

Approach to Media Monitoring

Governance Conflicts in Nepali Federal Context

5 July 2023 (First Revision)

Governance Monitoring Centre Nepal (GMC Nepal)
Centre for Social Change



Introduction to GMC Nepal

Governance Monitoring Centre (GMC) Nepal is a research initiative led by Kathmandu-based NGO Centre for Social Change (CSC). Using a variety of investigative methods and the latest in qualitative & quantitative research tools, GMC Nepal is dedicated to strengthening the newly established federal democracy and empower its citizens through up-to-date information relating to the status of governance related conflicts and peace in Nepal.

While the first phase of this initiative successfully looked into the governance aspects of the Health, Education, and Migration sectors in Nepal, GMC Nepal Phase-II takes a closer look at the four major mutually non-exclusive arenas of governance conflicts in the Nepali federal context:

1. Natural Resources and Climate Conflicts
2. Development Conflicts
3. Ethnocultural Conflicts
4. Political Conflicts

Media Monitoring

Media monitoring plays a vital role within GMC Nepal, serving as an integral component of the operations. Its primary focus lies in gathering publicly available information related to governance conflicts. In the past, media monitoring was a labor-intensive task that involved manual searches for articles on specific topics, followed by cutting and pasting them into a designated clipbook. However, in recent days, media monitoring has become significantly streamlined with archival availabilities granted by media sources through digital platforms.

For this specific research project, data recorded under media monitoring initiative is gathered through secondary sources of data collection. A dedicated team of five researchers are responsible for reviewing five media outlets daily. To ensure the accuracy and integrity of the sources, each relevant news piece is further meticulously sourced and recorded into a separate Word file.

Moreover, the qualitative data gathered from the media are subsequently transformed into quantitative data for analysis. This conversion process enables us to organize, clean, interpret, analyze and visualize the data more effectively.

1. Objectives of Media Monitoring

- To gain insights of the evolving governance conflicts within the federal system
- To identify the triggering factors that contribute to occurrence of governance conflict
- To comprehend the roles played by various actors in governance conflicts
- To ensure comprehensive documentation of reported governance conflicts
- To develop a robust and systematic methodology for governance conflict mapping

2. Sources

To achieve the objectives of media monitoring and refine the scope of the research, five specific national daily newspapers were chosen as the primary news sources. The selection was based on their wide readership and comprehensive coverage of news. Additionally, the availability of e-paper versions for each newspaper facilitated daily reviews by the researchers. Also, sources with archives of previous news and events were selected for the purpose of this study. This approach not only ensured feasibility but also helped minimize paper waste that would have been generated by the process.

To ensure the relevance of media monitoring within the local context, the majority of the selected newspapers were in the Nepali language. Subsequently, the news and events published in Nepali language were translated into English while entering the data into an Excel sheet. This step allowed us to effectively capture and analyze the information while maintaining accuracy and consistency in our records.

List of Media

Media	Language
The Kathmandu Post	English
Kantipur Daily	Nepali
Annapurna Post	Nepali
Online Khabar	Nepali
Seto Pati	Nepali

3. Time Frame

The current media monitoring activities cover the period from June 2022 to May 2023. This time frame was based on the project's inception date, which began in June 2022. The project is scheduled to conclude in June 2024. The final data collection will encompass information until June 2024, and the research work will culminate in the production of a comprehensive final report on the media monitoring, incorporating data collected over a two-year period.

4. Rationale of the Approach

GMC Nepal's media monitoring approach largely relies on media sources for timely report of occurrences of events. This approach does not rely on media biases, which can be a genuine concern regarding data legitimacy. Rather it relies on the quantitative description of events and uses information specific to objectives of the study.

It is also important to mention that this media monitoring approach is inspired by Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)'s model of armed conflict mapping but it incorporates varied scopes, issues and objectives.

