of vigilant media scrutinizing government and muckraking its excesses has gained new grip in many parts of the world. Similarly, “investigative reporting has long been considered a vital bulwark of democracy as a check on wrongdoing in politics and public policy, but a pejorative word has been coined to describe it as “muckraking”(Feldstein, 2006, p.105)”. American president, Theodore Roosevelt, coined the term “muckraking” more than a century ago, in March 17, 1906. Muckraking has its many synonyms such as investigative reporting, adversarial journalism, and public service journalism, which evolved over the years in style and techniques of reporting. According to Hampton (2009), in new democracies, the “Fourth

estate” is understood as synonym of the press, where the major idea of the “fourth estate” is to promote discussion and “educate” readers, or to “present” them by publicizing abuses. And to do so, it requires the accessible representation of serious information and an independent perspective. “Fourth Estate” journalism in other word is understood as watchdog journalism. It scrutinizes the irregularities and wrongdoings happening inside the government bodies and helps them to hold accountability. There are immense examples of impact of watchdog journalism in the world. “The *New York Times*’ publication of The Pentagon Papers (1971), Edward Murrow’s *See it Now* campaign against Senator McCarthy (1954), and Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein’s exposure of the Watergate break-in and cover-up (1973)” are world-vibrating examples of independent journalism (Hampton, 2009, p.6).

The numbers of media outlet has been increased with private ownership in media. Having been practicing investigative journalism shows the democratic nature in the political situation in the country. Media often tend to be independent in democratic political environment of the country. However, the concept of the press as “Fourth Estate” has been threatened by the growing concentration of media ownership in the twentieth century (Hampton, 2009).

Nepal has begun practicing such muckraking gradually after the end of “civil war” in 2006. Muckraking model is directly proportional to the press freedom and democracy of a country. Muckraking is possible only where there is meeting of two disparate parties or groups. Journalists’ security and privacy goes under threats and surveillance in the countries where the political turmoil exists. And, the supply of investigative reporting goes low in the chaotic political situation of a country.

2.8 Overview of Journalism education in Nepal

A joint report of Parajulee, Humagain, Panthi, & Maharjan (2009) exposes that the journalism education was first introduced at proficiency level in Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Nepal by 1976. With the aim of producing quality journalists, journalism education in higher secondary level was introduced in 1997, and in Masters level by 2001.

Similarly, Pokharel (2001) in his research, *Journalism Education in Nepal: In search of new moorings*, discusses about the journalism education and training in Nepal. Nepal Press Institute (NPI) introduced journalism training in non-formal way by 1984. Prior to that, one used to become a journalist by ‘learning by doing’ process. NPI is an institution that provides media training to the journalists with the aim of excellence in journalism. However, there are number of schools, colleges and university that provides journalism and mass communication today. And, the journalism graduates are supposed to be engaged in various sectors besides

journalism, for example, NGOs/INGOs, Public Relation (PR) officers in business industry, media organizations, etc.

However, journalism is taught in other universities besides Tribhuvan University. Kathmandu University, Pokhara University, and Purbanchal University have also launched journalism education these days. (Pokharel (2001)

Gans (2011) stresses that investigative journalism, as a particular genre of journalism should be taught in universities as well. Academic journalist's involvement in investigative reporting is crucial. Academic institutions such as universities and colleges can play in building and maintaining investigative journalism in every region of the world. Universities and colleges should guide their students to prepare a research that can be of importance to society. On doing so at a time when the public relations industry is growing and traditional media is shrinking, university-based investigative journalists can fulfill the gap of investigative journalism, both in partnership with media organizations and through their own publications. Also, universities should build research cultures, which hopefully promote practice based innovative research and more experienced journalists move into the academy (Gans, 2011).

2.9 Global challenges of Investigative Journalism

Almania (2017) in a research paper, *Challenges Confronting Investigative Journalism in Saudi Arabia*, has documented that common challenges to investigate a reporting, in Saudi Arabia, include lack of information, lack of access to documents, reporters' fear of being tarnished, and some safety concerns. Besides, the fear of informants of not being completely anonymous on delivering the information adds more challenges for the journalist to access the information. Another interesting fact, Almania states, is that privately owned media receiving government subsidies do not directly write against the government with the fear of losing subsidies, and even license to run media as well.

Arab News (2018) has reported about the new criminal law and its impact on journalism in Nepal. Despite being a federal democratic country, Nepal hasn't been successful to establish it as a journalism friendly country yet. Even though the constitution guarantees freedom of speech and expression, the provisions of the new code appears to limit such freedoms. New criminal code of Nepal has marked a giant step backward for press freedom. The new criminal law makes criticizing government for its failure to boost media. Rather the codes prohibit publishing private information of officials, and ban recording and photograph without permission to publish or broadcast. This has truly put journalism into risky position than ever.

Azhagan Chenganna (2017), in a research article “Investigative journalism in the post-truth era: views from Mauritius” writes that with the development of social media and amplification of news sources, investigative journalists are obtaining information from hackers and leakers in post truth era. The information obtained in the form of leaked documents either in electronic version or secretly leaked materials have become a backbone of investigative stories in Mauritius. Despite the culture of obtaining information through unethical means in post-truth era has weakened the relationship between journalists and their sources, investigative stories have impact on uncovering bad governance and the corrupt practices

Kasoma and Pitts (2017) in a paper, “Challenges of doing Investigative reporting: A Zambian case study” have highlighted, lack of access to information” as the major challenge of doing investigative journalism in Zambia. Besides, Government Red Tape, Inadequate funding and institutional bureaucracy, political violence, and inadequate training, are other challenges that a journalist comes across while producing an investigative reporting.

Rasmin and Raguram (2017) in their joint research, “investigative Journalism in Sri Lanka”, explain the effectiveness of investigative video storytelling. Along with the effectiveness of video storytelling, they have pointed out some key challenges of doing investigative journalism in Sri Lanka as well. Poor media pluralism and lack of transparency in the process of offering license to media has been recognized as the major challenge. Similarly, getting less support from editorial board, lack of incentive, lack of professional safety for journalists, political affiliation, commercial media, and privilege of skepticism amongst the journalists and civil society, have been noted as challenges of doing IJ in Sri Lanka. In order to increase the effectiveness of IJ despite these challenges, Rasmin and Raguram (2017) suggest that the investment in media convergent could be a better option. Editorial independence, and trainings offered to journalists, in addition, can contribute for the efficacy of IJ.

Homolova (2017) in his paper, *Graph my tender: exploring public procurement networks*, talks about the obstacles posed by corruption in public spending. The major source of the government revenue is taxes. And, government allocates budgets in different level- local, provincial, and central level, every year for the development of nation. Government publishes tender and eligible company send their proposal on behalf of aiding government for developmental work. But, once a company wins the tender and begins the developmental work, there occur irregularities. Therefore, public should monitor the government tenders. Corruption on the name of public spending affects the Welfare of the inhabitants. So, journalism should uncover the irregularities for it has a power to set topics for public

discussion to eradicate the corruption. (Homolova, 2017) emphasizes the roles and responsibilities of media to check on corruption on the name of public spending.

2.10 Social media and advance technology:

A review article published in *Nepali Times* by Initiative (2018), discusses about changing landscape of Nepali media. According to a survey conducted in Nepal, broadband Wi-Fi is still limited in affluent household in urban areas (Initiative, 2018). People do not have sufficient access to Internet to go through online news. Despite 90% of people are using mobile sets, only 35% of them do have access to Internet i.e. via mobile data. And Facebook is commonly used social media for interaction with people in national and international level. Besides, TV is the most reliable source of news. In one hand, the circulations of printed newspaper in Nepal do not suffice the number of household. On the other hand, very few people read a paper daily, relying on radio and TV for local, national and international news. Fortunately, with the development of advanced technological means of communication and availability of infrastructure in recent days, the process of human communication has become speed up. Now, Nepalis are getting two-way communication as they are increasingly accessing the Internet for interactive social media (Rai, 2017).

Soderlund (2016) states that the impact of Internet technology can be seen in IJ worldwide. It has deepened the revenue concerns in one hand, and has opened the new possibilities in the other. The emergence of funders willing to support new investigative projects have been affected as the Internet has rendered investigative reporting more collaborative and international.

