A Comparative Analysis of Climate Change Framing in Nepali Newspapers

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Nepal, because of its specific topographical and geographical characteristics, is at the epicenter of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. This study investigates the way three Nepali newspapers, namely *Kantipur, Nagarik,* and *Nayapatrika* Daily framed climate change from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. The research provides a comprehensive approach to investigating the framing ways used by these newspapers, identifying and evaluating five prominent frames: environmental impact, humanitarian, policy, and governance, economic, and global justice. Through rigorous examination of chosen reports and articles from the required timeframe, the study indicates a noticeable trend in framing preferences among these three publications. Significantly, the results highlight the centrality of the Policy and Governance Frame as the main focus, which comprises more than half of the total coverage, then following the Environmental Impact Frame. The research presented here provides vital insight into each of the methods applied by media sources to convey climate change in Nepal. The study highlights the significance of using a diverse framing approach for addressing the many facets of this complicated issue, acknowledging the nation's varied climate-related challenges. This research not only contributes to the scholarly knowledge regarding climate change communication but also has practical implications for professionals in the media, policymakers, and the general public. The need for a more varied and diverse framing approach is emphasized, showing

the potential for more successful communication tactics that are tailored to Nepal's particular context and challenges in the face of climate change.

Introduction

Climate change is seen as an essential issue worldwide that extends beyond scientific research and policy considerations to the crucial arena of media discourse. The media, as an influential force in shaping the public's opinions and understanding, serves an essential part in the challenging story of climate change. The framing of climate change in the media might have an important influence on public opinion, policy formulation, and social responses, making it a crucial part of the broader socio-environmental dialogue. Despite generating far less global emissions of greenhouse gasses than industrialized nations (Ghimire, 2019), Nepal is more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This vulnerability can be particularly acute in Nepal and the surrounding Himalayan region due to specific ecological and climatic shifts (Bhattacharjee, 2017). The urgency of dealing with climate change as a major problem in Nepal needs an in-depth study of how this complicated topic is represented in the national media landscape.

The present research proposes to explore the complications of climate change presentation in Nepali newspapers, particularly special focus on *Kantipur, Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika Daily.* Understanding how climate change has been presented and conveyed in the news has significant repercussions for framing public discourse, influencing policy decisions, and motivating collective action in the face of the global crisis. Given Nepal's diverse landscapes, ecosystems, and cultures, a research investigation of how climate

change is presented in Nepali newspapers is very essential. The local context has an enormous influence on the transmission of this global issue and analyzing framing methods in Nepali media can provide important insights into the techniques at perform. Despite being a vulnerable country, Nepali communities are not well-informed about the causes and effects of climate change (Shrestha and Baral, 2018). For ownership of the policies and actions related to Climate Change mitigation, adaptation, etc. public awareness about those aspects is crucial.

Recognizing newspapers as effective agents in shaping public opinions, the main objective of this study is to delve into the way climate change is framed in Nepali newspapers so as to uncover potential influences on public understanding, perception, and attitude towards climate issues. By investigating into the specific frames used by *Kantipur, Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika* this study aims to present an in-depth understanding of how climate change has been seen and presented in Nepal's media surroundings. The results of the research have the potential to enhance media practices, influence public discourse, and contribute to more informed decision-making in the face of Nepal's and other nations' severe climate change challenges.

Literature Review

Having its profound impact on the environment, society, and the economy, climate change is one of the most pressing problems humanity faces today. To increase public comprehension, action, and awareness regarding climate change, effective communication is important. Through their framing of the topic, the media, notably newspapers, greatly influence public perceptions and discourse surrounding climate change. The aim of this literature study is to investigate the framing of climate change in Nepali media. This review aims to provide insights into the present circumstances of

climate change communication in Nepali media and identify potential for future research through a review of existing research on media framing and climate change framing.

Research on Climate Change Framing

Study in this category includes a wide range of themes related to the framing of climate change, particularly the depiction of scientific viewpoints, the dynamics of legislative procedures, and the intricate interactions between public opinion and media discourse. Specifically, in the context of Russia, Rowe's (2013) seminal work demonstrates the complex relationships among scientific perspectives, policy-making processes, and media depictions. By exploring these distinctions, Rowe's work clarifies the intricate connection between scientific contributions, media discourse, and policy findings. By doing this, it offers a fundamental understanding of climate change framing that cuts beyond geographical boundaries and provides insights into how it presents itself in various socio-political circumstances.

