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National Survey Report 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on **journalism** in Nepal

Chindu Sreedharan, Einar Thorsen,
Laxman Upreti and Shreeman Sharma



Survey coordinated by Bournemouth University
and Nepal Press Institute

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For a printed copy, please contact:

Mr Laxman Upreti, T: +977-1-4264 155 / 4266 418

E: info@nepalpressinstitute.org.np / institute.npi@gmail.com

For inquiries related to survey and research, please contact:

Dr Chindu Sreedharan T: +44 (0)1202 958838 E: csreedharan@bournemouth.ac.uk

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Authors

Dr Chindu Sreedharan is Principal Academic in Journalism at Bournemouth University, United Kingdom.
Email: csreedharan@bournemouth.ac.uk

Professor Einar Thorsen is the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Media and Communication at Bournemouth University, United Kingdom.
Email: ethorsen@bournemouth.ac.uk

Mr Laxman Upreti is an experienced broadcast journalist and a Director of the Nepal Press Institute, Kathmandu.
Email: lupreti@gmail.com

Mr Shreeman Sharma is a freelance journalist, and PhD scholar at the Department of Conflict, Peace and Development Studies at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.
Email: bigyansharma@gmail.com

With contributions from: **Patrick Ward**

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Foreword

The global public health crisis of Covid-19 has affected all sectors of the Nepali society. This includes the mass media, particularly journalists. The efforts to contain the spread of the virus have produced adverse impact on news personnel, their way of communication, the overall information flow across the nation, and the functioning of the institutions essential for informing citizens on a regular basis. While there has been much discourse on the impact of Covid-19 in Nepal, a focussed portrait of the effects of the virus on journalists has not been presented so far.

Keeping this in view, the Nepal Press Institute and Bournemouth University of the United Kingdom have undertaken this national survey. Its findings could be described as a testimony of Nepali journalists' grass-root mental state and experiences, and the changes to their working practices amidst the shocks of Covid-19. It records their personal agony, their professional challenges, and the complexities they live and work in. The survey, hence, constitutes a baseline for understanding how the virus affected Nepali journalists. It will help decision-makers and planners to craft policies and programmes essential for enabling Nepali journalists to recover, and continue their role of championing public interest.

Obstacles, hindrances, struggles, challenges, disruptions, disasters, and interferences are nothing new to Nepali journalism. It has a rich history of facing them in different times and always moving forward in a dynamic way. The resilience Nepali journalists have demonstrated in challenging times is notable, and I am sure that this strength will help them triumph over the shocks of the present pandemic as well.

Just before the Covid-19 threat emerged, the Nepali mass media sector was facing a great challenge from the unregulated information flow on various digital and social media platforms. The challenge, which is still present and could remain for some time, represents the tension between the information disseminated by mass media honouring the values of gatekeeping, decency, and public interest, and the information aired by those who post with no regard for such values. Media users are finding themselves lost in an information blizzard, struggling to filter real news from fake news. They have been encountering the same predicament while seeking to learn about the pandemic as well.

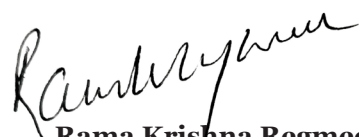
With no vaccine to ward off the virus yet and the multi-dimensional impact of the efforts to check its spread being acutely felt, Covid-19 has placed Nepali journalism in uncharted territory. Prevention measures such as lockdown, social distancing, use of face mask, quarantines, test and tracing, and various hygienic rituals are stressful to all those involved. They have resulted in further additions to the mental, physical, and financial pressures felt by individuals, families, and the whole society. Maintaining

the flow of information in such circumstances as per journalistic standards is demanding. However, Nepali media personnel, like other frontline fighters, are working hard to protect the interests of the public, not minding the risks they personally run.

As this survey highlights, Covid-19 is having a notable impact on journalists and the media institutions in Nepal. Journalists in all the seven provinces have been affected mentally and physically. A large number of news workers suffered financial difficulties, and some have lost their jobs altogether. There have been many notable changes to their newsgathering and news dissemination practices, including reduction in broadcast, print, and radio outputs across the country.

This national survey has followed the ethical guidelines of international research, used the latest Information Communication Technology (ICT), honoured social distancing, and included journalists from all seven provinces engaged in print, radio, TV, online, and news agencies. It has made provisions for respondents to express their views on disaster resilience and disaster preparedness. The questionnaire also provided journalists the option to suggest a road-map for journalism education and training in future, particularly in view of disasters and pandemics. This is an important first step in facilitating actionable recommendations that can be implemented by journalists, news organisations, and other stakeholders. In staking out a course for future capacity building, this report also highlights the need for continuous disaster preparedness training to strengthen our collective resilience.

The Nepal Press Institute and Bournemouth University have, through this national survey, conveyed the message that journalists' problems in times of crises can be best understood through their own participation, intervention, and expression. In my opinion, this report provides a rich evidential basis for strengthening the journalistic resources of the Nepali media sector for coping with disasters and pandemics in future.



Rama Krishna Regmee
Professor, Kantipur City College
Kathmandu

Executive summary

This rapid response report presents findings from a national survey undertaken to ascertain the impact of Covid-19 on Nepali journalists and their working conditions. Covid-19 spread as Nepal was approaching the fifth anniversary of the devastating 2015 earthquakes, the effects of which can still be felt in the nation. As such, Nepal faces additional economic, cultural, and social pressures because of the global pandemic. This report outlines how national and regional journalists, and news organisations responded to the pandemic, and identifies the training and capacity building requirements of Nepali journalists to strengthen future disaster resilience.

Methodology

The survey was conducted online, using Microsoft Forms, from 10 July to 24 July 2020. A total of 1,134 journalists took part in the survey. This included news personnel working in print, online, broadcast, and radio, as well as news agencies. Broken down by gender, 80.4% (n=912) of our respondents were male and 19.2% (n=218) female, while 0.3% (4) chose 'other'. The survey had responses from all seven provinces of Nepal (see Figure 1), and included both employed and freelance journalists. For more methodological details, please see Appendix 1, available in the online version of this report.

Number of respondents by province

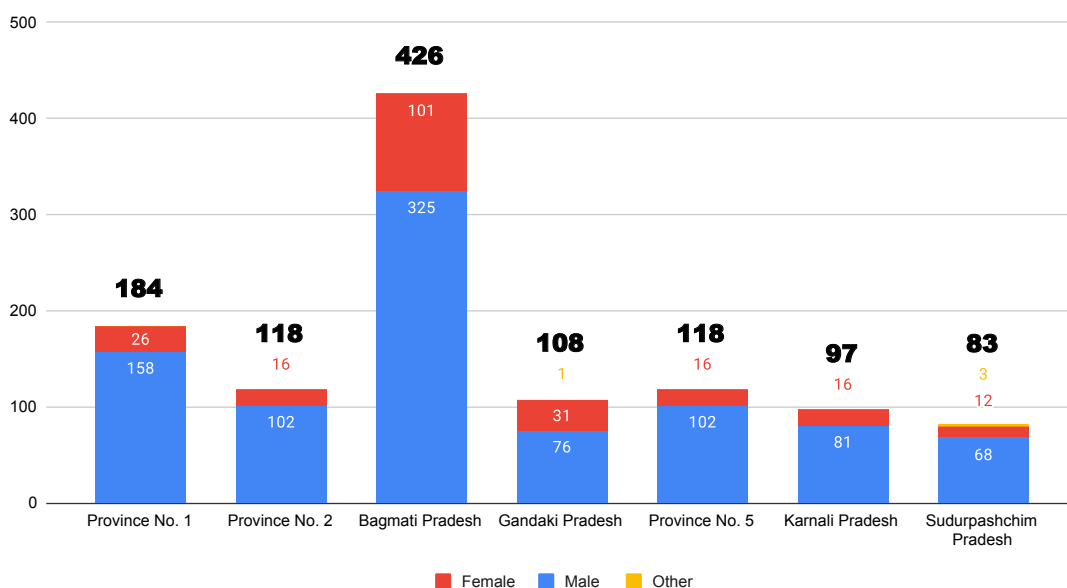


Figure 1

Key findings

Despite the relatively low morbidity rate among Nepali journalists, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on journalists' working practices. The vast majority of our respondents, in all seven provinces, reported significant personal impact as a direct consequence of Covid-19.

