Transformation of Durga- from Elite's Goddess to Beloved Daughter in the Folk Religion of Bengal

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Abstract: *Durga puja is related to royalty from the era of epics. The Gupta, the Pallaba and the Bijoynagar dynasties used to celebrate Navaratri to show off their wealth and power to their feudatories and common subjects. The earliest reference of Druga puja in Bengal was mentioned in 12th Century A.D text "Ramcharit Manas" authored by poet Sandhakar Nandi. In the 18th century, Druga puja became very popular among the Bengali nobility and common people alike. Whatever the reason may be, in the late 18th and early 19th century all the solvent families of Calcutta used to worship Goddess Druga with devotion and spender. IN this way the old Bengali house hold pujas became synonym of "Banediana". Contemporary European observers used to describe these pujas as the "three Blues". Besides the elites, the common Bengali mass used to participate in the pujas in a passive manner. In the 21st century Bengal, the once solvent houses are in decline in their fortune due to abolition of zamindari rights, division of property among the branch families lack of interest from young generation. But still today they are trying to maintain the legacy of annual family Druga puja. Though number of old "Banedibari" pujas is decreasing rapidly stilltoday Bengali people use to share a mutual pride and nostalgia for these pujas. Now I am discussing about the concept of Goddess Durga as the beloved daughter of Bengali common people. During the 4th-16th century A.D. Various regional cultures had been picturized Shiva- Parvati in different perspective. In Bengal the Mangalkavyas originated during 15th-18th century narrated the Shiva- Parvati story in a Bengali perspective. Parvati here has been described as Uma. Here Shiva is described as a rustic figure that tills land and led a vagabond drug addicted life. Uma's life with Shiva at Kailas is hard. Uma's parents Giriraj and Menka are waiting for their daughter's return. During the annual Druga puja Goddess Uma returned from Kailas to her parental house. Agamoni song celebrates her coming and Bijoya song mourns her departure from parental home. This paper deals with the transformation of Druga, from elite's Goddess to beloved daughter in the folk religion of Bengal. I will use both primary and secondary sources to point out the transformation.*

Keywords: *"Durga Puja", "Uma", "Mangal Kavyas", "Banediana", "Agomoni, Bijoya".*

Introduction

Practice of Goddess Worship as symbols of fertility-reproduction, divinity of royal authority, protection for devotees, slayer of enemies/evil is as old as human civilization. Archeological materials from pre-historic cultures of Paleolithic France, Austria, Neolithic Turkey, Jordan proved this truth. It is a common theme that the cult of Goddess in India is non- Brahmanical, indigenous. This theme originates from the speculation that the Indus Valley people worshipped mother Goddess. On the other hand, the early Vedic religious pantheon was undoubtedly dominated by the male deities. None of the early Vedic Goddess is clearly associated with battle which is the most common characteristics of the cult of Goddess like Pārbati, Durga, and Kali (Chakrabarti, 2018). The Goddess connection with the Brahmanical pantheon evolved through her role as demon slayer or great battle queen. Mahabharata and HariVamsha mentioned the Goddess as a fierce deity. Who is represented as a warrior whose companions are ghosts and wild animals, which fought against demons. Taittiriya-Aranyaka first mentioned name of the Goddess as "Durga", "Durgi"(Chakrabarti, 2018).This name has several origins in Hindu Mythologies. The Puranic traditions denote oneThe Goddess connection with the Brahmanical pantheon evolved through her role as demon slayer or great battle queen. Mahabharata and HariVamsha mentioned the Goddess as a who ends all miseries, the slayer of a demon named Durgama and protector of a fortress (CHATTERJEE, 2013). The Samkhya School of thought propagated the theory of two principles "Prakiti" and the "Purusha" in the cosmic evolution of the universe. The "VagAmbhrnisukta" of Rig Veda saw the notion of Shakti behind all divine and human actions. Brahmanical literature linked Durga with "Prakiti", "Shakti" (Chakrabarti, 2018).

