



THE EMERGING RELIGIO-GLOBAL CULTURE: CONTEXT OF SECULARIZATION AND GLOBALIZATION IN RESPECT TO RELIGION

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

Hinduism or the Hindu religion is known as the 'Sanatan Dharma'. By the term 'Sanatan Dharma', the Hindu religion is considered as such which has no beginning or end and has been continuing since ages, since time immemorial. In Hinduism, there are three sects namely – Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism. Even under Vaishnavism, there are various sects or Parampara lineage. The present study is focused on Vaishnava religion and its associated culture in the Nabadwip-Mayapur region, including ISKCON. This study has been conducted following qualitative methodology, particularly case study method. The research area of this study is Nabadwip-Mayapur. The Vaishnava sect of Hindu religion considers Vishnu or Lord Krishna as the sole supreme being. People from all around the world with different religious orientations come to this place having their goal to worship Lord Krishna. These multicultural religious faiths are getting intermingled and coming into one point of faith. So, globally we generally know there are different perspectives based on race, caste, creed, religion and so on. However, when arriving in Nabadwip-Mayapur, they are becoming a part of a local culture instead of the global culture. On the other hand, the reverse is also happening. This local culture is getting the global platform in a unique way, being known as the Vaishnavite. The local culture is being replicated all over the world. Hence, this paper focusses on examining the emergence of this local religion and its growth in the global platform while preserving its religious demarcations.

Keywords: Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Globalization, Secularization, Emerging Religio-Global Culture

Introduction

Globalization is a thread running through all of humanity's past, starting with generations of our hunter-gatherer ancestors, over millennia, gradually migrating across the world. In this sense, there is no set beginning, as well as no foreseeable end. R. Robertson (1992) defined globalization as "the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole." The historian C. A. Bayly (2002) view that globalization is "a progressive increase in the scale of social processes from a local or regional to a world level." Secularization can be seen as a consequent process of globalization. Brian Wilson (1966) described secularization as "the process whereby religious thinking, practices and institutions lose their social significance." Bryan R. Wilson writes that in secularization process "the various social institutions gradually become distinct from one another and increasingly free of the matrix of religious assumptions that had earlier informed, inspired and dominated their operation." In such context, the Vaishnava sect of Hindu religion, following the lineage of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has set out a community of religion and culture that stands unique in this global platform. Even in the present time of globalization and secularization, this religious community holds significant importance in local as well as global regions. Studying such connections of religion with globalization and secularization stands significant in this study from the sociological point of view.

Objectives

The core of the present study involved the following objectives:

- Tracing the evolution of Vaishnavism and its growth to the modern time in Bengal.
- Exploring the concepts of globalization and secularization in the practice of Vaishnavism through the lineage of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.
- Examining the underlying cause for the single point of faith from multi-cultural worlds.

About The Place Of Vaishnavism

Nabadwip, is a heritage city in Nadia district in the Indian state of West Bengal. It is regarded as a holy place by Hindus. Located on the western bank of the Hooghly River, it is considered to have been founded in 1063 CE and served as the old capital of the Sena dynasty. The great Vaishnava saint, social reformer and an important figure of the Bhakti movement, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486–1534) was born here. It was after Mahaprabhu's birth that Nabadwip became an important center of pilgrimage for the Vaishnavas worldwide as well as for Hindus in general. "Nabadwip" is said to be composed of nine islands, namely Antardweep, Simantadwip, Rudradwip, Madhyadwip, Godrumdwip, Ritudwip, Jahnudwip, Modadrumdwip, and Koladwip. Mayapur Dham is one of the nine islands of Navadwip. Mayapur holds a special place in the heart of the Gaudiya Vaishnavites. The headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is situated in Mayapur.

