

Significance of Durga Puja in Different Parts of India

Durga Puja is an annual Hindu festival celebrated in different parts of South Asia, worshipping the goddess Durga. Durga puja represents the Goddess Durga's defeat of the Demon Mahishasura, representing good over evil (Durga Puja, 2015). Durga puja is celebrated in different cities and states of India in very different and grand ways. In addition, it is widely celebrated in Bangladesh, United Kingdom, China, Nepal, United States, Europe, Australia, Indonesia, and South East Asia (Durga Puja, 2015).

In Bengal, Assam, and Odisha, Durga Puja is known by many names, each with a different meaning. Some names Durga Puja are known by are *Akalbodhan* (untimely awakening of Durga), *Sharadiya Pujo* (autumnal worship), *Sharodotsab* (festival of autumn), *Maha pujo* (Grand puja), *Maayer pujo* (worship of the mother), or puja. In East Bengal or Bangladesh, Durga Puja is known as *Bhagabati* puja. West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Odisha, Delhi, and Madhya Pradesh, refer to this festival as Durga Puja.

In West Bengal, the worship of Durga is the largest Hindu festival. It is celebrated from the sixth to the tenth day of the waning of the moon. According to the Gregorian calendar, Durga Puja is celebrated at the end of September, or the beginning of October for ten days. Hindus celebrate this festival with new gifts and clothes which they wear in the evening. In Bengal, there are carnivals which people attend, regardless of their religious background (Durga Puja, 2015).

Durga Puja is the most glamorous and largest festival in Kolkata. Kolkata is decorated with lights and an active night life. Fairy lights are used to decorate streets, alley's parks, houses, and trees. The government of West Bengal and Kolkata Municipal Corporation announce awards for best pujas. Married women smear each other with *sindoor*, ending their procession with music, and dance. There are several notable pujas done in Kolkata such as *Bagbazar Sarbojonin*, *Ahiritola*, and *Siktarbhagan*. The *Dakshineswar* temple, performs special pujas. Many people perform the *Kumari Puja* on Astami at *Belurmath* (Durga Puja, 2015).

The city of Siliguri, Mahakurma has hundreds of pujas, colorful lighting, and sounds. The oldest Durga puja's are held in Saktigarh, Deshbandupara, Halzipara, Rabindra Sanga, and Rathkola. The oldest puja in Siliguri is Swastika Yubak Sangha. In this region, the Durga puja is the most crowded gathering. In 2007, Siliguri celebrated fifty years of celebration of the Durga festival. Recently, Sarojini Sanga completed one-hundred fifty years of celebration of the Durga puja (Durga Puja, 2015).

One of the oldest Durga Puja's in in Bengal, which began in 1510. Cooch Behar has a large Durga sculpture, known as *Borodebi* (Great Goddess). The sculpture is red color and made of clay. Today, Durga Puja is celebrated here with the royal family offering blood drops. Animals such as goats, buffalos, and pigeons, are all sacrificed. The royal family refers to Durga as a supreme deity, calling her *Boro-Devi*, meaning supreme mother (Durga Puja, 2015).

In Badkulla Nadia, thousands of people gather together to see amazing idols and beautiful light works. Badkulla Nadia is known for its cultural devotions. All clubs have annual functions such as Lakshmi puja, Rathyatra, and Rashyatra. Web developers in Badkulla developed a website to share with the world (Durga Puja, 2015).

One of the oldest Durga puja's is held in Chanduli Katwa, in a village called Chanduli, which is more than one-hundred years old. Here, goddess Durga has two hands in place of ten and Devi Durga is glorious

and famous. The first *barowari puja* was held here in 1790 and is now led by Satyendra Nath Goswami Rajpara (Durga Puja, 2015).

In Gujarat, Navaratri is devoted to *Amba Mataji*. Temples have visitors from morning to night. Navratri is celebrated with *garba* dances using dandias. Dances go on for nine nights in public grounds and streets (Durga Puja, 2015).

In Jharkhand, Durga Puja is celebrated with many carnivals. During the last four days of the festival, there are several visitors from various cities as well as different stalls and games for people to play (Durga Puja, 2015).

In Andhra Pradesh, Durga puja is celebrated in Vijayawada, Proddatur, Nandyala, and Hyderabad. The Durga temple in Vijayawada, is the most famous temple in Andhra Pradesh. In Nandhyala, Kurnool, Vijayadashmi is the biggest festival along with Ugadi. People buy new clothes and things for the house. The Balaji temple is the biggest one in South India. Durga Puja has been celebrated in Andhra for sixty years. Across Hyderabad, five organizations celebrate Durga puja (Durga Puja, 2015).

The festival *Golu* is celebrated in Tamilnadu. Gods and Goddess's in the form or dolls are arranged on a seven- step wooden platform. On the ninth day, *Saraswati* puja is performed. Books and musical instruments are placed on puja pedestals and worshipped. Tools are placed for *Ayudha* puja. Vehicles are washed and decorated and people perform for them. In the *Golu* festival, the *Saraswati* puja is performed as *Ayudh* puja. Festivals are celebrated on the tenth day, *Vijayadashami* (Durga Puja, 2015).

In Bangladesh, Navratri is the largest religious festival for Hindu Bengali's. Thousands of puja mandaps are set up in villages, towns, and cities. The Ramakrishna mission, Joykali Temple, and Dhakeshwari National Temple hold major pujas. Tourist departments hold major boat races on the Padma River. Places with large populations of Hindus such as Jessore, Khulna, Barisal, Gopalgani, Faridpur, Mymensingh, and Sylhet, hold several pujas. All educational institutions celebrate *Vijayadashami* for five days (Durga Puja, 2015).

Durga puja or Navratri is celebrated by Hindus in India. Celebrations take place with family and in social gatherings. Durga puja consists of shopping, gift giving, Pandal hopping, lighting decorations, and dances to observe and worship goddess Durga (Durga Puja, 2015).

Works Cited-"Durga Puja." *Wikipedia*. September 2015. Retrieved July 2, 2016.



Archana Susarla

Archana Susarla lives in Vestal, NY. She is a graduate of SUNY Oneonta with a BS in Psychology. She works with Alzheimer's patients engaging them with social activity and memory stimulation.

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