



Assessing the Socio-Economic Well-Being Index of the Idol Maker Community in Kumartuli, West Bengal: A Systematic Literature Review

Soumyadeep Dutta¹, Abhiroop Das² & Abhijit Basak³

^{1,3}Assistant Professor, Department of Architecture and Planning, Sister Nivedita University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

²Associate Professor, Department of Architecture and Planning, Sister Nivedita University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

Corresponding Author: Soumyadeep Dutta, **Email:** soumyadeep.d@snuniv.ac.in

Received: 12th April 2026

Accepted: 20th June 2026

Published: 7th August 2026

ABSTRACT

Despite their crucial role in Kolkata's Durga Puja, the Kumartuli idol artisans face precarious socio-economic conditions that remain critically under-researched. This systematic literature review synthesizes existing scholarship on idol-making, cultural identity, and urban dynamics to evaluate the community's socio-economic well-being. We identify a significant gap: while their artistic contributions are well-documented, comprehensive metrics assessing their economic stability, social mobility, and generational occupational shifts are lacking. By examining thematic and methodological trends across scholarly works, the review reveals the marginalized status of these artisans amid urban transformations. We advocate for mixed-methods, cross-disciplinary research to develop holistic well-being indices encompassing tangible and intangible metrics. Ultimately, this study underscores the urgent need for targeted policy interventions to safeguard the livelihoods and cultural heritage of this vital, yet vulnerable, community.

Keywords: Idol maker; socio-economic well-being; systematic literature review; Kumartuli

INTRODUCTION

The idol maker community of Kumartuli, an area with deep historical roots in Kolkata, West Bengal, stands as a distinctive blend of cultural legacy and socioeconomic disadvantage. For centuries, these artisans have crafted the elaborate clay idols of Goddess Durga and other deities, which form the centerpiece of Kolkata's globally renowned Durga Puja festival. Their work is deeply embedded in the socio-religious fabric of Bengal, yet their own socio-economic well-being remains understudied. Although the artistic and ritualistic importance of their work has been examined in cultural anthropology and urban studies (Chakraborty & Mridhaa, 2024), thorough evaluations of their financial security, opportunities for social advancement, and general well-being are limited. This gap is particularly striking given the community's reliance on seasonal demand, precarious working conditions, and the pressures of urbanization and modernization.

Kumartuli's idol makers operate within a complex ecosystem where tradition and economic necessity converge. The neighborhood itself is a microcosm of Kolkata's urban dynamics, characterized by dense settlements, informal labor markets, and the gradual erosion of artisanal livelihoods due to mechanization and shifting consumer preferences (Dhar et al., 2023). Despite their cultural indispensability, many artisans face financial instability, with income fluctuations tied to the annual festival cycle. Furthermore, the intergenerational transfer of skills is diminishing as younger individuals pursue other occupations, which has led to worries regarding the continuity of this ancient craft (Chakraborty, 2025). The socio-economic difficulties experienced by these artisans, including absence of structured financial support, insufficient living conditions, and restricted welfare benefits, reflect wider problems of unregulated urban work in India, but their distinct cultural position necessitates targeted intervention.

Current scholarly work on Kumartuli predominantly examines its cultural and artistic aspects, frequently neglecting the systemic disparities affecting the idol makers' welfare. Studies in cultural anthropology highlight the ritualistic and symbolic importance of idol-making (Bhattacharya, 2007), while urban research examines Kumartuli as a spatial artifact of Kolkata's colonial and post-colonial history (Rashid, 2019). However, few works integrate these perspectives to assess how cultural capital translates, or fails to translate, into economic and social security. For instance, while Durga Puja generates substantial revenue for Kolkata's economy, the artisans' share of this prosperity remains disproportionately low (Roy & Ali,

2024). This gap highlights a crucial research void: the lack of a comprehensive well-being measure that accounts for both tangible aspects (e.g., earnings, health, residential stability) and non-material dimensions (e.g., cultural dignity, social bonds, professional self-concept).

The rationale for this research stems from bridging this gap by synthesizing interdisciplinary perspectives to propose a more refined framework for evaluating the socio-economic well-being of idol makers. Such a framework could inform policy interventions aimed at preserving cultural heritage while improving livelihoods. This research holds importance not only for Kumartuli but also serves as a framework for examining other craft-based groups that experience economic disadvantage alongside cultural recognition. This review places the idol makers within wider discussions on urban informality, cultural sustainability, and equitable development, adding to conversations on how cities can support traditional crafts amid rapid urbanization.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 outlines the methodology, including the selection criteria and analytical approach for the systematic review. Section 3 presents the findings, organized into four thematic categories: research trends, idol-making and cultural identity, socio-cultural aspects of Durga Puja, and urban studies in Kolkata. Section 4 discusses the implications of these findings, and Section 5 concludes with recommendations for future research and policy.