Review Of Literature

- The origin of Gaudiya Vaishnavism

The article '*The Origin and Evolution of Vaishnavism in Bengal: Historical Analysis*' (2021) by Akhil Sarkar provides a brief background of the emergence of Vaishnavism and its propagation in Bengal. The author traces back to as early as Vedic times providing evidence to show the presence of the Vaishnava tradition. Through historically analyzing the origin and evolution of Vaishnavism in Bengal, the author has captured the growth of Vaishnava tradition from its emergence to its popular presence in today's modern time.

In this paper, the author describes Lord Vishnu – who He is and what His glories are. Sarkar writes that the mention of Vishnu has been in various '*Suktas of the Rigveda*'. Vishnu is regarded as the protector, who can be hurt by none and is the epitome of dharma. The entire world has emerged from Vishnu. He is regarded as the one who heads the status, controls the world and is the universe Himself. The author also mentions the Supreme Court's rule which has regarded Hinduism, presently, not to be a religion but '*it is a way of life*'. Sarkar discusses various scholarly works that have discussed about the position of Vishnu spanning around Rigveda to Vedic literature.

However, Sarkar mentions it to be difficult to state with certainty the time of origin, propagation and flourishing of this religion. So, various archaeological evidence has been collected to find out how Vaishnavism had its entrance in Bengal. Certain inscriptions on rock, during the Gupta period, have been found engraved beside a wheel/ chakra encompassed with flames, that may be resemble '*Vishnu chakra (the wheel of Vishnu) or Surya*'. Other than this, several copperplates, scripts and idols of different Vishnu incarnations have also been found in various parts of Bengal. Depending on this evidence, the author claims that Vaishnavism has been prevalent in Bengal being '*the largest part of Hinduism*' spanning from the period of the Guptas to the Sena rulers.

Sarkar writes that in most of India, a huge number of religious Hindus have accepted Sri Krishna Basudev as the form of Vishnu and thereby Krishna became the preeminent. The author discusses the work of Dr. Hemchandra Roychowdhury, who stated that the pre-historic literature mentions a human Krishna and is silent about the deity form. Other works from Buddhist and Jain traditions, and even Mahabharata also mention about the same human form. Thus, the author concludes that Krishna was a real man. In this way, with time Lord Krishna became prominent in Vaishnavism. In eastern parts of India, particularly in Bengal, alongside Krishna being worshipped, Radha is found '*as the love power with Krishna*'. Various scholars have agreed that the complete duet form of Radha and Krishna was revealed in Bengal. In the Middle Ages, Bengal was stringently ruled by foreign rulers, particularly Islam. It was at that time that conservatism and the practice of casteism had increased in the Hindu society. Moreover, Gaur was the center of Islamic rule in Bengal. Chaitanya Dev rose at a time when feudal era was at the verge of end in Bengal. So, with the withdrawal of feudal rule by the Mughal empire, '*the philosophy and religious thought of Chaitanyadev was influential all around*'. It is said that Sri Chaitanya has established his life by introducing '*devotional mass movements and human religion*'. The main areas of Gaudiya Vaishnavism were Nabadwip, Vrindavan and Nilachal. The center of this religious movement was headed by Sri Chaitanyadev, Advaita Acharya and Nityananda Mahaprabhu.

Addressing the disagreement regarding which sect of Vaishnavism Sri Chaitanya used to belong, Sarkar mentions that Sri Chaitanya was initiated by Ishwar Puri and Ishwar Puri was a disciple of Madhabendra Puri. Initially, Madhabendra Puri was a believer of Shankaracharya's Advaita philosophy, however, later for some reasons he shifted to the ideology of Dvitya Vedanta. Accordingly, he is known as the real proponent of '*Gaudiya Vaishnavism or love religion*'. Following him, Sri Chaitanya revived this philosophy and became the pioneer of the religious movement of Gaudiya Vaishnavism in Bengal.