For the purpose of developing existing quantitative content studies, Eskjaer (2009) calls for a paradigm shift toward a more qualitative analysis of global variances in climate change coverage. This demand for the qualitative research method is a result of the discourse on climate change being recognized for its essential complexity. Eskjaer emphasises the need for qualitative approaches in capturing the complex nature of media approaches and framing climate change, underscoring the importance of nuanced knowledge. Broadbent et al. (2016) present a thorough investigation of the discourse in the global media regarding climate change, providing a thorough study that explores its complex character. As a result of their thorough research, they are able to identify a number of opposing aspects of this discourse, demonstrating the complexities that surround global climate change framing. The multi-dimensional

framework proposed by Broadbent and others is an essential component of the conceptualization of climate change and offers a rich basis for further research. Their study clarifies the complex terrain of climate change framing and helps us understand it deeper. It also serves as an outline for future scholarly endeavors to further explore and disassemble the topic.

Research on Climate Change and Media Framing

This category of studies emphasizes the critical role that the media play in framing issues relating to climate change. Particularly, the studies aim to illuminate how some narratives survive, why framing strategies vary between regions, and how alternative media platforms affect the conversation. The study conducted by Seelig, Deng, and Liang (2022) highlights the persistent use of familiar terms and imagery in the representation of climate solutions in traditional news sources as well as online media. Their work makes a significant contribution to the continuing discourse about how the media affects people's opinions and responses to climate-related issues by demonstrating its persistence. Their results also emphasize the need for deeper studies on media framing methods and the need for careful analyses of how these practices change over time. Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) shed light on regional differences in scientific representations in Western and Indian media contexts through a comparative analysis. Through their investigation, they provide insightful information about how cultural and contextual elements impact and how climate change is framed in various geographical areas.

This comparative approach emphasizes the significance of taking into account various socio-cultural contexts in media study, while also deepening our understanding of the dynamics of climate change framing. The frame analysis of COP21 coverage in Chinese, American, and British news media by Pan, Opgenhaffen, and Gorp (2019) adds to our understanding of variations by region

in climate change framing. Their findings show how Western and Chinese media outlets frame stories in various ways, highlighting the significance of political and cultural circumstances in shaping media narratives. Their research has significance because it demonstrates the importance of conducting context-specific analyses in order to find the slight differences that exist in the ways individuals frame climate change in different parts of the globe.

Gaps in Literature

There is a noticeable gap in the analysis of climate change framing in Nepali newspapers, despite the large corpus of literature on the subject. Our knowledge of how climate change is portrayed in Nepali media is lacking because the majority of studies to this date have been conducted in Western contexts. The previously mentioned gap highlights the significance of specialized studies aimed at Nepali media to bridge this divide and offer perspectives on the distinct limitations and prospects in climate change communication within the Nepali context.

To illuminate this exploration, the research formulates the following questions:

- What were the key focuses of Nepali newspapers' (Kantipur, Nagarik, and Nayapatrika) coverage of climate change issues?
- What are the distinct frameworks employed by Kantipur, Nagarik, and Nayapatrika to present climate change?
- What are both distinctions and similarities between Kantipur, Nagarik, and Nayapatrika framing strategies regarding reporting on climate change?

Theoretical Framework

This research adopts a theoretical framework rooted in media framing theory to scrutinize the representation of climate change in Nepalese news media. Framing theory, as elucidated by Tankard et

al. (1991), encompasses the selection of story angles, serving as the central organizing idea for news content. This framework supplies context and implies the issue through the deliberate use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. As posited by Entman (1989), the slant in news significantly influences public opinion, revealing that media not only provide information but also proffer perspectives on issues (McCullagh, 2002; Zeng Li &TahatKhalaf, 2012).

Framing, as conceptualized by Goffman (1974) in his seminal work on Frame Analysis, involves both inclusion (emphasizing) and exclusion (de-emphasizing), allowing media outlets to prioritize certain aspects over others, consciously or unconsciously promoting specific interpretations of events (McQuail, 2005).

Framing theory posits that the presentation of information influences audience perceptions and decision-making. According to Tankard and Paluck (2016), framing theory offers a lens to unveil underlying assumptions, values, and ideologies that shape news coverage. Within the context of climate change, this theory becomes particularly relevant as it facilitates an exploration of cognitive structures or frames employed by the media to make sense of this intricate issue (Entman, 1993). These frames serve to define the problem, attribute responsibility, propose solutions, and mold public opinion and policy responses (Entman, 2007).

