Place Making within an Urban Public Milieu: An Ethnographic Study of the New Dwellers in Butwal

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ABSTRACT

This paper is based on research undertaken with the main objective of analyzing the modes of place making adopted by the new dwellers within an urban public milieu of Devinagar, Butwal. The data required were collected ethnographically using in-depth interviews, observations, and kuragraphy. The qualitative data analyzed manually have shown that the new dwellers from the rural origin find it chaotic initially but adapt to the urban milieu gradually by using the available public places. The *Chautari* [public resting place] of Devinagar Chowk, Devi *Mandir* [Hindu temple] and *path* [narrow street] and their chowks provide major avenue for adapting to the new socio-cultural context. Moreover, newer people tend to create their identity through the active as well as meaningful contribution in various public activities in their setting. This has eventually enabled them to produce a space of their own. Public places increase familiarity amongst newer and older dwellers and provide a perfect platform for social integration. The place making efforts maximize the dwellers' chance to enhance their social position. This study shows that people use their financial, social, and other resources to the optimum for turning their place making efforts into a reality. The urban public places and situational junctures in Devinagar provide every dweller with equal chance to experience urban encounters. When these urban encounters occur repeatedly, the social integration process between newer and older dwellers strengthens. This study concludes that the new dwellers who

are more skillful to map their opportunities are more successful in using public places more suitably, thereby turning their place making endeavors into a reality.

KEYWORDS: Public place, place making, ethnography, urban encounter, urban milieu

INTRODUCTION

Anthropology is the holistic study of human beings. Traditionally, it used to focus on small-scale communities in the non-urban settings; however, the trend has not remained the same as Jaffe and Koning (2016) posit that "cities have become a prominent context for anthropological research" (p. 1). From the latter half of the twentieth century, anthropological researches started to focus away from primitives and peasant communities to modern complex societies in the urban world. Basham (1978) provides the rationale behind that shift in focus of anthropological research:

> Anthropology as a living, active profession, not merely a keeper of the verbal formaldehyde of vanished life styles, must accommodate itself to the reality of a world that has undergone radical transformation since the early days when anthropology styled itself as the study of primitive peoples. (p. 3)

One of the major outcomes of that shift in focus of anthropology was the evolution of urban anthropology. As explained by Kemper and Rollwagen (1996), urban anthropology emphasizes the ethnographic research on the cultural systems of populations, compares them and offers contextual explanations for the attitudes and behaviors observed among those populations. Urban places play a vital role in bringing dwellers with diverse cultural backgrounds and identities together, thereby integrating them into a more or less closely-tied urban community. Among others, the place and place making have already occupied an important place in the domain of anthropological researches.

Butwal, one of the largest cities in the western Terai of Nepal, has been transforming into a mosaic of people from diverse ethnic, social, cultural, and economic backgrounds owing largely to the high influx of migrants from surrounding areas. The historical process of the development of the city of Butwal shows that migration led cultural as well as social mixing of different hill communities/groups from neighboring hill districts was the major driving force in the evolution of this city and the urban community of the city has continuously been evolving through time. The Devinagar area has been one of the most popular destinations for the in-migrants in Butwal for the last 5-15 years. Located at the bank of Tanau River, the area was not a residential area for a long time despite the rapid expansion of Butwal city. However, from the beginning of the decade of 2060s, Devinagar saw a vast influx of in-migrants. Due to the availability of a vast number of empty land plots, the place started to attract a large number of people from surrounding hill districts of Butwal like Palpa, Gulmi, Arghakhanchi, Syangja, Parbat, Baglung, etc.

Often, new in-migrants of a place need to pass through a transitional period before fitting themselves to the social and cultural system of the area. For many, this period may turn out to be quite chaotic as they may not be able to discover appropriate ways to become familiar with other dwellers in the neighborhood, thereby establishing a vivid social and cultural relationship. Starting from the first day, they need to go through a series of place making activities like developing a new social bonding, engaging in new forms of cultural exchanges and maintain a cordial relationship in the neighborhood.

Urban public spaces tend to act as a perfect avenue for urban encounters among newer people, thereby bringing them much closer to each other. By continually engaging with the urban space, people tend to create a place for themselves.