- ✧ **Covid-19 affected the mental wellbeing of a majority of journalists** in Nepal: 83% reported increased sense of vulnerability, 75% increased anxiety, and 62% grief; 25% reported they experienced depression.
- ✧ **74% of journalists have been impacted financially**, with 38% having to take a pay cut, and 6% losing their jobs.
- ✧ **66% reported significant changes to their working hours**: 24% were working longer hours, 24% fewer, and 18% on weekends.
- ✧ **The pandemic affected newscasts and publishing substantially**. Respondents reported decreased broadcast, video, and audio productions. The print sector saw the reduction of both print frequency and number of pages, and some publications moved to digital-only format.
- ✧ Despite Nepal's extreme vulnerability to disasters, including health crises, **most respondents were ill-prepared and ill-trained to face the pandemic**. Overall, the respondents scored -69 on the Net Promoter Scale (see Appendix in online version of this report for details), indicating low disaster preparedness in the news industry; 66% of respondents reported *never* receiving disaster resilience training.
- ✧ **Gandaki Pradesh and Province No. 1 were the provinces where journalists were *most* likely to have received disaster resilience training**. Sudurpaschim Pradesh, followed by Province No. 5 were the areas where they were *least* likely to have received such training.
- ✧ Respondents identified **new technologies, investigative reporting, and fact-checking and verification as top priority areas for training** and capacity building. Physical safety aspects, digital safety and security, and editorial preparedness were other key areas.
- ✧ **Most journalists preferred future disaster resilience training to be delivered via websites and webinars**. They also showed a preference for physical workshops in their respective provinces.

Personal impact on journalists

We queried journalists on whether they had personally contracted Covid-19. Ninety-eight per cent (n=1,115) of our respondents had not, to their knowledge, been infected by the virus. Just 0.97% (n=11) reported having had the virus, and a further 0.97% (11) responded that someone in their family had been infected with it.

Psychological

However, despite this low morbidity rate, the pandemic had a significant impact on the lives of our respondents, in all provinces, across all sectors (see Figure 2). The majority of the respondents reported being affected by it psychologically.

The most striking concern among 82.6% (n=937) of the respondents was an increased sense of vulnerability, with 30% agreeing strongly and 52.6% agreeing with that statement. Respondents also reported impact of Covid-19 in terms of increased anxiety (74.8% n=848), grief (61.6% n=698), loss of connection from family and friends (37.1% n=421), and sleep deprivation (27.9% n=316).

Importantly, 25% (n=283) of the journalists said they experienced depression as a consequence of Covid-19.

82%
of journalists
experienced an
increased sense of
vulnerability

Covid-19 related impact on Nepali journalists

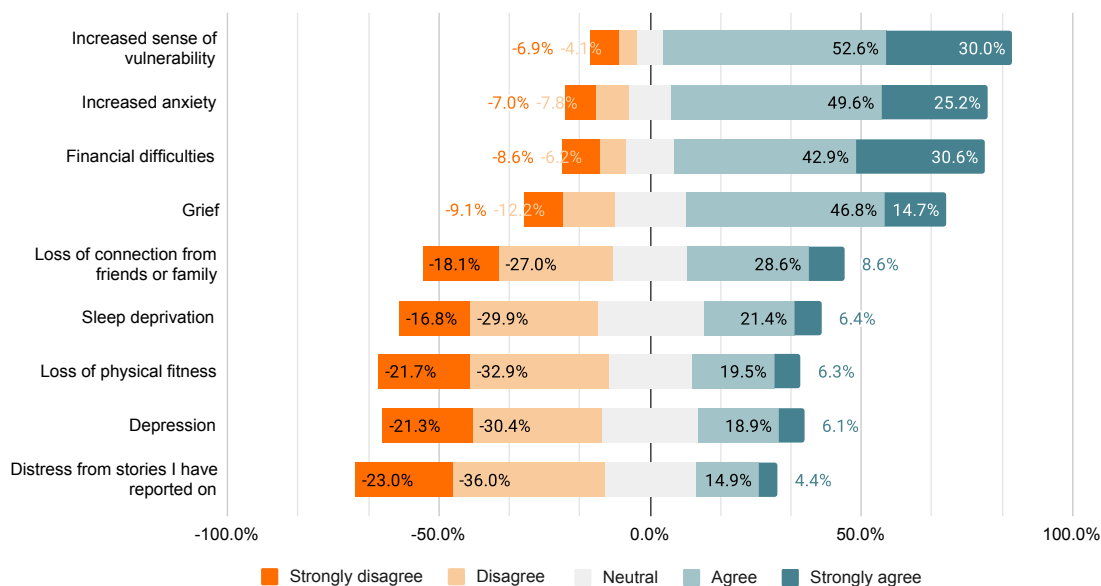


Figure 2

73%
of journalists
experienced
monetary troubles

Financial difficulties

Financial difficulties was the next most cited category of Covid-19 impact among the respondents, with 73.5% (n=834) experiencing monetary troubles. While this was the third most common complaint, financial difficulties had the largest percentage, 30.6%, of those strongly agreeing. Some journalists also highlighted late payment of salaries as a specific challenge that exacerbated their personal financial situation.

Perhaps tellingly, as the incidence rate of Covid-19 in Nepal has been relatively low, those saying they had been distressed by the stories they had reported on was ranked the lowest by respondents, with 59% (n=669) disagreeing and strongly disagreeing with the statement.

Provincial variations: psychological

These trends were noticeable across all provinces, although there were some regional variations. Respondents from Province No. 1, for instance, reported higher rates of vulnerability and anxiety than the national average. Province No. 2, similarly, reported 9.4% *more* respondents experiencing grief, while those in Gandaki Pradesh appeared to be experiencing slightly lower levels of vulnerability and anxiety compared to the national average.

Provincial variations: financial

Bagmati Pradesh, the capital province, showed a slightly lower instance of those concerned with financial difficulties (66.4% n=283) than the national average of 73.5% (n=834). Province No. 5, on the other hand, showed the highest number of financially affected journalists among all provinces, reporting 87.3% (n=103). A detailed breakdown of the provincial variations can be seen in Appendix 2, available in the online version of this report.

Personal impact by gender

The survey gathered responses from 912 male and 218 female journalists, with four respondents selecting 'other' (see Appendix 1 in online version of this report). The two main areas of divergence between men and women respondents in terms of personal impact were mental wellbeing and finance.

Female respondents reported experiencing increased grief, depression, anxiety, and vulnerability than their male counterparts. Specifically, 8.4% *more* female respondents reported they experienced grief (67.9% women, 59.5% men), and 4.8% *more* said they experienced depression (28.9% women, 24.1% men). The percentage of respondents reporting heightened vulnerability and anxiety, too, were higher among women (Figure 3).

