

Cultural History and Community Solidarity of *Falcha* in Kirtipur**doi: <https://doi.org/10.3126/skmj.v3i01.79300>****Reena Maharjan¹****Abstract**

Falchas are public shelters constructed and maintained by the Newar community historically. The primary functions of Falcha were: shelter for visitors/porters from out of valley, mid-day rest and community gathering in the evening. The specific Falcha has specific as well as general cultural importance, social value, and latent functions in Kirtipur. Falcha as easy accessed public social space neighbors used to sit, chat, make community meetings, plans and share the grief and happiness of their family issues. The paper tries to explore cultural and functional importance of Falchas in recent contexts. The additional objective of the article is to explore community solidarity, entertainment, identity and latent function like mental health contributions. I employed qualitative research design to collect stories of changing values and different functions of different Falchas. After few transect walks at the Falchas in Kirtipur, I explore knowledgeable people for specific Falcha. Then, I employed observation and key-informants interview methods to collect information. Being Newar of the Kirtipur, I added my personal reflections and family engagement for the construction, and perpetuation of social life of the Falcha in Kirtipur. Falcha played significant contribution for community solidarity, cultural identity, cultural economy through Falcha tourism. The policy implication of the Falcha can be social and mental health healing of senior citizens through social, cultural and music space in the age of increasing individualism, techno-centrism and crisis of social life.

Keywords: Newar, culture, solidarity, *Falcha*, function, identity**Introduction**

Community solidarity is a fundamental condition for healthy social life as well as a precondition for development activities. Frequent meetings, interactions, negotiations, collective functions, sharing resources and collective decisions strengthen community solidarity. The paper tries to explore various functions and values encapsulated at the Newari *Falchas* and how such valuable *Falcha* contributed for community solidarity in Kirtipur.

Kirtipur is not only politically well known, but also socio-culturally unique Newari settlement located on a ride in the Kathmandu Valley. It is an ancient but rich in culture and history (KC et al., 2024). One of the ingredients of uniqueness of the settlement is numbers

¹ Maharjan is a faculty of Shahid Smarak College, Kirtipur Kathmandu

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of *Falcha* in every neighborhood. *Falcha* are public shelters as rest houses constructed and maintained by the Newar community historically. The peoples of Lalitpur Metropolitan had great enthusiasm to construct the *Samaya Falcha*. Years-long resistance, struggle, and success story to the re-establishment of the cultural heritage '*SamayaFalcha*' at Pulchowk in 2078/12/5 by Mayor of Lalitpur dragged public attention to the socio-cultural values of the *Falcha* among the Newar community. Similarly, the *Falcha* was also risk of encroachment in Kirtipur. Ex-Former Mayor of Kirtipur Ramesh Maharjan claimed that he has completed about 75% of renovation. He added that by understanding the deep historical, cultural, and social importance of the *Falcha*, the local government prioritized the renovation and remaking of *Falcha* in Kirtipur (R. Maharjan, personal communication, August 14, 2024).

Falcha construction and renovation in different Newari settlements of Kathmandu was one of the popular election slogans of the Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan Balendra Shah attracts the attention of Newari people in Kathmandu. Ramesh Maharjan argued that Balendra's commitment of the cultural development of Newar was reflected when he won the election with a wide difference of votes with Newar competitors in 2079 B.S. After election, he initiated the renovation and made *Falcha* in the different settlements as per commitment (R. Maharjan, personal communication, August 14, 2024)

Falcha are recognized as rest houses in modern days where the general public can take rest during their leisure time and chat about current events or domestic and community problems. The "Rest houses" were erected by generous and religious-minded citizens of the society for the benefit of the general public about 800 years ago and thereafter (Nepali, 1965). Other European and Asian countries have followed much later in modern times.