The available public spaces and places in Devinagar have been the places of frequent encounters amongst the newer and older urban dwellers where they are drawn together to form a new urban community. With the help of these encounters, newer people tend to make urban public spaces their own. This results in the development of a sense of belongingness amongst the new dwellers towards the urban space. Kumar (2003) highlights the scope of urban spaces in the contemporary world. For him, a sense of community in these urban spaces became vastly different from rural models that were based on kinship networks and traditions. The fast pace of city life and the frequently competitive existence of urban dwellers make it far more difficult to connect with the community. However, the exchanges in the urban spaces serve as the means for connecting different kinds of urban dwellers. In this context, the argument of Purcell (2002) seems relevant who deduces that the production of urban space entails much more than just planning the material space of the city and involves in producing and reproducing all aspects of urban life. Against this backdrop, I have endeavored to explain the place making endeavors of new dwellers of Devinagar, Butwal based on my ethnographic research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The place and place making in an urban setting has already got a considerable attention from the scholars of a wide range of social sciences. In common understanding, the place is taken as a geographical location. From this view, the place is taken to be an objective reality. Similarly, the place making, which Sepe (2017) sees as the art of making places for people, is understood as the efforts related to the transformation of a place. Mehanna and Mehanna (2023) present the place making as a quiet movement that reinterprets public spaces as the heart of society. Cresswell (2004) is one of the leading scholars theorizing about the place who maintains that the "place provides the conditions of possibility for creative social practice. Place in this sense becomes an event rather than a secure ontological place rooted in notions of the authentic" (p. 39). As Cresswell posits, a place is made and remade on a daily basis through the reiterative social practices. From his standpoint, people make places and thus they are responsible for the place making. In line with this point, Komarova and Svašek (2018) opine that "the idea of 'place-making' echoes the Lefebvrian understanding that space is socially produced, that it is simultaneously 'conceived', 'perceived' and 'lived'" (p. 391). I have found a kind of reiteration of the subjective nature of urban places and place making process adopted by various stakeholders.

Scholars have used a variety of theoretical standpoints while dealing with the issue of place, space, and place making. Due to this, I have found the task of operationalizing and theorizing the place and place making quite a tricky issue. Citing Friedmann (2010) is much relevant here who maintains that "It is difficult to take a word such as place, which is in everyday use and applied in all sorts of ways, and turn it into a concept that has a precise and operational meaning" (p. 149). In this study, I have reviewed the theoretical standpoints of some of the selected scholars who have relatively

more contribution to the contemporary anthropological thought on the place and place making.

One of the leading Marxist theorists on the city is a French scholar Lefebvre (1970) who argued that the urbanization process is not one driven by the population expansion and mobility, per se, but rather by the actions of key social actors. He further insisted that human beings, as social agents produce and reproduce the spaces in cities. Thus, according to him, the place making is a subjective process. Appadurai (1996) is one of the leading anthropologists who has made a significant contribution in defining and theorizing the place and place making. In his view, the process of making locality is the one that socializes time and space through the practices such as performance, representation, and action, which are deliberate but complex in themselves. Another scholar to contribute significantly in the theories of place and place making is Harvey (2000), a British geographer and a Marxist writer. For him, the place making is based on the value of land in the city or the urban space. According to him, the social factors including the real estate developers and bankers, actually exploit the value of urban space through their investment and selling strategies. Similarly, Harney (2006) posits that the politics of urban space involves three major forms viz. how people create, make claims to, and express their belonging in particular neighborhoods in the city. As he puts forward that all three place making efforts include the quotidian shaping of neighborhoods, the calendrical colonizing of public spaces during religious and secular celebrations and the monument building that attests to the permanence of a particular group people in the city.

Likewise, Low (2014) claims that a place is produced in response to the psychological state of people resulted due to their specific visualization of the urban space. She suggests that an anthropological analysis of space and place should encompass multiple processes such as social production, social construction, embodiment, and discursive practices that play a vital role in making and remaking of a place. Imai (2014) views small urban inches as an important component of an urban ecosystem because they attract the diverse groups of people into the city. Thus, he highlights the importance of focusing on such small urban niches and the way people use of these spaces for getting their needs fulfilled. One of the interesting observations that I have made during the review of literatures on the place making is similar to Lew (2017) for whom the three terms 'Place making,' 'place-making,' and 'placemaking' are three ways of spelling a popular concept. Different scholars have used the term in different ways, though the inherent meaning of all three terms is more or less the same. In this study, I have preferred to use the term 'place making.'