5. Limitations of the Approach

- Due to the reliance on a limited set of five newspapers for data collection, it is important to acknowledge that the coverage of governance conflicts in the country may not be comprehensive. Consequently, it is not possible to make the claim that all governance conflicts occurring in the country are being reported. The use of these specific newspapers restricts the scope of the data collected, and there is a possibility that some governance conflicts may go unreported or be missed during the analysis.
- Governance conflicts in the country are reported, with the research focusing on a specific two-year timeframe within federal Nepal. It is important to note that this limited timeframe prevents generalization of the entire situation within the federal system of Nepal and the conflicts arising within it.
- Identification of actors for data segregation is not pre-defined. Rather, they are based on known actors, and as new actors emerge, they are incorporated into the methodology and updated regularly. This ensures that the data remains comprehensive and up to date with the evolving dynamics of governance conflicts and the role of actors.
- The study specifically incorporates governance conflicts observed under four thematic areas, and as such, generalization of all conflicts within the governance system cannot be made. The focus remains on these specific themes to maintain a targeted and meaningful analysis.
- It should be noted that while the methodological segment is periodically updated, the data collected is not open source, meaning that it is not publicly accessible. The updates primarily serve to enhance the accuracy and relevance of the research findings.

6. Relevant variables

The media monitoring database includes the following variables to understand the characteristics associated with governance- related conflicts:

Elements	Description
Event type	Record of violent or nonviolent nature of the conflict
Sub-event	Further segregation of main events into subcategories like legal notice, riots, attacks, etc.
Actor/s	Record of party/ parties involved in the conflict
Event location	Record of province, district and local units where conflict occurred/ originated
Conflict theme	Record of theme the conflict is relevant to (Natural resources, political, ethno-cultural and development theme)
Relevant indicator	Record of relevant indicator (as described above)

The above-described variables are observed by the media monitoring report to record real-time conflicts. Simultaneously, the governance-related conflicts reported since the 2017 elections in Nepal will also be recorded in the database.

Components of Media Monitoring

1. Themes

Following major thematic areas of governance conflicts were identified based on the findings of the rapid assessment conducted by the CSC on governance conflicts related to federal context of Nepal.

Governance areas	Definition
Natural Resources governance	Norms, institutions and processes that determine how power and responsibilities over natural resources and climate are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens (including women, men, youth, Indigenous peoples and local communities) participate in and benefit from the management of natural resources.
Development governance	Governance of social and infrastructure development through appropriate procedures comprising policy formulation, program design, budgetary allocation, and administrative reforms parallel to annual targets and/or short-term, mid-term and long-term goals and objectives set for social and economic development.
Ethnocultural governance	Accountability of authorities and government institutions to ensure rights, opportunities and security of all citizens, especially of historically marginalized and minority groups without imposing violence or discrimination on anyone based on their identity, culture, gender, region, language and ethnicity.
Political governance	Practices of federalism among different tiers/organs of governments and between the government and people.

2. Indicators

The media monitoring methods adopted have assessed the following major indicators to understand the four areas of governance and governance related conflicts while attempting to highlight major gaps and challenges existent within the federal governance system. Understanding effectiveness in formation as well as implementation of the indicators is the major focus of this report to derive governance related conflicts and also, relevant opportunities. Following are how the methods have defined the indicators:

Indicators	Definition
Legal and policy frameworks	Enforcement of laws and regulations, policies and procedures enacted by the legislative bodies in accordance with broader governance and societal reform.
Government bodies and mechanisms	Institutional arrangements of government bodies and autonomous bodies under federal structure and their interaction.

Roles and responsibilities	Power relations and functions of government bodies (both executing and implementing agencies) along with civil society, international bodies, media for fully functional of federal structure, better governance and rule of law.
Conflict resolution/transformation	Existing mechanisms and provisions dedicated to resolving conflicts, providing access to justice and ensuring participation and representation of marginalized communities and indigenous people.

3. Event Types

The methods adopted for this study have segregated the recorded news and events recognizing influence or adoption of violence or nonviolence in strategies as display of resistance, attack or protest. Also, corruption or Commission for Abuse of Authority Investigation (CIAA)-related cases are separately categorized as they majorly signify legal actions or decisions, rather than being an event that is violent or nonviolent in nature. Also, to avoid data duplication, these cases are distinctly recorded. The Centre for Social Change under Governance Monitoring Centre currently records three event categories and 21 event types.

Note: Events inspired by ACLED's methodology of recording political violence.

Violent	Armed Clash	
	Bomb explosion	
	Animal Attack	
	Illegal poaching/hunting	
	Mob violence	
	Looting/Property Destruction	
	Attack/Assault	
	Protest with intervention	Protest
	Violent demonstration	
Nonviolent	Peaceful protest	
	Arrest/Seize	
	<i>Delegation/Memorandum</i>	
	<i>Agreement</i>	
	Legal case registration	
	<i>Official Meeting</i>	
	Official Decision	
	Legal/Policy decision	
	Dispute	
CIAA	Cases Registration	CIAA Cases
	Legal Decision	
	Arrest	

Description of Event Categories

Violent Events: Actions where actors use physical force/ arms or cause harm or damage to display resistance, disagreements, demands, etc.