The primary functions of *Falcha* were: shelter for visitors/porters from out of valley, mid-day rest and community gathering in the evening. Cultural functions and social implications of the *Falcha* have been changed. The specific *Falcha* has specific as well as general cultural importance, social value, and latent functions in Kirtipur. Before 20 years ago, neighbors used to sit, chat, make community plans, and share the grief and happiness of the family. Some of them passed their time by playing cards, tiger-goats, and funny jokes. There are more than 40 *Falcha*, situated each 10 to 15 households difference or 2 or 3 *Falcha* in one Tole in Kirtipur Ring road. Elderly people and musical teams (*Dapha Khala*) gathers in the morning and evening to sing religious hymns and community meetings (Personal observation, August10, 2024)

The traditional *Falcha* were simple in design but decorated with ornate wooden, brick or stone structures and even numbers of pillars that depicted the cultural values of the times. Most of renovated *Falcha* tries to capture traditional style, materials and architecture but some of them are modified and constructed by cemented pillars and roof. The traditional

Falcha communicate cultural importance and the dedicated efforts of Newar ancestors as exemplary pieces of art and culture life to the world. Old Newar said that the two-storied *Falcha* serves two purposes: the ground floor serves for taking rest during the day hours and the top floor serves for taking rest during the night hours, especially for fellow travelers who need to halt for the night before continuing their long journey sometimes to distant towns out of valley (P. Pradhan, personal communication, September 20, 2024) and sometimes to distant countries like Lhasa/Tibet and India (Ishii, 1992).

Despite importance of *Falcha* in everyday life of the Newar community, scholars have not documented cultural history and social function of them. Because of the changes in agrarian livelihood practices, the traditional need of labor stay in the community changed. Political and identity issues are attached recently. The cultural history and community solidarity including mental health, cultural tourism through *Falcha* has been overlooked.

Objectives

This paper explores cultural, functional history of *Falcha*, community solidarity, entertainment and latent function like mental health contributions through regular musical hymns, sharing of grief and happiness. The specific objectives of the paper are: to explore the cultural and functional history of *Falcha* culture in Kirtipur; to interpret the logics of making *Falcha* in recent days in each settlement; and to analyze functions of *Falcha* in terms of community solidarity, entertainment, mental health management and identity of the community.

The paper is based on qualitative research design in which the researcher employed personal narratives and filed observations as key data source. After a few transact walks, I explore numbers of *Falcha* and key informants of the specific *Falcha*. I made schedules of meetings with key informants and observation of functions at different *Falcha*. Narrative inquiry method was helpful to get information about cultural history, trajectories of function of the *Falcha*. Collected data were translated and categorized in various themes. Long stories of changing values, history of *Falcha* and different functions of different *Falcha* are documented by employing descriptive and exploratory research design.

Theoretical Approach of Community Solidarity

Community solidarity denotes unity, negotiation, meetings, gathering, and collective ownership and participation. Community people come together for their positive change. Structural Functionalism is one of the suitable perspectives to analyze collective behaviors of people for solidarity. It assumes that different parts of the society actively function to maintain socio-cultural structures/systems of the society. The founders of the perspective believe that each of socio-cultural units fulfill needs of healthy society (Durkheim, 1967;

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Malinowski, 1922; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952). Similarly, Gopal S. Nepali (1965) analyzed how different parts and functions of Newar contribute to make Newar society economically independent, culturally healthy, and socially functional. I focus on social structure prepared with several units of social and cultural system. According to this theory, cultural and social development is possible through the functions of different units. People have a direct relation with such units. They have a both latent and manifest function at the process of change and continuity of the social and cultural systems.