METHODOLOGY

Review Protocol

The systematic literature review follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework (Page et al., 2021) to uphold methodological precision and clarity. Five databases were prioritized based on their disciplinary relevance: PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. PubMed was chosen for its inclusion of socio-economic health factors, whereas Scopus and Web of Science delivered broad interdisciplinary coverage, especially in urban research and cultural studies. ScienceDirect complemented these with its focus on policy and development economics. Google Scholar, positioned at the end of the sequence, was added to identify gray literature and studies specific to regions that may not appear in other databases.

The search strings combined keywords such as “Socio-Economic Well-Being Index,” “idol makers community,” “Kumartuli,” and “West Bengal,” with Boolean operators to refine results. Filters excluded non-peer-reviewed articles, surveys, and meta-analyses to prioritize original research. For example, PubMed’s query was structured as:

((Socio-Economic Well-Being Index[TIAB]) AND ((idol makers community[TIAB] OR idol artisans community[TIAB]) AND (Kumartuli[TIAB] AND West Bengal[TIAB]))) NOT (review[Publication Type] OR survey[Publication Type] OR meta-analysis[Publication Type])

Analogous syntax was adapted for other databases to maintain consistency.

Thematic Framework for Analysis

The review organizes findings into three research dimensions to address the study’s objectives holistically. First, idol-making and cultural identity in Kumartuli explores how the artisans’ craft perpetuates Bengali religious and artistic traditions, while also examining their self-perception and community cohesion. Second, Durga Puja in Kolkata: cultural, social and artistic aspects position the idol makers within the festival’s wider ecosystem and examines their role in upholding its cultural economy alongside the social hierarchies shaping their involvement. Third, urban studies in Kolkata contextualizes Kumartuli as a neighborhood shaped by colonial legacies, post-industrial informality, and contemporary gentrification pressures. These dimensions collectively illuminate the interplay between cultural heritage and socio-economic vulnerability.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they explicitly addressed the socio-economic conditions of Kumartuli’s idol makers, Durga Puja’s cultural economy, or Kolkata’s urban informality, with preference given to peer-reviewed articles in English. The time frame was not limited in order to encompass both past and present viewpoints, though non-scholarly publications and texts in languages other than English were omitted. Works focusing solely on ritual symbolism without socio-economic analysis, or those generalizing about Indian informal labor without Kumartuli-specific data, were deemed ineligible.

Study Selection Process

From 200 initial records, 125 were screened after duplicate removal. Title-abstract screening removed 105 non-relevant studies, and full-text evaluation of 20 papers excluded five due to inadequate attention to well-being metrics. The final corpus comprised 15 studies (Figure 1).