Before making my position in this study about the place and place making process, I think that it is relevant to cite the argument of Aucoin (2017), who maintains that the anthropological studies of space and place take into account of landscape, space, and the body as important sites for cultural meaning, social and political memory, and public discourse. For her, space can be used to carry culturally and historically constructed as well as contested social meanings. Thus, I believe that the places are basically social and cultural constructs and the human actors attach meanings and produce and reproduce them through their repeated actions in their neighborhood or society.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

I selected the Devinagar area of Butwal purposively for ethnographic research as it has been one of the most popular destinations for the in-migrants of the city in the last 5-15 years though it has a short history as a residential area. During my research, I used exploratory and descriptive research designs to explore and describe the major place making endeavors that the new dwellers of Devinagar practice frequently. This study is based on the primary data of qualitative nature collected from various primary sources including my research participants/collaborators, informants and key-informants. Besides, I have used the relevant data from the secondary sources too in order to triangulate with the primary findings. Here, I have used two terms *i.e.,* research collaborators and research participants interchangeably. During the selection process of participants/collaborators and informants, at first, I used my social network to find out the appropriate families. Altogether, there were two families within my social network (established through my various kinship ties) within the study area. One of the families within my social network (the Pandey family who migrated to Butwal from Arghakhanchi) was residing in the Devinagar area for the last 20 years, while another was there in Jogikuti (the Bhattarai Family who migrated to Butwal from Arghakhanchi) almost three decades ago. To ensure the collection of rich and more credible data, I had requested those families to find such families of the new dwellers who had in-migrated to Devinagar at least five years ago. Both families supported me to locate appropriate families, reach out to them, and establish a rapport with them. Moreover, for the selection of key-informants, I scouted for those individuals who were more aware about the history and development of Butwal, first as a market center and then as a residential area.

I started my fieldwork right from the day when I reached one of the families in my social network for briefing about my research problem and requesting them to find suitable participants. During the fieldwork, I collected all of the data needed for this research by employing various ethnographic data collection techniques including unstructured observation, in-depth interviewing, key-informants' interviews, kuragraphy, and network analysis. Since it is a qualitative study, data analysis took place throughout the study right from the commencement of the fieldwork. Within the qualitative domain, I used the ethnographic data analysis procedure, which followed a cyclical pattern of data collection, recording, analyzing, and returning to the field to collect more data. During data analysis, at first, I transcribed all of the collected data through interviews and kuragraphy from the field in Nepali. After that I translated each transcript into English. Then I carried out open coding in the translated data to generate themes and categories. Finally, I analyzed all of the collected data descriptively. Abiding by the practices of ethnographic report writing, I have used the direct quotes alongside the themes and categories deduced from the analysis as I had to ensure the incorporation of emic perspective into my analysis. I understand my responsibility towards my research participants and informants, so I was sensitive and respectful towards them and their basic human rights. Therefore, I have been completely abided by the ethical guidelines of a research.

RESULTS
The Ethnographic Context: Devinagar – a Cultural Mosaic

Devinagar lies in Ward No. 11 of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City. According to the Profile of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City (2076 B.S.), this ward occupies more than one-fourth of both total land area and total population of the sub-metropolis. Due to its larger area, there are a number of built structures including the campus, colleges, schools, stadium, Haat Bazaar, indoor sports complexes, etc. in Devinagar. Besides, there are branches of banks, trading houses, shopping complexes, and a developing transport network. These facilities have made the area quite vibrant now and ensured a fluent mobility of people throughout a day. As a residential area, Devinagar does not have a long history. As revealed by one of the informants migrated here from Patauti of Arghakhanchi, the flow of people to Devinagar for a residential purpose started particularly from the beginning of the 2060s during which the Maoist-led people's war was at its apex. This process intensified after the people's movement in 2063 B.S. As a result, the area has now become a melting pot for people of a diverse social and cultural backgrounds.