In terms of financial difficulties, 74.6% of men either agreed or strongly agreed that their situation was adversely affected by the Covid-19 crisis

Female journalists

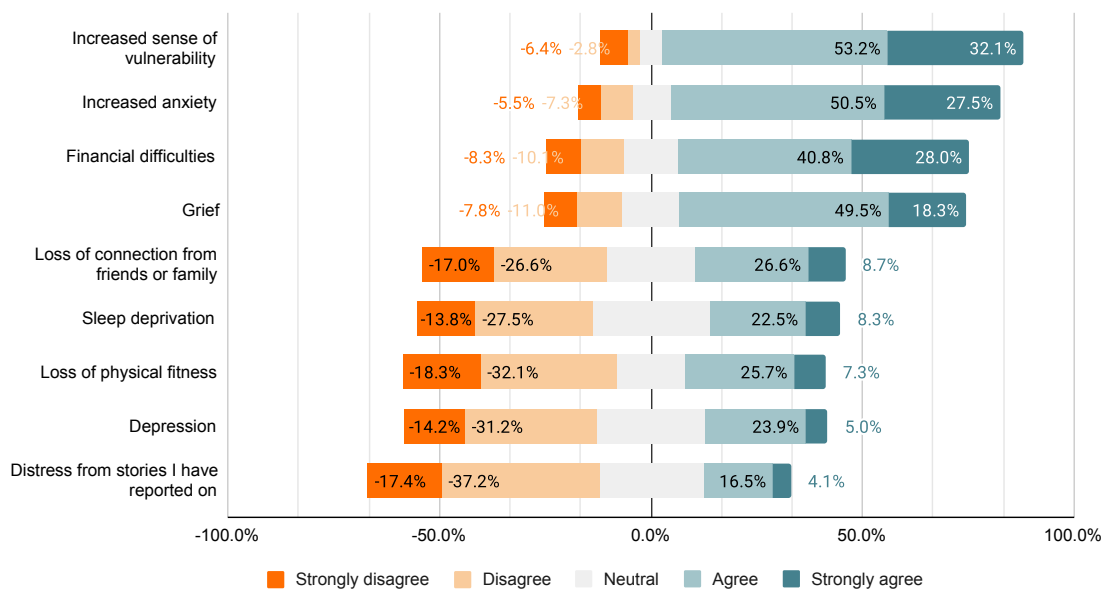


Figure 3

Male journalists

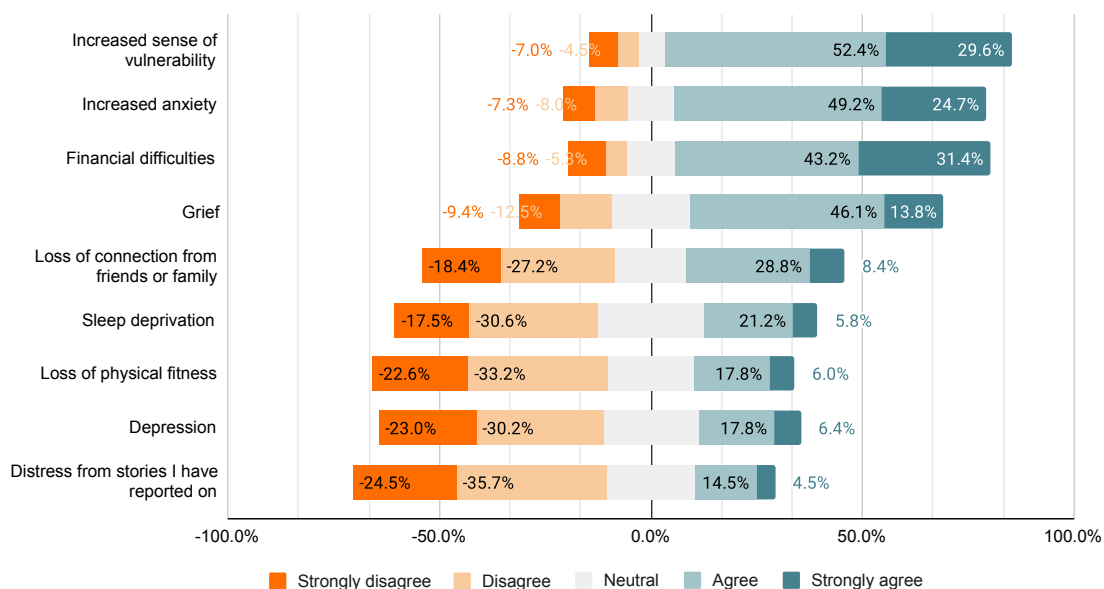


Figure 4

(Figure 4). The proportion of women respondents saying the same was 5.8% lower, at 68.8%.

Women respondents appear to have been more affected than men across other categories as well, with a higher percentage reporting sleep deprivation, distress from stories, loss of physical fitness, and loss of connection from family and friends.

Impact on working conditions

The effects of the Covid-19 crisis were acutely felt by journalists in several professional areas. Job security, working hours, and news production and dissemination practices, our survey found, have undergone disruption and changes.

Employment

6%
of Nepali
journalists have
lost their job due
to Covid-19 cuts

Covid-19 has had a detrimental impact on employment conditions and job security for Nepali journalists. Overall, 38.4% (n=435) reported that their pay was cut — including 18.8% (n=213) of journalists saying that they were working the same hours for less pay; and 19.6% (n=222) responding that both their pay and working hours have been reduced (Figure 5). More concerning, a further 6.3% (n=72) said they had lost their jobs. This marks a worrying trend in the news profession in Nepal, at a time when reliable public health information, scrutiny of public governance, and plans for recovery and future mitigation are ever-more pressing.

Whilst the majority of respondents said their employment terms had been affected in some way by the Covid-19 crisis, a significant proportion — 43.3% (n=491) — said their terms of employment had *not* been affected at all by the pandemic. Here, it is worth noting that radio and television journalists reported the most secure employment terms, with 51.8% and 49.4%, respectively, reporting they had seen no change to their employment due to Covid-19. Print and online journalists, in other words, appear to have been the more vulnerable.

Provincial variations: employment

Breaking these results down by province, we find that the highest rate of those who had their pay cut (with or without working fewer hours) was in Karnali Pradesh, at 53.6% (n=52). Journalists in Sudurpaschim Pradesh seem to have suffered the most in terms of job losses, with 13.3% (n=11) responding they were out of employment. The second-most affected province was Bagmati Pradesh, where 8% of journalists reported losing their jobs (Figure 5).

The highest percentage of respondents whose employment had been

How has your employment been affected by COVID-19?

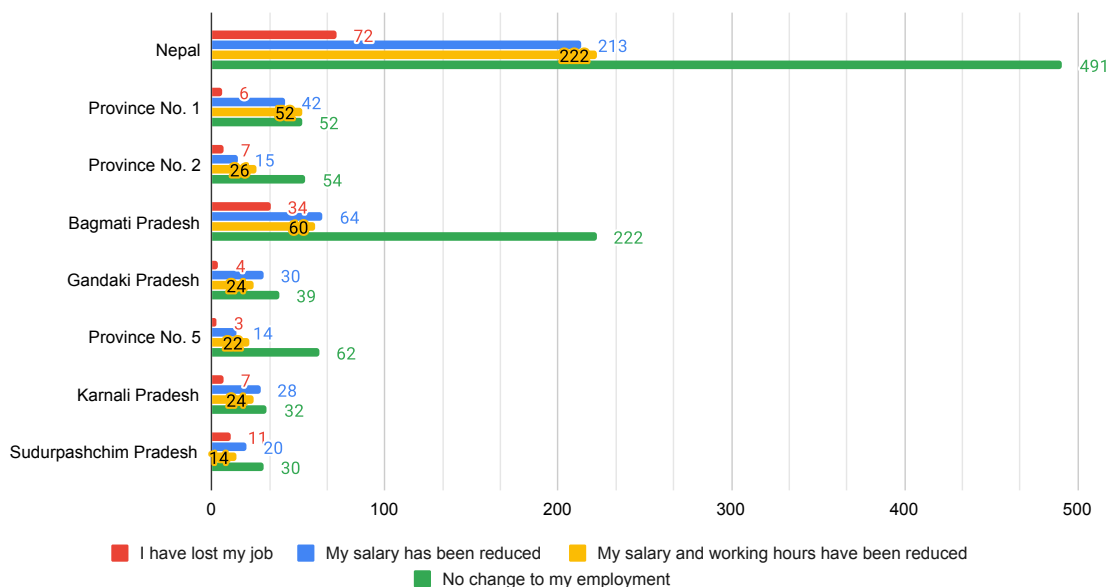


Figure 5

unaffected by Covid-19 was in Province No. 5, at 52.5% (n=62). This was followed by those in Bagmati Pradesh, at 52.1% (n=222), and Province No. 2, at 45.8% (n=54).