Durga is related with royalty as well. According to Bengali Ramayana, Ram worshiped Durga in autumn before involving in combat with Ravana (Chatterjee, 2013). The theme that the king or his representatives being empowered by the Goddess to destroy enemies successfully re-established dharmik/legitimate authority can be found in regional Bengali literature (Chatterjee, 2013). From 8th to 14th century A.D. Worshipping of Durga benefitted the kings/warrior class. In the 12th century A.D. the rituals of Maha Nabami was considered as the most performed duty of the king. The king would renew his tie with the State with splendid court ceremony honoring the Goddess. The festival would initiate a new military year. The kings of Rajasthan, Bijoy Nagar, and Mithila celebrated grand Nava Ratri festivals before starting new campaigns (Sarkar, 2012).

During Medieval period, ambitious Rajas who revolted against the Bengal Sultanate draw their inspirations from the Goddess. For example, Raja Ganesh who usurped political power from the Iliyas Shahi Sultans, and his son proclaimed their association with Devi Durga by performing ritual worship and issuing coins bearing symbol of the Deity (Richard Maxwell Eaton, 1996). In the late Sultanate and early Mughal era, many successful Rajas and landed aristocracy attributed their political success to the blessings of the Goddess. Rajas of Tamluk, Dhalbhum, and Karangarhetc can be mentioned as examples. In many cases, the Goddess was supposed to perform as the protector of the strongholds of these Rajas. Mrinmoye, the presiding Deity of the Malla Kings of Bishnupur, was installed in all the forts of this kingdom (Chatterjee, 2013). Though the practice of worshipping Goddess Durga was prevalent in different parts of India, there was diversity in rituals. During the 15th /16th Century A.D. Smarta Raghunandan Bhattacharya codified the rules for Durga worship in Bengal, referring both the Puranic and the Tantric literature. Besides him, Jimut Bahana's "Kala Viveka" (11th /12th century A.D) and Sulpani's "Durgastaba Viveka" (12th Century A.D.) also provided ritualistic guidance for this puja. The Bengal province had developed a strong tradition of harvest rites between the first and seventh day, honoring the Goddess as an embodiment of fecundity combined with Tantric rites and completing with warrior rites of Astami and Nabami (Sarkar, 2012). During the late medieval era, the

agricultural Goddess of rural Bengal had been assimilated with Durga. At this period, the nature of patrons also changed. In place of kings/ warrior class, the medieval Bengali zamindar class worshipped the Goddess with the belief that they had private relationship with her. This concept is related with renovation of Bengali Hindu identity. However, the warrior nature of the Goddess had reduced. The aim of the landed feudal zamindar class for patronizing the Goddess was to acquire wealth through agriculture in place of war (Sarkar, 2012).

