

Durga Puja (Dashain) in Nepal: A Fusion of Ritual, Cultural, and Commercial Performance

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Abstract

This research article examines Durga puja (Dashain) in Nepal as a fusion of ritual, cultural, and commercial performances analyzing the impact of ritual and culture on commercial behaviors. Culture is largely concerned with the human values and beliefs that have been connected with the economic and commercial conduct of the people. The study explores how cultural performance shapes consumer behaviors besides strengthening social solidarity and preserving cultural identity. How the celebration of Durga Puja increases the financial activities of the country and what pros and cons it brings to society is analyzed. The qualitative data are collected from the relevant books, journal articles, and newspapers. Schechner's "Theory of Ritual and Performance", and Chattopadhyaya's "From Religion to Culture" have been used as the theoretical framework. This research finds that the celebration of ritualistic cultural festivals preserves ritual and culture, strengthens social solidarity with identity, and increases commercial activities. It concludes that cultural festivals require celebrating in such a way that they can protect ritual and cultural identity, promote social solidarity, and progress commercial activities.

Keywords: Durga puja, performance, ritual, culture, consumer behavior, solidarity

Introduction

Background of the Study

"Durga puja", a ritualistic cultural performance, has been celebrated in Nepal since ancient times. It is also celebrated in India and other countries where Hindus densely live. The traditional religious celebration of the puja for religious purposes has been changed into a cultural performance with economic motives. The consumer behavior of buying and selling goods and services increases during this festival which directly connects to the national economy. The culture of celebrating inside the private houses of rich people in the past has been changed into a public ceremony performed in public places on stage constructing *Pandals* and organizing a fair-like event. People dramatize the fighting between the goddess Durga and

the devils as a memory of conquering virtue over vice. Durga puja and Dashain are celebrated in Nepal receiving *prasad and jamara* of the puja from the seniors. The Narrative of lord Rama praying Durga before waging the war against Ravana who kidnapped his wife Sita in the exile period made this festival a historical event. Nowadays these festivals are celebrated with different religious and cultural programs like singing, dancing, praying, and dramatizing the role of Duraga and Danav. Hindus choose and perform this festival consciously to renovate their annual working life with joy and for economic motives. As Schechner pointed out, "Performance is something else, more consciously "chosen" on a case-by-case basis and transmitted culturally not genetically. Performance probably belongs only to a few primates, including humans" (34). According to him, a consciously designed purposeful human deed is a performance such as the Durga puja that is designed purposefully. The event of a boy at the theatre is a performance contrary to the event of animals fighting on the ground as it lacks the purpose of the event. A cockfight arranged purposefully somewhere in Bali to award the prize to the winner is the performance, whereas mere fighting of cocks on the ground is not the performance. The celebration of the Durga puja and Dashain is ritualistic and culturally designed to promote trade and commerce is a performance study. Goddess Durga is worshipped in her different forms of Durga (goddess of power), Laxmi (goddess of wealth), and Saraswati (goddess of knowledge) for the three essentials of life: power, prosperity, and knowledge. This festival increases domestic tourism visiting the homes of relatives and friends. Generally, the festival falls in September or some years in October and the government announces a week-long holiday all over Nepal. These festivals bring happiness and pleasure to all who are waiting for the festival. Supporting this fact, Bandyopadhyay pointed out, "Durga puja is the occasion which provides us the opportunity to know our potential as a collective force and it lends us a sense that as a collective, we are enormously powerful. It is both an enjoyable and a pleasurable feeling" (20). It brings happiness to followers and develops the spirit of collective work to achieve a common goal of socially, culturally, economically, and religiously prosperous life.