Working hours

The largest group of respondents 26.6% (n=302) said that their working hours remained unchanged due to the Covid-19 crisis, while similar numbers said that they were working longer hours, 24.1% (n=273), or fewer hours, 24% (n=272). Some 17.7% (n=201) said that they were doing more weekend work as a result of the pandemic.

Provincial variations: working hours

The survey indicated that changes to working hours affected journalists in provinces differently. For example, 34.9% (n=29) of respondents in Sudurpashchim Pradesh said they were working longer hours, compared to 17.4% (n=32) in Province No. 1. Similarly, Bagmati Pradesh, which had the highest number of survey respondents, also had the highest number of journalists whose working hours had *not* registered any change (30.5% n=130).

How has your working hours changed?

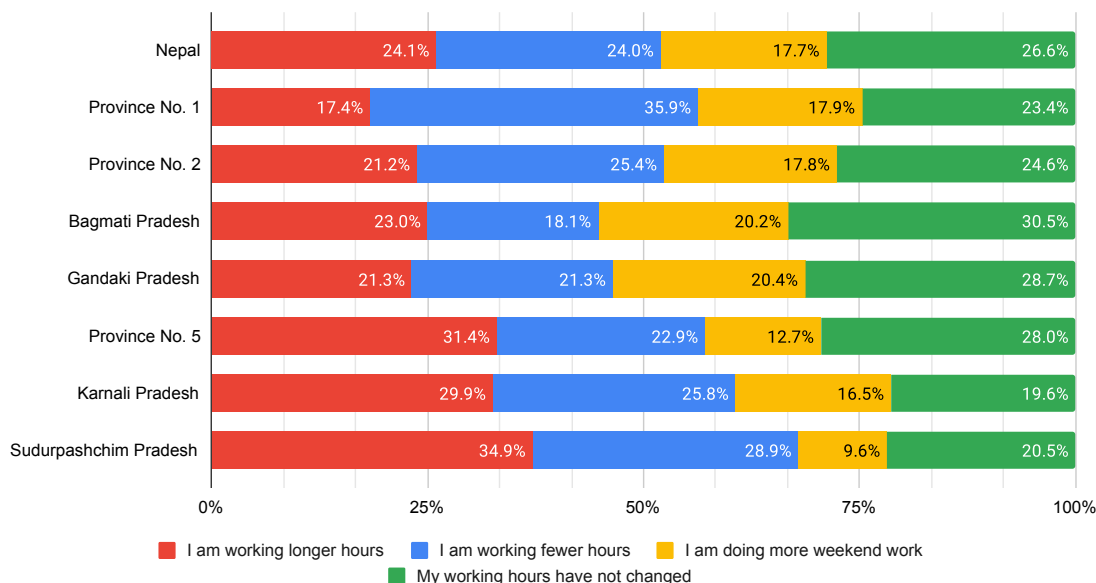


Figure 6

Job security

60%
of Nepali
journalists were
worried about
their jobs due to
Covid-19

The pandemic appears to have triggered significant employment insecurities among journalists, with 60.2% (n=683) acknowledging that they were more worried about their jobs now than they were before the onset of Covid-19. To our question on job security, 37.8% answered they felt less secure, while an additional 22.4% said they felt much less secure (Figure 7).

A significant section of respondents, however, reported that the pandemic had not affected their job security adversely at all. This included 32.6% (n=370) of respondents who said they felt no change, 3.5% (n=40) who felt more secure, and 3.6% (n=41) who felt much more secure than before the Covid-19 crisis.

Provincial variations: job security

Karnali Pradesh had the highest percentage of respondents who felt insecure about their jobs (Figure 7). The combined total of those who said they felt less secure and much less secure in this province was 70.1% (n=68). Sudurpashchim Pradesh and Province No. 1 followed, reporting a combined total of 67.5% (n=56) and 65.2% (n=120) respectively.

Province No. 2 had the largest percentage of respondents who reported no adverse effects in this regard: 39.8% (n=47) said they had no change to job security, while 10.2% (n=12) said they felt much more secure and an additional 5.9% (n=7) said they felt more secure than before the pandemic.

Covid-19 impact on job security for Nepali journalists

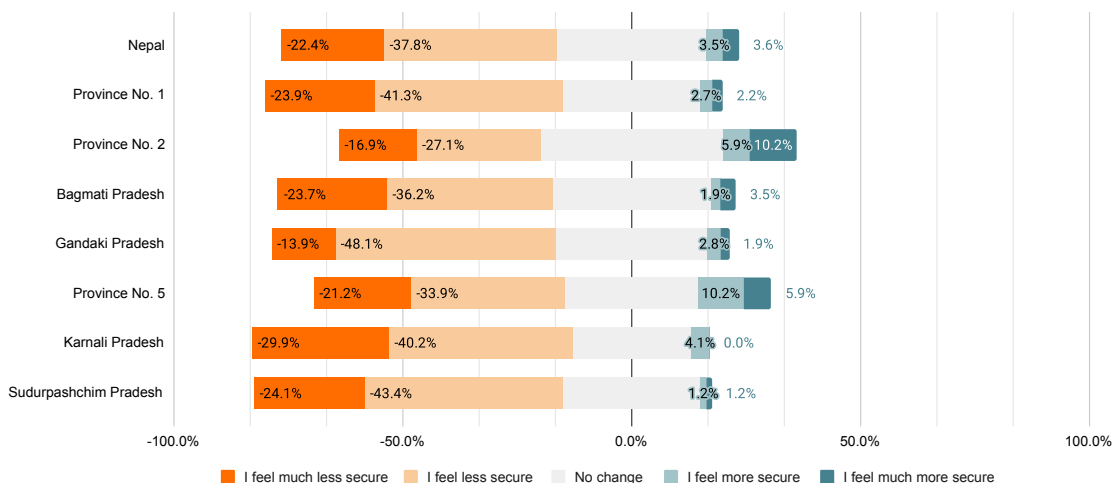


Figure 7

Changes to working practices

As was expected, Covid-19 forced Nepali journalists to change the way they worked. Most relied heavily on remote working practices, not only in terms of not attending office, but also in the way they sourced their news stories (Figure 8).

The majority of newsgathering, according to our respondents, was done online, either on social media (80.4% n=912, both agreeing and strongly agreeing), or on other internet sources (82.6% n=937, both agreeing and strongly agreeing). We also see an increased reliance on official and government sources, with 71.4% (n=810) of journalists acknowledging this trend.

Further, the ability to conduct investigations was severely affected, with 64.8% (n=735) agreeing and strongly agreeing that this was a result of Covid-19, and 63.5% (n=720) that this was a result of associated financial pressures associated with the pandemic.