By employing framing theory, this study aims to uncover patterns, biases, and discourses inherent in the framing of climate change as a social, political, and environmental issue (Carvalho, 2007). Furthermore, framing theory allows for an exploration of how various stakeholders strategically frame climate change to advance their interests and agendas, be they governmental, non-governmental, or industry actors (Nisbet, 2009).

Methodology

Ylä-Anttila, Eranti, and Kukkonen (2021) have contributed

significantly to this line of research by analyzing climate change frames used by NGOs, governments, and experts in Indian and US media. Their methodology, utilizing topic modeling, provides valuable insights into frame analysis of public debates. This study adopts a qualitative content and analytical approach to explore the framing of the issue of climate change in three Nepali newspapers in 2023. Elo & Kyngäs (2008) define qualitative content analysis as a systematic approach to investigating written content with the objective of uncovering patterns, themes, and discourses. The employing of framing theory for analyzing the contents of *Kantipur, Nagarik,* and *Nayapatrika* in 2023 helps with the identification of comparison and contrast between specific stories and pieces. 180 reports in all, 54 from *Kantipur*, 67 from *Nagarik*, and 59 from *Nayapatrika* have been collected for this research. These reports, which represent the time frame from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, provide the primary dataset employed for this research. In carrying out a comprehensive analysis, the researcher specifies the following frames:

Environmental Impact Frame

The Environmental Impact Frame focuses on the impact of climate change in Nepal, particularly glacier melting, irregular weather patterns, and hazards to biodiversity. It shows the pressing requirement for actions to reduce these effects and protect Nepal's natural resources.

Humanitarian Frame

The Humanitarian Frame highlights the effect of climate change in Nepal on vulnerable populations including farmers, the countryside, and marginalized populations. To address humanitarian issues, emphasis is placed on adapting strategies, preparedness for disasters, and global support.

Policy And Governance Frame

The Policy and Governance Framework analyzes the implications of government policies, global commitments, and regulatory actions on climate change in Nepal. It analyzes the impact of present policies, governance gaps, and the significance of political leadership in building sustainable development and climate adaptation resilience.

Economic Frame

The Economic Frame analyzes the way climate change impacts Nepal's livelihoods, agriculture, tourism, and infrastructure. It also explores the costs of mitigation and adaptation approaches, the potential for green growth, and the role of capital from the private sector in climate resilience.

Global Justice Frame

The Global Justice Frame bears into consideration the global impact of climate change and the imbalanced effects of industrialized nations on developing countries like Nepal. It highlights the significance of climate justice, equity, and international collaboration in addressing the main drivers of climate change and helping vulnerable countries like Nepal.

This study is going to employ framing theory to analyze how these three mainstream media outlets portrayed and framed the climate change issue, resulting in a deeper comprehension of media dynamics and their roles in shaping public perceptions of this crucial global crisis.

Data Analysis And Findings

Data for this study were systematically collected through the utilization of an electronic database search engine employing specific keywords related to news reports on climate change within

Kantipur, Nagarik, and *Nayapatrika* daily newspapers. Employing this search engine, the identified news outlets were meticulously compiled. A total of 180 reports were retrieved for analysis, with 54 originating from *Kantipur*, 67 from *Nagarik*, and 59 from *Nayapatrika*. These reports which span the time frame from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023, constitute the primary dataset for this investigation.

A comprehensive overview of the sample distribution across these three newspapers is presented in Table 1. The categorization of news reports into distinct genres such as News, Features, Editorials, and Articles further contributes to a nuanced understanding of the framing of climate change within the Nepali media landscape during the specified time period.

	Kantipur	Nagarik	Nayapatrika
News	26	48	33
Features	9	10	12
Editorials	3	3	0
Articles	16	6	14
Total	54	67	59

Table 1: Extend of Coverage

Dominant Frames in Climate Change Reporting

The analysis of climate change framing in Nepali newspapers, namely *Kantipur, Nagarik,* and *Nayapatrika*, revealed the presence of five dominant frames: Environmental Impact Frame, Humanitarian Frame, Policy and Governance Frame, Economic Frame, and Global Justice Frame.