The *Falcha* culture apparently fulfills economic and cultural needs but silently playing roles on mental health, social solidarity and identity. The community used it to provide night shelter for the agricultural labors from out of Kathmandu Valley. They used it to store raw food grains before well processed. Some of them used it to store construction materials for few days. During festivals and *Jatras*, community gathered at *Falcha* to sing devotional hymns and musical programs. The devotional hymn group called *Dapha Khala* initiated musical performance in the *Falcha*. Religious worshipping and *Jatra* functions occupied the *Falcha* space. Because of its unique architecture, easy access and cultural gathering, tourists also attracted to look *Falcha* so, *Falcha* became not only mere rest house but also the center of god/goddesses-human relations, musical performance, elderly hang outs, tourist attraction and identity politics recently. It sounds trivial element but works as important component. It has also fulfilled the common necessity of the society. Similarly, the structure has existed with the mutual relationship of different units. It maintains mutual relation between the function and structure. The Newari culture remains as one of the units of the cultural activities of the Newari cultural landscape, which is also interrelated with their identity, solidarity and community healing. To get deeper understanding of the function, importance, and implications of the *Falcha* culture, structural-functionalism, a classical sociological theoretical approach, provides better lens.

Radcliffe-Brown (1952), one of the structural-functional theorists, has clarified the fact that there is mutual relationship between social structure, units and their functions in the society. He focuses on the fact that the existence of the unit is not possible without structure and the system or structure can't be prepared without the functions of the units (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952). He claims that cultural units without positive contributions in the society do not exist for long period of time. His perspective is useful to analyze structure and functions of the Newar through Newari *Falcha* based musical life and institutional development. Similarly, Malinowski (1922) has forwarded the fact that different units always work positively to fulfill seven different needs including social and psychological needs of the society. Both Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown argue that cultural systems and functions have mutual relations strengthen by functions of various institutions of the society (Malinowski, 1922; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952).

Emile Durkheim argued that it was necessary to understand the "need" of the social organism to which social phenomena correspond. Other writers have used the concept of function to mean the interrelationships of parts within a system. In sociology, functionalism met the need to a method of analysis in Anthropology or provided an alternative to evolutionary theory and trait diffusion analysis (Durkheim, 1976). Durkheim believed that individuals might make up society; sociologists have to look beyond individuals to social facts. Social facts are the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals and all of the cultural rules that govern social life (Durkheim, 1976). Emile Durkheim explains how societies change and survive over time. Durkheim believed that society is a complex system of interrelated and interdependent parts that work together to maintain stability and that society held together by shared values, languages, and symbols. He believed that to study society, a sociologist must look beyond individuals to social facts such as laws, moral, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashion, rituals and rites which all serve to govern social life. Malinowski said, 'culture is a need for surveying system'. Culture is a system of which satisfies needs such as food, reproduction, security, health, protection etc. As Malinowski gave importance to individual needs, so his functionalism also known as 'Psychological Functionalism'. Merton (1949) argued that culture fulfilled both latent and manifest functions of the society. For Merton, manifest functions are consciously and deliberately intended to produce beneficial outcomes, latent functions are neither conscious nor deliberate but also produce benefits and they are unintended positive consequences (Merton, 1949).

The most basic needs are biological, but this does not imply any kind of reductionism, because each level constitutes its distinct properties and needs, and from the interrelationship of different levels that culture emerges as an integrated whole. Culture is the kernel of Malinowski's approach. It is 'uniquely human', for it is not found to exist among sub humans. Comprising all those things material and nonmaterial that human beings have created right from the time they separated from their simian ancestors, culture has been the instrument that satisfies the biological needs of human beings. It is need serving and need fulfilling system. Because of this role of culture in satisfying biological needs Malinowski's functionalism also known as bio-cultural functionalism. Anthropologists generally consider interconnections of different cultural domains when they analyze cultures, the connections between subsistence strategies and family organization or religion. Functionalists view society as a system in which all parts work or function together to society as a whole (Anderson and Mitchell, 1978).

In this way, societies need culture to exist. Cultural norms function to support the fluid operation of society work together to fulfill a society's needs, culture exists to meet its member's needs. *Falcha* articulates the social and religious configuration of urban space,

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and abilities of cyclist, enclosure and intensification that permeate various domains of Newar cultural experience (Widdess, 1999). The performance of Newar music and dance intimately bound up with other cultural domains including religion and ritual, agricultural and religious calendars, social organization and Hindu-Buddhist concepts of time and space. This singing tradition is on the verge of extinction and the author presents the disappearing tradition in its social and religious context.