According to Sarkar, "*The revolutionary ideology that was transmitted by Chaitanyadev in religion, action, philosophy, song, knowledge and literature is considered to be the rarest chapter in history.*". Sri Chaitanya brought about great changes in the cultural setting of this region. He provided the life-giving mantra to the neglected, oppressed, insulted common people for obtaining liberation. It resulted in the birth of democracy in the eastern part of India, thus Sarkar writes '*all this conservatism laid the groundwork for that democratic spirituality*'.

Initially, Gaudiya Vaishnavism, introduced by Sri Chaitanya, prevailed among the upper classes. At later stage, people from the lower castes also adopted to the practice of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Thereby, people from the different strata joined this religion and Vaishnavism came to be known as '*Jat Vaishnavism*'. After the death of Sri Chaitanya, major changes had come in the Vaishnava society and Gaudiya Vaishnavism was nurtured by its devotees. Further, many sects and sub-sects were formed, that is, Nityananda group, Advaita group and six different Goswami segments in Vrindavan.

Sarkar writes that with the arrival of Nityananda, Gaudiya Vaishnavism received immense popularity. Sri Nityananda was a close friend and dynamic preacher of Sri Chaitanya's ideology and philosophy irrespective of caste. The author also mentions Janhobi Debi in such propagation. Nevertheless, Sarkar asserts that, though Sri Chaitanya was regarded as a historical personality, incarnation of Krishna or pivotal head of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, yet he considers the remarkable contribution of 'Kedarnath Dutta, Bimalaprasad Dutta and Abhay Prasad Datta' in reviving the religion in the second epoch or 'establishing Gaudiya Vaisnavism as an international religion'.

- The Teaching Principles of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

The book '*Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – His Life and Precepts*' has been written by Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura (1896). Most of the books on Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu being composed in Bengali language had created a difficulty. So, the author has composed this book in Sanskrit language for wide circulation. He also provided a summary in English to help the English knowing readers. The book mainly deals with the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and helps in identifying the right way of acquiring spiritual knowledge. The rational attributes of man like reason or 'jukti' are incapable of achieving the Divine realm of spirit. However, religious feeling of men or 'ruchi', even in small portion, is highly capable of attaining it. Inspiration alone itself can throw light upon spiritual matters which comes down from the Heaven through purified souls and manifest in the form of Vedas, Puranas. Hence, Vedas are regarded to be the only evidence regarding spiritual matters and eternal in nature. While reason is accepted as 'auxiliary evidence'.

- Religious Globalization and Modernity

The article '*New Religious Movement: A Synthetic Spread of the Traditional Vaishnavite Values by ISKCON*' (2025) by Mahajan et.al. has studied the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) as a New Religious Movement in the context of secular modernity. With the aim of creating cultural connections, ISKCON has intentionally combined tradition with modernity. According to the authors, the globalization of religious practices is less of inactive diffusion but more of a diverse process of active translation, which requires negotiating tension between sustaining dogmatic legitimacy and acquiring cultural vibrancy. This study is focused on ISKCON which is also popularly known as the '*Hare Krishna movement*'. This movement has purposefully restructured social demarcations by portraying it as a "*public, rational "spiritual organization,"*" being contrary to the traditional temples which are being commercialized. The study found that the success of the movement has been neither from complete rejection of modernity nor a strict conservation of ancient form, rather, from a tactful and progressive restructuring of tradition. ISKCON serves as a '*cultural filter*' which applies innovative models and social logic aligning with modern needs while, also including from the ancient Hindu heritage principles that seem relevant.

- Replication of Vaishnavism and Its Associated Mandala

The author of the article, '*Replicating Vaisnava worlds: organizing devotional space through the architectonics of the mandala*' is Tony K. Stewart (2011). After the demise of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a series of doubt arose among his followers regarding which path and practices of Mahaprabhu to be followed. People from Bengal, Orissa, Vraja lacked a communal feeling among them. In this respect, Sri Krishnadas Kaviraj's '*Chaitanya Charitamrita*' had played a significant role. There is a latent feature which has a strong hold in the mandalas (or communities), which has been and continues to shape the communal space of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. In this context, pancharatra samhitas has been related to, where a structured universe is constructed and in which the power is maintained through the practice of various rituals. This entire universal structure is termed as the mandala. According to the author, this is where the Gaudiya Vaishnavas got new hope after the decline of Gajapati dynasty in 1568. However, at a time of probable decline of royal Vaishnavism, Sri Chaitanya turned out to be the mobile Jagannatha.