Statement of Problems

People perform rituals and culture in their community to achieve peace, prosperity, solidarity, and a healthy life. In the celebration process, they spend their time and money with family and friends exchanging joy and happiness. Not only to the individuals but the whole community is devoted to celebrating the festival forgetting their sorrows and difficulties of life for the moment. People spend their time and money for the celebration cleaning homes, roads, and temples. They buy new clothes and furniture, decorate homes with painting and gardening, and prepare themselves for the celebration. The businessmen keep extra stock of goods and services in their shops and business houses to meet the additional demands of the customers. The government and non-government offices provide extra festival bonuses to their employee for the celebration of the festival financially comfortable. The schools, colleges, and

government offices are closed for the celebration of the Durga puja and Dashain festival for more than a week, people who are out of home for jobs and studies return to their homes, and the tickets for the buses from Kathmandu to different parts of the country have been booking in advance, and create a festival environment throughout the country. The economy of the country mobilizes effectively as the central bank issues new notes targeting the festival. The new offers of business companies are advertised on the television and hoarding boards. But when celebrating the cultural festival how much do people become aware of their rituals, culture, and customs? How the cultural celebrations can be managed prudently with economic interest so that the celebrants and society will be safe from the adverse effects is the research area.

Research Questions

Based on the above background this research projects these research questions:

- (i) What rituals are followed to perform Durga puja?
- (ii) How do Durga puja and Dashain connect cultural and commercial acts?

Objectives of the Study

This research has the following objectives:

- (i) To examine the ritual and culture of Durga puja.
- (ii) To link ritual and cultural performance with consumers' behaviours.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that:

- (i) This study examines the UNESCO-recognized Durga puja ritual.
- (ii) This research explores cultural performance for social solidarity and economic activities.
- (iii) It analyzes the merits of cultural performance and is aware of the demerits.

Limitations of the Study

Nepal is culturally rich and there are many cultural festivals that Nepali people celebrate in Nepal throughout the year. Still, this research is limited to the study of the Durga puja and Dashain festival celebrated in Nepal. This study is delimited to the cultural performance and its impact on the commercial behavior of Nepali people. It does not cover the multidimensional aspects of the celebration of the Durga puja but is limited to ritual, cultural, and commercial analysis. This study is library-based research and the qualitative data is used as found in the books, journal articles, and internet searches.

Review of Literature

Infusing religion and culture in performance promotes social solidarity and cultural harmony among the celebrators. Certain reasons back up for celebrating rituals and cultures in the society. Bell (2009) summarized the reasons for ritualistic performance in society as (i)

Ritualization empowers those who more or less control the rite; (ii) their power is also limited and constrained; (iii) ritualization dominates those who are involved as participants, and (iv) this domination involves a negotiated participation and resistance that also empowers them (211). Celebrating rituals and cultures is important because they give purity and happiness in personal life, strengthen social unity, and promote national integrity. People of similar rituals and cultures unite faster than others from different cultures, which ultimately grows social and cultural understanding. They can go to the collective bargaining in the company where they work together. People of similar rituals and cultures can conduct business and trade related to their culture and gain specialization in it soon. Bell further argued that ritualization can promote social solidarity and promote unity among the groups and subgroups in the social order (216). It gives the power to be united and work together because they feel proud of having their distinct identity, rituals, and cultures. Rituals are part of the culture that continued from immemorial to now passing from generation to generation.

Durga puja celebration is the ritualistic culture of Hindu people they celebrate their religion and culture. They do not celebrate it on a small scale but perform on a large scale. Schechner (1988) distinguished performance from the similar concepts of drama, script, and theatre. According to him, "Drama is what the writer writes, the script is the interior map of particular production; the theatre is the specific set of gestures performed by the performers in any given performance; the performance is the whole event, including audience and performers (technicians, too, anyone who is there) (83)". Performance is everything that people do purposefully. It ranges from ritualistic *puja* in a temple to the cultural dance on the stage to business advertisement hoarding board displayed in Durga *puja* and Dashain. The form of performance is not fixed and keeps on changing prioritizing the interest of the audience. It covers even a single personal non-ending work of Sisyphus to the mass performance as in the Durga *puja* and Dashain. Performance is an umbrella term that covers rituals, cultures, sports, hunting, hearings, business advertisements, and any other human activities designed purposefully. The present and past events related to the person, nations, and globe are reviewed historically and theoretically in the performance study. So, performance study is interdisciplinary and connects with others such as business, sports, religion, history and so on which can be performed. Schechner opined again, "Performance studies draws on and synthesizes approach from the social sciences, feminist studies, gender studies, history, psychoanalysis, queer theory, semiotics, theology, media and popular culture theory, and cultural studies" (foreword, p. x). It synthesizes the multiple human life approaches and performances in society such as the culture of mass media which influences people for socialization and consumption.