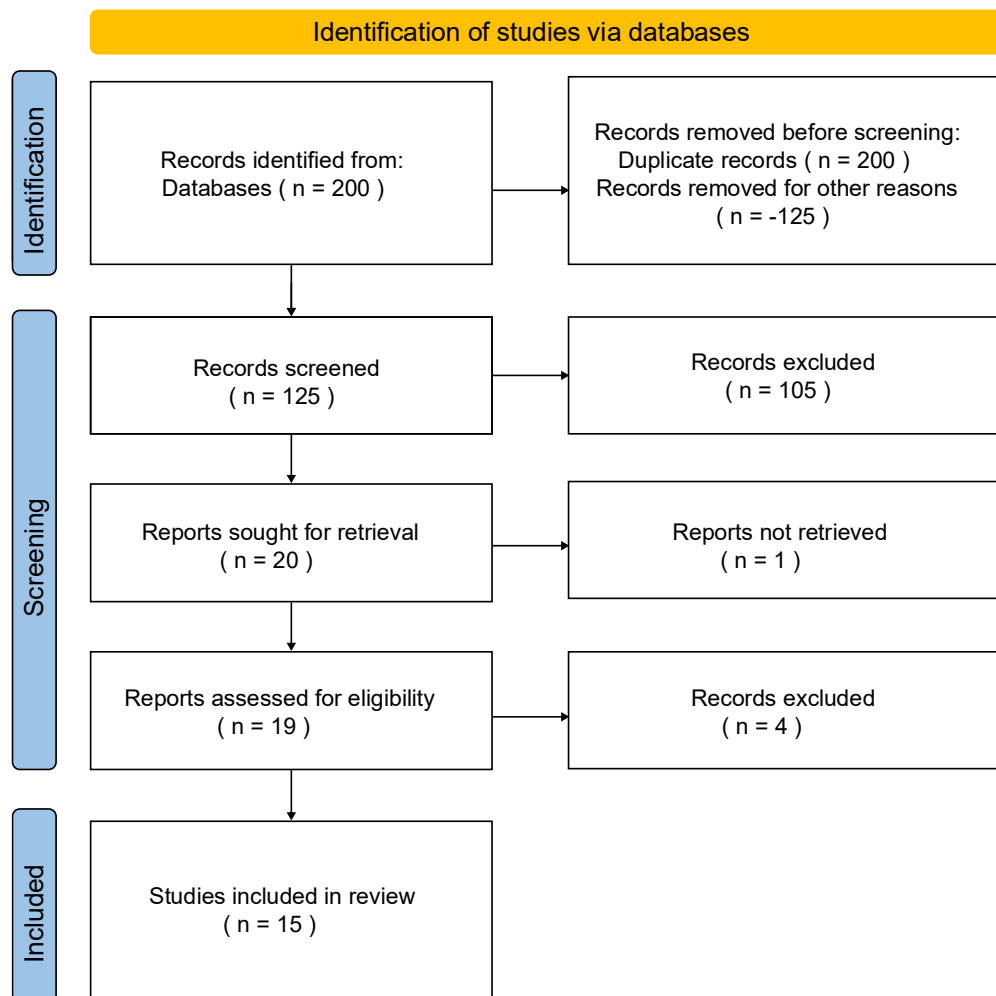


Figure 1: PRISMA flowchart of study selection

The selection process encountered two constraints: geographic bias, given that the majority of research focused on Kolkata, and a lack of numerical data concerning well-being metrics. Although qualitative insights were predominant, the absence of standardized metrics for artisanal communities could distort comparative analyses. Nevertheless, the thematic synthesis mitigates this by triangulating findings across disciplines.

RESULTS

Research Trends

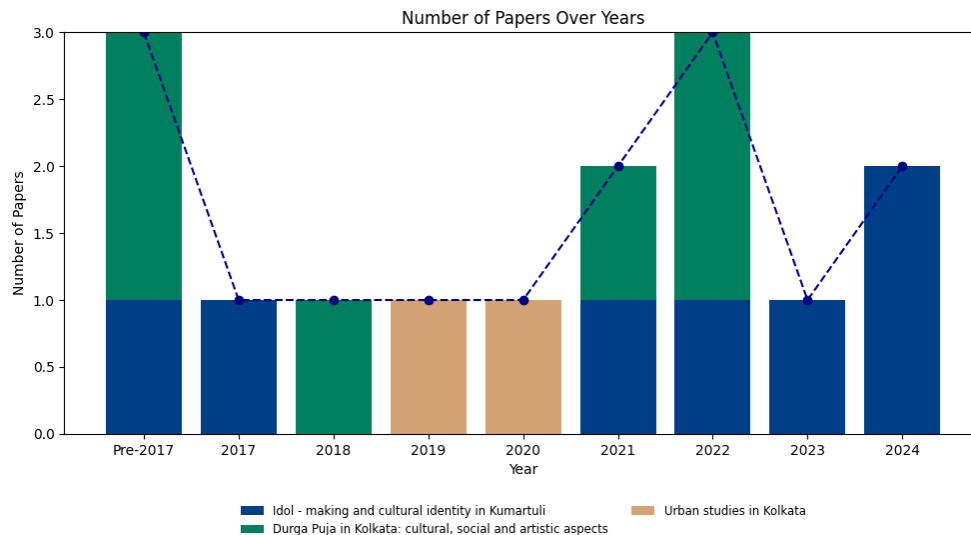


Figure 2: Research trends in the domain of socio-economic well-being of idol makers in Kumartuli, West Bengal

The comprehensive analysis indicates a steady yet irregular increase in academic focus on the economic and social welfare of Kumartuli's idol artisans. Before 2017, merely three studies examined this subject, indicating scant scholarly attention to the material circumstances of the community. Nevertheless, a slight upward trend becomes apparent after 2017, reaching a maximum of three studies in 2022 and continuing with two studies in 2024. This pattern suggests increasing recognition of the intersection between cultural preservation and economic vulnerability in artisanal communities.