- Global Culture and Socio-Economic Landscape

The article '*Global Vaishnavism and the Economy of Sacred Space: Historical Perspectives from Nabadwip-Mayapur*' (2026) by Firoj Mondal discusses how with the global exposure of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), the social, cultural and economic landscape of Nabadwip-Mayapur has transformed. This region shifted from being a center of pilgrimage to a universally connected religious destination. It portrays Nabadwip-Mayapur as an exceptional example where the devotional tradition from the medieval time continued to have influence simultaneously in '*modern global religious culture and regional economic transformation*'. The internationalization of Gaudiya Vaishnavism took place during the twentieth century which is regarded as the pivotal point in the history of Mayapur. In 1966, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada established ISKCON in New York. The translation of Vaishnava texts, networks of temples, missionary activities, public kirtan popularized ISKCON all over the globe. Gradually, Mayapur became the headquarters of ISKCON. Devotees from different parts of the world like Africa, America, Russia, Europe, South-East Asia visited this region on a regular basis. Accordingly, more temples, schools, guest houses, restaurants, residential areas, cultural centers established. Various grand religious festivals, like Gaur Purnima, attracted large numbers of pilgrims from various nations every year. This led Mayapur to arise as a place for cultural exchange and gain a transnational identity. A distinguished feature of Mayapur is how local Bengali culture is interacted with global religious groups. International devotees visiting Mayapur take part in the Bengali kirtan, vegetarian food, Sanskrit learning, devotional music and Vaishnava festivals. Groups and communities with multiple nationalities, language, ethnicity get involved in '*shared devotional practice*'. Thus, Mondal states that, the globalization of Vaishnavism has brought about international prominence of Bengal's cultural practice.

Theoretical Overview

- Emile Durkheim on Religion and Communal Society

The book *'The Elementary Forms of Religious Life'* by Emile Durkheim (1912) is an elementary work in the field of sociology. It serves as a foundational text in context to religious studies. According to Durkheim, "*A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.*" Durkheim has defined religion as a unified system consisting of beliefs and practices that are sacred in nature, and which unifies into a single moral community. Here, through this definition, Durkheim emphasized the role that religion plays as a social institution in society. For him, a religious institution, like a Church here, which can even include a temple, a mosque or a gurudwara, serves a unifying function in society. Through its religious principles, beliefs and practices, it binds all the members of the community associated with it. Durkheim states religion to be an 'eminently social thing' that develops collective conscience among its members. Religion integrates the people of society through the performance of the prescribed rituals and practices and thereby deriving communal ties and bonds among them.

- Peter L. Berger on Religion and Secularization

The book *'The Sacred Canopy'* (1967) by Peter L. Berger is a remarkable contribution in the field of religious studies and sociology of religion. Berger asserts religion as socially constructed system of meaning which provides the individuals with a context called "sacred canopy", where life seems meaningful, orderly and legitimized. Initially, Berger argued secularization to be a consequence of modernization, where industrialization, urbanization, scientific rationality and institutional differences limit the social authority of religion. Secular institutions like education, state, science gain autonomy while religion loses its monopoly in explaining to the world and providing guidance to public life. He also highlighted the role of religious pluralism, asserting that the exposure to multi-religious beliefs diminishes the certainty of a single religious faith. Rather, the faith on collective obligation gets transformed into a state of personal choice. However, in his later writings, Berger revised his view on secularization and stated that modernization does not necessarily result in weakening of religion. Alternatively, he asserted that the modern world being characterized by religious pluralism, religious and secular views complement as well as compete, thereby, resulting in pluralism rather than making secularization the defining trait of the present society.