Cultural Importance of *Falcha*

Falcha have multiple functions, as a resting place, social-cultural and religious gatherings. *Falcha* are used for socially and culturally as in 1st day of month which is called *Salun:Pa* mostly people used to gather for discussion of development, social welfare and in Punih Pa mostly people used *Falcha* for festivals and cultural program as *Samayabazi* and also *bhajans* are played. So, we could say *Falcha* are built up to give facilities and to construct culture. During the different times of the day the same *Falcha* plays different role for children to play, elderly men to chat, gossip about news, play cards and recitation of *bhajans* during mornings and evenings performed daily, weekly, monthly and women to chat and make cotton wicks. Different deities are kept inside *Falcha* as Ganesh, Krishna, Umamaheshwor, etc.

During my field day, different *Falcha* of Kirtipur was used for different purposes in different aspects and festival. Most *Falcha* were constructed as a donation to achieve *Punya* (Merit), a prerequisite for salvation. Years ago, when there were no economic institutions people used to spend money by constructing the *Falcha* to show their status rich, as gift to society in the memory of a deceased member of the family and images of god and goddesses were placed on the rear walls with an inscription from the donor. So, here I found both latent and manifest functions of *Falcha*. *Falcha* are well respected as communal public spaces. It serves various roles from being a place to hold meetings to an important space for festivals and celebrations. During my fieldwork one of my respondent said,

Those days, though Bosi Gaun, Satungal and Chandragiri were not located in Kirtipur, but culturally “*Saat Gaunle*” *Jatra* unites them and located in Kirtipur. He said in the time of *Jatra* it was informed by playing *Kaan: Baja* literally saying now *Jatra* has been started The *Jatra* preparation and initiation were made in the *Falcha* (M. Maharjan, Personal communication, September 19, 2024).

Similarly, R. Maharjan said,

Some *Falcha* which were situated inside the Tole were used to celebrate annual-ritual function by giving *Samayabazi* (famous Newari dish), which

is also called *Barshbardhan/Busadhan*. *Samayabazi* is used to give people in all *Falcha* of their own Tole once in a year in *SamayaPunih* Day (*YanlathwoPunih/Yenha Punih*) (R. Maharjan, personal interview, September 20, 2024).

During field day, I heard a song while taking *Samayabazi*. Local people used to sing “*La chaku weyeka Samayabazi/give Samayabazi having one piece of meat*”. Rice wine is also poured from the mouth of *Hathubhairab* as blessing in *IndraJatra* festival *Yenha Punih*. But, not all *Falcha* are used for *Samayabazi* function. In Chithu, firstly *Hathu Jatra* was celebrated with an exhibition of *Samayabazi*. Sunstar Club known as an active club in Kirtipur has been celebrating *Hathu Jatra* every year by exhibiting *Samayabazi* in Chithu. This year i.e. last time, on the day of *Yanlathwo Punih*, the club celebrated *Jatra* in a great manner. The face of *Hathubhairab* is placed on the front of *Ganesh Falcha* in Chithu for the purpose of *Darshanpuja*. In front of the *Hathubhairab* a pile of *Samayabazi* is kept on display. Then *Lakhey* scattered *Samayabazi* to the general public. Club started a campaign to revive the extinct *Hathubhairab* culture in Kirtipur in 2021. In the year 2022, the face of *Hathubhairab* was arranged in Kirtipur. Since that year, the club has been regularly celebrating this tradition in the presence of local government leaders.