CIVICUS (2019), an online platform that tracks threat to civil society, reports, “Fundamental freedoms in Nepal continue to face serious threats. Information technology bill tabled by Nepal government would impose strict sanctions for improper social media posts, if the proposed new social media law came into effect”.

Conversation (2016) reveals that in Nepal, digital tools are changing the ways in which journalists seek, find, and share their stories to the audience. In *Asian Investigative Journalism Conference*, held in Nepal, journalists shared that use of social media, in one hand, has contributed to reduce the cost of preparing investigative stories. Following people’ status and tweets, has often worked as clues of the issues for further reporting. Also, using social media such as Facebook and Twitter, it is cheap and fast to contact the concerned stakeholders regarding the issues. On the other hand, it has made possible of global outreach

of stories. Large number of audience can participate at a time to read, critique, and share the stories.

Chapter III: Research methodology

In previous chapter II, and I, it has been discussed about the introduction of this thesis, literature reviews and theoretical frameworks that have been used in this research while analyzing the findings. In this chapter, the details of research methodology such as how, where, and when the data are collected, and how data is handled and presented, will be discussed thoroughly. My research is based on qualitative approach, and the research revolves round the “Challenges of Investigative Journalism in Nepal”. Specifically, it explores the challenges (RQ1) and experiences (RQ2) of investigative journalists, and resources set aside for investigative journalism (RQ3), and the criteria to be an investigative journalist (RQ4) in Nepal. To explore these things, it is requires explanation, description, observation, symbols, views of the informants. And, these are non-numerical, non-statistical data.

3.1 Rationale for choosing qualitative approach:

Qualitative research strategies, as explained by Toloie-Eshlaghy, Chitsaz, Karimian, & Charkhchi (2011) are used to interpret and reveal concepts and meanings rather than generalizing relationships. This research is about the exploration of the challenges of investigative journalism in Nepal. Therefore, choosing qualitative approach appears to be the best choice. For the qualitative research, it is found that different methods of data collection such as semi-structured in-depth interviews, and focus group discussion have used. And, for this research, only qualitative interviews have been used as a data gathering method to collect information from individuals about their own practices, past and present experiences, belief or opinions, and to tap into the expert knowledge of an individual (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Although qualitative research has occupied large space, especially, in social science genre, there are things that a researcher should be aware of (Hadjistavropoulos, & Smythe, 2001) while doing a research using qualitative method. There remains a probability where confidentiality of the informants may, sometimes, be leaked. Similarly, the meaning of the narrative may differ while transcribing narration from one language to another. Therefore, in this research, I myself have conducted face-to-face interviews with the informants. Also, I myself have done the task of data transcribing in order to avoid the weakness of meaning lost and twist in the translation. Since my research is about exploring challenges and experiences of investigative journalism in Nepal, I have applied semi structured in-depth interview as a technique of data collection. Having semi structured interviews with the informants meeting them physically and talking to them face to face seemed more applicable to find out answers for my research questions. Also, the chance of clearing confusions and making probe if needed was another substantial feature of semi-structured interview.

3.2 Sample Size:

As main goal of qualitative research methods is to grasp phenomena, from the views of informants, in significant social grounds (Krefting, 1991), I travelled to Kathmandu, Nepal for a month. And, I collected data from a sample of 10 informants. Among them, one was a female informant, and rests of them were males. There are two reasons for this. First, Nepali journalism industry is male dominated, which I have discussed in my literature review part. Second, I found only one female journalists doing investigative reporting in those three media outlets. Although the gender representation doesn't have a big role in my research, I tried to include at least one female to hear the challenges of female journalists while doing investigative journalism. The sample size used in qualitative research is often smaller because research methods used in qualitative research are concerned with acquiring in-depth understanding of phenomena or meaning centered on the how and why of a particular issues of social interaction (Dworkin, 2012). Although, I was tempted to have interview with more informants than I did, most of the answers given by informants were kept repeated, and I received less new information while I was having interview with my 10th informant. These 10 informants are investigative journalists having more than a decade of experiences in journalism.

To be specific, two journalists are from *Kantipur National Daily*, two are from *Nagarik Daily*, two are from *Nayapatrika National Daily*, and four are senior freelance journalists, authors, and journalism trainer having long experiences of journalism in national and international media outlets.

3.3 Sampling, and sample technique:

As the major aim of this research is to explore the challenges experienced by investigative journalists in three different media outlets in Nepal, a non-random purposive sampling method (Bryman, 2016) has been used. It is called as non-probability or selective sampling techniques. This purposive sampling is relying on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to process of selecting unit (people) to be studied. The main goal of purposive sampling is to concentrate on particular features of a population that are of interest, which will best enable a researcher to answer his research questions (Etikan, 2016). Usually, the sample being investigated under this purposive sampling method is quite small sample size. Equal numbers of informants have been chosen from three different media outlets, i.e. two from each. Besides, there are wide ranges of purposive sampling techniques; one of them is "Expert Sampling". Expert sampling is a type of purposive sampling technique that is used

when research needs to gather knowledge from individual informants that have particular expertise on his sector. “Expert sampling” is usually done where there is currently a lack of observational evidence and it is a positive tool to use when investigating new field of research (Etikan, I, 2016). On the qualitative research design, purposive sampling is widely used. In this research, remaining four informants were chosen using this “expert sampling” method of purposive sampling. Those four informants were senior freelance journalists, authors and journalism trainers, having long experiences of journalism in national and international media outlets.

Likewise, the investigative journalists working for *Naya Patrika Daily*, *Nagarik Daily* and *Kantipur National Daily* have been chosen for two reasons. First, all of these three media outlets are leading broadsheet daily with high readership in Nepal. *Kantipur National Daily* has 360,000 copies daily circulation, *Nagarik Daily* has 350,000 copies circulation, and *Naya Patrika Daily* has 270,000 copies daily throughout Nepal. Second, while investigative reporting is dying a death in Nepal, these three national dailies have always been committed to continue bringing difficult stories amid tough circumstances. With a few journalists involved in investigative reporting in Nepal, there is an increasing pressure over the journalists and media outlets to sustain the practice. However, these three media outlets have been maintaining their position on producing investigative reporting beside all the pressures and adverse political situation.

3.4 Using semi-structured in-depth interviews as a technique of data collection:

A semi structure in depth interviews consists of an “interview protocol” that is about how to begin the interview with and what are the major questions to be asked with informants (Rabionet, 2011). Likewise, I had also prepared an interview guide for this research that has been attached below in the annex 1. Following the interview guide, the semi-structured in-depth interviews with investigative journalists contributing for *Naya Patrika National Daily*, *Nagarik National Daily*, and *Kantipur National Daily* have been conducted. Face to face interview with informants was conducted since it is real, and the meaning can be formed from person’s voice pitch, body language and intonation of the informants. Similarly, face-to-face interviews offers both interviewee and interviewer to clarify the confusions occurred during the interview (McIntosh & Morse, 2015). Despite the challenges that interviewee gives the answers more spontaneously in face-to-face interview, and, the interviewer, however, must be aware of questions in interview guide and sometimes it’s pretty hard for the interviewer to

have control over the interview (Opdenakker, 2006), I chose to have face to face interview, as it is one of the best ways of descriptive data collection.

The informants were questioned related to their most recent investigative stories, the current status of investigative reporting in Nepal, what mechanisms they do use while doing investigative reporting, the challenges before and after the stories are published, the support they get from the news organizations they are working with, how they dealt with the challenges, and their opinions about the status of investigative journalism in future. Furthermore, the in-depth interview was focused on experiences of investigative journalists such as time investment to prepare an investigative report, how they follow up the stories, sufficiency, and insufficiency of the fund and time to prepare investigative stories, the risk while going through the reporting and after the publication of their reports.