Vaishnavism In Nabadwip-Mayapur: The Local Culture

- Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is regarded as the Krishna Himself. The sect of Vaishnavism propagated by Sri Chaitanya was known as Gaudiya Vaishnavism or 'Neo-Vaishnavism'. In and around 1486, the time when Sri Chaitanya was born, the condition of Bengal was critical then Sri Chaitanya stood up to unify the society regardless of caste, class, religion, race, origin. He preached to the people to chant the name of Lord Krishna (Hari) and popularized Harinam Sankirtan. He popularized Harinam Sankirtan into a mass movement which involved thousands of people chanting the name of Hari accompanied by singing and dancing in high ecstasy. Mahaprabhu even travelled in different parts of the country propagating this movement. His idea of Sankirtan had spread in and out of Bengal and even in the Western countries, as evident today.

- Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura

Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura is regarded as one of the prominent preachers in the succession of disciples coming straight from Lord Krishna. He was a leading spiritual head, a magistrate and a prolific poet and writer. At a time when the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had completely lost, he reintroduced those teachings through various scholarly writings, volumes of books and devotional songs. He also communicated with various philosophers, scholars, theologians, leaders, professors of his time and had sent books to the libraries of foreign universities. Thereby, in this way, he had laid the foundation for worldwide propagation and movement of the Krishna consciousness. Another remarkable contribution of Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura has been the discovery of the birthplace of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura was not convinced that Nabadwip was the birthplace of Mahaprabhu. So, he conducted rigorous research and investigations. Searching for the exact location, he kept reading various ancient scriptures and texts and where he found the mention of a place named 'Mayapur'. Ultimately, with the help of his spiritual master, Srila Jagannatha Dasa Babaji Maharaja, he was ascertained that Mayapur was the exact location of Mahaprabhu's birth. It was in the beginning of the year 1888 that this extraordinary discovery had taken place. At the end of his life, Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura also advised his son Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Thakur to permanently establish devotional service in Sridham Mayapur, propagate devotional books and publish Vaishnava writings.

- Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur

Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur was the son of Sri Bhaktivinoda Thakura and the initiating spiritual master of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. For his vast knowledge, he was known as the 'Living Encyclopedia'. He had strongly advocated against casteism and philosophical disparities. He even aimed to unite the four different sampradayas of Vaishnavism. He published multiple authorized shastras. He introduced innovative ways to expand preaching and propagation. He had set up sixty-four Gaudiya Math temples in India and others in England, Germany and Burma. He also established printing presses in Calcutta, Madras and Krishnanagar. One of his major contributions has been the initiation of his disciple, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. Sri Sarasvati Thakur had inspired and instructed Sri Bhaktivedanta to embark on the journey of preaching Krishna consciousness in English language all over the world.

- Sri A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada and ISKCON

Following the instruction of his master, Sri Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, Sri A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada took the movement on the global platform. He formalized this movement by establishing International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) for the first time in New York in 1966. Now, he is known as the Founder-Acharya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). He also authored innumerable books and scholarly works to propagate the teachings of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. ISKCON aims to unite all through spreading of love and Bhakti yoga. The practice of this religion involves simple ways of conduct like chanting Hare Krishna Mantra, Nam Sankirtan, Japa, Arati, etc.

The Emerging Global Culture

People from all around the world with different religious orientations come to this place having their goal to worship Lord Krishna. Globally, we generally know, there are different perspectives based on race, caste, creed, religion and so on. However, when arriving in Nabadwip-Mayapur, they are becoming a part of a local culture instead of the global culture. On the other hand, the reverse is also happening. This local culture is getting the global platform in a unique way, being known as the Vaishnavite. So, the local culture is being replicated all over the world. ISKCON Vaishnavism is being established in multiple nations around the globe. It is gradually emerging as a huge global culture.