During my fieldwork, I came to know that these in-migrants to Butwal are mostly from surrounding hill districts like Gulmi, Arghakhanchi, Syangja, and Palpa. Besides, there are people from other districts of Western Nepal as well. From the religious point of view, a vast majority of people here are Hindus; however, there are people following Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and other religions as well. The statistics of Ward No. 11 in the municipal profile of Butwal indicates that women population is slightly more than male population in the area. The vast majority of people speak Nepali for communication; however, there are people who also speak their respective mother tongues such as Magar, Tharu, Newari, Hindi, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Gurung, etc. A careful glace to the caste/ethnic composition reveals that Hill Brahmin, Magar, Chhetri, Newar, Bishwokarma, Tharu, Pariyar, Gurung Thakuri, and Musalman are the main caste/ethnic groups of this area. From these facts, it is fair to say that the Devinagar area has now become a social and cultural mosaic within the urban landscape of Butwal.

Based on the research questions, I focused on the visible efforts of the dwellers of Devinagar that they have been making in the process of place making in their neighborhood/locality. In fact, the place making in the public realm, tend to remain as the main priority of new dwellers as it provides them with the opportunity to strengthen their social position as well as social relationship with other people in their neighborhood. There are a number of publicly owned public spaces in Devinagar, including a *Rangasala* [Stadium], two high schools, one renowned campus, numerous chowks and paths, and religious places. However, during the preliminary fieldwork, I discovered that the *Chautari* [public resting place] of Devinagar, the Devi *Mandir* [Hindu temple] of Devinagar Chowk and the Path and their chowks as the main public places where there remains vibrant public engagement. People were seen gathered in these places in different times of a day for different purposes. I found the place making endeavors more vivid there. Thus, I have included the findings from these three public places.

Devinagar *Chaupari/Chautari*: A Place Common to All

Traditionally, a *Chautari* is a resting place constructed at either side of a street, whether it be a conventional trail or a blacktopped road. It is generally a rectangular, squarish or round shaped raised platform constructed around Banyan, Peepal or Samee trees. Some of them may have Samee tree also alongside Banyan and Peepal, while some others may have Samee tree only. A typical *Chautari* is made of stones and mud. The stone slabs are laid at its surface, where people can rest comfortably. Now-a-days, cement, concrete, and sand are also used for constructing *Chautari*. In the daily usage, people are found to be calling it *Chaupari* also. In terms of its significance, a *Chautari* is a resting place for people during a hot sunny day. Similarly, all three trees grown in a *Chautari* are considered to be sacred and are worshipped regularly and the construction of *Chautari* is viewed as a part of *dharma karma* (a sacred act). Besides, a *Chautari* carries a significant ecological role of its own.

When I was in the Devinagar area for the first time during my PhD fieldwork, I had found the *Chautari* present in front of Nabin School in Devinagar Chowk to escape from the heat of sunlight. When I reached there on that day, the *Chautari* was also with full of resting people. Big Banyan and Peepal trees provided me the much comforting shade. There were metal benches fixed near the edges of all four sides of its rectangular structure. Besides, it had a small metallic gate at its western side to enter into the *Chautari*, but there was no provision of entry fee. When I entered into the *Chautari*, there was no any vacant place, so I had to wait for some time. I was purely a stranger there and got a seat after waiting for about eight minutes. On that day, I stayed there for about 49 minutes, during which I learned that this *Chautari* being a favorite hangout place for the students of Nabin School as well as Lumbini Banijya Campus, elderly men and women, and people having a rest day from their usual work. After that, I visited the *Chautari* in all of my fieldwork days in the Devinagar area.

On another day, when I was sitting in a bench present in the northern side of the *Chautari*, an elderly man (I will use E1 to refer to him afterwards) entered the *Chautari* at around 2:19 pm and sat next to me in the same bench. After a while his mobile phone rang, he received the call and he started to talk to another old man sitting next to him after the phone conversation. Based on their conversation style, I found that the two elderly men were very good friends. After talking for some time, the old man turned towards me and asked about what I was engaged there in Butwal. It was much happy as the man whom I wanted to talk started talking to me himself. I explained him about my research. He disclosed that he was born in Bareng of Baglung but he was raised in Butwal. When we were talking, more elderly men also entered into the *Chautari* one by one. Each time, whenever a new man entered into the *Chautari*, E1 used to introduce me to them. I came to know that this *Chautari* is the place in which they meet daily.