Distribution of Frames

The distribution of frames across the three newspapers varied significantly. The following percentages represent the prevalence of each frame in the overall reporting:

Policy and Governance Frame: 54%

Environmental Impact Frame: 23%

Humanitarian Frame: 10.5%

Global Justice Frame: 10.5%

Economic Frame: 9.5%

The results show that the Policy and Governance Framework gets the most focus, representing more than half of all climate change coverage in all three newspapers. The Environmental Impact Frame is the second predominant frame.

Frame-wise Breakdown

To provide a more nuanced understanding, a breakdown of each frame's representation in the individual newspapers is presented below:

Environmental Impact Frame

Kantipur: 9 stories

Nagarik: 5 stories

Nayapatrika: 14 stories

The Environmental Impact Frame is well-represented across all newspapers, with Nayapatrika featuring the highest number of stories in this category.

Humanitarian Frame

Kantipur: 7 stories

Nagarik: 5 stories

Nayapatrika: 7 stories

The Humanitarian Frame is depicted consistently across all three newspapers, with a comparable number of stories in each.

Policy and Governance Frame

Kantipur: 28 stories

Nagarik: 44 stories

Nayapatrika: 25 stories

Policy and Governance Frame emerges as the most prevalent frame in all newspapers, with Nagarik showcasing the highest number of stories in this category.

Economic Frame

Kantipur: 7 stories

Nagarik: 8 stories

Nayapatrika: 6 stories

The Economic Frame is relatively evenly distributed with Nagarik having a slightly higher representation.

Global Justice Frame

Kantipur: 3 stories

Nagarik: 5 stories

Nayapatrika: 7 stories

The Global Justice Frame is less prevalent but Nayapatrika again stands out with a higher representation.

Frames of story	Kantipur	Nagarik	Nayapatrika	Total No. of stories	% of the stories
Environmental Impact	9	5	14	28	15.5
Humanitarian	7	5	7	19	10.5
Policy and Governance	28	44	25	97	54
Economic	3	8	6	17	9.5
Global Justice	7	5	7	19	10.5
Total	54	67	59	180	100

Table 2: News Frame

Comparative Analysis Of Framing Strategies

Policy and Governance Dominance

The clear dominance of the Policy and Governance Frame in all three newspapers indicates a strong focus on government policies, international agreements, and institutional responses concerning climate change. This suggests a collective media emphasis on the role of governance in addressing climate challenges in Nepal.

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Varied Emphasis on Environmental Impact

      While the Environmental Impact Frame is consistently the second most prevalent, the variations in the number of stories across newspapers suggest nuanced differences in how each outlet covers the direct environmental consequences of climate change. Nayapatrika, in particular, appears to prioritize this frame more extensively.

Humanitarian, Economic and Global Justice Considerations

      The lower representation of the Humanitarian, Economic, and Global Justice Frames indicates a potential gap in media coverage of the human dimension, economic implications, and global justice aspects of climate change in Nepal. Further exploration into these frames may reveal untapped narratives that could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Implications for Climate Change Communication

      The dominance of the Policy and Governance Frame suggests a potential need for diversification in reporting to encompass the broader spectrum of climate change impacts. By giving more prominence to frames that address the human, economic, and global justice dimensions, newspapers can contribute to a more holistic public understanding of climate change and foster a well-informed discourse.
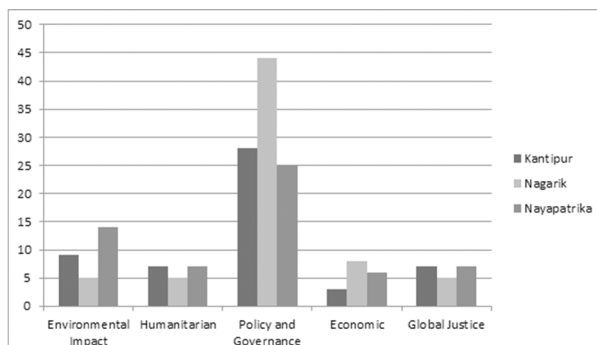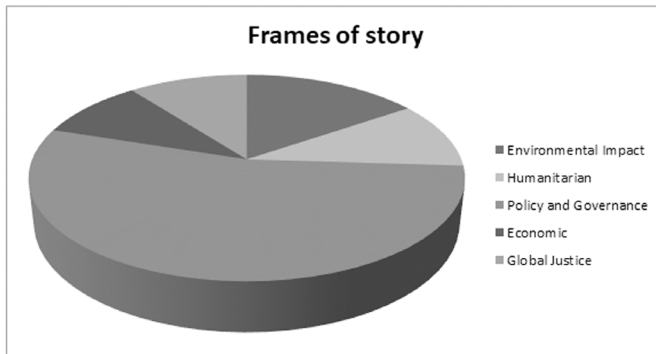