Methodology of the Study

The present study has been conducted based on Qualitative research, specifically case study method. To gain an in-depth understanding of the pattern of how a local religious culture is evolving into a new religio-global culture, through the lived experience of the Vaishnavites, adopting a case study method was essential. The case study method enabled deeper insight into individual cases, thoughts, philosophies, experiences of the Gaudiya Vaishnavites which has laid implications upon how the small local Vaishnava community has acquired global status in the modern secular world. The fieldwork for the study was conducted in the Nabadwip and Mayapur region of Nadia district in West Bengal. Since, the research study is on religious aspect, particularly Gaudiya Vaishnavism, thirteen respondents, who were Vaishnavites, were selected as sample units. Among those respondents, eight were from Indian states (mostly West Bengal) and five were from foreign nations (United States, Russia, Malaysia, Italy). Both primary and secondary data have been involved in this study. Primary data has been collected from the respondent's narratives. While the secondary data has been collected from the various existing literatures studied for this research. The sample selection has been conducted following purposive sampling method because obtaining knowledge of the beliefs, practices, rituals, livelihood, philosophy of the Gaudiya Vaishnav community was essential in this research. The analysis of data was based on narrative analysis, interpretation of existing literature and theoretical connection.

Findings

As part of the study, thirteen respondents were interviewed, among which eight were from Indian states and five were from foreign countries.

The foreign respondents were primarily from Christian religion except one, who was atheist initially. ISKCON has multiple linkages all over the world. So, these foreign respondents have their respective centers or temples or communities in their nations. Having quest for religion or the Supreme God or the mystic, these respondents have some way or the other come across the ISKCON community, its philosophy and practice. Gradually, they have adapted themselves with this culture and the practice of this religion. This practice of the Vaishnava religion through the lineage of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu attracted them to get associated with this religion. Through time and learning of this religious practice, they turned into being members of this community and ultimately acquiring initiation. Two of these respondents have even become permanent residents of Mayapur. While others are associated with ISKCON in their home nation and have come here to pay a visit.

Among the Indian respondents, some were Hindu by birth while some, upon becoming Vaishnavite, did not agree to share their previous religious affiliation. Some have taken up this religious practice from their family lineage. While, according to others, the Vaishnava religion has been well known for ages and at a point of time, they got interested in leading religious life and thereby became associated in such practice. On the other hand, few also stated about the popularity of this religious practice through ISKCON which inspired them to get involved in the Vaishnava religious practice. Majority of these Indian respondents were permanent residents of Nabadwip or Mayapur among which some has shifted to this place from their place of origin. While others visit this place occasionally though they intend to get shifted to this place in future.

According to the respondents, Hinduism is the 'sanatan dharma' which has no beginning or end. Hence, it can be regarded as true religion. For the respondents, Vaishnavism is the religion, which is liberal in nature, specifically in context of the religious practice propagated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. In this religious practice, people from different origins, caste, creed, religion can come together under a single shelter. Apart from them, the justified rights of the entire living community, including all beings and creatures, are also considered here. It seeks for the right to life, freedom, and significance of all living entities including humans.

Discussion

All over the world, there are multiple religious organizations and orientations. Based on it, people from different nations, regions or communities have their own religious choice, opinions or affiliations. In the recent times, the popularity of Gaudiya Vaishnavism has reached great heights all around. It is because, despite varied religious interests, people are gaining interest in

the Vaishnava culture of Nabadwip-Mayapur. Hindus already have a brief knowledge about the Vaishnava sect of Hindu religion. However, those who do not have any religious orientation with Hinduism are also learning about this religion and culture. People from the Indian states have easy access to knowing this culture firstly, due to the popularity of the Vaishnava Hindu sect in India and secondly, through the different ISKCON temples built in multiple cities of India. However, ISKCON or the Hare Krishna movement having achieved global status, citizens from foreign countries are also being able to know and get connected to this movement and its religious practice. After getting connected, majority of them gradually become associated with the Vaishnava communities, temples or centers available in their own vicinity. Accordingly, they start learning and knowing more about the entire religion, its practices, rituals, principles, philosophies and code of conduct. Thereby, the local and the global culture are getting interconnected, and which is taking place in a two-way process.