All these activities articulate cultural functions and importance of the *Falcha*. When celebrating cultural functions, people organized series of meetings, discussions and unity among them. The cultural functions of the *Falcha* ultimately contribute social solidarity and sense of integrated identity. Similarly, *Falcha* has a special role during the day of *GaiJatra* in Kirtipur, after the dance performed by *jhyajhya-papa*, local people sit and shared their *kewu phewu* (peas), *Naspati* fruits, cucumber at *Falcha* which creates social bonding and community solidarity among different Newar castes. Then after *jhyajhya-papa* dance there will be *Khyala* (comedy drama) section which is bought by same organizer who both organize *jhyajhya-papa* and *Khyala*. While viewing both, people will enjoy from *Falcha*. Today, in some *Falcha* at *GaiJatra* day people used to sing and dance till midnight. All in all, *Falcha* have made people realize the importance of our unique identity and dignity. Basically in *Falcha*, during *Krishna Jatra*, God Krishna is displayed there. Every full moon day people used to lighten the light of ghee for the god. Similarly, every *Falcha* has an idol of a God Ganesh, Narayan and Lord Shiva, which gives a religious significance. Therefore, *Falcha* is not only material culture of the Newar. It carried cultural and religious stories (intangible cultural heritage) of various Hindu/Buddhist gods. People installed different god's sculpture and narratives. People started their everyday life by worshipping god installed in the *Falcha*. *Falcha* is considered as sacred space for both Hindu and Buddhist people.

Functional Importance

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The name *Sorakhutte Falcha* which has 16 pillars made from carved wood is a term adopted during the Rana regime but previously it was called *Mandap Falcha* and was constructed in Malla period. There are altogether three *Mandap Falcha*. Today, the one at Kirtipur is situated in Nayabazar-9 also called as *Amalshi Falcha*, which is known as by the side of a custom office. Those situated at the entry points served the dual function of a custom office, a resting place for porters or travelers who traveled Kathmandu, India from Kirtipur, Chitlang, Bhimphedi. Near every *Falcha* there should be a water tap. During Lichchavi and Malla period, people used to sit and collect tax from travelers. Another is situated in exit points at wada no.3. During King's regime, soldiers were kept in that *Mandap Falcha*/Kirtipur Dhoka for protection of Kirtipur City. Third one is at Chovar Danda which was used for Tax collection and a resting place for travelers. It was said that this *Falcha* was also used for entry points or check points for travelers who travel from Makwanpur, Hetauda and Tistung. Businessmen also sit there for their business purpose and have rest.

In Kirtipur, *Falcha* is not only for resting area but also functions as a location for gatherings, accommodation services to the visitors during a time when guest houses or hotels were unheard, for events and celebrations. Also *Falcha* is a place where elderly people perform their *bhajans* early in the morning and evening. In historic Newar cities of Kirtipur, *Falcha* are frequently seen in every *galli-tole* and *chowk* typically located close to a water source, also built near temples where community people used for daily devotional singing purposes and entry and exit point. By this different cultural and functional performance *Falcha* brings people together.

Hence, we found structure and physical function of *Falcha*. Firstly, worker taking rest, protection from sunlight and rainfall, protection from natural disaster, secondly intangible religious function articulates unseen culture and worshipping god at *Falcha* is seen culture. I have found most *Falcha* are also constructed near Ghats to perform death ritual performance during the people's death. So, *Falcha* are related with death ritual activities as well as used in different festivals.

Developmental Functions of *Falcha*

Before the establishment of school building in Kirtipur, *Falcha* have been used for teaching purposes. By the end of Rana regime and establishment of democracy in 2007 B.S., many public schools were opened. Elderly people told that *Falcha* remained public counseling center for community youths and other people. Usually, senior people orientated for developmental activities for the new generation.

Now a day, *Falcha* had different role according to the need of people. It became tool for revitalizing culture of Newar. Similarly, *Falcha* are using for *Mahila Samuha* Meeting, organized vaccine for children, blood donation, collecting charity or donation and also used

for shop for business purposes. To maintain and preservation of *Falcha* culture, Mandap *Falcha* Amalshi Khala initiated coordination to form an umbrella forum of all *Falcha*. Today, all reconstructed *Falchas* has “*Falcha* consumer welfare committee (*Falcha Upabhokta Samiti*)”. Most of the *Falchas* are smoke free zone and have warning sign “NO SMOKING ZONE” (Personal observation, September 22, 2024). Tourism and social awareness related performances were performed around the *Falcha*. The performers try to communicate conservation of environment and cultural heritage which are important for the tourist and researcher.