I felt quite excited as I just got a live experience of urban encounter among the residents. During the conversation, E1 told me that the *Chautari* is their junction. He further claimed that *"nagarpalika bhitra yettiko junction kahi ni chhaina"* [There is not another junction like this within the whole municipality]. His fellow elderly men (E2) agreed with him by nodding his head and adding that it is like compulsory for them to meet there, where they meet not once but twice or thrice in a day. Thus, both men were highlighting the role the *Chautari* that has been playing in their daily socio-cultural lives including elderly socialization. Another elderly man (E3) added the similar view saying

that this is the gathering place for all people around here. He was trying to convince me that the *Chautari* is a famous meeting place not for the elderly people only, but also for the diverse groups of people. Saying so he was elaborating the intensity of the *Chautari* in terms of drawing people on a regular basis for meeting, resting, and sharing purposes. Another elderly man, who was a retired Gurkha soldier added that they used to scare to come to that place before. When he said that I remembered the remarks of my research collaborator the Pokharel couple, who had said, "*ek samaya ta yo chhattis kulo chha ni, tyo kulodekhi yatatira riksa, manchheharu aaunai darauthe re*" [Once upon a time in the past, rickshaw as well as people used to scare if they had to cross the canal here named *Chhattis Kulo*]. It reflects the psychological fear in people in the past as the area was far from developing into a residential area as it today.

While I was taking to the elderly men, three young men entered the *Chautari*. The elderly man from Bareng introduced me with them. Those three men also joined our conversation. Since I had discovered that these elderly and young men are frequent visitors of the *Chautari*, I was prompted to ask them how people pass their time in the *Chautari*. In response to my query, the first elderly man instantly replied that ranging from what people ate that day in lunch to political affairs, all kinds of gossips take place in the *Chautari*. The retired Indian army man added, "*bimar simar vayeni aayera basni thau …. gathering thau ho ke yo*" [This is the place where we come for resting when we are sick … this is the place for gathering]. He seemed to mean that the aura of the *Chautari* remains such that even sick people feel it quite comfortable place to pass time while recovering from their illnesses. E3 equivocally supported the two elderly men maintaining that the *Chautari* is a common place for people of wide range of interests and habits. To quote his words,

> *Ye yaha aauni basni, tarka bitarka garni kam dherai hunchha, u tyo hernus ta gadi ma tala gayo ni, shahi thakuri ho u, ahile aauchha yaha, katai kam vayera gayo hola, uhi ho yaha sabvanda dharai prashna garni, yesto garyo, usto garyo vanni* [In this instance, E3 was admitting that numerous gossips, arguments and counterarguments take place in there. He even showed me a Thakuri (a caste group) man, who was passing by the *Chautari* in his and claimed him being the one who mostly questions on various social, economic and political issues].

From my series of observation and conversations, it was clear that the *Chautari* of Devinagar is a very productive urban space in Butwal in terms of sociality and social conglomeration. Regarding this, one of the young men, who had joined our conversation in the *Chautari* shared his views, "*tapaile sappai thari manchhe vetnuhunchha yaha. Hami bahek yo Nabin school ka ketaketi, Banijya campus ma padhni haru, mahila haru, budhi aama haru*" [You will find all types of people here. Besides us, you will find the students of Navin School and Lumbini Banijya Campus, elderly mothers, etc.]. When he said this, another elderly man who was silent till that point claimed that the deal of a number of land plots have already taken place there and one will find a number land brokers there. Other participants of our conversation agreed with him.

One of my research collaborator families from Devinagar had told me that he found it quite chaotic to integrate in their new society and used to thought about and even practice a number of ideas in order to become familiar with others. Since I was equally concerned about the use of *Chautari* by the new dwellers, so I brought this topic into the discussion. When I raised the issue, one of the young men claimed that the

Chautari is the best place for the newer residents to introduce and amalgamate with others. He was also introduced to all of those gentlemen over there in the *Chautari*. The first elderly man affirmed the young man by saying,

> *Ho ho, mero ni tyahi ho, suruma yehi Chaupari mai sablai veteko, ani ta aaja vetiyo, voli vetiyo garda bistarai batoma chowkma, pasalma jaha vetiyeni bolne, sancho bisancho sodhne vayo, ani bistarai jhyammine vako ho, ahile dekhi halnao kere hami kati milcham vanera* [In this case, E1 avowed the young man stating that he had also become familiar to and establish friendly relationship to many people around due to the repeated meetings, gossips and encounters that took place in the *Chautari*].