Figure 1: Distribution of Frames

This data analysis provides a foundation for understanding the framing strategies employed by *Kantipur, Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika* in reporting climate change issues in Nepal. Further research and exploration into audience reactions and the effectiveness of these framing strategies could offer valuable insights into shaping more impactful climate change communication strategies in the future.

Figure 2: Percentage of Distribution of Frames

Analysis of Framing of News Coverage

The comparative analysis of climate change framing in Nepali newspapers reveals intriguing insights into the prioritization and representation of various frames in the media landscape. The dominance of the Policy and Governance Frame, comprising 54% of the coverage, underscores a strong emphasis on the role of government and institutional mechanisms in addressing climate change. This finding suggests a notable focus on policy interventions and governance strategies in the newspapers studied, possibly reflecting the perceived significance of regulatory measures in tackling the climate crisis.

Furthermore, the prominence of the Environmental Impact Frame as the second most prevalent suggests recognition of the immediate ecological consequences of climate change.

The distribution of frames across newspapers highlights nuanced variations, with *Nagarik* leading in the Policy and Governance Frame and *Nayapatrika* featuring prominently in the Environmental Impact and Global Justice Frames.

The research, which shows Nepal's vulnerabilities to climate change, stresses the pressing need to address concerns like a rise in natural disasters, decreasing groundwater supplies, and rising carbon emissions, which complies with the qualitative content. Nepal's distinct position as one of the most affected countries points out the strong connection between the appeal for international aid and climate financing. As the debate continues, it is essential to examine the consequences of these framing strategies and explore how media narratives in the context of climate change might affect public opinion, the creation of policies, and global collaboration.

The study identifies five dominant frames used in reporting climate change: Environmental Impact, Humanitarian, Policy and Governance, Economic, and Global Justice frames. The dominant frame across all newspapers is the Policy and Governance Frame, followed by the Environmental Impact Frame. The Policy and Governance Frame constitutes the majority of coverage (54%), indicating a strong emphasis on government policies and institutional responses. The Environmental Impact Frame follows with 23% of coverage. *Kantipur* features a significant number of stories on Policy and Governance and Environmental Impact. *Nagarik* shows a higher emphasis on Policy and Governance, with a balanced representation of other frames. *Nayapatrika* emphasizes Environmental Impact and Global Justice Frames, alongside Policy and Governance. The strong focus on Policy and Governance suggests a collective media emphasis on governmental policies and institutional mechanisms. While Environmental Impact is consistently represented, there are nuanced differences across newspapers, with *Nayapatrika* prioritizing this frame more extensively. Less frequently used frames

are humanitarian, economic, and global justice, implying possible gaps in media attention to Nepal's impact of climate change on people's lives, the economy, and global justice.

Conclusion

The present research provides a detailed analysis of climate change framing in Nepali newspapers, particularly *Kantipur, Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrik*. The leading position of the Policy and Governance Frame shows an overall emphasis on governmental policies and institutional solutions, highlighting the vital function of governance in solving climate concerns. While the Environmental Impact Frame always comes in second, variations between newspapers reveal nuanced differences in coverage. The insufficient presence of the Humanitarian, Economic, and Global Justice Frames indicates potential gaps in media discourse, emphasizing the significance of a broader approach to climate change reporting. This study serves as a basic examination that caused future research into audience emotions and the effectiveness of framing strategies with the goal of enhancing climate change communication.

It is suggested that media outlets extend their narrative techniques to include a wider range of climate change impacts, such as issues related to global justice, economics, and humanitarian concerns. In order to increase public understanding of climate change policies and programs, government agencies should strengthen their communication strategies. Policies from the government should fill in the gaps in the media's coverage, especially when it comes to issues of global justice, economic impacts, and humanitarian concerns. The general public should examine media coverage and use a wide range of information sources to stay up-to-date on climate change issues. Media organizations, public officials, and lawmakers can help make better decisions and take collective action to address the current climate crisis by implementing these suggestions.

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