Similarly, the same interview guide was followed while having interview with all of 10 informants. But in case of the interview with senior freelance journalists, it was more enquired about their experiences of reporting during ten years civil war (1996-2006) in Nepal. Those informants had surpassed the challenging media situation during political transition in Nepal. Asking them about their journalistic experiences such as how they did do investigative reporting during such a transitional period, what tools they used while reporting, what was the trend of reporting that time, and how it has been changing the process of investigative reporting today, was more interesting. All interviews were recorded using an audio recording device with the prior consent of the interview participants. All interviews were in-depth and were conducted in Nepali language, which are later transcribed into English in next step.

Moreover, for my own knowledge, and as a part of literature reviews, I visited many libraries, organizations working on the field of investigative journalism, had meeting with many professors, lecturers of journalism and mass communication in Kathmandu. To crosscheck the data, fact, and information given by informants during interview, I went through annual reports of journalism related organizations such as Press Council Nepal, and FNJ. Press Council Nepal is a governmental body working to promote healthy journalism in Nepal. Also, I talked to many freelance senior journalists, which helped me to get more knowledge about the practice of investigative journalism in Nepal. In addition, I managed to have a meeting with chief commissioner of NIC, regarding the RTI Act in Nepal, and its use by journalists.

3.5 Study area:

My study area is capital city, Kathmandu, of Nepal. Nepal is south Asian country, which lies between China and India. It has an estimated population of one million people (National

Population Census of 2011). Nepali is the national language, and Newari is the most spoken language in the Kathmandu where English is widely used and understood. Kathmandu is and has been the center of culture, art, education, and journalism for many years. Every year, thousands of students from all over Nepal come to Kathmandu to pursue higher education. Numbers of college and largest university of Nepal is located in Kathmandu. Kathmandu is the hub for newspaper, Television and FM radio. Kathmandu is one of the highest newspaper registered district. According to the registered data from the Nepal Press Council on fiscal year 2018-2019, total 1465 newspaper had been registered so far in Kathmandu alone. This covers 36.42 % of total registered throughout the country.

Now a days Kathmandu is the hub of journalism education and practices. The only campus where the journalism education was taught is Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus located in central capital. Most of the current practitioners are graduates from Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus. The Ministry of Information and Communication, Nepal Press Council, National Information Commission and other media related forum, organization, networks are located in Kathmandu.

3.6 Process of research & data collection

3.6.1 NSD Notification and approval

I had notified to NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) on 6th December, 2018 that the informants interviewees will be ensured that their privacy will remain confidential, and any part of the information they do not want to get published/broadcasted or known, will not be disclosed without their prior consent. The consent form from NSD was not approved till I left off to Nepal on Jan 31st 2019. However, I chose to conduct interviews anyway with informants since I had limited time to wait till the approval of consent form. I informed all of my interview participants about my research project orally. Besides, I assured them that the confidentiality of their personal information would strongly be maintained. And, the consent form will be emailed to them as soon as possible once it is assessed. Later on, my consent form from NSD was lately approved on March 20, 2019, and I have sent a copy of it to all of my informants so that they too have it in a written form as well.

3.6.2 Experiences during the field visit

My “fieldwork” started on February 1, and lasted till February 27, 2019. In between, I approached the informants, scheduled appointment, and fixed interview spot. Generally, interview used to be initiated with general introduction of both interviewer and informant. Similarly, informants were briefed about the research topic, consent form of NSD, nature of

interview questions, and the reason why I chose them for the interview. And, the interview was proceeded ahead with their consent, and ensuring them of keeping their information (demographic information, and opinions) anonymous. Normally, Interview was lasted for 30 to 45 minutes. Interviews were recorded in a device, called recorder. The language of interview was mostly Nepali.

3.7 Methodological challenges

During the research process, I come across some methodological challenges.

Sample Size: Regarding the sample size, it was difficult to get more number of investigative journalists from the same media house. Because of this, I had to choose some freelance investigative journalists as informants for my research. In addition, I could not make gender balance of the informants. Male and female could have different challenges and experiences regarding investigative reporting. Having only one female informant in this research could be a limitation of my thesis. There are two reasons for this. First, Nepali journalism industry is male dominated. Second, I found only one female journalists doing investigative reporting in those three media outlets. However, this research doesn't speak about particular challenges experienced by female journalists. And, the information I collected from my informants has answered the RQs about experiences of investigative journalism, regardless of gender.

Interview settings: Interview spot was chosen on convenience of the informants. Most of the interviews were conducted at cafeteria, and some of the interviews were conducted at the offices of informants. In cafeteria, environment was not enough quiet, and interview was disturbed by the unnecessary noise. In office, phone calls and regular office works interrupted the interviews sometimes.

Time and response: It was quite challenging to approach the informants. Some of the informants didn't respond phone calls, and messages easily. While some used to postpone the date and time which was already scheduled for interview. In addition, some informants were not punctual, and it affected the next appointment of interview with another informant.

Response to Interview questions: The informants did not easily comprehend some of the questions, for example, what resources they are using while doing investigative reporting. Some informants were responding questions so straightforwardly, and some of

them answered in a very comprehensive way. Because of this, it was challenging to find out the meaning and transcribe them with appropriate vocabulary.

Limitations of the Study: It is found that there has been least research regarding the investigative journalism. Therefore, literatures particularly related to challenges of investigative journalism in Nepal are not significantly available. This research is based on print media outlets only. There were many daily paper published from Kathmandu, however, only three are studied in this research. I didn't consider broadcast media outlet, and new media in this research. There are very limited choices available for theories in investigative journalism. I have chosen global muckraking model as the appropriate model for the analysis of data.

3.8 Data transcribing and analysis

All interviews were in-depth in nature, and were conducted in Nepali language. Interviews are recorded using an audio recording device with the prior consent of the interview participants. The recorded interviews are later carefully translated into English in next step. The qualitative data, for instance, interviews, have been found analyzed using two strategies: analytical induction, and grounded theory (Bryman & Burgess 2002), where analytic induction is more associated with studies of social problems. In this research, I have been applying analytical induction, and muckraking model as a method of data analysis.

On the findings and discussion part, the answers of the research questions have been presented and analyzed according to the theme of interview guide based on the RQs. Firstly, informants' answers have been proportionally presented. Secondly, their specific and most relevant views have been quoted. And, thirdly, the answers, and quotes have been discussed by using muckraking model of investigative journalism.

Chapter IV: Findings and discussions

In previous chapter, it has been described that how and where the data are collected for this research. Now, in this chapter, the results of this research will be presented along with their analysis. The findings and discussion will be structured according to the themes of the interview guide (*Appendix 1*). Firstly, the thesis will look at what informants recognize as major challenges of investigative journalism in Nepal (RQ1). Secondly, it will talk about the resources set aside for investigative journalism in Nepal with reference to *Kantipur Daily*, *Nayapatrika Daily*, and *Nagarik Daily* (RQ2). Thirdly, then the thesis will discuss what experiences did investigative journalists in Nepal gain during reporting and after the publication of reporting (RQ3). Similarly, this thesis will discuss the criteria to be an investigative journalist in Nepal (RQ4). And, last but not the least, it will examine the idea that how a story gets worth of investigative reporting.

4.1 Challenges of investigative journalism (RQ1)

Regarding the challenges of investigative journalism, informants were inquired several questions, such as the news beat they are covering, professional safety they are ensured by the media outlet they are working for, sufficiency and insufficiency of time to produce an investigative story, whether they do get incentive for their investigative reporting or not. On the basis of the in-depth interviews with informants for this research, following challenges have been revealed:

4.1.1 Lack of resources:

The informants were asked what they do regard as the major challenges of doing investigative reporting in Nepal. Interestingly, the lack of the resources was most repeated answered. Informants were probed to describe what they do mean by resources. Although the answered varied from teamwork to the separate bureau of investigative reporting, the most common answer was finance.

In addition, informants were inquired if they are working on salary basis, or if they get incentive for investigative stories they produce. Their answers revealed that journalists in Nepal are working on salary basis. Findings of Kasoma & Pitts (2017) also show that inadequate funding is considered as major challenge of investigative journalism. And, again they were probed whether the salary they are getting is sufficient to cover the expenses of investigative story. One of the informants' response was like this:

“I am working on salary basis. Salary is insufficient to invest for intensive reporting. It is fitted for survival only.”