Yet another young man shared that since anyone can come and sit in the *Chaupari*, new people find it comfortable and easier in that *Chaupari*. According to him, the more time they pass in the *Chaupari*, the better integrated they become in the society. All other people in the conversation completely agreed with the three men. Later another research collaborator from Devinagar also shared the similar idea by saying that there is no any better place than this *Chaupari* for newer people to intermix with others; therefore, they have formed the *Chautari Tole Bikas Sanstha* [The Organization of the *Chautari* area].

An important observation that I made there was that some old women were gossiping sitting in the southern corner of the *Chautari*. When I went to the *Chautari* the next day, those old women were there, but in the benches in the eastern side. While talking to them informally, I came to know that those old women used to come to the *Chautari* everyday as they find quite safe, comfortable and hospitable environment there. Besides, young boys and young girls were gossiping in a group in the western corner. Thus, I was convinced that the Devinagar *Chautari* has been a place for the leisure-time socialization among different groups of people where people's activities and behaviors largely remain informal. People exchange their opinion and counter opinions, share their lived experience from the earlier time, anecdotes, and even engage in flirtations with the close ones in the *Chautari*. New dwellers find the aura of the *Chautari* quite hospitable as well as friendlier in which the place making efforts become much easier. As people visit it on a regular basis, it gradually becomes a favorite meeting place for all groups of older and newer people.

Path and Chowk

The main road of Devinagar runs north-south and connects Devinagar Chowk with Tilottama Municipality. Other two roads which run almost parallel to the main road serve as the connecting links between various toles. Besides, these north-south roads, there a number of narrow, mostly a single lane, the east-west streets that connect each household to the city transportation network. These narrow streets are called *path* in Nepali. The term chowk is quite popular amongst people to refer to the place where a street meets the main road. One of the major observations that I had made during my fieldwork was that each path has a display board with its name. During my field study, I found the practice of naming a street i.e., path being a popular place making practice. Oli Path is one of the earliest paths to get a unique, at least at the time of naming, name of its own. As disclosed by my research collaborator from Devinagar Chowk, the name Oli Path was named after Rudra Oli by his children. Recalling the initial naming of Oli Path, one of the elderly men, originally from Bareng, Baglung remarked, "*auta oli vanni ko*

jagga ollo chheu dekhi pallo chheu samma va'ra, tyo bato name oli path rakheko re" [This street was named after a man called Oli, who owned all the land between two ends of that street]. During the in-depth interviews, a woman from a collaborator family explained that Oli Path was named after the person who was the owner of the major land section through which the street runs in east-west direction. The remarks made by the elderly man and my research collaborator makes it clear that the land around the present Oli Path was owned by Rudra Oli, whose children opened up a road through the land for the purpose of plotting it to sell as *Ghaderi* [A plot of land allocated for housing purpose]. Now, Oil Path is a well-known place in Devinagar as there is a secondary school as well as a badminton covered hall in this *path.*

During my fieldwork, I found other *paths* also which were named after a particular surname. Besides, a number of *paths* are found to be named after the place of origin of people in the hills. Regarding the naming of *path*, one of my research collaborators put forward her arguments like this, "yaha *Narajayapath pani chha, Nar Bahadur bauko nam ra Jaya Kumari aamako nambata Narjayapath Rakheka raichan, purai bato uniharuko jaggamai pardo raicha kere"* [There is also a Narajayapath here, which was named after father Nar Bahadur and mother Jaya Kumari of the family who owned all the land section through which the street extends east-west]. This naming seems quite similar to the case of Oli Path. I wanted to understand more about the place making activity in the form of place naming, so I asked another collaborator who agreed that money may play some kind of role in naming the streets. His indication was that *path* naming may occur after the one who makes more monetary contribution during the construction phase. The same collaborator provided me another dimension of path naming as follows:

> *Yo nam rakhne kurama pani aba chaltapurja manchhe jo chha, tyasaiko identitybata huni raichha ke. Aba hernus na Dhaulagiripath ko chaltapurja manchhe vaneko Prem Basnet, yahako Nabin skulko Pra.A. hernus, huin Baglungko Galkotko manchhe, tyai vara tyo batoko name Dhaulagiripath rakhechhan. Suruma hwanko matrai raicha ke tyaha ghar* [In this instance, the research participant disclosed that the street naming can involve the power and prestige issue and those people who are socially and economically influential have greater chance of owing the street naming process. He provided one example of 'Dhaulagiri Path,' a street in Devinagar named by the then Head Master of Navin School, which signifies his ancestral root to Dhaulagiri - one of the 14 zones prior to the declaration of Nepal as a federal republic].