Methods Used

For writing this article I have gone through Rachel Fell McDermott's manuscript *"Revelry, Rivalry, and Longing for the Goddesses of Bengal"* and *"Singing to the Goddess: Poems to Kālī and Umā from Bengal"*.Besides these I have cultured Jasodhara Bagchi's "*Interrogating Motherhood THEORIZING FEMINISM*", Aparna Bhattacharya's *"Religious Movements of Bengal and Their Socio-Economic Ideas, 1800-1850"*, Kunal Chakrabarti*'s "Religious Process: The Purāṇas and the Making of a Regional Tradition"*, Thomas B Coburn's "*Devī-Māhātmya: The Crystallization of the Goddess Tradition",* Wendy Doniger's "*Śiva, the Erotic Ascetic*", Richard M. Eaton's "*The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760",* Dagmar.Engel's "*Beyond Purdah? Women in Bengal 1890-1939"*, Tapati Guha-Thakurta's "*In the Name of the Goddess: The Durga Pujas of Contemporary Kolkata",* Hillary Peter Rodrigues's "*Ritual Worship of the Great Goddess: The Liturgy of the Durga Puja with Interpretations"*, Bihani Sarkar's "*A in Medieval Bengal : An Introductory Study of Raghunandana 's Durg ̄ Uj ̄ Atattva with Text and Translation of the Principal Rites 1*. Vol. 2", Dinesh Chandra Sen's "*Banga Bhasa O Sahitya"*, Harihar Sheth's "*Prachin kalikata porichaya".* I have collected several scholarly articles connected with this topic from variable databases. Bachika, Reimon. "ON THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE," 2015. https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/ON-THE-SACRED-AND-THE-PROFANE-Bachika/b85d0a8f92c8ce17d071654f476a41c327a1eb8c, Bhattacharya, Tithi. "Tracking the Goddess: Religion, Community, and Identity in the Durga Puja Ceremonies of Nineteenth-Century Calcutta." *Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 4 (2007): 919–62. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911807001258, Chatterjee, Kumkum. "Goddess Encounters: Mughals, Monsters and the Goddess in Bengal." *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 5 (2013): 1435–87. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X13000073, Chatterjee, Mohona. "The Oral Tradition of Agomoni Songs as Intangible Heritage : Re- Reading the Marital M Igration of the ' Bengali Bridal Diaspora '" V, no. ii (2020): 202–14, Ray, Manas "Goddess in the City: Durga Pujas of Contemporary Kolkata." *Modern Asian Studies* 51, no. 4 (September 26, 2017): 1126–64. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X16000913, "Religion|Definition, Types, List of Religions, Symbols, Examples, & Facts." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, September 28, 2021. https://www.britannica.com/topic/religion, Sengupta, Anindya. "The Face of the Mother: Woman as Image and Bearer of the Look in Ritwik Ghatak's Films : Journal of the Moving Image (JMI) : A Film Journal from the Department of Film Studies, Jadavpur University," September 25, 2021. https://jmionline.org/article/the_face_of_the_mother_woman_as_image_and_bearer_of_the_look_in_ritwik_ghataks, Sircar, Jawhar. "The Domestication of the Warrior Godess, Durga: An Attempted 'Rationalist' Deconstruction." *Women's Education and Politics of Gender*, no. October 1999 (2004). http://jawharsircar.org/assets/pdf/The domestication of the Warrior Goddess Durga An attempted Rationalisat Deconstruction_Jawhar_Sircar.pdf, Studies, Asian. "Puja Associations in West Bengal Author (s): Jyotirmoyee Sarma Source : The Journal of Asian Studies , Vol . 28 , No . 3 (May, 1969), Pp . 579-594 Published by : Association for Asian Studies Stable URL : Http://Www.Jstor.Org/Stable/2943180" 28, no. 3 (2010): 579–94, Suryanarayan, Renuka. "The Spirit of Bengal." *The Hindu*, 2016. https://www.thehindu.com/features/friday-review/history-and-culture/The-spirit-of-Bengal/

article14425915.ece etc. can be cited as examples. I have collected some hybrid sources like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's "*Anada Moth*", Kaliprasanna Singha's "*Hootum Pyanchar Naksha*" *from Bagiya Sahitya Parishad,* Uttarpara Jaykrishna Public Library.

The English word "History" was derived from Greek word "Historia" which means enquiry, research, investigation of past events. Historical research is a systematic enquiry of past events/objects with the aim to reconstruct the past totally/partially as nearly as it was. It can be divided into 3 main activities. A] Exploration of new data. B] New interpretation of known data. C] Subordination of data to unifying principles. Historical sources can be classified into 3 sections as well. Primary, secondary and hybrid. In this study I have tried to answer my research objectives utilizing both secondary and hybrid sources following blended descriptive and analytical methodology.

Result & Discussion

There are different theories about the founder of Autumnal Durga puja in Bengal. According to one theory, Kamsanarayana, zamindar of Tahirpur in Rajsahi started it as a suitable alternative for an Ashvamedha ritual. According to another theory, Laxmi Kant, a zamindar and one of the three tax collectors of Bengal in the early seventeenth century, started the autumnal Durgafestival at Chala temple inBarisha in 1585/1610 A.D. His descendants, who became famous as the Sabarna Roy Chowdhurys continued this tradition (Rodrigues, 2003. The prominence of the Goddess Cult in Bengal continued its existence in 18th Century as well. The political anarchy of this century may be the reason of it. Raja Krishna Chandra of Nadia, Nanda Kishore Roy and Raghunath Roy, sons of Dewan of Burdwan, Raja Harendra Narayan of Koch Bihar, and Raja Mahatab Chand of Burdwan etc. were prominent patrons of Goddess cult in 18th century Bengal. Bharat Chandra, Ram Prasadwere Shakta intellectuals (Bhattacharya, 1981). The stillprevalence of Goddess Durga's warrior characteristics was proved by the fact that Maratha Burgee commander Bhasker Panduit used to worship the Goddess to secure military success in Bengal (Chatterjee, 2013).