(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 8, 2019)

Similarly, another informant’s experience was like this:

“I am working on salary basis, and I do not get extra incentive for investigative reporting. My editor sometimes says that to submit the receipts of expenses that I make during information collection process for investigative stories. But, I can’t submit, as we don’t have culture of taking and giving receipts.”

(Journalist, *Nayapatrika daily*, February 8, 2019)

Both of the bites presented above shows that journalists do not get extra incentive for producing investigative stories. Rather, it hints that journalists themselves are bearing the expenses of investigative reporting from their own salary. It is mentioned on the literatures review above in the chapter II also revealed that nearly half of the journalists have no job contract letter, and are suffering from low wages, and irregular payment (Adhikary, 2016).

In addition, it is found that almost all of the informants are doing investigative reporting on their own interest; they do not get any instructions or guidance from editorial team and media management to do investigative reporting on the particular issues. Moreover, it is found that resources is not only associated with the salary they receive, it is also associated with the organized way of journalism in a media outlet. One of the informants’ opinion regarding the lack of resources was like this:

“We don’t have any bureau for IJ. Our media are not that much organized. We are working as a beat reporter.”

(Journalist, *Nagarik Daily*, personal interviews, February 10, 2019)

On the basis of interview, it is revealed that none of the media outlet, informants are working with, have separate bureau of ‘investigative journalism’. And, none of my informants from all three media outlets were appointed as an investigative journalist. Rather, they are found producing investigative stories related to their news beat.

4.1.2 Deadline pressure

Informants were inquired about the frequency of producing investigative reporting. Most of the informants shared that they are mostly engaged in daily reporting. During this process, they came to know about particular issues related to their beat. However, it is found that due to the pressure of daily reporting, they have not been able to do follow up of the issues on time. To be specific, it is found that none of the media outlet in Nepal has hired particular

investigative reporter. Rather, it is found that journalists were given particular beat, for example, business, politics, foreign affairs, education, sports, etc. The daily beat reporters produce the investigative reports occasionally. One of the informants shares his experience as:

“It took six month to two years to complete a story”
(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 8, 2019)

Besides, investigative reporting itself is a time consuming reporting by nature, and the process is lengthy. The pressure may be from publishers and editorial board due to time and resource limitations, or threats from those under scrutiny, as well as legal complications after publishing the stories (Robie, 2011). And, most of the informants disclosed that they are expected to do stories on daily basis, if not two or three stories in a week in general. Therefore, due to this pressure to do stories as many as possible in a day or week, informants are not being able to do follow up of the issues they thought to do investigative reporting on.

4.1.3 Lack of access to information

Lack of access to information is revealed as another significant challenges of investigative journalism. Usually, investigative reports are prepared on the basis of personal meeting with stakeholders, analyzing data and documents (annual reports and bulletins, press release) of the concerned institutions. Governmental bodies, department, ministries, and administrative bodies have been considered as center for information in Nepal. To get information from these governmental bodies, one has to go through a lengthy process. One time visit to these bodies is not enough to get information. Officials are reluctant to provide information in most of the cases. One of the informants having three decade of experience in journalism mentions:

“Lack of archiving system is the major challenge in my journalism journey. First, we don’t have proper access to information. Second, people who have document of information, they don’t provide us easily. Third, the facts and data that we received through hard struggle is, whether valid or not, how to verify if we don’t have proper archiving system”.
(Freelancer journalist, personal interview, February 20, 2019)

All the informants agreed that to the point that to get information particularly related to the issues of corruption, human trafficking, crime, and human rights violation and other forms of wrongdoing is very challenging. One of the informants shared his views as:

“I am engaged much in “crime and security” beat. So, I have to talk to many people because admitting crime is something unusual”.

(Journalist, *Nayapatrika daily*, personal interview, February 21, 2019)

One of the informants working in crime and human trafficking beat, argues that it is very difficult to gather the information, and to verify and cross check the information before publishing the story. As consequences, it takes often longer than expected time to publish the stories. However, modern data archiving system is gradually replacing manual data archiving system of the past. The culture of updating information on the website by institutions and government offices have been gradually improved. Most importantly, Right To Information (RTI) Act has been introduced in the constitution of Nepal of 2015, and it is in smooth effect now (Baskota, 2018). But, receiving information through RTI is still a bothersome process in terms of time consuming. Regarding the process of using RTI Act and its complications as informants said, have been explained further in this same chapter below.

4.1.4 Lack of journalists' loyalty and consistency

One of the interview questions was about the continuity of their work. The most common answer was about the uncertainty to continue the work of investigative reporting. Many of the informants were found dissatisfied with the salary they get as a journalist. It shows that journalists are not that much encouraged to be dedicated to their work. It rather has raised the question of journalists' loyalty, and passion to their profession. To illustrate an example, some informants were found contributing their stories to other organizations such as CIJ Nepal, prior to publishing on the very media outlet they are working with. Similarly, informants were found frequently shifting the media house. The arguments given by one of the informants supports this idea of inconsistency of journalist.

"Journalism is nothing like permanent or government job"
(Journalist, *Nagarik Daily*, personal interview, February 12, 2019)

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, IJ is more about muckraking the irregularities, which are intended to keep secret. Investigative reporting requires both passion and patience of a journalist. It is time consuming in terms of information collection and verification. It demands patience of a journalist to even play with bothersome, worrisome process of reporting. Dixit (2011) states that practice of IJ in Nepal, sometimes, has been happening beyond the ethics of journalism. Likewise, some informants were indirectly indicating that malpractice within the journalism exists such as blackmailing of people, character assassination, and disclosing of high secret information behind the scene.

“Character assassination, and creating propaganda are common malpractice. Maturity in journalism is lacking. Journalists are not that much aware about the impact of their stories in future”.
(journalist, *Nagarik Daily*, personal interview, February, 20, 2019)

During the interview, similar view regarding the lack of loyalty was observed as:

“Journalists are not loyal to their profession. They are taking journalism only as profession, but not as passion”.
(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 6, 2019)

Regarding the salary, some opposing views were perceived:

“Low wage is just an excuse. What I think is if doing investigative journalism doesn’t help you survive, you should find out better option”.
(Senior journalist, personal interview, February 23, 2019)

In addition, it is also found that the intensity and worth of investigative stories have been shadowed due to lack of proper following up of stories. Journalists bring the stories for one time. The impact of the stories goes higher when follow up stories are carried on. One of the informants having long experience of 30 years in journalism emphasizes the following up of stories as:

“One story may not be sufficient to represent the things. So, the following up of stories is needed. But, in our context, majority of journalists do not keep patience to do follow up stories following the impact and consequences of the first stories.”
(Senior journalist, personal interview, February 26, 2019)

Some literature shows the impatience of journalists as: For the sake of being first to break the news, and make a scoop, sometimes, journalists happen to deliver inaccurate data, they even don’t verify whether the data they have received is correct or not (Dixit, 2011).

The immaturity of the journalist can be a responsible factor behind this. Besides, lack of guidance from the editorial team, lack of training related to investigative journalism, lack of realization of responsibility towards the profession, etc., may be the probable reasons behind such inconsistencies.

4.1.5 Nexus between media and interest groups:

Regarding the challenges of IJ, asked on interview, informants considered, nexus between media and interest groups as one of the substantial challenges. During the interview,

it was revealed that generally there is not the culture of writing in against of client and advertisement donors in commercial media. Also, the literatures exhibit that most of the investigative reporting are about the irregularities and wrongdoings of government bodies, but not about the corporate houses (Robie, 2011).

Adhikary (2016) in addition also explored that investigative reporting, is directly or indirectly, affected by the nexus between media, political leader, and business groups. Media owner is always aware about his business and does not want to loose the advertisement revenue. He wants reporter not to write “bad” about the corporate houses.

In addition, it is also discovered that a reporting on muckraking the corporation by a media house is not covered by another media house at the same time. They rather remain silence in that particular issues which was the issues of public interest. Because of this, the impact of the stories remains ineffective and let audience be skeptical towards media outlet as well.