The above illustrations show that the *path* naming is an easy way for place making for a new dweller. As divulged by a research collaborator, who was also the secretary of the *Tole Bikas Sastha*, a new dweller can name a street as per own interest through monetary contribution made for the *Tole Bikas Sanstha.* As she revealed further, *Tole Bikas Sastha* encourages sponsorship for the construction of the gate.

An important observation that I made during the fieldwork was that there is an increasing tendency of erecting a gate at the chowk of each street and some of the gates were found to have the name of the sponsor. During the fieldwork, I got a chance to meet one of the new dwellers, who had recently sponsored the gate of his street. He disclosed that his family was not much familiar to other people in the neighborhood for the initial time after residing permanently there. However, during the meeting of the *Tole Bikas*

Sanstha, he proposed to sponsor the gate that was going to be installed, which the committee meeting accepted and the gate was installed. Now, people in the *Tole* know not only him but also his business. In this case, he was quick to map his opportunity for place making, which he did and was able to fulfill his desire of being known in the society and marketing his business.

The *paths* are public places, so they must be maintained at a regular interval. Cleaning has to be done, wear, and tear have to be repaired. The households around have to bear this responsibility faithfully. As informed by some of the informants, they become more integrated in the *Tole* after their active engagements in a series of such public campaigns. This presents another dimension of place making.

Durga *Pooja* and Devi *Mandir*

Now, Devinagar is a well-established center in Butwal. However, the place got its name after the worshipping place of goddess Devi Durga, which was previously located in the exact location where there is a *Chautari* now. As informed by my collaborator from Devinagar Chowk, the practice of worshipping Devi started at that place from 2021 B.S. There was no proper Devi temple, but Devi was worshipped during Durga *Pooja* [a special Hindu day for worship]. As revealed by older people in Devinagar during informal talks, some devotees used to erect a large statue of Devi Durga brought from India on *Ghatasthapana* [the first day of Nava Ratra during the Dashain festival] to worship. They also used to organize Durga *Visarjan* (disposal) after the nine days of Durga *Pooja*. A large number of people used to flock to this chowk for worshipping Devi during all of those ceremonies. Eventually, this area started to be called Devinagar. Later, a new Durga temple was constructed about a decade ago in front of Lumbini Banijya Camus, since then Devi is worshiped in the same temple.

For Hindus, a temple is a sacred place as well as a place for worshipping their deities. People visit the temple in various occasions. Since Devinagar got its name from Devi *Pooja* done during Navadurga [a Hindu goddess] and the event has been shifted to newly constructed temple, the temple holds a great significance for the local people. Now, this new temple has been one of the main attractions of Devinagar. In the words of one of the informants, "*ahile ta herda herdai yo Devinagar ta jhan ahile yo mandirle ta jhan Devi nai chamke jhai vayo*" [In this quote, she was maintaining that Devinagar area have become more popular due to the new Devi Temple as it has been attracting a number of devotees from different places]. Similarly, according to another the informants who served in temple construction committee, it took 86 lakh Nepali rupees to complete the temple construction and the majority of the money was raised from the local people as donations. Now, the temple has a very active and functional Temple Management Committee, which oversees the daily operation and maintenance activities of the temple including Durga *Pooja*. The representatives of the Devi Temple Management Committee informed me that they still welcome donations from the devotees, aspirant donors, and others. As revealed by my research participants and informants, Devinagar Chowk has become a popular place for celebrating Teej [a Hindu festival for women] for the residents of Butwal for the last two decades. The Devi Temple Management Committee assumes the patronship of Teej celebration event. During the Teej celebration, tents, water, fans, security, and other key arrangements are also made in an orderly manner for those who come to celebrate Teej. This year (2080

B.S.), the Devi Temple Management Committee assigned the responsibility of managing Teej event to G25 Club of Devinagar.

