

(Continuation Sheet 1)

Kyoto Univ.	Doctor (Area Studies)	Name	Harsha Man Maharjan
Dissertation Title	Digital Transitions and the Making of Online Newspapers in Nepal		
(Summary of Dissertation)			
<p>The dissertation documents and discusses the making of the online newspaper industry in Nepal between 1995-2018. At heart, conceptually speaking, the effort is aimed at questioning the linear and progressive development of technology and technological choice. That is, the candidate is keen to underline that contingency and unintended outcomes shaped the digital pathway for several print newspapers in Nepal to develop their online presence. The dissertation, moreover, is positioned as a research dialogue of sorts between the fields of Media Studies and Science and Technology Studies.</p> <p>The dissertation comprises seven chapters (including Introduction and Conclusion). Methodologically, the candidate has used multiple methods such as case studies, interviews, artifact analysis, secondary sources and participant and observation methods. Two major Nepali newspapers —Kantipur Publications and Gorkhapatra Corporation — were selected for the case study in order for the candidate to map out and explore their different approaches towards starting online newspapers in Nepal. In chapter two, the larger context is provided with a good and helpful discussion on how Nepali newspaper were by the 1990s already in throes of carrying out changes in journalism and reportage: in terms of moving from handwritten reports to computerization alongside new media policy initiatives that was increasingly tilting towards privatizing the media space. Chapter three focusses on the period 1995-2003, when several actors from the internet technology companies were pushing the newspapers towards adopting online content. The idea was also to attract the attention of the Nepali diaspora. Chapter 4 discusses the specific case of Kantipur Publications group in terms of how they constructed their choices and strategies for going online. Here the candidate is arguing that the Kantipur Publications shaped their strategy through an innovation pathway that was driven by technological factors, social changes, political events and economic calculations. In Chapter five, the specific trajectory of the Gorakhapatra Corporation is explored. Here, however, while many contingencies informed the decision to go online, there was also the play of several ideological factors that inflected a range of decisions. Chapter 6 explores the role of the social media such as Facebook in creating contexts for the online</p>			

presence. Notably, Facebook was harnessed by journalists. Chapter seven offers the final overview by reiterating that the online industry in Nepal appears to have co-evolved through several contingent choices involving technology, media organizations and digital possibilities.

(Summary of Results of Dissertation Review)

This dissertation is a significant and helpful addition to the field of Nepal Studies as it is, arguably, amongst the first efforts to understand the implications and impacts of digital technologies in Nepal and the Himalayan region in general (countries such as Bhutan, for example). The candidate has also achieved a convincing interdisciplinary effort by linking the study of contemporary politics and history of Nepal with insights in media studies and science and technology studies. It indeed provides an entirely new way to look at the contemporary history of Nepal. The dissertation, moreover, offers us a good amount of hitherto undocumented aspects of the main players and organizations that helped to make the shift from print to online news. This dissertation, in fact, is able to help us map how digital technologies in Nepal followed entirely unique and different pathways that attempts in the western world or the early innovators in the field have taken. And lastly, this dissertation is able to extend our understanding of social power and economic calculations through technological artefacts rather than seeing these elements are created only in the cultural sphere. The candidate has been insightful, original and above all else capable of asking new and fresh questions.

Accordingly, this dissertation was recognized as being a thesis worthy of qualifying the author for a doctoral degree (Area Studies).

Furthermore, as a result of the oral examination on the contents of the dissertation and the relevant matters conducted on January 25th, 2019, the applicant was recognized as having successfully met the requirements.

In addition, having been determined that the dissertation accords with Article 14, Paragraph 2 of the Kyoto University Academic Degree Regulations, a summary thereof instead of the entire text is eligible for publication.