Still in the afternoon and evening *Falcha* is used by elderly people, women and children. Different constructions of Recent *Falcha* of wada no. 3 and other wadas are building up for the purposes of economic activities and also for displaying local products in the morning. So in recent days for temporarily we found business activities.

***Falcha* and Economy**

Falcha are also the part of economic enhancement through tourism. According to Ram Maharjan, Kathmandu valley has very rich Culture and *Falcha*, so it is like “Living Museum”. So people from different district and foreigner have come to view this beautiful tangible heritage. By this activity Kirtipur Municipality have earn good economy. By interpreting *Falcha* story to the foreigner Story teller/Guide have earn good money. Similarly, rebuilding *Falcha* has also revived traditional *Dapha bhajans* which is performed in these resting places. Comparatively it is said that by tangible heritage Bhaktapur Municipality have earned Rs. 50, 0000/- in a year by tourism. While interviewing with respondents one of my respondent said that,

During Malla Period *Falcha* were used as a place to collect Tax. The central office named *MalAdda* was located at Baghbhairab *Sthan*/Place and people from India, Terai, and out of valley paid tax for their business transaction (P. Pradhan, personal Interview, September 21, 2024).

Mainly, *Falcha* can be broadly classified into two types. One is found in core cities of Kirtipur mainly used by local people and other is found in out skirt of the city Kirtipur mainly used by traders. Also there are two types of main *Falcha* name Mandap *Falcha* which is found in entry zone of Kirtipur and other one is found in exit zone of Kirtipur. Also found in near water sources. This kind of constructing attracts the tourists from other districts. This shows the people from the past were very creative as an engineer.

As we know *Falcha* represents traditional resting houses, for an authentic cultural experience Sasa: Twa Restaurant of Kirtipur had also build up different *Falcha* inside the restaurant for economic point of view. One of respondent said,

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There are altogether 7 *Falcha* inside Sasa: Twa Restaurant, 2 *Falcha* are in entry point, 4 *Sattals* are in ending point and 1 *Falcha* is in Middle point called Hukka *Falcha*. Moreover, structure of *Falcha* are also been used as restaurants to enhance the business purposes and for tourist attraction. Similarly, other restaurant as Lahana and *Falcha* had also built up *Falcha* inside their corridor. (P. Pradhan, personal Interview, and September 21, 2024). Similarly, *Falcha* is used for different functions as bus stop, waiting sport, meeting and time pass public space.

***Falcha* and Politics**

Former-Mayor of Kirtipur Ramesh Maharjan had shown great interest on Cultural Heritage Preservation. This is a kind of public attraction towards oneself. Not only Former-Mayor of Kirtipur Ramesh Maharjan, Mayor of Lalitpur Municipality Chiribabu Maharjan had also revived the Samaya *Falcha* at Pulchowk and other *Falcha* at Lalitpur. Furthermore, during 2079 B.S. popular election slogan of Mayor Balendra Shah was to construct and renovate the *Falcha* in Newari settlements of Kathmandu. This shows that he know the cultural value and was close to Newar Sentiments. By this kind of behavior it shows they both are working for cultural preservation.

***Falcha* and Community Solidarity**

Besides traditional functions of the *Falcha*, social ramification of reflect when heterogeneous functions and people occupied the *Falcha* space. Ward and neighbor level political party meetings also called in the *Falcha*. Community development, peace initiatives, *Jatra* performance, *Dapha* and religious devotional musical performance were organized in the *Falcha* space. By observing all these functions and narratives about *Falcha*, it can be argued that *Falcha* is very important cultural and social component (structure) of the Newar community. As Radcliff-Brown, Malinowski, and Durkheim argued functional characteristics of the social structure, *Falcha* played significant contribution to make social solidarity, religious harmony, and community development.