Most of the informants were indicating that media in Nepal are not fully professional. Democracy and independent media, and transparent politics go hand in hand (Adhikari, 2005). On the basis of interview with informants, it has been discovered that corporate agents understand media as a tool they can control easily. One of the informants having more than three decade of journalism experience in national and international media organization argues:

“Unless media instrumentalization by political power and interest group ends, investigative journalism remains super challenging. Political power or some stakeholder provides some monetary allowances to the journalist to speak against the media outlet. It is another challenge.”

(Senior journalists, personal interview, February 12, 2019)

The investigative reports prepared and published by reporters are not getting much attention from stakeholders. This has discouraged journalist to do follow up reporting. Besides, it came to be found out that media in Nepal are functioning as business hub rather than fulfilling social responsibility roles towards society and nation. Also, the nexus between media and interest groups deprives audience and reader from groundbreaking truth.

4.2 Resources set aside for investigative journalism (RQ2)

Resources set aside for investigative journalism was the RQ2 of this research. In order to identify the resources used in IJ, informants were inquired about the tools and technologies they have been using to produce investigative stories. It is revealed that none of the media

outlets has fixed particular tools for the purpose of investigative reporting. Nonetheless journalists are using different types of tools according to their news beats and nature of story they are going to explore. They have been explained below separately.

4.2.1 Human Intelligence:

The informants covering news, especially, in social issues such as human trafficking, crime and security, beats are found that they have been using “human intelligence” as a major resource used for collecting the information. Also, they explained that there are not data and statistics recorded in these issues. In this case, journalists themselves have to explore data by meeting people (witnesses, victim, police officers, perpetrators, etc.) and talking to them. Regarding these issues, they have to use their own aptitude to avoid probable risks and threats. In a request to explain this term “human intelligence”, one of the informants explained it as:

“Talking to many people such as witnesses, stakeholders, officials regarding the same issues to find out the reliable answer. The more the repetition is, the reliable the answer is”.

(Journalist, *Nayapatrika daily*, personal interview 10, February 2019)

It is found that journalists working in social issues have to talk to many people regarding the same story. To crosscheck the information before publishing the story, it is found necessary to talk to people in a clever way. They further mentioned that human intelligence has been consciously used while writing the stories in terms of word selection and way of writing to avoid possible dangers and threats.

4.2.2 Data and documents

“Data and documents” is found as another special mechanism used by journalists working on the corruption beat. “Data and documents” as explained by informants means recorded and published annual audit reports, budget plans, commissions reports, and statistics. One of the informants working on corruption beat shared his experiences of using data as follow:

“I write stories only on the data and document basis. It strengthens the news value and reduces the risk.”

(Journalist, *Nayapatrika Daily*, personal interview, February 12, 2019)

Journalists are found beginning the stories once they get clues and hints of irregularities and misusing of monetary resource beyond rules and regulations inside governmental and non-governmental bodies. Especially, these hints and clues are found from the social gathering, social media (Facebook and Twitter), personal coffee chat, blames and allegations by social activists, charges political counter parties. Journalist are then found doing stories on such irregularities on basis of scrutiny and analysis of above mentioned data and documents. They follow up the irregularities and wrong doings, they verify the documents, facts and figures, and develop the stories. To illustrate examples, *Kantipur Daily*, muckraked the “*Tara Goan Land Deals*” scam using this data and documents means. Similarly, “*Nepal Oil Corporation scam*” was muckraked first by *Nagarik Daily*.

4.2.3 Right to Information Act: A tool barely used

Right to Information (RTI) is identified as another tool or resource journalists are using during investigation of the stories. Constitution of Nepal, 2015 has guaranteed the Right to Information in Article 27. It inspires people to seek information from the government and public organizations and ask for government documents and their copies. When journalist’ do not have easy access to governmental and organizational documents, they can file RTI at National Information Commission (NIC), Nepal. And, NIC provides an authentic, detail and accurate information to the applicant. (Baskota, 2018) states that when there are two numerical figures, there is no other way than using RTI to get the exact and accurate data.

Among ten, only one of the informants is found using this tool to collect information. Some of the informants were unaware of this tool while few informants were aware of it but have not been using it. While talking about the tools and resources used by investigative journalists in Nepal, RTI is found as one of the safest and reliable tools to seek, receive and impart the information. Informants were further inquired that having been agreed to the point that “RTI is the proper and safest way to seek and receive information”, why they are not used to using it.

One of the informants working on issues of corruption, responded as:

“Use of RTI is a good way to get the information. But, that is very clumsy and time consuming.”

(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 6, 2019)

Of course it takes little bit time, sometimes from one week to one month, and requires patience to wait for the data. However, the practice of RTI in Nepal is still weak. Journalism practice in Nepal shows that journalists rather go after rumors than filing RTI (Baskota,

2018). While another informant working on the same media outlet found RTI Act as the best and safest tool. He is found frequently using RTI Act. He shared his experiences of using RTI Act as:

“Sometimes, it’s very difficult to find exact information from the concerned sectors. And, sometimes, even people do not tend to provide the information as well. I file RTI in such cases. The stories written by using this tool have been widely popular in Nepal”.

(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 2019)

Despite being a good tool of getting authentic information, RTI Act is found less in practice. There may be some probable reasons behind this. The lengthy process of achieving information is one as explained by one informant above. Similarly, RTI Act is introduced in Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2008. However, NIC brought this RTI Act into effect only after the amendment of Constitution of Nepal in 2015. Therefore, it is the latest preamble in Constitution and many journalists are not familiar with this Act.

4.2.4 Use of social and multimedia

Informants were questioned if social and multimedia have helped them in investigation of the stories. All positive and negative, and neutral answered were gathered during the interview. However, most of the journalists were positive to use of social media in terms of getting clues for the issues. Almost all of them responded like: “it has been very useful to facilitate the stories”. Especially, it is disclosed that the Facebook statuses, tweets, comments, shared video clips, and images regarding some issues have been found used as the clues to do the stories. Besides, some of the informants argued that social media have reduced the cost of preparing investigative stories as:

“It is low or zero costly way of collecting the information from Viber, Messenger, Email, WhatsApp. Social media have been as “low or zero costly” tools to approach the concerned stakeholders”.

(Journalists, *Nagarik Daily*, personal interview, February 20, 2019)

The cost of travelling, charges of mailing documents, and time to collect the data and information were used to be costly in the past. But with the development of social media, nowadays, the cost of travelling, mailing, and communicating with stakeholders has become reduced highly. Journalists were found much more comfortable and satisfied with the use of social media during the process of developing stories.

Moreover, regarding the time consumption to collect and verify the data and information, multimedia and social media have become drastically beneficial. Following

people' status on Facebook, and tweets on Twitter, has often worked as clues of the issues for further reporting. Also, using social media such as Facebook and Twitter, it is cheap and fast to contact the concerned stakeholders regarding the issues.

During the interview with informants, it is also revealed that all of them were being logged in to every kind of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Messenger, Email, etc. Also, they're found as active users of these social media. Likewise, they also revealed that they are using social media to quote the source sometimes. The archiving of the information for the future proof has become very easy, handy, and low costly. Besides, it is also revealed that there're often chances of being call details tracked of the journalists when they are reporting on sensitive issues. At that time, communicating with concerned people from Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, Viber, Twitter, etc. have been found safe. Most of the informants agree this low costly and effectiveness of use of social and multimedia as: "One time investment in information collection can ne used multiple time." Soderlund (2016) also states that the impact of Internet technology can be seen in IJ worldwide.

Conversation (2016) reveals that digital tools are changing the ways in which journalists seek, find, and share their stories to the audience in Nepal. In *Asian Investigative Journalism Conference*, held in Nepal, journalists shared that use of social media, in one hand, has contributed to reduce the cost of preparing investigative stories. In addition, it is discovered that social media have been useful not only in terms of collecting information, but also in terms of disseminating published stories to the larger audience. On the other hand, it has made possible of global outreach of stories. Large number of audience can participate at a time to read, critique, and share the stories. Informants argued that shares, comments, and feedbacks on the stories, are significant way of knowing the impact of the stories. Similarly, it has been discovered that social media have helped them to understand the psychology of the stakeholders. "Their reactions, and opinions, in addition, especially in social media reveals the impact of my story", one of the informants shared his experience.