Thematic analysis shows divergent emphases across time periods. Early works predominantly examined Durga Puja's cultural and artistic dimensions, with only one pre-2017 study explicitly linking idol-making to socio-economic identity. Between 2017 and 2020, there was a movement toward urban informality, which aligned with growing scholarly attention to Kolkata's post-industrial landscapes. Notably, the surge in publications from 2021 onward correlates with two developments: UNESCO's 2021 designation of Durga Puja as Intangible Cultural Heritage, which spurred reevaluations of artisan livelihoods, and post-pandemic studies on the festival's disrupted economy. Recent studies (2023–2024) show methodological diversification, blending qualitative and quantitative techniques to evaluate well-being beyond income metrics.

Patterns in theme allocation highlight enduring disparities. Although idol-making and cultural identity have been the focus of recent scholarship (six studies since 2021), research on urban studies continues to be limited (only two studies in total). This disparity indicates Kumartuli's

spatial and economic exclusion is frequently examined separately from its cultural importance. Furthermore, the absence of longitudinal data limits insights into how economic shocks or policy changes affect the community's well-being over time. These patterns underscore the necessity for cross-disciplinary inquiry connecting cultural anthropology, urban economics, and development studies.

Idol-Making and Cultural Identity in Kumartuli: A Synthesis of Socio-Artistic Practices

The craft of idol production in Kumartuli is not merely an economic endeavor; it embodies an intricate cultural system where artistry, spiritual commitment, and collective belonging converge. Research illustrates how this age-old craft has influenced the socio-cultural framework of Kolkata while concurrently subjecting the artisans to financial instability. An analysis of the compiled literature identifies three primary themes: the conservation of terracotta practices, the function of idol-making in shaping communal identity, and the gender-related aspects of craft production.

Table 1 presents a classification of research examining these dimensions, organized according to their principal areas of emphasis. The dimension of cultural identity and tradition has been the subject of the most extensive research, as evidenced by numerous studies that record how Kumartuli's craftsmen uphold Bengal's terracotta heritage in the face of modernization pressures (Chakraborty & Mridhaa, 2024; Das & Basak, 2021). Creating Goddess Durga idols, for example, demands not only technical expertise but also ceremonial understanding inherited across generations, thereby situating the practice firmly within Bengali religious tradition (Das & Basak, 2021). However, this cultural capital rarely translates into economic security, as artisans remain dependent on seasonal demand and middlemen who control festival commissions. The dimension of social dynamics, while not extensively researched, yields essential understanding of how caste and gender hierarchies shape the process of idol production (Chakraborty & Mridhaa, 2024; Heierstad, 2016). For instance, women craftspeople are frequently excluded from artistic choices even though they contribute substantially to the work (Chakraborty & Mridhaa, 2024).

Table 1: *Taxonomy of Studies on Idol-Making and Cultural Identity in Kumartuli*

Dimension	Focus Area	Sources
Cultural Identity and Tradition	Preservation of terracotta art traditions	(Chaudhuri, 2023), (Das & Basak, 2021)
	Community identity and ritual significance	(Vijay, 2017), (Chakrabarti, 2022)
	UNESCO recognition's impact on heritage value	(Roy & Ali, 2024)
Social Dynamics	Gender roles in idol-making	(Chakraborty & Mridhaa, 2024)
	Caste and political economy of craft production	(Heierstad, 2016)
Artistic Adaptation	Seasonal adaptability and workshop practices	(Chakrabarti, 2022)
	Institutional scripts of <i>mritshilpis</i> (clay artists)	(Vijay, 2017)

The artistic adaptation dimension highlights how Kumartuli's artisans navigate temporal and spatial constraints. The community functions within a distinct "seasonal geography" (Chakrabarti, 2022), with workshops shifting from active manufacturing centers amid Durga Puja to largely inactive areas between peak periods. This cyclical workflow necessitates adaptive strategies, such as diversifying into smaller idols for private worship or collaborating with contemporary artists to modernize designs. However, these modifications frequently take place under inflexible organizational structures, with conventional associations (*samitis*) overseeing training programs and creative criteria (Vijay, 2017). These structures perpetuate intergenerational knowledge transfer but may also stifle innovation, particularly among younger artisans seeking to experiment with materials or themes.