Performing Durga puja and Dashain begins with ritualistic worshipping of goddess Durga from the day of *ghatasthapana* and it continues for two weeks more with praying,

singing, dramatizing, animal scarifying, receiving *tika*, *jamara*, and blessings from the elders are designed purposefully. Religious rituals connect to the performance as Beeman (2015) advocated, “All religious ritual is seen as having a performative component... carried out in front of an audience” (36). Durga puja and Dashain get priority in media. The newspaper publishes Durga puja and Dashain news on its front page. The television and YouTube channels release the events in audio and visual form. New cinemas and song audios are released for entertainment and profit. People go to temples with their families in new dresses and visit different new historical, zoological, and religious places. The economic activities of people climb to the apex. People apply the Hindu principle of life *Yabtiwet sukham jibet rinamkritwa gritam piwet* (However you live to spend life happily even borrowing from others) (my translation). The government job holders receive a Dashain festival bonus additional one month's salary. Businessmen and business houses wish their customers happy, prosperous, and peaceful lives in media. The companies offer special discounts in selling items targeting the Durga puja and Dashain festivals. The abroad members of the family return home for the celebration together. It is celebrated as the fusion of ritual, culture, and commercial behaviors. In this regard, Manas Ray (2017) assessed Durga puja as a new installation form that blends traditional folk arts and crafts with fine art in the modernist form (18). The celebration of Durga puja presents an example of transformation from tradition to modern culture. It performs violence, disgust, and shock to make the events real and lively rather than functional. Schechner's seminal idea of performance is all the works purposefully done. Not only is the ritualistic work of Durga Puja and Dashain performances but also the other memorable events such as “The attack on the Twin Towers is declared to be a great event of a performance art” (Giesen, 2006, p. 322) as this 9/11 attack of 2001 was designed purposefully by Al-Qaeda led by Osama Bin Laden, the greatest terrorist of 21st century against humanity and the United States of America. The attack of 9/11 contradicts the attack of Durga against Danavas as was designed to conquer the evils represented by the demons and to save the good and virtue.

The festival completes with the disposal of the Durga idols at *Pandals* nearby river or lakes paying goodbye for the current year and inviting for the next year. This disposition is a part of performance as Peggy Phelan pointed out, “Performance only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representation of representation: Once it does so, it becomes other than performance” (p. 146). The nature of performance is not repeatable but occurs again with some changes either by characters or place of performance, the different roles given to previous characters. The Durga puja and Dashain repeat yearly but the changes come either by the number of performers, stage decoration, or the place and time of the performance. The terms ‘theater’ and ‘performance’ mean alike to the mass readers as both are performed for the audience with characters, plot, and action but George (1999) distinguished “Theater is an institution and performance is an event”

(p. 13). Based on him the Durga puja and Dashain is performance as it is performed in private or in public places. Whatever events are performed in Durga puja are displayed outside institutions with open audience access. It extends from Nepal to India, Bangladesh, and other countries where Hindus live densely. Durga puja is enlisted in UNESCO Cultural Heritage. The Hindus living all over the world celebrate this puja personally with family and socially with groups believing that it brings power, prosperity, and peace in life. “Rituals are not only performances, but they also serve to create and validate our identity” (“Festivals and Rituals”, p. 147). Rituals and cultures are followed to build identity and to continue to posterity. This grand festival is also immensely celebrated in Kolkata, West Bengal, India, and got a UNESCO heritage tag in December 2021 under the intangible cultural heritage of Humanity (“New Alipore”, p. 11) making proud of all Hindus in the world.

