

Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools for Nepali Journalists: Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the journalism industry worldwide, bringing forth new tools that can revolutionize how information is gathered, produced, and disseminated. AI's ability to assist with data analysis, content generation, real-time transcription, audience analysis, and fact-checking has proven valuable in modern newsrooms. In the context of Nepal, a country with a vibrant yet resource-constrained media landscape, the integration of AI offers both immense opportunities and significant challenges. This study explores the various ways AI tools are impacting Nepali journalism and the ethical, professional, and infrastructural issues that come with it. Drawing from a survey of 200 journalists across Nepal and several qualitative interviews, the study outlines current AI usage, perceived benefits, and the barriers journalists face in embracing AI. A comprehensive review of global, regional, and local literature complements the analysis. The study concludes with practical recommendations for ethical and effective AI integration into Nepali journalism, underscoring the need for local innovation, journalist training, and strong regulatory frameworks.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Journalism, Nepal, Media, Fact-Checking, Digital Divide, Automation

I. Introduction

Background

The evolution of journalism in the 21st century has been marked by rapid technological advancements. Among these, Artificial Intelligence has emerged as one of the most disruptive forces in the media industry. Globally, AI is reshaping how journalists work—by automating mundane tasks, enabling data-driven investigations, and personalizing content for readers. Newsrooms in technologically advanced countries have been quick to adopt tools such as natural language generation (NLG), AI-assisted transcription, facial recognition, and AI-based content curation (Lewis et al., 2021).

In Nepal, the journalism sector is both dynamic and challenged. Journalists often work in resource-limited settings, and the adoption of new technology is slow. Nevertheless, digital transformation is underway, driven by increased internet penetration, the rise of digital media platforms, and growing demand for real-time news. AI tools can support Nepali journalists by improving efficiency, accuracy, and reach. However, there are significant obstacles: lack of awareness, inadequate training, ethical dilemmas, infrastructural limitations, and fears of job displacement. This study investigates these dynamics in detail.

Problem Statement

Despite growing awareness of AI's potential, its adoption in Nepali journalism remains low. Several barriers—including infrastructural inadequacies, digital illiteracy, limited access to relevant tools, and ethical uncertainties—hinder widespread use. Furthermore, journalists lack training and support to explore AI effectively. There is a need to understand how journalists perceive AI, the extent of its use, and the socio-technical challenges involved in integrating it into their workflows.

Research Objectives

To explore the current extent of AI adoption in Nepali journalism.

To analyze the benefits and challenges perceived by journalists regarding AI tools.

To assess the ethical implications of AI use in Nepali newsrooms.

To provide practical recommendations to media houses, policymakers, and educators for integrating AI ethically and effectively.

Research Questions

How are Nepali journalists currently using AI tools?

What are the perceived advantages and limitations of AI in journalism?

What ethical concerns arise with AI-driven journalism in Nepal?

What strategies can be implemented to improve AI adoption in Nepali newsrooms?

II. Literature Review

AI in Journalism: A Global Perspective

The global media industry has witnessed increasing use of AI-powered tools in recent years. These tools assist in automating news generation (e.g., Reuters' Lynx Insight), transcribing interviews (e.g., Otter.ai), personalizing news feeds through recommendation algorithms, and even detecting misinformation in real-time (Diakopoulos, 2019). Organizations such as the Associated Press use AI to automatically produce business reports and sports recaps. AI-driven journalism is not just about speed and automation—it also enhances the accuracy and reach of news stories by enabling the processing of large datasets.

AI in Journalism: The South Asian Context in South Asia

AI integration in journalism is varied. India leads in AI-powered media tools, with fact-checking platforms like BOOM and Alt News using AI for verifying viral claims and debunking misinformation. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are exploring AI applications but face similar challenges as Nepal, including digital infrastructure gaps and low digital literacy (Sinha, 2021). Collaboration between media houses and tech companies is increasing, but limited financial resources and lack of policy support remain hurdles across the region (Parajuli, 2021).