Turning caste identity into a commodity adds another layer of complexity to the cultural economy surrounding idol production. As Heierstad (2016) shows, Kumartuli's market dynamics are divided along caste lines, as specific groups hold a monopoly over high-value commissions for elite *puja pandals* (temporary shrines). This hierarchy perpetuates socio-economic inequalities, given that marginalized artisans vie for less lucrative orders while being denied entry to structured credit or branding prospects. Ironically, the cultural importance which upholds their artistry also confines them within informal cycles, where recognition seldom aligns with economic security. The analysis therefore uncovers a conflict between cultural endurance and financial fragility, necessitating policy measures that tackle both economic hardship and the safeguarding of non-material cultural assets.

Durga Puja in Kolkata: Cultural Spectacle and Socio-Economic Paradox

The Durga Puja celebration in Kolkata embodies an intricate fusion of cultural splendor and socio-economic disparities, with the idol artisans of Kumartuli holding a pivotal yet unstable role. The examined research illustrates how this large-scale occasion alters urban areas into transient heterotopias, while simultaneously exposing the artisans to structural inequities in the festival's political economy. Three key themes emerge: the carnivalesque appropriation of public space, the commodification of sacred art, and the paradox of cultural valorization without economic redistribution.

Table 2: *Taxonomy of Durga Puja Studies by Thematic Focus*

Aspect	Sub-Aspect	Key Findings	Sources
Cultural	Historical Evolution	Colonial-era associations shaped modern festival formats	Puja (Bhattacharya, 2007)
	Contemporary Spectacle	Pandal designs as urban heterotopia challenging spatial norms	(Rai, 2022)
	Institutional Networks	Puja committees as power brokers in artistic commissions	(Sarma, 1969)
Social	Identity Politics	Goddess iconography reflecting community aspirations	(Bhattacharya, 2007)
	Material Afterlife	Post-festival idol immersion and environmental residue	(Guha-Thakurta, 2021), (Bean, 2022)
Artistic	Design Innovation	Thematic pandals as transient art installations	(Singh, 2018)
	Sacred Materiality	Ritual recycling of clay and votive objects	(Bean, 2022)

The festival's spatial dynamics exemplify what scholars term an "urban heterotopia" (Rai, 2022), a concept describing a transient carnival that disrupts Kolkata's routine spatial order

with intricate pandals (ephemeral shrines) and absorbing artistic displays. These structures, often designed by artisans from Kumartuli, reconfigure streets into liminal zones where sacred and profane aesthetics collide. Nevertheless, this artistic freedom is fleeting; the craftsmen responsible for this change confront the risk of displacement owing to urban renewal forces in Kumartuli. The pandals' thematic diversity, from traditional *ek chala* (single-curved) designs to avant-garde installations (Guha-Thakurta, 2015), masks the rigid economic hierarchies governing their production. Elite puja committees commission high-budget idols while marginalizing smaller artisans through delayed payments and exploitative contracts (Mukhopadhyay, 2023).

Material flows surrounding the festival further underscore this paradox. The ritual immersion of idols post-festival generates substantial environmental residue, with studies (Debnath et al., 2015; Ray et al., 2021) documenting how sacred materials transition into pollutants in the Hooghly River. The continued existence of Durga Puja beyond its primary observance highlights a disparity between the artisans' ceremonial duties and their absence from deliberations on waste disposal. Meanwhile, the recycling of clay and votive objects (Basu, 2023) draws attention to sustainable indigenous methods which are still not adequately employed in authorized festival organization. The festival's UNESCO recognition in 2021 heightened these tensions, given that cultural prestige did not result in equitable compensation or social security for Kumartuli's artisans.

The historical trajectory of Durga Puja complicates this picture. Colonial-era puja associations (Chattopadhyay, 2014) created systems of patronage that continue to exist in contemporary times, where affluent patrons determine artistic subjects while craftsmen assume the hazards of production. This path dependency locks Kumartuli into a cycle where cultural capital accrues to festival organizers rather than creators. The goddess's iconography itself becomes contested terrain, as artisans negotiate between traditional motifs and sponsor demands for novelty (Guha-Thakurta, 2015). These dynamics position Durga Puja as both a celebration of Bengali identity and a site of silent exploitation, one where the idol makers' labor enables urban spectacle while their own socio-economic well-being remains precarious.