As interpreted by the key informants, initial functions of the *Falcha* were limited to agricultural support. *Falcha* basically was for resting purposes for different people according to time, place and age. Furthermore, *Falcha* are used in early morning, afternoon, evening by elder people, women, youngsters and children's and at night by porters. It is found in core areas of *galli-tole* (street and neighbor) and *chowk* (square), entry and exit place of Kirtipur. Wherever *Falcha* are found, eventually local people used according to their needs. In the morning, I found elder people's gathering for singing, some women hanging out and mid-day rest and elder people's gossips in political topics and funny jokes, playing cards and tiger-goats, in the evening children play freely around *Falcha*. Although, when they do

interaction each other than firstly it reduces disputes and entertain, secondly improves health of elder people's and thirdly bring solidarity among them.

***Falcha* and Entertainment**

There are a few reasons behind why these *Falcha* are used. This provided free lodging back in the day for travelers or porters and visitors used to sleep for the night, served as a communal space for locals including the elderly and women to socialize with friends and carry out daily activities as used to sit and take wick spinning/cotton wicks to light butter or oil lamps, weaving carpet of straw, shared feelings of people. After re-constructing *Falcha* in the afternoon for senior citizens to bask in the sun and discuss with national and international events through newspaper, hangout and play cards and share their grief, chat, and think about their daily life as they too feel like they have turned to yesteryears. During different times of the day especially in the evening or in the holidays same *Falcha* plays role as space for the children to play.

Thus, these kinds of function show entertainment purpose.

***Falcha* and Mental Health Management**

In recent days, there have been hotels, guest houses, and religious spaces for rest of travelers. To pass the time for elderly and children, there are many clubs, parks, community houses, temples and TV programs. But still Newar community prioritized making *Falcha* among other development activities. Apparently, it looks useless investment but its latent functions of *Falcha* are very deep in meaning. In early morning and evening, elder people play or songs *bhajans* and in afternoon is used for social gatherings. So, contributions through regular musical hymns create mental balance.

Visiting *Falcha* shows two latent functions as physical function and spiritual function. Physical functions mean physical appearance and having breakfast and tea with friends. Spiritual functions mean being refreshed mentally. Usually, people are restricted to go in private space for discussions so they choose social space or public space to hang out that is *Falcha*. Today *Falcha* are being challenging to Old age homes. At *Falcha* elderly people share their grief with their friend, happiness and gossips of politics, play different games. By doing this, they mentally solve their mental problems, family problems and whenever they visit *Falcha* physically they would get little bit exercise also. Most of the elder people who visit *Falcha* I found were whose son and daughter-in-law are working at offices, grand children are going school. Some were those whose son and daughter-in-law were in foreign countries. Thus, being alone at home creates mind

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dull and get depressions so visiting *Falcha* and having tea and sharing with friends maintain mental health.

***Falcha* and Identity**

On the basis of cultural and economic implications of the *Falcha* in the Newar community in the Kathmandu Valley, Newar claimed that *Falcha* were their traditional cultural marker. The name *Falcha* also derived from Newari language. The origin, religious, economic and other functional aspects are also used and interpreted by the Newar. The Newar owned the space as own community space though it was open to all people. P. Pradhan argued that years-long resistance, struggle, and success story to the re-establishment of the 'Samaya *Falcha*' at Pulchowk dragged public attention to the socio-cultural values of the *Falcha* among the Newar community (P. Pradhan, personal communication, September 21, 2024). The series of cases of Samaya *Falcha* at Pulchowk and movement related to the Samaya *Falcha* united the Newar for the feeling of *Falcha* as cultural identity of the Newar. By understanding underlying cultural identity of the *Falcha*, Balendra Shah (the Mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan city) started renovation and installation of many *Falcha* in different location.