Materials and Methods

Motivated by the study of Durga puja from the ritual, cultural, and commercial points of view, this research investigates how the ritual of Durga puja and Dashain is culturally performed for economic incentives. How significantly this cultural festival connects Dashain and the commercial activities during this period in Nepal is searched and supported by the primary and secondary data found in books, and journal articles. The primary data are collected from *Saptasati Chandī* as the narrative of Durga puja and her heroic deeds of killing demons for the protection of virtue in the world. The secondary data are collected from the writings found in journal articles and webpages on the Durga puja and Dashain celebration.

Results and Discussion

Durga Puja Rituals

Durga puja is a ritualistic worship of the goddess Durga for the supremacy of the female power as the last hope for survival and conquering the devilish power. This puja is performed with a sacred heart for the desire for power and completion of the work planned in life. Puja is performed with worshipping steps known as *samskara* in Hinduism find in the books *Saptasati Chandī* and *Devi Mahatme Puran*. Traditionally, Hindus pursue Vedic steps for worshipping this puja bringing purity and spirituality to the devotee and connecting the earthly body to the celestial supremacy reciting Vedic Mantra *mangalacharana* invoking names of Hindu gods and goddesses. Das (2021) mentioned the following steps of Durga puja based on Swami Harshananda of Ramakrishna Mission, Bangalore.

- The external cleanliness of the devotee taking a bath, wearing pure clothes cleaning the puja room, arranging puja vessels, keeping the deity to the left, and facing the devotee to the east or north. Facing south is ritually forbidden.

- The whole rite of puja, or any religious or ritualistic act begins with the ceremonial sipping of water with certain mantras known as 'Aachamana' that is followed by *Sankalpa* (a religious vow for performing the puja).
- Then come purification processes like *asanasuddhi* (ritual sanctification of the seat); *bhutapasarana* (driving away evil spirits); *pushpasuddhi* (ritual cleansing of flowers), *Billa patra* (wood apple leaves), *tulsi* (holy basil leaves); and *agniprakarachinta* (erecting a wall of fire through imagination), then *pranayama* (breath-control to calm the nerves, concentrate, and bring in peace); and *bhutasuddhi* (creating a spiritual body in place of the physical one), *pranapratishta* (filling the spiritual body with the presence of the deity is done), and *upacharas* (modes of direct service) *upacharas* are ceremonially offered with appropriate mantras to the deity invoked into the image or symbol. The ten *upacharas* are *padya* (water for washing the feet); *arghya* (water for washing the hands); *achamaniya* (water for rinsing the mouth); *snaniya* (giving a bath by pouring water over the image or the symbol with Vedic mantras); *gandha* (applying fresh sandal paste); *pushpa*, (offering of flowers, bilva, and *tulasi* leaves); *dhupa* (lighting incense sticks and showing it to the deity); *deepa* (offering a lighted oil lamp); *naivedya* (fruits and food offering) and *punarachamaniya* (giving water for rinsing the mouth at the end).
- Then *pushpanjali* or offering of a handful of flowers which is laid at the feet of the deity which concludes the whole Puja ritual. Where the puja is performed in a temporarily invoked image as in the worship of clay icons of Durga and *visarjana* is performed by withdrawing the deity from the image, back into one's own heart, after which the image and flowers are disposed of.
- All these puja rituals are performed as the prescriptions mentioned in the holy books of Hindu traditions. This ritual aims to conduct the puja ritual with a sacred heart and devoted mind. This ritualistic culture personifies Durga who has a birth and death like normal living things. It invites Durga to worshipping places, performs many works to please her, and concludes by disposing of the idols and the flowers into the river.