These constraints reported by journalists have broader implications for disaster journalism in general. Arguably, they limit the quality of news content at a critical time, and raises questions about how the media can perform its role of holding power to account and providing public service journalism during times of crisis.

Response of news organisations

As with individual journalists, Covid-19 had a severe impact on Nepali news organisations. Across the nation, news outlets responded to the situation in line with government regulations, adopting measures such as social distancing and remote working.

Changes to newsgathering / production practices after Covid-19

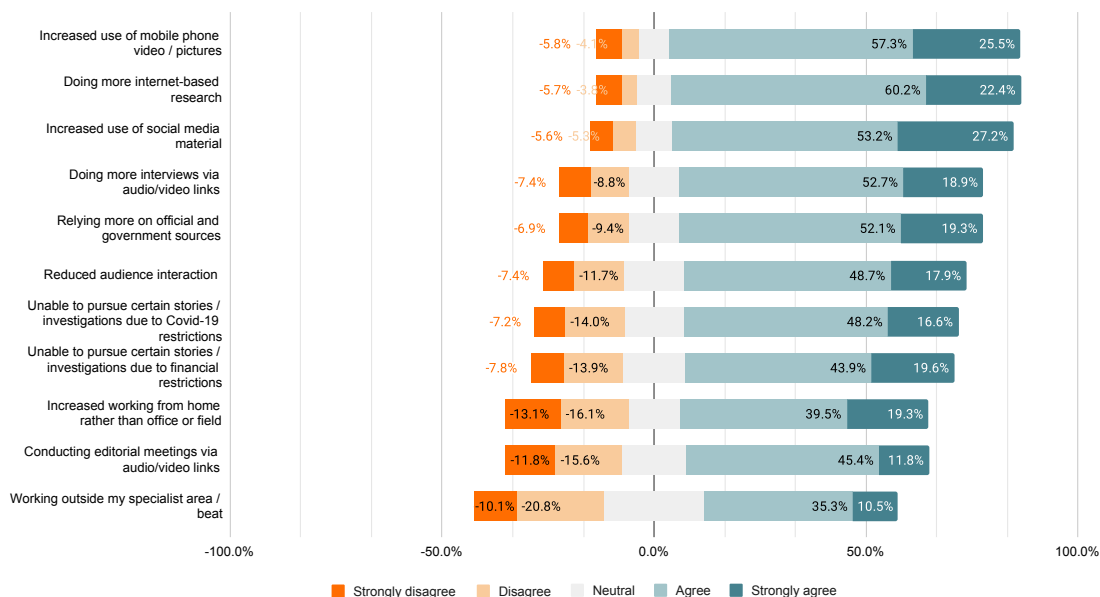


Figure 8

But our survey also indicated two other, more troubling impacts: *a substantial decline in the production of original news content*, and *decreased news dissemination*. Both are of critical concern during a global health crisis, as they affect the news media's ability to keep the civil society informed, and impact journalists' capacity to interrogate the responses of the government to the pandemic.

Reduced outputs and dissemination

The production of print, video, audio, and online news content saw a marked decline across the nation because of the Covid-19 crisis. The print and broadcast sectors appear to have been the most affected (Figure 9).

Respondents who worked for print outlets reported a reduction in the number of pages published (55% n=258) and reduced print frequency (48.4% n=227).

Broadcast, too, followed the same pattern, with 51.8% (n=176) and 42.8% (n=116) of our respondents from the radio and television sectors, respectively, acknowledging reduced broadcast production.

Respondents also pointed to a substantial reduction in video production. Further, a substantial number of print and broadcast news organisations adopted the digital-only format because of the Covid-19 crisis. In terms of news audio production, radio appears to be the sector that was worst affected by the pandemic, as indicated by the reduction in audio production figures reported by respondents from within the sector (27.4% n=93).

Has your news organisation made any of the following changes to its output since Covid-19?

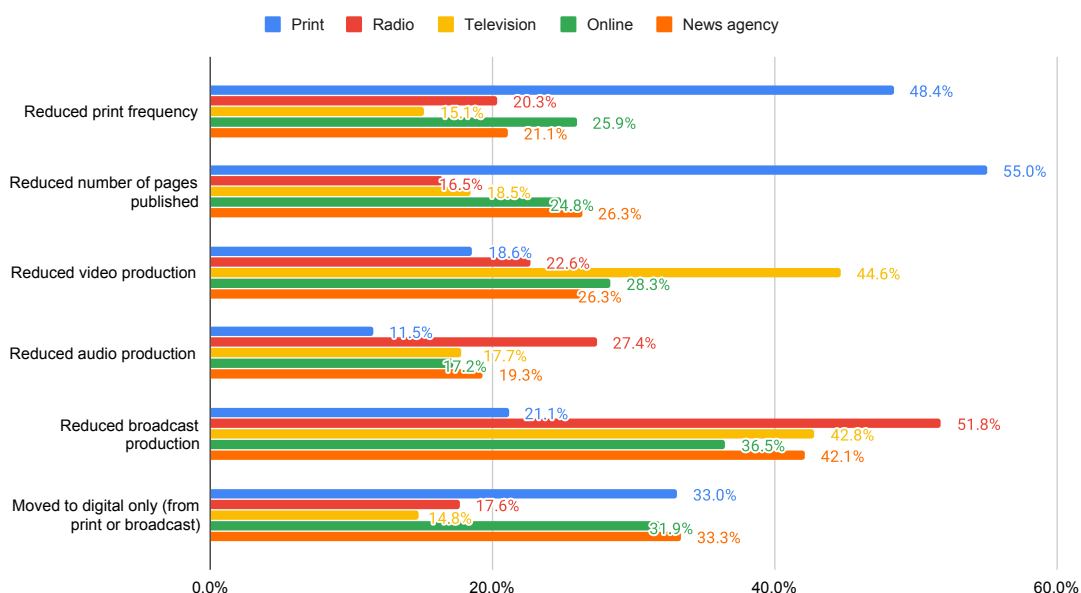


Figure 9

Physical measures

A majority of respondents (69%; n=783) reported that their news organisations implemented physical distancing measures in their workplace (Figure 10).

Linked to this was the implementation of staff rotas for attending office, which was acknowledged by 35.4% (n=401) of those who took part in the survey.

The use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), on the other hand, appears to have been facilitated by news organisations to a very low extent. The national average of journalists who reported they had access to PPE was just 5.5% (n=62).

Similarly, very few organisations appear to have adopted or implemented editorial policies to guide journalists during the pandemic. The national average for this was only 14.7% (n=167), with journalists from Sudurpashchim Pradesh reporting the highest percentage (19.3% n=16) in this regard.

Workplace support

The most common support that news organisations offered journalists was flexible working hours (Figure 11). This was reported by 56.5% (n=641) of the respondents. The second most common support available was professional guidance on new working principles (48.5% n=550), followed by time to take care of family (46.6% n=528), guidance on coping mechanisms (41.7% n=473), and social support (37.2% n=422).