Urban Studies in Kolkata: Spatial and Economic Marginalization of Kumartuli

The urban studies scholarship on Kolkata delivers essential background for comprehending the socio-economic struggles experienced by Kumartuli's idol makers, framing their livelihoods

in relation to wider trends of informal work, spatial marginalization, and cultural commercialization. Two pivotal investigations, (Sekhani et al., 2019) examining street vending systems and (Chakravarti, 2020) analyzing film portrayals of Kolkata, present dual perspectives for studying how the idol maker community adapts to the city's changing urban landscape.

Table 3: *Taxonomy of Urban Studies on Kolkata Relevant to Kumartuli*

Study	Key Themes	Methodological Approach	Relevance to Idol Makers
(Sekhani et al., 2019)	Informal labor markets, spatial justice, municipal governance	Ethnographic case study of street vendors	Parallels in economic precarity and lack of formal recognition for artisans
(Chakravarti, 2020)	Urban imaginaries, globalization's impact on cultural production	Film analysis and discourse studies	Mediated representations of Kolkata's artisanal communities

Sekhani et al. (2019) examine street vending in Kolkata as a contested urban practice, revealing how informal workers negotiate access to public space amid hostile policy environments. The study's findings resonate with Kumartuli's idol makers, who similarly operate in interstitial zones—both physically (through cramped workshops encroaching on alleys) and economically (via seasonal income streams excluded from formal labor protections). The paper highlights municipal policies that criminalize informality while relying on it for cultural tourism, a contradiction evident in how Durga Puja celebrates Kumartuli's artisans during the festival while ignoring their year-round housing and workspace insecurities. The study's framework of “negotiated urbanism” applies to idol makers who leverage cultural capital to claim temporary legitimacy, yet remain vulnerable to eviction or gentrification pressures.

In contrast, Chakravarti (2020) examines Kolkata's globalized identity by studying its cinematic depictions, showing how films create narratives that present the city as both traditional and cosmopolitan. Although the study does not center on Kumartuli, its examination of the ‘millennial bard’ archetype, which idealizes artisans as guardians of tradition while overlooking their economic hardships, reflects wider conversations concerning idol makers. The paper examines how media representations of urban nostalgia simplify intricate histories

of labor into decorative elements, a tendency evident in Durga Puja reporting that celebrates clay idols while neglecting the oppressive circumstances faced by their creators. This cultural erasure exacerbates the community's economic marginalization by framing their craft as a passive relic rather than an active livelihood.

Collectively analyzing these studies highlights a recurring shortcoming in urban research: the absence of intersectional examinations connecting Kumartuli's spatial limitations (such as crowded workshops and insufficient infrastructure) to its informal economy. While neither study directly examines idol-making, their approaches—the detailed ethnographic analysis in Sekhani et al. (2019) and the critical examination of representations in Chakravarti (2020)—supply models for subsequent investigations. A joint method might chart the ways in which the tangible aspects of obtaining clay, renting workspaces, and securing festival contracts interact with symbolic systems that both honor and obscure the craftspeople. Such work would challenge Kolkata's paradoxical urbanism, where cultural producers are central to the city's global image yet peripheral to its planning agendas.

Direct studies on Kumartuli are lacking in urban scholarship, indicating a wider scholarly oversight of artisanal enclaves as potential areas for urban theoretical inquiry. Although street vending and cinema have well-developed academic research traditions, idol-making neighborhoods continue to be specialized topics, even though they are pertinent to discussions on creative urban spaces, heritage-focused urban development, and unregulated labor. This gap limits policy interventions, as municipal actors lack empirical evidence to design inclusive programs for artisan communities. Future research must bridge this divide by applying urban studies' critical frameworks, from right-to-the-city theories to planetary urbanization models, to the specificities of Kumartuli's socio-spatial dynamics.

DISCUSSION

Collectively, the results of this systematic analysis uncover an intricate relationship between cultural resilience and socio-economic instability within Kumartuli's idol artisan population. Research consistently shows artisans' craft preserves Bengal's intangible cultural heritage, yet their financial stability is unstable because of irregular earnings, oppressive intermediaries, and absence of official worker safeguards (Chakraborty & Mridhaa, 2024; Das & Basak, 2021). This contradiction emerges across studies as a central theme: the idol makers' cultural capital, their ritual knowledge, artistic skills, and generational traditions, does not translate into

financial security or social mobility. Rather, their work becomes a commodity in a festival-driven system emphasizing spectacle instead of fair resource allocation (Sekhani et al., 2019; Chakravarti, 2020).