Firstly, it is being seen that a large population, belonging to different religious affiliations, from around the world and even from different parts of India are visiting ISKCON-Mayapur, the headquarter of ISKCON. Their visit is not merely for tourism purposes but to acquire closer views, insights and knowledge of the religion exactly from the place where Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the founding figure and initiator of the Hare Krishna movement, Himself was born. Through time, these people seek spiritual masters, get initiated under Gaudiya Vaishnavism and gain their new identity as a Vaishnavite. In this way, the multicultural religious faiths are getting intermingled into one point of faith, i.e. worshipping Lord Krishna and becoming part of the local religion. Accepting the Vaishnava religion through initiation, some are even permanently shifting to this place and conducting devotional service to the Lord. This process of people getting shifted to Nabadwip-Mayapur and thereby accommodating various culture, religion, language, ethnicity all together in a single place have led to the rise of a new communal space. This pattern of interconnection is taking place from global to local.

Secondly, due to the global status of the Hare Krishna movement, thousands of ISKCON centers have also emerged in various parts of the world. Some devotees, after getting spiritual initiation at Mayapur, shift back to their place of origin and serve devotional service at their nearby ISKCON center. They also head out to propagate and spread the teachings of Mahaprabhu in their region. Through such propagation, more people get to know about this religious practice and who, in turn, are also getting influenced and associated with the respective centers. In that process, various other communal spaces are also being created surrounding the respective ISKCON centers abroad. Hence, in a reverse manner, a unified culture, like the one in Mayapur region, is also being created globally which are scattered in different parts of the world adjacent to the respective centers. However, despite the spread of this Vaishnava religion worldwide, its authenticity of religious practices, philosophies and activities does not get changed. Despite going under the process of globalization, the core traits or principles of the local religion have not been modified or impacted in global terms. The local religio-culture of Nabadwip-Mayapur is just being institutionalized in various parts of the globe yet maintaining its uniqueness. This pattern of interconnection is taking place from local to global.

The interconnection of two cultures, local and global, centering Gaudiya Vaishnavism has led to the creation of a communal space – it is a space where all the devotees share faiths, values, beliefs and collectively come together to participate in communal rituals and religious practices. So, whether it is in Nabadwip-Mayapur region or in the foreign nations, this creation of a communal space has developed immense unity and integrity among the devotees. ISKCON, through its Hare Krishna movement, have created communal ties among all its members, followers and devotees by providing them with the common objectives of worshipping Lord Krishna and chanting the Hare Krishna maha-mantra. Besides, it also provides the devotees with a way, a medium, a process or a path to acknowledge whosoever they wish or consider as their Supreme being. Such a mechanism in religious practice binds all its members and devotees, becomes a medium of mental peace and builds cohesion among its community. Such context of community building can be perfectly related to how Emile Durkheim has defined the function of religion. According to Durkheim, religion serves the function of unifying the members of a society into a single moral community. Gaudiya Vaishnavism, through its religious principles, philosophy, beliefs, practices, performance of rituals, prescribed way of living and code of conduct has created a collective conscience among the devotees. Through such collective conscience, multiple global cultures are getting merged into a local religio-culture leading to the growth of a single community. So, the Gaudiya Vaishnav community of the Nabadwip-Mayapur region is the unified system that integrates its members and has emerged as a single community with globally.

The religious ideology propagated by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and the path paved by Him has been so developed that all living entities in this world get a safe space or shelter. According to the devotees, it is the space where they get all their answers to their religious seeking and achieve fulfillment in life. All kinds of answers sought for the uncertainties, queries, doubts, dualities in human life find their way in this religion. Being associated with the practices of this religion, people from varied backgrounds, race, caste, ethnicity, class find solace from material distress and find meaning to their lives. This emergence and institutionalization of this local religio-culture in global platform is turning it up as a secular hub.