Changes to newsroom or newsgathering routines to mitigate Covid-19

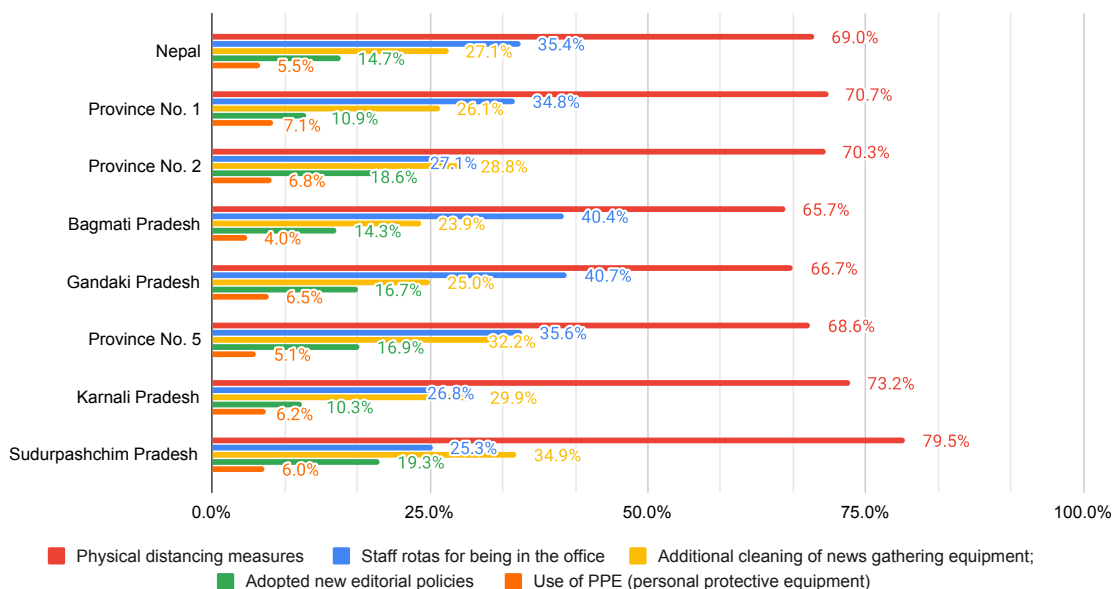


Figure 10

Covid-19 support from news organisation

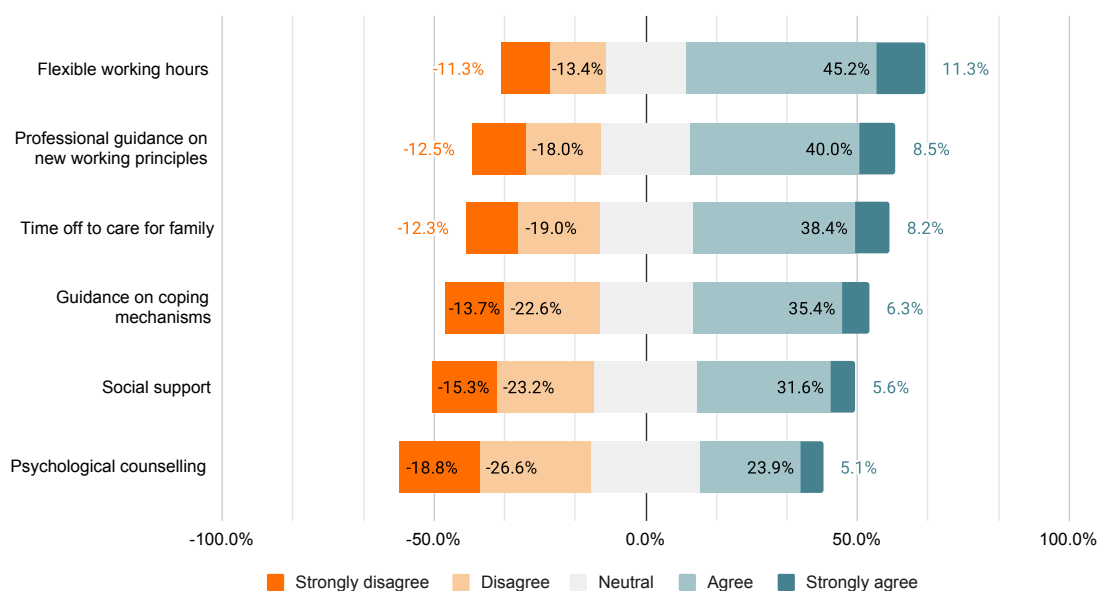


Figure 11

Psychological counselling was the least available measure to the respondents, with only 29% (n=329) agreeing and strongly agreeing that they received this support from their organisation. The acute need that respondents felt for this support is arguably underlined by the fact that this category saw the highest percentage of respondents who disagreed that they received this support: 45.4% (n=515). Similarly, social support had the second highest percentage of disagreement (38.4% n=436). Taken together with the increased vulnerability, anxiety, and grief that respondents reported (outlined earlier), this result further underlines mental health as a key capacity building area for Nepali journalists.

Disaster resilience and capacity building

Previous research by Bournemouth University into disaster resilience after the Nepal earthquake had indicated an emphasis on physical resilience training in Nepal at the expense of other aspects of disaster preparedness (eg: editorial, psychological). To understand the current state of affairs, this rapid response survey queried respondents on the training they had received specifically in this area, their own assessment of their levels of preparedness, and their future disaster training needs.

Our results indicate that at a national level, the majority of journalists have not received any disaster resilience training. Sixty-six per cent (n=799) of those who responded to this question reported they had never taken part in disaster resilience training, with a further 4.2% (n=51) respondents unsure if they had (Figure 12). Thus some 70.7% of journalists in Nepal could not confidently say they had received any disaster resilience training.

Of the rest, 13.8% had participated before the 2015 Nepal earthquake (n=166), and 15.5% (n=186) afterwards — in other words, there appears to have been only a marginal increase in the number of journalists who received training, despite the lessons and vulnerabilities underlined by the 2015 Nepal earthquake.

Of those who *had* received resilience training, only 17 respondents (1.5%) had participated in training both *before* and *after* the earthquake. Eleven of these journalists were from Bagmati Pradesh, which includes the national capital of Kathmandu, and two each from Karnali Pradesh, Gandaki Pradesh, and Province No. 2. Previous research has identified continuity in disaster resilience training is essential to ensure that knowledge is current and to act as regular refresher. This, however, does not seem to have happened in Nepal. As evidenced by the results of this national survey, such continuity applied to only 1.5% of our respondents.

Analysing the numbers across print, radio, television, online, and news agency, we find that radio journalists were the most likely category to have received resilience training. A total of 36.2% (n=132) of radio respondents said they had participated in resilience training — 14.8% before the Nepal earthquake

66%
of Nepali
journalists have
never participated
in disaster
resilience training

Have you participated in disaster resilience training?

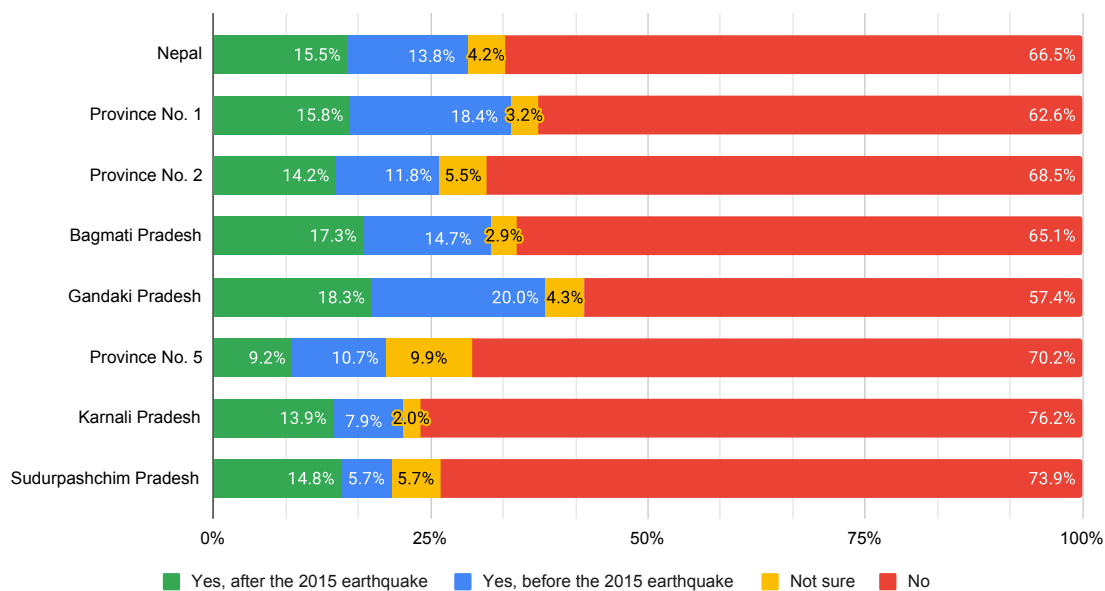


Figure 12

Have you participated in disaster resilience training?