In 1757, by the battle of Plassey, the British East India Company overthrew young NawabSiraj-Ud-Daula and became the De-Facto ruler of Bengal Province. their hold on Bengal's polity and economy strengthened by their victory in the battle of Boxar and granting of Dewani of Bengal-Bihar-Orissa Suba by the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam in 1765. In the late 18th and early 19th century, Bengal saw magnitude of Durga worship. There are different theories and counter-theories about the origin of this magnitude. It is basic theme that after the transfer of power from Mughal to British hand, different land revenue settlements, a new landed aristocracy/ middle class bourgeoisie emerged in Bengal. They earned their economic solvency in connection with the British (Sinha,1863).The old zamindaries had been abolished due to revenue experiments of the British(McDermott, 2011). The new zamindar and middle-class bourgeoisie not always belonged to higher social class or creed. But with their newly acquired economic prosperity they wished to gain social prestige and status. According to shastric texts, Goddess Durga can be worshipped by every social class (Chakrabarti, 2018). So, the newly wealthy section of Bengali society chooses the occasion of Durga puja to show off their wealth, gain social status, and express their political allegiance to the newly established British rule(Mc Dermott, 2011). Whatever the reasons may be, the newly wealthy families competed with each other to show off their wealth during the puja Sinha, 1863). Maharaja Nabakrishna Deb of ShovaBazaar, Raja Raj Krishna of Calcutta, Raja Kali Shankar Ghose, Raja Jai Mittra, Babu Rammohun Mallick, Babu Bholanath Mallick, Gobindaram Mitra, Radhanath Basumallik, Kailas Bose and other wealthy person spent thousands of rupees on the occasion of Durga Puja (Sheth, 1952). Contemporary European residents of Calcutta mentioned how the natives entertained their European Puja visitors with nautch

performers, bag pipers, English brand, European acrobats. Attendance of high-ranking company officials was considered as the crowning touch of honor. Governor-Generals, from Lord Clive to Lord Bentinck visited Autumnal festivals in the rich native's house (McDermott, 2011). Besides the show off of wealth and attempt to attract European visitors, different rituals of 10 days festivals also bore sign of royalty/solvency. Important among them were bathing of NabaPatrika, Sandhi Puja, Dhunadance, Kumari Puja, Dasami procession to the river etc. solvent family pujas used to perform this rituals with great care (McDermott, 2011). In 21st century Bengal, the old "Banedi Bari" pujas are decreasing rapidly in number due to lack of interest from young generation, abolition of zamindari rights and division of property among the branch families. Still to day Bengali people use to share a mutual pride and nostalgia for these pujas.