4.3 Experiences of investigative journalists (RQ3)

Previously, it has been presented the findings and discussed about challenges of investigative in Nepal (RQ1) and the resources set aside for investigative journalism in Nepal with reference to *Kantipur Daily*, *Nayapatrika Daily*, and *Nagarik Daily* (RQ2). Now, in this section, it is presented the experiences of investigative journalists (RQ3) in Nepal. Regarding the experiences, informants were, inquired about their academic background, years of work experiences, their understanding of investigative journalism, performances, trainings,

seminars, and conferences they have attended, and the risks they experienced while working as a journalist.

4.3.1 Academic Qualifications

All of the informants were well-educated earning masters degree. Less than half of the informants were found having masters degree in Journalism whereas rest of the informants were graduated in Management and other subjects of Social Sciences such as Sociology, Political Science, and Law. Their experience of working as a journalist varied from a decade to three plus decade. Some of the informants introduced themselves as:

“I have earned Masters in sociology, and bachelors in Economy and History. Also, I am doing journalism for 30 years, and have authored some books related to journalism in Nepal.”

“I have done Masters degree in Management. I have 24 years of experience. I began my journalism career as Radio Jokey (RJ)”

“I have 28 years of experience in Journalism. I am an author as well. I have written five books related to corruption and politics in Nepal. Have earned masters in Journalism”

(Journalists and an author, personal interview, February 2019)

Journalism education in Masters degree was introduced Nepal by 2000. But, some informants were found having journalism experiences of more than two decades. It shows that to have journalism as an academic background matters less than the skills and interests of a person to be a journalist.

Some institutions such as CIJ Nepal, Media Foundation, and NPI have been started working in the field of IJ organizing journalism festival, for examples, organizing, trainings, workshops, conference and seminar to prosper the quality of journalists in Nepal. Most of the informants were found having received training regarding the investigative journalism either from CIJ, Nepal or Federation of Nepalese Journalist, and Nepal Press Institute. And, some of the informants have received training about how to do investigative reporting from International organizations such as British Council, Thompson House, etc. However, only one of the informants having almost three decade of experience in journalism, as well as an author shared his experience as:

“I haven’t taken any training. When I began my journalism journey, training culture was not introduced in Nepal. But now a days, I often go as a trainer about how to write, what tools to use in journalism, on the basis of my experiences”

(Senior journalist, personal interview, February 2019)

However, it is believed that academic journalist's involvement in investigative reporting is crucial (Gans, 2011). Academic institutions such as Universities and colleges can play in building and maintaining investigative journalism in every region of the world. Gans (2011) stresses that investigative journalism, as a particular genre of journalism should be taught in universities as well. During the interview, most of the informants were arguing that Universities and Colleges should guide their students to prepare a research that can be of importance to society. On doing so at a time when the public relations industry is growing and traditional media is shrinking, university-based investigative journalists can fulfill the gap of investigative journalism, both in partnership with media organizations and through their own publications. Also, the investigative journalism in the future will be more charming if universities keep on contributing to build research cultures, which hopefully promote practice based innovative research and more experienced journalists move into the academy (Gans, 2011).

4.3.2 Informants Understanding of IJ

The major question asked after the short introduction including academic background of the informants was how do they describe investigative reporting as. The common answer from all of the informants was like this: "the impact created by stories makes a story an investigative reporting". It shows that they were basically focussed on the impact created by their stories. Some of the informants' perception of IJ according to their experiences was like this:

"It is something that vibrates policy level, stakeholders and government"
(Journalist, *Nagarik Daily*, personal interview, February 12, 2019)

"IJ is something, which exposes the stories that are intended to keep secret. IJ should bring changes in authority level. It should bring change in the policy. IJ exposes the fact and offers chance to rectify the errors"
(Senior journalist, personal interview, February 23, 2019)

"The response and impact of the reporting after the publication makes a reporting as investigative reporting. IJ bears certain attitudes from the very beginning since the identification of issues. Issues are being watched from different perspective"
(Senior journalist, personal interviews, February 20, 2019)

Investigative journalists write news stories to help government or stakeholders to solve the problem (Lublinski, et al., 2016, p. 8). Informants were very close to the definition of (Hampton, 2009) that Investigative Journalism is often perceived as watchdog journalism

or “Fourth Estate” journalism. Watchdog journalism especially uncovers the official wrong doings, corruption, and force stakeholders to keep the accountability, which is often a risky job. Moreover, one of the informants’ understandings of IJ was like this:

“IJ is an exploration of marginalized stories”
(Senior journalist, personal interview, February 21, 2019)

The marginalized stories as he explained are the issues of *untouchability*, gender based violence and discrimination, social malpractices on the name of culture and religion, child marriage and dowry system, social boycotting on the name of punishment, etc. Soderlund (2016) also has argued that investigative journalism should bring stories besides the issues of public and corporate corruption.

4.3.3 Self-motivated journalists

Both group of informants were asked what motivated them to be a journalist, especially an investigative journalist, during the interview for this research. It is found that they have become journalists by their own choice. Interesting is that all of the informants began their career as general reporter either in broadcast media such a FM or radio, or as an intern in publication house. Similarly, it was discovered that as they got habituated with the journalism, they realized they should do something different than daily reporting on journalism. Some of the informants share this experience as:

“I was fascinated about being Radio Jockey (RJ). And joined journalism academically, and started work as a journalist. Later, I realized, IJ is the heart of journalism. And, I am doing it for a decade.”

“Technology fascinated me to be a journalist. Was amazed to see the printing press and newspaper. I wished to see my name (byline) on the newspaper”.

“I chose to be a journalist to contribute society for change, to make stakeholders responsible, and, to earn fame”.

(Journalists, *Kantipur daily, Naya Patrika Daily, and Nagarik Daily*, respectively, personal interview, February 2019)

4.3.4 Risks experienced by investigative journalists

Informants were asked to describe the risks they experienced in their journey of journalism. “Journalism is a risky profession”, was the most common response from all of the informants. One of the informants interestingly argued regarding the risk as:

“If a reporter doesn’t get any reactions or threat after publishing the stories, that is not watchdogging, rather that is lapdogging”

(Senior journalist, personal interview, February 23, 2019)

Lapdogging, he explained as is a type of work based on what editor or editorial board assigns a journalist to do.

Most of the informants were saying that some phone calls against the reporting and after publishing the news are common challenge of journalism. One of the informants explains like this:

“Investigative reporting deserves little dissatisfaction, aggression, and threats. It is watchdogging. If no threat, no vibration the reporter feels after publishing a story, that is not watchdogging, that is rather lap dogging.”

(Senior journalist, personal interview, February 21, 2019)

They further explained their risks experiences as that the risk they face during daily event reporting and investigative reporting is not similar as the impact of event news and investigative news differ from each other to the greater extent. They later described the risk in mainly in two categories. They are: Psychological Fear, and Physical Risks and threats.

4.3.5 Psychological Fears

Psychological fear as they referred are the dilemma whether to write the facts or not, unsecured feeling, anxiety caused by anticipated risks, fear of loosing job, fear of physical attacks, etc. To avoid these types of fear, some informants are found very much conscious in the language of their stories; some were letting data and documents speak in the story, some are found writing stories with self-censorship.

One of the informants shared his experience of writing to avoid risk as:

“I prefer to work on data or fact basis. I let the facts or data speak. Even sometimes, I write the issues with comparison, it makes the story strong and reliable. Choosing appropriate vocabulary to describe the fact or event or happening helps reduce the threats or something like that”

(Senior journalist, personal interview, February 26, 2019)

One of the informants has been found shifted his residence because of psychological fear. He described the situation like this:

“I had shifted my residential location during reporting. I used to hear noise of people around my apartment during night. I felt like people know about the story I am writing. Later on, I came to know that it was only my psychological fear because nobody told me anything about that story”.

(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 8, 2019)

4.3.6 Physical Risks and Threats

Informants considered physical attacks, threats, phone calls, SMS, oral threats, public threats from social media, as physical risks and threats. None of my informants shared me the experience of physical attacks. However, rest of the threats and risks were highly felt, they revealed. Interestingly, “physical attack and death threats come down once a story is published, rather risky is the period of writing stories”, one of the informants, disclosed. He further explained that stakeholders go in defensive mode rather than attacking journalist, once the story is published. Threats and attacks during the period of writing stories are intensely higher compared to the period of after publishing the stories.