Nine Worshipping Days

The ritualistic Durga Puja is performed for nine days starting from the day of the Ghatasthapana the first day of the Navaratra to Mahanawami. On the first day, the goddess Sailaputri Mata (daughter of Himalaya rides on a bull with lotus in one hand and trident in another) is worshipped seeking the well-being of the family. Besides the Puja, the devotee mix grains of rice, maize, and barley and scatters in the soil temporarily deposited in front of the icon with *diyo* (lamp) *kalas* (water-filled cylindrical vessel), and Ganesh (son of Lord Shiva and Mata Parvati for avoiding all possible hazards and obstacles). The sowing seeds of the day grow into small plants known as *Jamara* that are received with the *tika* in Dashain. The worshipping of *diyo*, *kalas*, and *Ganesh* continues during the puja period wishing to avoid all

omens and bringing joy and happiness. The second, third, fourth, and fifth days are similarly worshipping the goddess Bramacharini (symbolizes her deep meditation to please Lord Shiva) for love and loyalty, Chandraghanta (fierce 10-armed goddess with a crescent moon on her head ride on a tiger to all evil and wicked) for supreme bless and knowledge, Kusmanda (creator of the universe) for knowledge of cosmic intricacies in human race, and Skandhamata (four-armed deity holds her little son Kartikeya) for knowledge. Even the idiot becomes intelligent by her grace. The legendary Sanskrit scholar Kalidas got her grace and wrote his two great books *Raghuvansh Maha Kavya* and *Meghdoot* (“Navratre-nine”, p. 1-2). All these goddesses are the different forms of Durga she constructed to fill different virtues in her devotees. The *Saptasati Chandi* (700 mantras) narrated the vicious fighting of Durga against the devil troubled the gods. Teilhet and Diego (n.d.) mentioned that literary translated from Sanskrit, Nava Durga means nine Durgas are the various representations or manifestations of Parvati, the Shakti of Shiva in tantric tradition (82). According to Hindu mythology Hindu gods and goddesses can appear in many forms to solve earthly problems concerning the god or human beings.

The Durga puja from Shhasthi to Dashami is more important than the previous five days. The sixth day is Maha Shashti and on the eve of Maha Shashti, the face of the idol of Goddess Durga is unveiled. This day goddess Katyayeni is worshipped for penance. She is the form of *Shakti* (power), one of the violent forms of goddess Durga. The wood apple leaves (*Billa Patra*) are invited to ritualistically reading mantras for use in Mahasaptami and other days. On Mahasaptami goddess Kalaratri is worshipped for destroying darkness and ignorance. She changes her skin to dark to kill the demons. She is a four-armed deity who rides on a donkey carrying a trident, sword, and noose. She possesses a third eye on her forehead representing the whole universe. The new banana plants are used to decorate the Devi temples and pandals. Male buffalos and goats are sacrificed to offer the goddess Kalaratri. Goddess Durga killed Mahishasura, the 'Buffalo head devil' in Maha Astami (the eighth day). Hymns or mantras are chanted in Sanskrit and people offer flowers and fruits to the goddess. Goddess Mahagauri (God of power rides on a white bull or elephant and appears with four arms carrying a trident and damage). The Nepali army and police visit Durga temples throughout the country and perform ritualistic puja (worship) for power. Goats and buffalos are sacrificed on behalf of the nation in the Durga temple built in different parts of the country wishing welfare. The ninth form of the goddess is Sidhidhatri (the goddess of perfection) is worshipped on the ninth day for knowledge and enlightenment. Om Prakash (2013) stated that she holds a lotus, mace, discus, and book. In this form, *Durga* removes ignorance and provides the knowledge to realize *Brahman*” (p.62). The *Saptasati Chandi* of the Sanskrit language reads the nine forms of Nawadurga as follows:

prathamam Sailaputri cha dyitiam Brahmacharini, tritiam Chandraghanteti Kusmandeti chaturthakam// panchamam Skandamateti shhashtham Katyayaniti cha, saptamam Kalaratri cha Mahagauritichastakam// nawamam Sidhidhatri cha Nawa Durga: prakirtita// (Durga Kawacha, p. 19-20). The nine forms of Durgas are Sailapurti, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kusmanda, Skandamata, Katyayani, Kalaratri, Mahagauri, and Sidhidhatri.