Up to now I have tried to portray Durga as the Goddess worshipped mainly by the elite section of Bengali society. Now I am turning towards second part of my argument. In Bengal's Folk tradition, Goddess Durga has been worshipped as Uma. Kena- Upanishad was the first Vedic literature which mentioned Uma/ Himabati as wife of Rudra (Chakrabarti, 2018). The name Parvati was first mentioned in Yayur Veda. In Maha Baharat, Parvati was mentioned as the consort of Shiva. Devi Mahatmya mentioned the Goddess as Vishnumaya/Parvati (Coburn, 2002). Stories about Uma can be found in Maha Bharat, Sanskrit plays and Puranas. According to these sources, Sati was daughter of Daksha Projapati. Daksha as propagator of Brahmanical religion had ideological clash with Shiva, the Ascetic- God of destruction. However, by the direction of Brahma, he was forced to marry his daughter to Shiva(Doniger, 1981).However, Daksha used to criticize Shiva in public time to time. Sati committed suicide in protest of her husband's insult by her father during a yogya. The Goddess was reborn as Parvati\ Uma, daughter of mountain King Himalaya and Meneka. Narada; the divine Sage predicted her marriage with Shiva (Doniger, 1981). After initial hesitation from Himalaya especially from Meneka, Parvati married shiva. The Bengali Mangal Kavayas narrated this story with twist. Dinesh Chandra Sen pointed out that in the Mangal Kavyas Gods and Goddess had been pictured with common human emotions of anger, jealousy, and sorrow. The Goddess was more responsive towards their devotee's wellbeing than Shiva (Sen, n.d). According to Bengali Folk tradition, Giriraj and Meneka are rulers of a Bengali city named Himalaya somewhere in North Bengal. They have to marry their daughter, Uma to Shiva, a poor, drug addicted, old, lustful, homeless necked beggar due to wrong match making by Narada (Rachel Fell Macdermott, 2002). Uma, Shiva and their children lives in Kailas. Due to unavoidable reasons, Uma's parents are not able to visit her in law house. According to the conception Meneka about Shiva, he sells Uma's ornaments to buy Marijuana, fails to feed her properly, fond of another wife (Doniger, 1981).Uma's parents and all their subjects eagerly wait for Uma's yearly visit to her parental home. The Agamoni songs begin with Meneka pursuing Giriraj to bring their daughter from Kailas. At the same time Uma perused Shiva to let her and her children visit parental home. Giriraj brings Uma and her four children back to his home(Rachel Fell Macdermott, 2002). Menekabecome very happy to see Uma after a long time. She talks to her with motherly care and questions about her condition in Kailas, the authenticity of circulating rumors about Shiva's financial condition, Uma's co-wife so on. Uma replies to her mother's questions sometimes supporting shiva and sometime blaming her parents to marry her with such kind of careless husband (Rachel Fell Macdermott, 2002). Three happy days elapses soon. Shiva comes to bring back his wife and children to Kailas. The Bijoya songs express the sorrow of Uma's parents and friends for letting her go so quickly (Rachel Fell Macdermott, 2002).

The Agamoni and Bijoya songs are centered on the basis of mother –daughter bond. These songs had evolved from the socio-economic background of 18th and 19th Century rural Bengal. During the18th

and 19th century, marriage was considered as the universal fate of Bengali women. The tradition of "Kanya- Dan" was associated with arranged marriage. According to the Kulinsystem of marriage, a family improves its social/ritual status by giving daughter in marriage to a husband belongs to higher social ranking familyalbeit of same caste or sub-caste. This system made finding of suitable bride-groom for higher ranking girls difficult. In patriarchal family, pre-puberty marriages of girls were obligatory due to Shastric doctrine. Even less ritualistic families used to marry their daughters due to fear of sexual scandals by these young girls. As puberty of Bengali girls began early, little time was left for girl's parents for finding suitable son-in-law with increasing social pressure. A survey found that in 1911 A.D. more than seventy percent Hindu girls had to be married within their fifteenth birth day. Increasing competitions for finding suitable bride-groom in time enabled sixty years old Bengali Kulin men to marry under-aged girls. For example, in 1880s Ram Chandra Mukherjee, Kulin Brahmin of Hooghly married his thirty third wife in his death-bed. In Hindu religious system marriage was a religious rite to be decided by parents and match- makers. Due to lack of information, many Bengali parents were forced to depend on match-makers for finding suitable son/daughters-in-laws(Engels, 1999). Ones married, these young brides became in-accessible to their childhood home, parents and friends for a long time. Thus, the agony of separation between mothers and daughters became deeper. The "Agamoni" and "Bijoya" songs pictured womenfolk's emotion, feeling, sentiments in an era when it was generally neglected by male patriarchy. In traditional religious calendar, there was no festival which highlights married Bengali women's relationship with their natal home. This way the narrative of the Goddess had become part of much wider network of cultural exchange beyond the scope of narrow ritualism. Vaishnav' religious themes of "Batsalya" and "Biraha" had influenced transformation of the Goddess to some extent (Bhattacharya, 2007). J.Sirkar has argued that, Durga in the form of "warrior-Goddess" represented female supremacy which was not totally acceptable to Patriarchic society of Medieval Bengal. So, the "warrior-Goddess" was domesticated to some extent as beloved "Daughter of Bengal". At the same time, importance of role of women as mother was highlighted with passive arrival of Durga's four children in the background. After that this "Domesticated" form of the Goddess received social recognition though the devotional poetry of Bengali Shakta poetic tradition of 18th and 19th Century (Sircar, 2004).

