

## **ABSTRACT**

### **WHY PEOPLE BUILD THE WAY THEY BUILD: A STUDY OF HOUSES IN DANNCHHI, KATHMANDU VALLEY.**

Most valued literature on the Nepali built environment draws our attention to the easily definable extremes of vernacular buildings and architecture. These categories are considered pure and exclusive: architecture is considered modern, designed and executed by professionals. Vernacular buildings are built by ordinary people without the help of formal experts such as architects. Vernacular strictly belongs to the place, to its past and untouched by foreign influences, while modern architecture can help transform traditional societies into modern societies that resemble the advanced-west. While these concepts may hold true at the extremes –or in regard to their core values-- most of the built environment belongs to the “gray” area or the liminal space in-between these, and are hybrids with multiple influences. This thesis concerns the production of spaces and building practices by ordinary people, particularly in rural Nepal who are increasingly influenced by western and other modernity. This thesis is an investigation into this ordinary architecture, the “in-between.” It asks what people build, how they build and why? The study, which follows these broad questions, is an inquiry into the lives of the ordinary people in a rural setting and it investigates the nature of ordinary building practices. It attempts to understand how people and their lives connect to the built environment and how the local is connected to the global and other places outside local and national boundaries.

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