Falcha is designed with distinction and character being true to its original identity. Most of the *Falcha* in Kirtipur have been built by noble families in the community not by kings. This shows the identity of Newar community. Mainly Indigenous people start to protect and preserve the *Falcha* for their identity.

Conclusions

Falcha are important cultural component of the Newar community. Initially, the *Falcha* culture started to accomplish agricultural labor support and processing of food grains. Gradually, people attached religious and cultural activities and values at the space of the *Falcha*. When religious and developmental functions occupied the space, *Falcha* space became strategic space for social solidarity and harmony among various people.

On the basis of the information, it can be argued that importance and function of *Falcha* changed and increased. Initially, it was built for the rest and night stay of travelers. The type of *Falcha* determines its functions and importance. Agricultural and taxation of government functions of the *Falcha* changed for meeting and entertainment. Before the establishment of school, *Falchas* were used as School as teaching purposes. Because of cultural and identity awareness in the community, *Falcha* are symbol of cultural identity. It is revitalizing culture of Newar. Hence, constructing *Falcha* means reviving culture of Newar community and preserving it reflects an identity of Newar. It's a community property and valuable tangible heritage. It reflects valuable place to reduce grief with friends by gathering. Initially,

government used *Falcha* to collect taxes and case decision on the presence of god/goddesses. It was believed that people told true in front of god. Therefore, many cases decisions were made at the *Falcha*.

Falchas are also related with different ritual activities as well as used in different festivals like *Salu:Pa* and *Punih:Pa*, *Jatras*. They are also used for *Mahila Samuha* Meeting, giving vaccine children, blood donation, and for small shop for business purposes. But today some *Falchas* are totally damaged and vanished. Mainly, still today *Falcha* found in core cities of Kirtipur mainly used by local people and other found in out skirt of the city Kirtipur used by traders.

Falchas are using as an economic enhancement through tourism. Cultural economy can be generated by selling the historical stories of *Falcha*, art and architecture of *Falcha*, religious and cultural values of the *Falcha* to the tourists. *Falcha* could tell political and economic systems of the periods. It can be argued that the agrarian society of Kirtipur was rich to build such public shelters by using local artists and labor. There was collective and public culture during agrarian society. It can be argued that *Falcha* strengthened community solidarity. Community solidarity or social health is one of the indicators of healthy people. If the society is well functional and integrated, people were healthy. When people meet, they shared their happiness and sorry. *Falcha* contribute to strengthen mental health of elderly and women. Mental health is also considering an indicator of health. If people manage their mental health in the community, society and country's health status increased. They discussed norms and values of the community. They shared community responsibility, collective meeting and seating which strengthened community solidarity in Kirtipur. There directly observable and cultural ramifications are reasons behind why these *Falcha* are used.

The manifest functions of the *Falcha* are observed everyday gathering and collective work. People organized communal and personal functions. When elder people's gathering for singing, some women hanging out and mid-day rest and elder people's gossips in political topics and funny jokes, playing cards and tiger-goats, interaction each other than firstly it reduces disputes and entertain, secondly regular musical hymns create mental balance and improves health of elder people's and thirdly bring solidarity among them. Similarly, this kind of behavior shows as for entertainment purposes. Moreover, the latent functions of the *Falcha* are mental health healing and preservation of intangible heritage of the community. When people interact regularly, it contributes to solve personal and social problem collectively. Therefore, *Falcha* culture is another tool to build community solidarity, conflict management and mental health healing tool. This culture can be applied another community to solve the problem of elderly loneliness, mental health issues, unity and community solidarity among the people.

Cultural History and Community Solidarity of *Falcha* in Kirtipur

Still today in Kirtipur there is increasing flow of renovation and making *Falchas* which shows cultural politics of identity. Similarly, Former-Mayor of Kirtipur Ramesh Maharjan, Mayor of Lalitpur Municipality Chiribabu Maharjan, and Mayor Balendra Shah were always active to construct and renovate cultural heritage and this shows they all are working for cultural preservation.

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