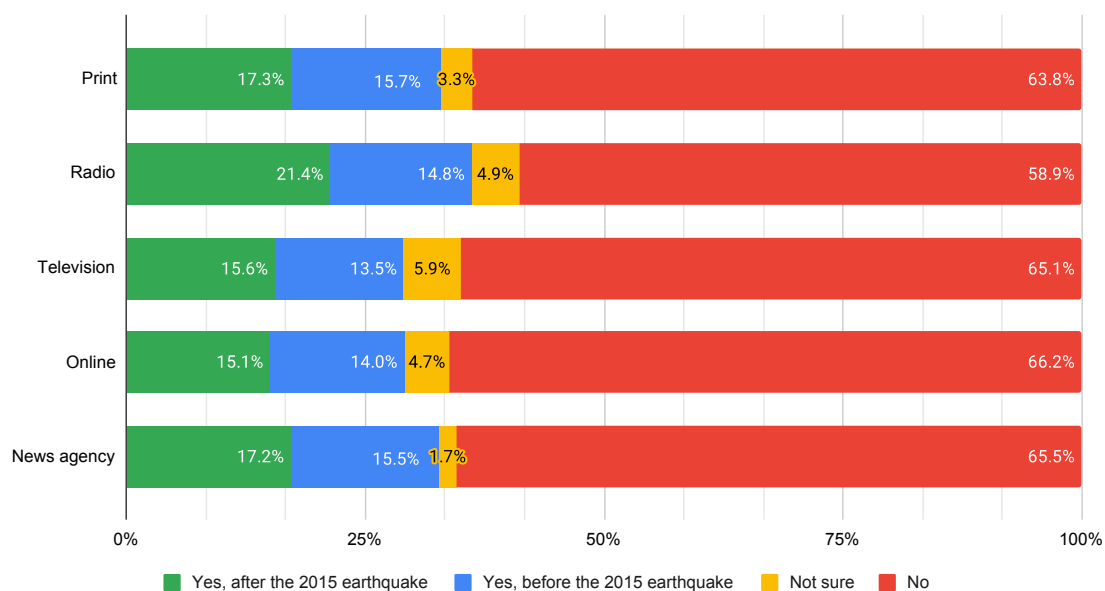


Figure 13

and 21.4% after — compared to 32.9% (n=162) from print, 32.8% from news agencies (n=19), and 29.1% each from television (n=84) and online (n=168).

The above figures, particularly the marginal number of journalists who had undergone disaster resilience training in both the pre- and post-earthquake periods, point to the lack of continuity in disaster preparedness. Such continuity, as argued in previous works from Bournemouth University, is a critical requirement for both the percolation as well as sustenance of robust disaster journalism.

Self-assessment of disaster-preparedness

To understand the respondents' own perception about their disaster preparedness, we used a Net Promoter Score calculation (see Appendix in online version of this report). As seen in Figure 14, some 75.9% (n=861) of our respondents at the national level self-reported as inadequately prepared, scoring 6 or below on an 11-point Likert scale. Of this, 22.4% (n=254) self-assessed as not prepared, scoring 0-2. At the other end of the scale, only 6.6% (n=75) of respondents assessed themselves as well prepared, scoring 9-10.

A cross-provincial comparison of these figures show that Sudurpaschim Pradesh had the highest percentage of those who scored on the extremes of the scale — both 0 (14.5% n=12) and at 10 (8.4% n=7). Province No. 5, however, had the highest score for all ranks classified as not at all prepared (26.3% n=31 scoring 0-2), and Gandaki Pradesh had the highest percentage

Level of self-reported disaster preparedness

0 = not at all prepared; 10 = extremely prepared

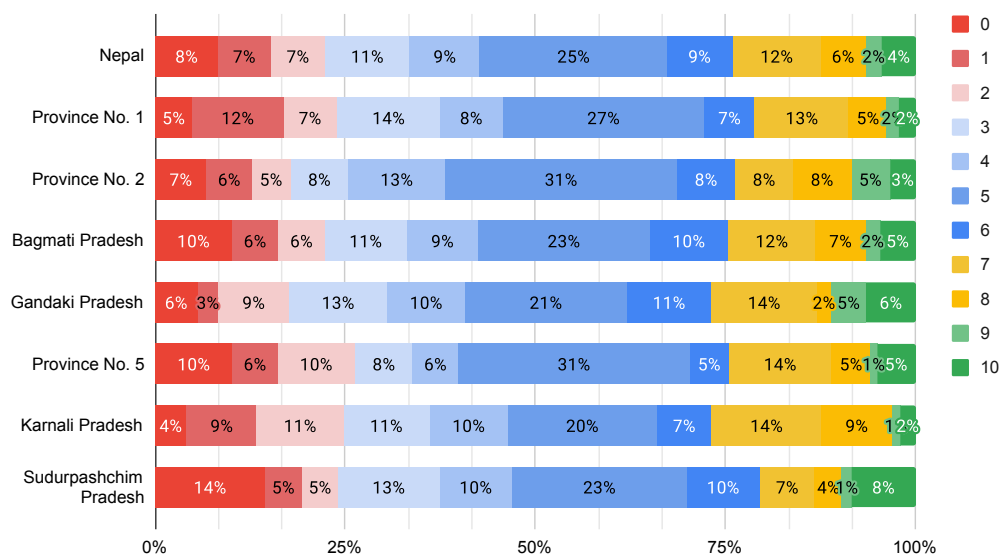


Figure 14

for all ranks classified as very well prepared (11.1% n=12 scoring 9-10).

These findings indicate that a significant number of Nepali journalists have low or extremely low levels of confidence in their ability to carry out their professional duties during disasters. In the context of some 70% journalists reporting they had never undertaken disaster-related training or being unsure if they ever had, and only 1.5% reporting some form of continued training, this remains a key capacity building area where more resources need to be invested.

Training needs

The survey queried journalists on seven areas (see Figure 15) they might require training in, and also their preferred modes of accessing such training. More than three-quarters of our respondents reported that they welcomed training across all the seven areas.

New technologies emerged as the most preferred area in which journalists sought training in, with 87.7% (n=995) indicating so. It was also the category for which the strongest preference was shown by the highest percentage of respondents (48.5% n=550).

Investigative reporting emerged the second preferred area for training, with 86.5% (n=981) journalists agreeing or strongly agreeing. This was followed by fact-checking and verification (82.9% n=940) and digital safety and security (81.5% n=924). Physical safety aspects and editorial preparedness and editorial strategies were indicated as key areas by 80.3% (n=911) and 78.3% (n=888) of the respondents, respectively.