The Vijaya Dasami also known as Dashain is celebrated on the tenth day after the completion of the nine days worshipping of Durga. It is performed with receiving *tika*, *jamara*, and blessing from the seniors as a memory of the victory of good over evil. From eleven to fifteen days, the program of receiving *tika*, *jamara*, and blessing goes on. The city is enlightened with the colorful lights and organizes *mela* (fairs) targeting all age groups and selling and buying goods. Dashin completes the *Kojagrat Purnima* by receiving memorable *tika*, *jamara*, and blessing at home together with the family members. The idols of Durga are kept in Pandal and worshipping flowers, and the remaining *tika and jamara* are disposed of nearby rivers and lakes with joy and happiness carrying Durga Mata in the vehicle performing singing and dancing like in a wedding. Hindus have a belief that the goddess Laxmi (goddess of wealth and a form of Durga) visits her devotee's home on *Kojagrat Purnima* at night. So, the devotees try to spend the whole night awake to be blessed with a healthy and wealthy business life.

Fusion of Ritual, Culture, and Commerce

The symbolic assumption of the victory of good over evil is displayed in the icons of the goddess Durga slaying Mahishasura (a buffalo-head demon). The icons are culturally constructed and mixed with clay and straw to sell for Durga puja. The priest gives life to the clay-made idols reciting tantric and Vaidic mantras known as *pranpratistha* (life-giving to the idols). The place where the idol of deity is kept is called *bedi* cleaned properly and regularly during puja days. The priests and the devotees perform ritualistic puja together for the welfare and prosperous life of the individual and the community. The puja starts early in the morning and completes at midday. The colorful lights are lit with the *diyo* (light for the puja) and pray to Durga Devi in the evening. The dramas with the theme of killing demons by Durga are performed and broadcast on Radio Nepal. The *Panchamrit* (mix of five sweet ingredients in milk) and Prasad (fruits and sweets) are given to the presented devotees. Priests perform *hawan* (mixing and burning of the mixture of rice, barley, and sesame seeds with ghee) in *hawan kunda* (ritualistic burning fireplace). It is believed that *hawan* refreshes the surrounding air and showers rain for animals and plants. The worshipping and feeding of nine girls under 10 with giving money and clothes are performed on the ninth day of Durga puja as the representation of the nine goddesses a blending of ritual and culture. The construction of pandals, hanging large hoarding boards for the advertisement of goods and services, buying new vehicles, releasing new cinema and audio cassettes, visiting new places, organizing public fairs (*mela*), announcing discounts in the purchasing items, and concluding Durga puja by disposing the

idols and flowers with like a wedding ceremony are the apparent commercial acts of the festival. The Hindus, Buddhists, and Shiksha communities perform Durga Puja and Dashain participation in the organized programs. The swinging of *linge ping* (the typical Nepali swing made from four tall erected bamboo strong blond rope). People gather there and swing in single or double. Jacobs noted:

Rituals serve to identify sacred places, sacred times, sacred events, and sacred symbols, and the profane is kept separate from the realm of the sacred through prohibitions. By engendering the separation of the sacred things from the mundane world, a systematic coherence between the sacred things helps create a space for the social group to reaffirm itself. At this point, society becomes a collective reality acting upon the memories of the sacred stored within each individual. (263)

This is the moment of performing sacred religion, culture, and commercial acts. The flavor of the Durga Puja extends to the Dashain festival as an inseparable part of Durga puja when people visit the homes of their relatives and develop social and family ties strongly. Manohar Upreti (2007) mentioned, “From the 10th day onwards, people of Nepal visit their elders to receive *tika* and *jamara* with blessings. It is also the festival of sumptuous feasting, especially of meat and beaten rice. It is the time of going home, reunion, meeting loved ones, and strengthening ties with relatives and elders” (p.1). When receiving *tika*, the blessings are given in Sanskrit differently from male to female. Blessings to the males are: *Ayu Drona sute, Sriyem Dasarathae, Satru Chheyam raghabe/Aishoryei Nahushe Gatischa pawane Manancha Duryodhane// Sourya Shanta nabe, Balam Haldhare Satyanta Kunti Sute/Bigyani Bidure Bhawati Bhabatam, Kritischha Narayane*// (“Mantras and Blessings”, p. 1). (May you live long like the son of Dronacharya (i.e. Asasthama). May your prestige prosper like King Dasaratha. May you become able to wipe out your enemies like Lord Rama. May your material well-being be like King Nahush. May your speed equate with the Pawan (Air) May people respect you like Prince Duryodhan. May you become a powerful worrier like a son of Santanu. May you become stronger like Balaram (elder brother of lord Krishna). May you become truthful like a son of Kunti (i.e. Youdhisthir). May you become as wise as the Bidhur. May your glory flourish like that of Lord Vishnu).