Besides physical attack and dead threats, rest of the physical risk and threats are found common.

Similarly, the physical risk after publishing the investigative stories are less experienced in Nepal, majority of informants’ revealed. General dissatisfaction expressed by the stakeholders is very common. One of the informants argues:

“My call logs were tracked. It made me feel like my privacy is under surveillance”.

(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 6, 2019)

Interestingly, some informants were found very unafraid of both type of risk as mentioned above. They were indicating that it is very common to feel and face risks while muckraking the people and organization. “But as a journalist and responsible citizen, revealing the truth comes as first priority”, informants said. And, some of the informants were unwilling to speak on this matter. One of the informants’ opinions was like this:

“I have to do many stories in the days to come as well. So, let’s not say what risks I have experienced.”

(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 6, 2019)

Another interesting findings revealed on the basis of interview is the risk is not always associated with the risk journalists who writes the stories, it is also related to the impact of the stories on stakeholder's personal life or public. One of the informants explained this like this:

“Journalist should be responsible to society, but should not create fear upon audience or readers. Character assassination, and creating propaganda, etc., has become common practice on the name of investigative reporting in Nepal. Journalists are not that much aware about the impact of their stories in future”.
(Journalist, *Nagarik Daily*, personal interview, February 10, 2019)

He further explained that sometimes people might commit suicide, or escape abroad for forever because of the impact of the stories.

Likewise, interview with senior and experienced informants also revealed that “word choice” while writing stories is much more important. To avoid all of above discussed risks and threats, informants are found very cautious of words while writing the stories. Their long years of experiences, says, journalist should muckrake the case, but should not advocate the case.

4.3.7 Time consumption and issues covered by investigative reporting

Informants were asked regarding the time duration they spend to prepare an investigative story. The straightforward answered varied from one week to two years. Time consumption by a story depends on the nature of that story, informants explained. One of the informants experience was like this:

“Usually it takes from six months to two years to complete a story. Recently, I spent four months to collect the data, and two months to write the story completely.”
(Journalist, *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 8, 2019)

In a follow up question of why it takes such a long time to do a story. He further explained that the main reason is time limitation because of the daily reporting side by side. In addition, as he described, he was doing investigative story on the parliament issues. He had to file RTI to collect the information at National Information Commission (NIC). So, it took quite longer time to get the required information from National Information Commission (NIC). One of the informants put quite different view on this. His experience was like:

“Story may go up to the 5 to 7 series depending on the nature and magnitude of the issues. So, it can't be said exactly how long time it takes to cover the issues”.
(Journalist, *Nagarik Daiky*, personal interview, February 20, 2019)

Other Informant's experience was like this:

" Sometimes I know the what issue is about but it takes time to collect data and verify them. But, I have spend more than two months for a story".

(Journalist, *Nayapatrika Daily*, personal interview, February 10, 2019)

"IJ reporting has not been made to the extent that it should have been. Sometimes, people know the case so earlier but reporting has been made too late. For example, wide-body airplane scams of 2018. It was reported out only after the 6 to 8 months of the payment purchase".

(Journalist from *Kantipur Daily*, personal interview, February 6, 2019)

After the follow up questions that if there are any reasons behind such time consumption, it is revealed that investigative stories of course take time by its nature. Besides, one of the informants interestingly justified it as "It is not like "vannuvayo" type of reporting, meaning "he or she said" type of reporting.

Another question followed up was if they are happy with the stories they are covering. Most of the informants were happy with stories what they are doing till now. However, some of them expressed their dissatisfaction with their own contribution for they have not been able to do many stories as they have thought to do. There are many issues those are untold, unwritten and unreported, for instances, issues of *untouchability* on the basis of caste, child marriage, social boycotting, human smuggling, human rights violation, etc. One of the informants presented his reason behind this as:

"I am working on salary basis. The salary I am getting is just fitting for survival. I can't dare to go to the farthest remote villages to search the story of gender based discrimination and violence".

(Journalist, *Nayapatrika Daily*, personal interview, February 12, 2019)

Generally, on the basis of interview, it is revealed that most of the stories are related to the issues of corruption. Some of the vibrant examples of muckraking brought by informants are the Wide Body Scam, Sudan Scam, Tara Goan scam, Nepal Oil Corporation scam, Money Laundering and Tax Haven scam, etc. These stories created a big discourse in Nepali society, among intellectual people. Besides, these are the examples of muckraking that have changed the traditional thinking of Nepali people towards politics, politicians and bureaucracy.

Most of the informants were found doing stories mostly on the issues of corruption and irregularities only. Besides these, there are many issues untold, unwritten and unreported,

for instances, issues of *untouchability* on the basis of caste, child marriage, social boycotting, human smuggling, human rights violation, etc.

4.3.8 Reporting during civil war

Regarding the experiences, senior informants were asked about their experiences of doing IJ during civil war in Nepal. One of the informants having three decades plus experience in journalism shared his experience of investigative reporting during civil war period as:

“There was time when telecommunication was not as accessible as it is today. Mobile phones and services were not available in far remote villages of Nepal. Digital media were rare, and even the print outlets were not so common. I used to write and publish stories after being back to Kathmandu from the far villages.”

(Senior Journalist, personal interview, February 23, 2019)

Similarly, another informant's experience during civil war was like this:

“That was different days. It was very challenging to convince people that I was journalist and was there for reporting. People used to be skeptical towards journalists thinking that they are spy of either government or Maoist.”

(Senior Journalist, personal interview, February 12, 2019)

Reporting during “civil war” was more challenging than today. On the basis of interview with informants it is revealed that the number of media outlets were not enough. Even though journalists brought stories, they have to wait for a week to a month to publish their stories. Similarly, some stories used to come in the form of literature as well (Dixit, 2011). Many books, novels, picture stories, autobiography, etc. were published as consequences of investigative reporting. “*Mantha daraeko jug*”, “*Upallo thalo*”, etc. are the examples of books that are compilation of investigative stories.

4.4 Criterion to be an Investigative Journalist (RQ4)

Informants were inquired about if there are any criteria to be an investigative journalist on the media outlet they are currently working with. The most repeated answer was “anyone can be a journalist in Nepal”. It seems that there is no hard and fast rule to be a journalist. It is only about person's skill and interest to work as a journalist. Among the informants, only less than half were from journalism background. And. Rest of the journalists are from other academic background than journalism. It shows that skills and experiences matter more than academic background to be a renowned journalist. Regarding the criteria to be a journalist or an investigative journalist, one of the informants put his opinion as follow:

“Another thing is there is not a fixed criterion to be a journalist in Nepal. There is not professional exam for journalist”

(Journalist, *Nagarik Daily*, personal interview, February 12, 2019)

Journalism in Nepal is a young profession. Journalism education on master's level was introduced only after 2000 in Nepal (Parajulee, Humagain, Panthi, & Maharjan, 2009). There are not any test or exam for journalist to be qualified. However, a simple job interview is taken before appointing someone in any particular media outlet. Very few people were journalism schooled till late twentieth century. Those who were graduated were either from India or abroad. And, NPI is established in Nepal in 1984. Since then the culture of journalism training began in Nepal.

In addition, even the academic background of the informants interviewed for this research also reiterates the same story that “anyone can be a journalist in Nepal”. Some of the journalists interviewed for this research were not from journalism background in the beginning. Some of them did master degree in journalism once they got involved into the journalism profession.

Chapter V: Conclusion

Investigative journalism is different than normal journalism for it bears certain attitudes from the very beginning of the reporting. It is in-depth in reporting, time consuming, methodological, and it muckrakes the things that are intended to keep secret by any people or organization of public interest. Interestingly, once an investigative reporting is published, it brings a vibration in the society. Investigative journalism is challenging throughout the world. And, it is more challenging in the fledgling democracy.