Would personally welcome training in the following areas

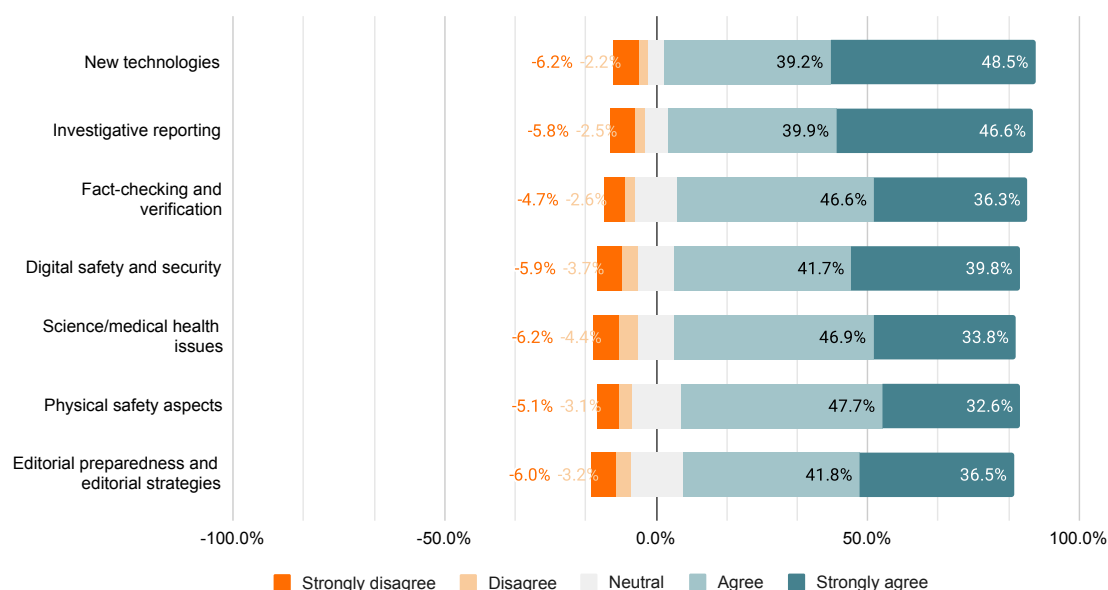


Figure 15

Training delivery

Online website materials was the most preferred mode by journalists for accessing training, with 78.4% responding that they either agreed or strongly agreed to its use. Similarly, online video seminars was the next favoured option: 69.8% either agreed or strongly agreed with that being their preference.

This, to an extent, is perhaps a reflection of the remote working practices that the Covid-19 situation near-normalised in Nepal during its lockdown periods. A more prominent reason, however, could be the accessibility issue that many journalists face in the rural areas and remote provinces, away from Kathmandu.

The latter reasoning finds support in the fact that, besides the digital modes, a majority of journalists indicated their preference for face-to-face training as well. Not surprisingly, a significantly higher percentage (68.2% n=773) preferred the physical workshops to be conducted in places *other than* Kathmandu, as opposed to the 54.4% (n=617) who preferred such training to occur in the national capital.

Podcast was the least preferred mode for training delivery. But even this category appears to be a valid option for Nepal, as 46.6% (n=529) of our respondents indicated their willingness to access training via this mode.

Preferred ways of receiving training

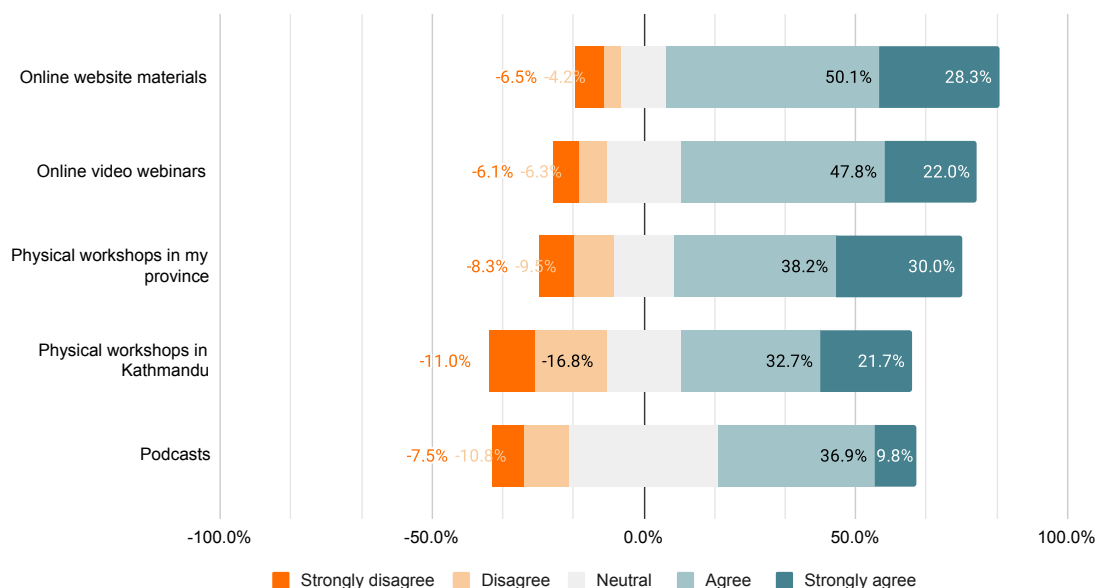


Figure 16

Areas for action

This rapid response national survey found that the Covid-19 crisis has had a severe impact on the journalism industry in Nepal, which inflicted a vulnerable nation when it was still recovering from the devastation of the 2015 earthquakes. Covid-19 affected the mental and financial wellbeing of journalists, and changed their newsgathering, news production, and news dissemination practices in disadvantageous ways across the country. Further, the survey findings have underlined disaster resilience as a key capacity building area that requires urgent investment at the national and regional levels.

Here, it is also important to recognise that the impact of Covid-19 percolates beyond morbidity. Nepal has to date recorded a low infection rate, including amongst journalists, according to our survey — yet the pandemic has had a broader societal impact that is important to recognise. Not only were news personnel affected at multiple levels, as our survey results demonstrate, but the restrictions placed on their journalism by the Covid-19 situation is likely to have impacted Nepal's crisis response.

In view of the critical role that the news media play during crises and disasters, the results of this rapid response survey have highlighted the need for urgent action in four key areas:

Psychological resilience

- ✧ The government, at both the national and provincial levels, should make the **mental wellbeing of journalists a key priority**, and invest resources that will *directly* benefit them in this area (eg: creation of trauma networks, facilities for counselling).
- ✧ A similar commitment is required from news organisations as well as national and regional journalism associations. They must work together, and with other stakeholders (government, NGOs, INGOs), to **protect the emotional and mental health of journalists**.

Financial resilience

- ✧ **The government should provide means-tested grants** to support ailing news organisations and journalists for short-term business continuity, and to support access to PPE and other relevant disaster-related equipment for journalists and media workers.
- ✧ **The government should provide short-term loans** to help bridge funding gaps, especially for salary payment to news personnel.

- ★ **News organisations and media houses should establish contingency funds** to facilitate business continuity during disasters, including protecting news output and timely payment of workers.

Health protection and resilience

- ★ News organisations and media houses should work together with other stakeholders (government, NGOs, INGOs) to **provide or facilitate PPE and clear guidelines on physical distancing** for all staff.

Building future disaster resilience

- ★ All stakeholders (government, news organisations, NGOs, INGOs) should **recognise disaster training for journalists as a key priority** in mitigating Nepal's disaster vulnerability. Investments for training and capacity building for news personnel must increase, and the news media must be better integrated in national disaster reduction plans.
- ★ Educational and training institutions should **widen the scope of disaster training for journalists** to include areas such as new technologies, investigative journalism, fact-checking, and digital security.
- ★ News organisation and journalism bodies should take the lead in working with other stakeholders (government, NGOs, educational institutions, UN bodies, etc) to **establish a system for delivering continued disaster journalism training** for Nepali journalists.
- ★ News organisations should facilitate better preparedness for their newsrooms by **publishing clear editorial guidelines and codes of practice during disasters**.