Nonviolent Events: Actions where actors display resistance, disagreements, demands, etc. without using physical force or causing harm or damage.

Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority: Corruption or CIAA-related cases are recorded as separate categories of events. Such cases are mostly legal concerns that are important determinants of governance conflicts as they display unrest among actors and triggers of such conflicts.

The media monitoring being carried out with a major focus on governance conflict, the inevitable part of this conflict has been corruption and transparency. Thus, CIAA, being a constitutional body particularly working for investigating and probing cases against the person holding any public office and their associates' indulgence in abuse of authority through corruption, is to be incorporated as a separate event. CIAA acting as an ombudsman, investigator and prosecutor makes any event related to CIAA an event of importance in governance conflict.

Description of Event Types

Protest: The protest includes an in-person public demonstration or stikes where individuals and groups opt for a demonstration against political actors, government institutions, policy, law, or governance functioning. This incorporates all creative forms of demonstration such as silent protest, protest by demonstrating effigy, naked demonstration, and symbolic public display of flags. However, this doesn't include legislative protests such as members of parliament walking out or staying silent.

Peaceful protest: Peaceful protest is when demonstrators gather for a protest and are not involved in any form of violence or rioting activity. Also, including stikes i.e., cessation of work by individuals employed in an industry; refusal of work by collective employees; halting the normal transportation systems and so on.

Protest with intervention: This event is used when individuals engaged in peaceful protest face a physical attempt to disperse or suppress the protest using force. In this sub-event, we incorporate arrest of the protestor, use of cannon of the protestor, and so on.

Violent Demonstration: Violent demonstration is reported when demonstrators themselves get to engage in violently disruptive and/or destructive acts such as targeting other individuals, property, businesses, other rioting groups, or armed actors. This also involves clashes with police, vandalism, looting and so on.

Armed Clash: This event type incorporates the use of arms by one or both conflicting parties in a conflict.

Bomb explosion: This event type incorporates the explosion of any kind of explosives all while related to our themes and elections.

Illegal poaching/hunting: It included illegal activities concerning trapping, hunting, poaching, transport and trade of wildlife that are punishable by law.

Mob Violence: A mob is considered a crowd of people that is disorderly and has the intention of causing harm or destruction. This incorporates violent events where group/s of people are engaged in violent or destructive acts including physical fighting, rock throwing, etc. that occur outside of the demonstration context.

Looting/Property destruction: This event is used when actors get engaged in looting or destruction of goods or property without causing any physical harm to another person or group.

Attack/Assault: This sub-event is used when civilians are targeted with any form of violence outside the context of demonstration. This also includes sexual assaults, and violence by law enforcement or actors of other government entities.

Arrest/Seize: This event incorporates events when state forces (particularly, the security force) detain an individual or mass individual.

Delegation/Memorandum: It includes events where actors inform a group or groups about specific events, issues or agendas. It also includes a brief plan of actions or demands that is made public by the acting groups/ individuals.

Official Meeting: This includes meetings initiated by the government entities in an effort to resolve disputes/conflicts, except for those meetings that conclude in an agreement.

Agreement: This includes an agreement reached between the disputing/conflicting parties through meetings or any measures.

Legal case registration: This Event includes events where legal measures are sought for the governance system's injustices except for legal cases registered by CIAA. All the cases registered in district court, high court, and supreme court against elected members at the local level, provincial or house of representative; government entities; ministers; departments, or public servants.

Official Decision: This includes important decisions or decisions igniting conflict or related to dispute resolution efforts made by government entities.

Legal/Policy Decision: This event involves the official decision of the court finally determining the respective rights or claims of parties in a suit.¹ Also, includes important policy decisions or decisions igniting conflict or related to dispute resolution efforts made by government entities except for decisions on corruption cases registered by CIAA.

Dispute: This sub-event is about an argument/disagreement/controversy between parties that often have direct impact to governance processes and service delivery.

CIAA Cases registration: These sub-events preceding CIAA's event. This sub-event is particularly dedicated to cases filed by the CIAA against any government entities. The case can be registered at a special court or against the decision of a special court at the supreme court.

CIAA Legal Decision: This involves the legal decision regarding cases registered in court. The final decision made by the court regarding the corruption cases is incorporated in this sub-event.