Ethical and Practical Challenges of AI in Journalism

AI introduces a host of ethical challenges in journalism. One key concern is the generation and spread of misinformation, especially through deepfakes and biased algorithms. Journalists are also wary of losing editorial control to automated systems, which may lack the contextual understanding necessary for ethical reporting (Zhou et al., 2020). The risk of job losses due to automation is another pressing issue. Additionally, the 'black-box' nature of some AI tools means journalists may not fully understand how decisions are made, affecting transparency and accountability (Newman, 2021).

Nepal's Media Landscape and AI

Nepal's media landscape is diverse but resource-constrained. Print, broadcast, and digital media coexist, but many outlets still rely on traditional methods for reporting. Digital journalism is expanding, but without a corresponding increase in training or access to advanced tools. While some newsrooms have started using AI for basic functions like translation or transcription, comprehensive adoption is minimal. Shrestha (2022) notes that most Nepali journalists are unfamiliar with the workings of AI, and there is a need for structured AI education.

III. Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. The core method involves a structured survey distributed among Nepali journalists from various media sectors. To enrich these findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with experienced journalists and editors.

Sampling and Data Collection

A total of 200 journalists were sampled across different regions of Nepal, representing diverse media types: national dailies, local weeklies, online portals, television, and radio stations. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring representation from different age groups, gender identities, and media roles. The survey was administered online, followed by virtual and in-person interviews.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and cross-tabulations to identify trends in AI usage. Qualitative interview data were coded thematically to extract insights into perceptions, challenges, and suggested solutions regarding AI integration.

IV. Findings and Discussion

AI Adoption Trends Among Nepali Journalists

Survey results show that 38% of journalists use AI-based tools for transcription tasks such as interview documentation. Around 22% use AI tools for fact-checking, leveraging platforms like Google Fact Check or image verification engines. Only 18% utilize audience analytics tools that help understand reader behavior. Alarmingly, just 12% of the respondents have received any formal training in AI-related tools or processes.

Perceived Benefits and Challenges

The majority of respondents (65%) cited increased time efficiency as the primary benefit of AI, followed by improved content accuracy (45%). However, 55% expressed concern over potential job displacement, particularly for entry-level reporting positions. Around 48% pointed to risks of misinformation, and 36% noted a lack of technical skills as a personal barrier to AI adoption.

Ethical Considerations

Interviewees and survey respondents emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability, and bias mitigation. A large majority (72%) supported the introduction of a national ethical framework or policy guidelines for AI in journalism. Concerns were also raised regarding AI's inability to understand cultural nuances, potentially leading to misrepresentation of facts.

Case Study Insights

Qualitative insights reveal that large media houses like Kantipur Publications and Onlinekhabar have begun experimenting with AI-based analytics and translation tools. However, they face hurdles in scaling these tools due to budgetary constraints and limited local expertise. Independent journalists and freelancers report feeling alienated due to the high cost and complexity of AI tools.

V. Recommendation and Conclusion**Recommendations**

AI Literacy Programs: Journalism schools and media organizations should integrate AI training into their curricula and ongoing professional development efforts.

Regulatory Frameworks: The government should develop ethical guidelines and legal frameworks for AI usage in media, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and human oversight.

Investment in Local AI Development: Government and private sectors should support AI startups focused on language processing, local news aggregation, and misinformation detection tailored to Nepal's media needs.

International Collaboration: Partnerships with global media tech companies and institutions can facilitate knowledge exchange, tool customization, and capacity-building initiatives.

VI. Conclusion

AI presents a promising yet complex future for Nepali journalism. While it can streamline workflows, enhance content accuracy, and expand audience reach, it also raises ethical, professional, and infrastructural concerns. This study underscores the need for thoughtful integration of AI—supported by policy, training, and innovation—to ensure that Nepali journalism thrives in the digital era. Ethical use, inclusive access, and journalist empowerment must remain at the core of AI adoption strategies.

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