In the second half of the Nineteenth Century, Nationalism began to spread quickly among Indian subjects first in Bengal and then other parts of the country. J.Bagchi pointed out that the concept of picturing Nation as mother was a common phenomenon around all over the globe. The agony of building nation out of colonial subjugation found expression in feminity. The Nation/ mother is in distress due to colonial rule. So, her children should strive hard to free her (Bagchi, 2017). The Goddess cult which was very popular among both the elites and the common Bengali people had been used as a propagator of nationalism. As early as 5th/6th Century A.D.a Sanskrit text mentioned India as "Bharat- Mata". Bankim Chandra Chatterjee first popularized this theme in Colonial Bengal through his book "Ananda Math". "Bande- Ma- Taram" became the synonym of Nationalism.Bankim assimilated the feminize Shakti- Mother Land on the basis of Hindu joint family (Chattyapadhyay, 1938). Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nibedita, Rabindranath Tagore, Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh and other nationalist leaders followed the literary tradition of Chatterjee. During the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal [1905-1911], Abanindranath Tagore and Ramendra Sundar Trivedi propagated the idea of "Banga- Lakshmi". The concept of Nation as mother was powerful enough to bring liberation War of Bangladesh during 1970s (Bagchi, 2017). Kazi Nazrul Islam in one of his song prays to Goddess for destroying foreign rule over her children (Rachel Fell Macdermott, 2002).

M.Chatterjee argued that Agamoni and Bijoya songs can be connected with the social condition of post partition Bengal as well. After Partition of the Indian Sub-Continent in 1947, thousands of

Bengali women were forced to migrate from their native home [East Bengal] to a foreign land [West Bengal]. The consciousness of re-location was haunted by memories of old home/family/country. Just as Goddess Uma had to stay in Kailas, similarly these migratory women had to stay in an unknown environment / company. So, these songs become part of in-tangible Bengali heritage. They make the listeners nostalogic. The customs of Bengali household make the link between host and root culture (CHATTERJEE, 2020).RitwikGhatak, in his film "Meghe-Dhaka-Tara" cultured the theme of Goddess Uma as a betrayed daughter on the background of the partition of 1947(Sengupta,2004).

During the post-Independence half of the twentieth century, Bengal saw the popularization of Durga Puja funded by public expense. The Goddess was generally worshiped with the patronage of Kings/Nobles/Zamindar/new Gentry of Colonial Bengal in extravagant style and in a humble manner by rural population. The concept of worshipping Durga by public fund/initiative was developed in the second half of the Eighteenth Century. The first Puja of this kind was organized in the Gupti-Para region in the first half of the Nineteenth Century. This system was known as the "Barwari Puja". In the second half of the Nineteenth Century, this system became more popular (Sinha, 1863). Sharma argued that this system became popular among less solvent section of Bengali society due to lack of fund(Sarma,1969). After independence, Partition, migration of refugees from East Bengal, the number of old "Banedi-Bari" Pujas decreased rapidly. In contrast the number of Barwari/Sarbajanin pujas increased. Youth Congress used to organize these Pujas. The organizer committee constituted of Members from different socio/religious background. This indicates social harmony(RAY, 2017). Large sum of donation had been given/collected by the young volunteers of the different Puja committees. Goddess idol size and decorations became costly (Sarma, 1969). M.Roy compared the extravagant nature of early Nineteenth Century Calcutta Puja with the Sarbajanin Durga Pujas of 1960s-70s (Ray, 2017).

In the Sociology of religion, the concepts of sacred and profane are inter-linked. Implying an opposition between a certain qualification of religiosity and its absence,theses double concepts reflect users conception of religion.Emile Durkheim, Bronislaw Malinowski, Mercea Elide have discussed and argued with each other on these twin concepts (Reimon Bachika, 2015). In the traditional Hindu religion, the guarantee of sacredness depends on foods offered to God/Goddess, Caste of performing priest, dress of devotees and priests so on. With democratization of Durga puja by the Sarbajanin committees, debate arises on the issue of religious /ritualistic sacredness. Sharma argued that though the sarbajanin pujas enable the young generation to show their creativity and organizational skill, provide joy and relaxation to common people, ritualistic sacredness may not be kept in desired level (Sarma, 1969). There are different scholarly opinions also.M. Roy argued that in globalized world of Twentieth/ Twenty First Century A.D. religious sacredness and secularism walk side by side. The concept is not bound about producing something totally secular/ religious nature.Though public entertainment is the main working goal behind organizing Goddess worship today, it is based on rhetoric religion/ritual. Roy termed this concept as "Modern Sacred" (Ray, 2017).

