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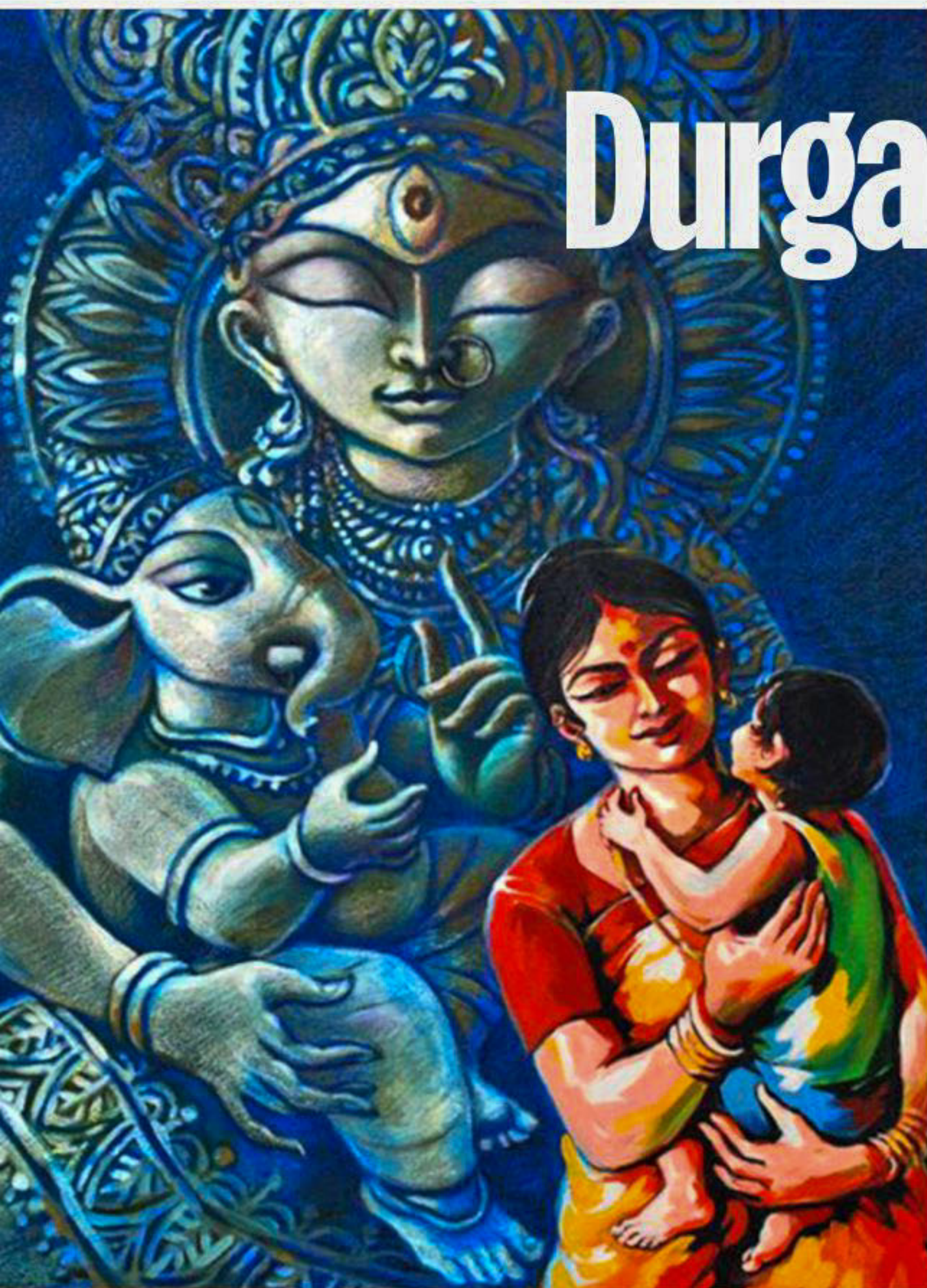
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Durga and the Tridevi

The portrayal of Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesh and Kartik as Durga's children is only exclusive to residents of West Bengal and its neighbouring regions. The simplest of reasons for this are that while the tale of Goddess Durga defeating Mahishashura is recounted in the coming days of Durga Puja, it is also the celebration of the Mother of the Universe's descent from the Mountain of Kailasha to her father's abode, accompanied by her children.

Yet, how are the other two female deities correlated to Durga then? Amongst the many popular and parallel explanations out there, a few have been mentioned to build a simplistic understanding of this.

Parvati is said to be the complete incarnation of Adi Parashakti (Supreme Being Goddess), and is one of the purest forms of Durga, and all

other Goddesses are either her manifestations or reincarnations.

This again also implies that the other avatars of her are also that of Goddess Laxmi and Goddess Saraswati.

Parvati, Lakshmi and Saraswati together symbolise the Tridevi (three Goddesses). If the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are the forms, they are the expressions without which the creation, balance and destruction of the universe is impossible.

The combined symbolic manifestation of Tridevi is Durga Devi, who represents divine power and thus, is considered to be supreme divinity.

Again, when Brahma bestowed Mahishashura with the boon that made him invincible at the hands of any man or God; to balance that, Durga, the embodiment of Shakti (power) was created by combining

all ten powers of the Gods into one female being.

Lord Shiva and Parvati (avatar of Durga) had only two children, Ganesh and Karthik, in fact there are specific stories that do solidify these familial bonds, but none in relation to the other two deities. Goddess Laxmi and Goddess Saraswati are always representative of the shaktis of Brahma and Vishnu respectively.

Regardless of which explanation one chooses to believe, Durga Puja is not just about Goddess Durga's triumph over evil, but also representative of the universe as a whole; her children are a reminder of knowledge, wisdom, prosperity, power and strength, all crucial to living a full life with no regrets.

By Supriti Sarkar
Photo: Collected



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