In this time of fast globalization and with the tide of modernization, different religious affiliations or groups are expected to get dissolved and secularized. However, in this context, it seems globalization has led to huge propagation of the Vaishnava sect. In the present modern time, secularization is having prevalence all over the world. Amidst rapid timescape, success and growth, people are losing interest in religious context, doctrines or traditions. In such a time, ISKCON rebuilds and reinterprets religious orientations in a strategic model that is inspiring and is attracting thousands of curious minds to a modernized yet tradition-sustained religious philosophy. Thus, this context can be related to the theory of P. Berger on religious pluralism. According to P. Berger, humans collectively construct a societal framework to shelter themselves from the chaotic conditions, thereby establishing religion as the 'sacred canopy' which imposes divinely sanctioned order and legitimacy in societies. Similarly, the

Gaudiya Vaishnavas have established a spiritual community which shields them from the miseries, sufferings or discomfort of material life. Therefore, this community collectively builds up a religious structure which derives mental peace and relief and delivers an orderly legitimate society. Thus, it can be understood that modern society cannot be defined solely in terms of secularization and diminishing religious significance. Rather, it provides a platform for multi-religious faiths and beliefs which is intermingled in a religiously collective society which Berger terms as the 'sacred canopy'.

Based on the discussed literature, context and overview, it is clearly visible how a religion, retaining its local significance, is emerging in the global society. The global propagation and the building of communal ties among the devotees have been possible mainly through the Hare Krishna movement of ISKCON. Thus, such a process where diverse cultures are getting blended and integrated leading to the formation of a religio-global culture stands unique and can be termed as 'ISKCON-ization'.

Conclusion

The strategy of propagating the ideology of Gaudiya Vaishnavism has been so designed that despite gaining global status and huge interaction of distinct cultures, ISKCON is able to maintain its religious demarcations, philosophies, cultural practices and tradition in true terms, even in all its branches all over the world. The globalization process of Gaudiya Vaishnavism holds a unique feature, where the core tradition of the religion is properly upheld and has not let globalization or any external factor to bring any consequent impact on it. Whether, Gaudiya Vaishnavism is considered as a local culture or a global culture, it sustains and adheres to its religious as well as institutional tradition. Thus, it can be said that Gaudiya Vaishnavism has emerged from the local context to as a religio-global culture. Moreover, thousands of faiths are getting accumulated into one point of faith in this local religion. It is probably due to the consequent function which this religious practice plays, where people are deriving distinct meanings to their lives, getting liberated from material distress and thereby, obtaining advancement in life. Considering the atheistic, secular mindsets, this new global culture provides a safe space or shelter, which is egalitarian in nature, to all people with diverse backgrounds. Studying these patterns of growth, adaptation, global culture, and local religion from the sociological lens has been of utmost significance in this study. Thus, it can be said that the practice of Vaishnavism in the local land of Bengal has escalated to a worldly status propagating traditional Vaishnava ideals remodulated on a secular, unifying and justified grounds. In the process of globalization, integration has taken its shape of secularization process where individual identity is declining because of religio-societal movement related to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's ideology and action. That is why, it was said by Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu that "*pr̥thivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma/ sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*", which means that all the cities, the towns and the villages that exist in this world everywhere my name (Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu) will be promoted. The tiny village of the Nadia district of West Bengal have taken a shape of a global village because of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's famous chanting "*Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*". This Hare Krishna mantra emerged from Nabadwip-Mayapur region, but its fragrance has been absorbed by majority of the global people who consider that this is the path for intermingling nations and different nationals. This alternative path has been the essence of Gaudiya Vaishnavism which cannot surpass but work as an integrated melting pot.

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