From the 90s decade of Twentieth Century A.D., Globalization and Economic liberation made effective entry in the Indian society, economy, and culture. Withthis commercial investment also gained momentum in the finance of Durga pujas. In the Twenty First Century, Calcutta and glamorous Durga Pujas become synonymous. More than Ten million visitors of different pandals in one day make this puja the biggest carnival on Earth (RAY, 2017). The pastoral charm of married daughter's returning to natal home with grandchildren creates positiveness (Suryanarayan, 2016).With avaibility of fiver-glass idols, Durga puja in among N.R.I is gaining momentum. This makes the festival cosmopolitan in nature (RAY, 2017). From the 1990s, theme puja became popular. A theme concept has been taken by the artist from real incident/temple/tribal village/ old zamindar house etc. On these themes the idol

and the pandal decoration take place. Around one thousand out of four thousand five hundred pujas in Calcutta fall in the category of this category (Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 2015). R.F.Mac Dermott argued that in spite of all the commercialization, cosmopolitanism Folk element still exists in the worshipping of the great Goddess. She pointed out that in spite of living in cities, people feel nostalgic towards their village/ancestral home and its Puja. Village women used to come to Calcutta for singing the songs of Uma's return to her natal home. The N.R.I families try to create Puja environment through playing recorded Agamani-Bijoya songs sung by modern artists like Ram Kumar Catterjee and Amar Pal (McDermott, 2011). T. Guha-Thakurta also argued on a same line by mentioning the fact that BhabatoshSutradhar, a famous artist made a Puja theme at Khidirpur, Calcutta on the basis of 18th century poet Ramprosad's song on agriculture and cultivation in 2007 (Tapati Guha-Thakurta, 2015).

Conclusion

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, "Religion" means the way people deal with the concern of their life and after-life. In many traditions, this relation and these concerns are expressed in terms of one's relationship with or attitude toward gods or spirits; in more humanistic or naturalistic forms of religion, they are expressed in terms of one's relationship with or attitudes toward the broader human community or the natural world (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). In India two major main stream religions are Hinduism and Islam. Besides that's Buddhism, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism etc. are minor religious sects. Though there are different sects and sub-sects among the main stream religious system According to Oxford Dictionary, "Folk Religion" is a religion limited among small, local communities which does not adhere in the norms of large system (www.britannica.com, n.d.).

In this article, I have tried to explain the transformation process of Goddess Durga from ancient period to Twenty First Century A.D. It is now a well-accepted theory that Goddess cult in Bengal/India had its origin in pre- Vedic tribal/non-Aryan society. Later Vedic scriptures assimilated this Goddess into Aryan religious fold in the role of demon slayer/battle-queen. Sanskrit literature connected Goddess Durga with royalty thus making her "Elite's Goddess". However, her rural/subaltern nature continues its existence in the form of "village Goddess". In early-late Medieval Bengal due to lack of Hindu sovereign Kingship, the main patron class of Goddess changed from Kings/Warrior to landed Zamindars whose aim of worship was not success in battle but good harvest and agricultural prosperity. After establishment of British rule in Bengal, the newly wealthy Gentry class tried to impress their European masters through extravagant worship of Goddess Durga. However, connection of this Goddess with grass-root Bengali people was maintained in form of Uma, the beloved married daughter of rural Bengali people through the literary aids of Mangal Kavyas and devotional Shakta poetry. After Independence of 1947, during the second half of Twentieth Century, Autumnal Durga puja had been democratized by the Sarbajanin puja Committees. With commercialization; Globalizations of this puja Goddess again receive very rich devotees. But her Folk/Subaltern nature keeps its existence in the mode of Theme Puja based on Eighteenth/Nineteenth Century Rural Bengali society. So, it's my understanding that transformation of Goddess Durgais still ongoing with changing socio-economic-political-cultural changes Bengali society. But the "Folk" religious nature always remains with her.

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