As revealed by my informants and collaborators, a large number of people became known to others through their contributions that they made during the construction of the temple, management of Durga *Pooja* event during the Navaratri and Teej celebration event. This indicates that the various types of involvement of people in the temple construction and its management and social and religious events like the management of Durga *Pooja* and Teej celebration have brought people closer to each other. Moreover, one of the informants disclosed that she started to become more familiar with people once she started to worship in the temple together. This shows that Durga *Pooja* event and Durga Temple have been forming an important dimension of place making in Devinagar.

DISCUSSION

The central finding of my research is that Devinagar *Chautari*, *Path* and Chowks and Durga Temple have been the main public places in Devinagar, Butwal that have been providing the best avenue for newer residents to intermingle with others. At the same time, they also serve as the centers for the local people to express their arguments with freedom, control their stress fatigue, and satisfy their impulses. One of my key standpoints in this research was that newer people have to make some vital endeavors that help them intermingle in the social and cultural sphere of their newer locality. For this, they need appropriate and vibrant public places. This is more important for such dwellers, who have in-migrated to a newer urban setting for permanent residential purposes. As suggested by my observations and based on the inferences drawn from the analysis of data, I posit that those three public places are the most appropriate platform for place making for the newer ones and the place making efforts of newer inhabitants of Devinagar are the most prominent and effective there. Each of them offers the dwellers with a distinct experience and opportunity for place making.

Another important point I discovered in this research is that the three public places discussed above serve as the urban situational junctures as well where the residents of Devinagar meet for a number of purposes. Such meetings between people in those junctures can be planned, casual or accidental ones. Though the purpose of meeting between the dwellers remains diverse in form, the final outcome tends to be the common one i.e., creating a space for one within the urban milieu. In other words, newer people are found to be centering their place making endeavors to create a place/space of their own in the urban milieu of Devinagar.

The results of this research need to be interpreted in the context of a number of limitations. The study was based on a qualitative inquiry in the form of ethnography and the findings are based on the data collected from a purposefully chosen research collaborators/participants and informants from amongst the people in-migrated to Devinagar in the last 10-15 years. Despite these limitations, I have attempted to assess the place making efforts of newer dwellers by using urban anthropology as a theoretical guideline and urban ethnography as a research method. Thus, I have tried to add a newer methodological dimension in the field of anthropological researches in Nepal. Furthermore, the findings divulge the stories of the strivings that people had to make while making a place of their own in the urban setting of Devinagar. In doing so, my

study has endeavored to show that the use of an emic perspective and in-depth interviewing is possible within the fast-paced urban socio-cultural setting.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The three public entities of Devinagar, Butwal namely Devinagar *Chautari*, *Path* and Chowks and Durga Temple have been playing a very significant role in bringing together the diverse groups of people. They have been playing a vital role in increasing familiarity amongst newer and existing dwellers of the area. On the top of these, they have been providing a perfect platform for social integration. Frequent encounters that take place in these public places lay a foundation for the development of newer sets of social and cultural relationship amongst people and provide a favorable aura to nurture those relationships. Thus, the place making efforts maximize the dwellers' chance to enhance their social position. This research shows that people use their social, cultural, political, and financial resources to the optimum in their place making efforts. The public places and situational junctures in an urban setting provide every dweller with an equal chance to experience the urban encounters. When these urban encounters occur repeatedly, the social integration process between the newer and older dwellers strengthens. The new dwellers, who are more skillful to map their opportunities, are more successful in using the public places more suitably, thereby turning their place making endeavors into a reality. To put in brevity, my study has deduced that the place making efforts are more vivid in those public setups which provide more opportunities of frequent encounters amongst different types of dwellers of an urban setting.

Since I was abided by my limitations, I concentrated on assessing the place making endeavors in three selected public places of Devinagar; however, I could not assess the place making activities practiced by the newer dwellers of Devinagar in other public places. From my field experience, I can say that an ethnographic study conducted for at least a cycle of twelve months will produce the newer insights into the place making endeavors evident in Devinagar. Therefore, I foresee the scope of an ethnographic research that runs at least for one complete year. Besides, I have not explored the issue of social status, power, tensions, and conflict amongst the dwellers of the study area and I believe that such issues can form some important research problems for independent or multidisciplinary studies for social scientists from various disciplinary backgrounds. Moreover, I assume that Devinagar can be an appropriate destination for the scholars who aim to make statistical analysis of migrations status, trends, and patterns.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS
The author has no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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