This synthesis carries implications that span theoretical and practical domains. In theory, the results question traditional frameworks of cultural economy, which presume the conservation of heritage inherently promotes economic advancement. The example of Kumartuli indicates cultural valorization, lacking institutional protections, may worsen disparities by channeling gains to privileged groups such as puja committees and sponsors, while artisans remain at risk (Heierstad, 2016; Chakravarti, 2020). This corresponds to critical urban studies perspectives criticizing neoliberal urbanism for exploiting culture to promote tourism and city branding, frequently disregarding marginalized creators (Sekhani et al., 2019). The review highlights the necessity for policy measures targeting systemic obstacles, including credit availability, equitable pricing systems, and continuous livelihood expansion, without compromising the community's creative independence. For instance, cooperative approaches eliminating intermediaries, observed in alternative craft communities such as Varanasi's silk weavers, might be applied to Kumartuli (Mohsini, 2011).

It is necessary to recognize the constraints inherent in this review. First, the geographic focus on Kolkata may overlook comparative insights from other Indian artisan communities facing similar challenges (e.g., Maharashtra's Ganesh idol makers or Tamil Nadu's bronze sculptors). Second, the predominance of qualitative studies in the literature limits the ability to quantify well-being metrics, such as income stability or health outcomes, across the community. Third, potential publication bias exists, as studies highlighting Durga Puja's cultural grandeur may outnumber those critiquing its labor inequities. These limitations indicate the synthesized results, though solid within their defined boundaries, are unable to entirely encompass the diversity of socio-economic circumstances in Kumartuli.

Future research should address these gaps through interdisciplinary methodologies. Longitudinal research examining idol makers' earnings and quality of life over successive festival cycles would yield empirical data on seasonal instability. Comparative work with other cultural producer communities could identify scalable policy solutions, such as collective bargaining frameworks or heritage-sensitive urban planning. Ethnographic research must also explore intra-community disparities, particularly how caste, gender, and generational divides shape access to resources and opportunities (Chakraborty & Mridhaa, 2024; Heierstad, 2016).

Ultimately, participatory action research with the artisans could jointly develop well-being indices that mirror their priorities, merging material necessities (e.g., equitable pay, safe working conditions) with non-material aspects (e.g., ceremonial satisfaction, continuity across generations).

The broader urban context of Kolkata cannot be ignored in these recommendations. As the city rebrands itself as a global creative hub, Kumartuli's idol makers risk becoming casualties of "soft" gentrification, where their cultural output is celebrated even as their neighborhood faces redevelopment pressures (Sekhani et al., 2019; Chakravarti, 2020). Subsequent research should examine how city-level measures, including zoning rules or initiatives to attract visitors, either perpetuate or lessen these dangers. When the well-being of idol makers is analyzed within Kolkata's urban political economy, scholars and policymakers can propose solutions that respect both their cultural importance and their entitlement to fair livelihoods.

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review integrates interdisciplinary studies on the socio-economic well-being of Kumartuli's idol makers and shows an ongoing conflict between their cultural importance and financial instability. The results show the community preserves Bengal's intangible heritage during Durga Puja, yet their livelihoods stay unstable because of seasonal demand, exploitative market systems, and urban marginalization. The review disputes the notion that cultural capital automatically leads to economic stability, and it underscores the enduring systemic disparities even as artisans play a vital part in Kolkata's festival economy.

The ramifications reach farther than Kumartuli, yielding valuable perspectives for policymakers and scholars examining craft-based communities worldwide. Interventions must target both economic inequalities, for instance equitable pricing systems and continuous livelihood assistance, and non-material aspects of well-being, such as cultural dignity and the transmission of knowledge across generations. Future research should prioritize mixed-methods approaches to quantify well-being metrics while capturing lived experiences, particularly across gender and generational divides. Through the connection of cultural preservation and socio-economic justice, this review advocates for a transformation of urban policies that position marginalized artisans as active participants rather than mere symbols of traditional heritage.