The blessing is so motivational and blissful that one frequently likes to receive *tika* and *jamara* from the elders in the recurring Dashain festival. It blesses the glorious and active life of the receivers. This typical Nepali culture is a unique cultural representation of Nepal in the globe. The females are blessed with different mantras thematically handling family and home with love and care. Generally, the mantra mentioned in Saptasati Chandi in the chapter of Agralastrotra is recited at receiving *tika* and *jamara* versified as *Om Jayanti Mangala Kali, Bhadra Kali Kapalini/ Durga Kshama Shiva Dhatri, Swaha Swadha namostute* (Shreedurgasaptasati, 2078 BS, p. 30). (She who conquers over, all auspicious, the remover of

darkness, the excellent one beyond time, the bearer of the skulls of impure though the reliever of difficulties, loving, forgiveness, a supporter of the Universe, take the oblations of the devotee who is one with you, take the oblations of ancestral praise, We bow to you).

Durga Puja and Dashain are the festivals of refreshment and joy to the Hindus who wait for this festival for the whole year. The spiritual peace of the mind combines with the beautiful look of nature. The collective works of the sanitation of the city, roads, and paths for the Dashain with the attractive coloring of the houses and temples, high flow of business and commercial activities are the lively performance of the festival. Man is a social animal and his works are influenced by social structures and cultural festivals. Torner claimed, "The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by this, has rights and obligations vis-a-vis others of a clearly defined and "structural" type; he is expected to behave by certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions" (95). The festival Durga puja (Dashain) has become an integral part of the Nepali lifestyle they can't go away from the festival. So, they do not limit this festival only to rituals but extend it to cultural and commercial performances to maximize the happiness of the people culturally and economically. The cultural industries increase their production so people get goods easily in the market. The beverage company of hot and cold drinks increases their production aiming to the festival. They advertise their products in the newspapers and hoarding boards in different parts of the city wishing for happy and prosperous lives of the customers with economic motives. Chatopadhaya opined, "Advertisers are eager to pay higher rates for having their advertisement displayed at the most popular puja" (199). Durga puja including the Dashain festival is an opportunity to increase sales of the industries and lead the industries into profit. The owners of the business companies like to sponsor the community Durga puja without hesitation so that they can give their name and fame impression to the local people. This festival promotes social solidarity, brings cultural unity, and upgrades commercial activities.

Conclusion

Durga puja and Dashain rituals and cultural festivals have been celebrated for ritual, cultural, and commercial motives. The old practice of celebrating Durga puja in a rich man's home to a temple is replaced and celebrated publicly as a community puja in *pandals*. Now people celebrate this cultural ceremony by blending the ritual, culture, and commercial behavior of people. This cultural puja performance provides a platform to understand each other, share their happiness and sorrow, and motivate the collective work. Appropriation of ritual and culture gives ideas on how to survive creatively in society. This ritualistic cultural festival gives a moral lesson to conquer the inner demons that remain in a man in the form of hatred, rage, greed unfaithful to each other. Associating human values with divine values leads individuals to choose the correct path in life. It gives self-realization and urges for cultural

identity and social solidarity. It brings peace, progress, and a sense of social security among people. Although rituals and cultures have been modified and commodified in this modern era, people are bound to continue it for the sake of unity and social identity.

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