This research was based on the challenges of investigative journalism in Nepal. Basically, the four issues were looked at into this research. Those three issues are challenges faced by investigative journalists (RQ1), resources and mechanisms they use while doing investigative reporting (RQ2), and the experiences of investigative journalists (RQ3), and criteria to be an investigative journalist (RQ4).

In Nepal, none of the media houses have been found hiring particular investigative journalists. Journalists who are assigned to cover certain news beats such as economy, education, parliament, etc., are doing investigative reporting once they are get hints of some irregularities or wrong doing doings on particular issues on their news beat. Journalists are bound by deadline pressure of daily reporting. And, investigative stories have found produced occasionally. Journalists are carrying investigative stories on their individual efforts. In fact, they are daily reporters, but working as an investigative journalist as well. This shows that acknowledging investigative journalist at first is the key challenge of investigative journalism in Nepal. Besides, the lack of professional media practice, fledgling democracy, and the impact of nexus between media and interest groups have constrained the smooth practice of investigative journalism in Nepal. Poor wage conditions make the journalists more vulnerable to corruption and bribery, and a number of journalists flee to better opportunity such as INGOs and abroad for better life (Messel, 2017). Security of journalists is still in thoughtful condition. Security is found associated with safety and payment. FNJ (Federation of Nepalese Journalist) has marked the year 2018 as the challenging year for freedom of press. Nepali journalism industry is male dominant. Female journalists are very less in number working as investigative journalists.

Moreover, not having established investigative bureau in the media outlet is another challenge. Lack of guidance and advice from editorial members, lack of collaboration among journalist within media outlet, has constrained journalists from pursuing more investigative stories. Journalists are lacking discussion about how to report, how to precede stories ahead,

and how to minimize risks of investigative reporting due to not having establishment of separate bureau of investigative journalism in a media outlet they are working for.

Investigative journalism, in Nepal, has been practiced in traditional way yet. Investigative stories have been done mostly on the basis of data and document analysis. Even though there are development of new modern ways of doing investigative journalism such as using RTI Act, Digital Investigative Journalism, investigative video storytelling, and “data journalism”, Nepali journalists less familiar with these terms and technologies. Some journalists are adopting the practice of RTI Act nowadays, which of course is a green light in the field of investigative journalism. Moreover, the development of Internet technology and social media has played crucial roles in doing investigative journalism. Time and cost reduction, quick access to source and widespread of news stories have become possible because of social media and Internet technology. Multimedia technologies have helped in storage and reuse of information in a convenient way. Alike print media, new media also have been contributing to bring groundbreaking investigative stories on the issues beyond corruption and political nexus. New media have covered the issues of social injustice and inequality, marginalized stories of gender based violence and sexual harassment.

During a decade of “civil war” (1996-2006), and political transition period before promulgation of *Interim Constitution of Nepal 2008*, it was not favorable environment for investigative journalism. It was difficult period for journalists to go in the field in search of investigative stories. Journalists were doubted from both government and revolutionist side. It was difficult for journalists to convince public that they are journalists. Public and local government bodies used to doubt them whether they are journalists or spy for revolutionist and government side. Threats and insecurity of journalists was higher that time than today. Because of this difficult situation, less investigative stories came directly in media. As consequences of these challenges, investigative stories used to come indirectly in other forms of literature, for instances, autobiography, novel, documentary and film, photo features, essays, stories, and poetry, rather than in the form of news stories in media outlet. However, the investigative stories in recent years have been coming rapidly. Both the quality and quantity of investigative journalism is gradually flourishing. Investigative reporting, in addition, has secured good space in all forms of media: print, broadcast, and new media. The issues of corruption and political nexus are being focused especially. But, corruption is not seen down yet. This shows that the impact of investigative journalism is not high yet or stakeholders are not taking it seriously.

Being a developing country, both governmental institutions and corporate organizations are not fully systematic in Nepal. Seeking and getting of information is challenging. Journalists are facing the problem of lack of access to information most. Also,

there is problem in fact checking that whether the available information are valid or not. In contrast, addressing these challenges, the government of Nepal has initiated some steps to ease the journalism practice these days. Guarantee of freedom of press in Constitution of Nepal 2015, amendment of rules and regulations, establishment of NIC to facilitate and promote access to information, are notable examples. Democracy and press freedom are guaranteed in the state. But they are not strong in practically.

To prosper investigative journalism in the days to come in Nepal, media should invest more on investigative journalism. Investment, especially, on the establishment of separate bureau for investigative journalism is required to sustain investigative journalism. Besides, motivation and guidance to journalists, journalistic autonomy to search and write news stories should be provided within the media organization they are working. Investigative bureau facilitates journalists to do investigative stories in a systematic way. Rather, it reduces deadline pressure of daily reporting, and provides time for journalists to do intensive research for qualitative reporting. In addition, IJ bureau may share information about international conferences on investigative journalism, facilitate and encourage them to take part on those seminars and conferences.

Lack of access to information has been recognized as a challenge of doing investigative reporting in Nepal. Investigative journalists are found less familiar with the use of RTI Act. Use of RTI to is the safest and most reliable medium to seek and receive information. And, it is significant to provide short course to journalists on the use and importance of RTI in reporting. Besides these, journalists should be provided workshop and training to investigative journalists to refine their skills of reporting and analysis. Investigative journalism is different than day-to-day journalism for it is in-depth reporting, time consuming, methodological, and it muckrakes the things that are intended to keep secret by any people or organization of public interest. Therefore, it is necessary to keep the journalists updated about new tools and techniques of investigative reporting in order to produce vibrant stories in the age of information.

Low wages and fear of loosing job are problems faced by investigative journalists in Nepal. Journalists have been doing investigative reporting mostly on their own expenses. Providing them incentive and allowance to encourage them to dive deep into investigation of stories are essential for the progress of investigative journalism in Nepal.

Investigative journalists require patience and passion to inquire the stories in-depth, critical ability to perceive and analyze the information, and knowledge of presenting stories in a systematic way. To cope these attributes, journalism as an academic background helps more. However, there is not any hard and fast rule to be a journalist in Nepal. Academic institutions such as Universities and colleges can play a crucial role in building and

maintaining investigative journalism in every region of the world. Academic journalist's involvement in investigative reporting is crucial. Investigative journalism, as a particular genre of journalism should be taught in universities as well (Gans, 2011). Universities and Colleges should guide their students to prepare a research that can be of importance to society. On doing so at a time when the public relations industry is growing and traditional media is shrinking, university-based investigative journalists can fulfill the gap of investigative journalism, both in partnership with media organizations and through their own publications.

Press Council Nepal has formed code of conducts for journalists. And, journalists should not disobey those rules and should not write stories that can create propaganda and fear in the society. Investigative stories should maintain impartiality, objectivity, and accuracy in the information. In addition, journalists themselves also should maintain professional loyalty, for instance, discarding political biasness, while doing stories.

Government of Nepal has proposed different rules and regulations to promote journalism in Nepal. To bring those rules and regulations into effect, both private and government media outlets should help the government by following proposed rules and regulations.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide

1. Could you explain about your academic background (degree, and subject)
2. How long have you been working as a journalist?
3. What motivated you to be a journalist? Especially, an investigative journalist?
4. How do you understand investigative reporting as?
5. Could you describe about the trainings and seminar regarding investigative reporting, that you've attended?
6. Could you please explain which beat do you cover mostly and why? (Corruption, crime, parliament, human trafficking, public service delivery, human rights violation, etc.)
7. How often do you produce investigative reporting?
8. Could you describe the resources set aside for investigative journalism in the organization you're involved?
9. Could you describe challenges are you often face while reporting on ... beat? What do you regard as major challenges of IJ?
10. Do you work on salary basis or you will be paid extra after you produce an investigative reporting?
11. Is the fund you get from the organization you are involved sufficient to prepare an investigative report?
12. Which is your latest investigative reporting?
13. Could you describe your experiences the risks (injury, physical injury, death and threats)?
14. Could you explain about professional safety that you get from the organization you are involved in case of you are in problem before or after publishing stories?
15. How has modern technology helped you for exploring an investigative journalism? Have social media (facebook, twitter, youtube, vlog, etc.) ease you for finding the core information for preparing an investigative report?
16. Do you want to continue this profession longer?