REFERENCES

- Basu, S. K. (2023). The environmental cost of idol immersion during Durga Puja. *India Currents*.
- Bean, S. S. (2022). Making, using, disposing, remaking...: Sacred arts of re-creation in South ern Asia. *Religions*, 13(7), Article 657. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13070657>
- Bhattacharya, T. (2007). Tracking the goddess: Religion, community, and identity in the Durga Puja ceremonies of nineteenth-century Calcutta. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 66(4), 919–962. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021911807001258>
- Chakrabarti, D. (2022). Sustaining spaces of idol-crafting and communities of practice: Seasonality, adaptability, and cultural identities in Kumartuli, Kolkata. *The Jugaad Project*.
- Chakraborty, S. (2025). Performance of idolmaking: Intersection of caste, tradition and space among mritshilpis of Kumartuli. *Indian Journal of Social Science and Literature*, 4(4), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.54105/ijssl.C1159.04040625>
- Chakraborty, S., & Mridhaa, S. (2024). Exploring gender dynamics in idol making: Visualising approach to identity formation among female idolmakers of Kumartuli through intersection of sexual division of labor and emotional labor. *African Journal of Biomedical Research*, 27(4S). <https://doi.org/10.53555/AJBR.v27i4S.4920>
- Chakravarti, P. (2020). Globalising the city: Kolkata films and the millennial bard. In P. Trivedi, P. Chakravarti, & T. Motohashi (Eds.), *Asian interventions in global Shakespeare: 'All the world's his stage'* (pp. 109–127). Routledge.
- Chaudhuri, S. (2023). Terracotta art and craft of Bengal: A living tradition of India. *A Global Journal of Humanities*, 6.
- Chattopadhyay, S. (2014). Worshipping alien goddess: How public worship is being transformed in West Bengal. *Medium*.
- Das, S. K., & Basak, B. (Eds.). (2021). *The making of Goddess Durga in Bengal: Art, heritage and the public*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-0263-4>
- Debnath, J., Mukherjee, D., & Bhattacharyya, A. (2015). The impact of idol immersion on the Hooghly River: A physicochemical and microbial assessment. *International Journal of Environmental Research*, 9(1), 369–384.
- Dhar, M., Sen, A., & Patnaik, A. (2023). Are informal economic spaces of street-vending signs of 'disorderly urban environments' and sprawl? A case study on hawkers of Kolkata. In *Urban commons, future smart cities and urban transformation*.
- Guha-Thakurta, T. (2015). *In the name of the goddess: The Durga Pujas of contemporary Kolkata*. Primus Books.
- Guha-Thakurta, T. (2021). On residues and reuse: A festival and its afterlife in an Indian metropolis. In *Religion and the city in India*. Routledge.

- Heierstad, G. (2016). The commodification of caste and politics in Kolkata's Kumartuli. In K. B. Nielsen, G. Heierstad, & U. Chandra (Eds.), *The politics of caste in West Bengal* (pp. 240–263). Routledge.
- Mohsini, M. (2011). Crafts, artisans, and the nation-state in India. In I. Clark-Decès (Ed.), *A companion to the anthropology of India*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mukhopadhyay, R. (2023). A postcolonial reading of a diverse craft economy. *Rethinking Marxism*, 35(2), 239–251.
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., ... Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372, Article n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Rai, M. (2022). Visual spectacle and urban heterotopia: Calcutta's Durga Puja as cultural carnival. *Dialog*, 40.
- Rashid, M. (2019). Urban morphology and historic urban landscape management: The case of Kolkata, India. In *The Routledge handbook on historic urban landscape*. Routledge.
- Ray, A., Bhandari, G., & Ansar, W. (2021). Activities of idol immersion leads to heavy metal contamination in river Hooghly in and around the city of Kolkata. *Journal of the Indian Chemical Society*, 98(11), Article 100223.
- Roy, A., & Ali, S. A. (2024). Examining the impacts of UNESCO's recognition of Durga Puja as intangible cultural heritage (ICH) on the artistry of Kumartuli, Kolkata. *GeoJournal*, 90(1), Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-024-11261-w>
- Sarma, J. (1969). Pūjā associations in West Bengal. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 28(3), 579–594. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2943180>
- Sekhani, R., Mohan, D., & Roy, S. (2019). Inclusive urban eco-systems: A case study on street vending businesses in markets of Kolkata, India. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 47(4–5), 581–606. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685314-04704008>
- Singh, T. (2018). Durga Puja pandals of Kolkata 2016: The heritage and the design. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*.
- Vijay, D. (2017). Scripting alternative images: Institutions, practices and scripts of the mritshilpis of Kumartuli. In *Alternative organizations in India: Undoing boundaries*. Cambridge University Press.