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/usao/justice-101/glossary#:~:text=judgment%20%2D%20The%20official%20decision%20of,hear%20and%20decide%20a%20case.>

CIAA Arrest: The sub-event involves the arrest regarding corruption and abuse of authority. The arrest can be a result of a court decision, or an initial arrest made by the CIAA. More importantly, entities being caught red-handed in bribery/abuse of power, or such are also incorporated in the event type.

4. Actors

Actors involved in governance conflicts can be broadly categorized, encompassing various subsidiary actors. However, for this study, our focus is solely on governance conflicts, particularly those related to development, politics, natural resources, and ethnocultural governance. Hence, we only consider actors associated with these four thematic areas within governance conflicts. Actor identification and categorization is an ongoing process, up to this date the following categorization is used for actors.

Actors	Details
Ethnic/Caste/Religious groups	Includes a group of people who share a similar culture (beliefs, values, and behaviors), language, religion, ancestry, or another characteristic.
Civilians	Includes individual/s who are part of the conflict but not associated with any organized group.
Judicial Body	Includes all forms of public organization or branch of government that are responsible for the administration of justice or the enforcement of laws.
Government Body	Governmental Body includes any government or governmental or regulatory body thereof, or political subdivision thereof, whether federal, state, local or foreign, or any agency, instrumentality or authority thereof, or any court or arbitrator. ²
Civil Servants	Includes a person/s employed (permanet or contractual) in the public sector by a government department or agency for public sector undertakings.
Private Sector (National)	It comprises businesses and enterprises that are controlled by private individuals and groups with the motive of maximizing profit. By national, we mean businesses and enterprises registered in Nepal.
Private Sector (International)	It comprises businesses and enterprises that are controlled by private individuals and groups with the motive of maximizing profit. By international, we mean businesses and enterprises registered outside Nepal but working in Nepal.
Security Forces	Security forces comprise all statutory organizations responsible for internal security mandates.
Elected Representatives	Comprises all the elected members in all three tire or federal systems in Nepal

² <https://www.lawinsider.com/dictionary/governmental-body>

Political Party	By political party, we mean the organization that coordinates candidates to compete in a particular country's elections. It is common for the members of a party to hold similar ideas about politics and promote specific ideological or policy goals. Under Political party, we include all the parties registered with the election commission in Nepal and all their sister-organizations, youth group, or any other form of subsidiaries.
Poachers/ Smugglers	Included individuals/groups engaged in the illegal killing of animals or illegal trading of animals.
Wild Animals	Wild animals have been included in this study because of the natural resources conflict. The nature of natural resource conflict makes it inevitable to include all the animals' attacks reported in the country. Also, the study incorporates wild animal attacks as important indicator to demonstrate not only human- nature conflict, but also highlights the role of government to protect the human-nature symbiosis.
Consumer Committee	Includes all the different committees with a set of people having similar interests, goals, or concerns regarding the use of particular commodities (eg. Water, forest, etc).
Legislative Body	By legislative body we mean a political institution that holds the legislative power in the country.
Autonomous Government Bodies	In Autonomous Government Body we incorporate all the autonomous bodies set up by the government for a specific purpose. These are independent and autonomous constitutional bodies.
Advocates	Includes individuals, groups or organization that actively support an idea or value through strategic methods.
CSOs	The study incorporates Civil Society Organizations as critical actors in sustaining peacebuilding efforts hence includes their activities through involvement in governance conflicts, public demonstrations, instigators of civil resistance, etc.
Journalists	Journalists are included as actors of conflict as they are majorly exposed to epicenter of conflicts or are even dedicated to tracking movement of conflicts and often have the potential to influence levels and agenda of conflicts.

5. Geographical location

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of governance conflicts and analyze the overall situation, all conflicts occurring across the country were reported. The collected media news data is carefully sourced, stored, and then categorized into quantitative data based on the location of the reported incidents. The geographical locations are identified based on the federal administrative divisions within the country. This approach ensures that the data is user-friendly and can be easily segregated and analyzed, allowing for a more effective assessment of the governance conflict landscape.

Province	No Districts in the province	No. of Local Units in the province
Koshi Province	14	137
Madhesh Province	8	136
Bagmati Province	13	119
Gandaki Province	11	85
Lumbini Province	12	109
Karnali Province	10	79
Sudurpaschhim Province	9	88

Source: Economic Survey 2077/78