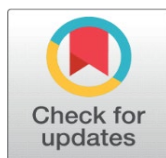
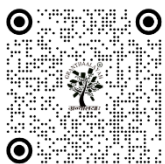


STRATEGIZING CURATED PERFORMANCES FOR HERITAGE ART FESTIVALS: A CASE STUDY OF THE 'DURGA PUJA IN KOLKATA' AND THE 'PREVIEW SHOW OF DURGA PUJA ART'

Arkaprovo Das  , Anjan Sen  

¹Senior Research Fellow, Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, India

²Professor, Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, India



Received 11 March 2026

Accepted 17 May 2026

Published 27 May 2026

Corresponding Author

Anjan Sen, dr.anjansen@gmail.com

DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v7.i12s.2026.7226](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v7.i12s.2026.7226)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2026 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

This research investigates the Preview Show of Durga Puja Art (PSDPA)—a curated pre-festival event organized in Kolkata before the overwhelming Durga Puja celebrations begin. Our study positions PSDPA as a pioneering curated event management strategy designed to catalyze international tourism for the urban festival. This paper addresses the 'paradox of abundance' in high-density South Asian mega-festivals—the local tension of crowd congestion and the global imperative for cultural accessibility—following Kolkata Durga Puja's inscription on UNESCO's representative ICH list. Adopting a qualitative case study design grounded in a constructivist paradigm, our study employs a multimodal methodology. Data collection and analysis involved triangulating document and discourse analysis of organizational reports (UNESCO, British Council, MassArt) and digital platforms (YouTube, Facebook) with thematic, content, and narrative analysis of participant observations (preview settings), semi-structured interviews (preview actors), visual ethnographies (photos, videos, maps), and auto-ethnographic reflections (stories). The findings demonstrate that PSDPA2023 successfully mitigates typical crowd-related barriers through strategic interventions such as security orchestration and explicit navigation. Cultural accessibility is significantly enhanced via immersive exhibition and festive storytelling, fostering deep engagement between international visitors and indigenous artisans. Comparative analysis with the PSDPA2022 edition reveals a 81.68% growth in global attendance and a 124.90% surge in international visitors, confirming the model's replicability and its efficacy in balancing global outreach with local cultural authenticity. Our study offers a seminal framework for the anticipatory curation of crowded festivals. It offers practical implications for creative stakeholders and social implications for artisanal welfare, aligning UNESCO ICHs with UN SDGs.

Keywords: Durga Puja in Kolkata, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), Curated Event Management, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Preview Show of Durga Puja Art (PSDPA)

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary experience economy, festivals have transcended their role as local rituals to become global platforms for international tourism and cultural exchange. Kolkata's Durga Puja, a ten-day ephemeral performance involving thousands of intricately themed art installations (pandals), stands as one of the world's most exceptionally organized urban festivals. The festival reached a global watershed on 15 December 2021, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized it as an Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). This

international recognition not only revitalized global interest in the local event but also brought into sharp focus the logistical challenges of managing millions of global visitors in a high-density South Asian mega-festival.

The central problem addressed in this paper is the 'paradox of abundance'—the inherent tension between the massive crowd energy that defines the festival's identity and the global imperative for managed cultural accessibility. Unlike popular Western and Eastern festivals like Brazil's Rio Carnival and Kyoto's Gion Matsuri, which have established controlled preview models (e.g., Samba school rehearsals and Yoiyama evening previews) over the years, Kolkata's Durga Puja is a ritually performed open-access art festival. There is a critical research gap regarding how to present such high-density ICH mega-festivals from South Asia as curated performances without losing their global intangible status or their local indigenous form. This study aims to deconstruct the Preview Show of Durga Puja Art (PSDPA) as a deliberate strategic intervention to resolve this paradox.

Academic discourse on event tourism has evolved from studying community-managed celebrations to examining professionally managed eventscapes that offer co-created, memorable peri-event experiences. The current literature emphasizes the shift toward event portfolios as a means of developing resilient urban strategies. Concepts such as creative tourism highlight how visitors now seek flexible, immersive engagements that allow them to participate in the creative process. While global precedents for curated previews exist—such as Rio's Samba School Rehearsals—there is a significant lack of documentation on how these contemporary principles are applied in traditional South Asian contexts, where reactive crowd control has historically taken precedence over anticipatory crowd curation. This study situates PSDPA within these evolving frameworks of event management and heritage sustainability.

Moving forward, this research employs a qualitative case study design to evaluate the second edition of the model, PSDPA2023. The study proceeds with four specific objectives: (1) to deconstruct the strategic design of the pioneering curated preview model; (2) to explore the role of public-private partnerships and digital technologies in its execution; (3) to evaluate its success in mitigating crowd-related barriers; and (4) to determine its potential as a replicable model for other South Asian festivals. By triangulating document and discourse analysis of organizational reports (UNESCO, British Council, MassArt) and digital platforms (YouTube, Facebook) with thematic, content, and narrative analysis of participant observations (preview settings), semi-structured interviews (preview actors), visual ethnographies (photos, videos, maps), and auto-ethnographic reflections (stories), this paper argues that strategic curation acts as a magnifying glass for the local festival's art, ensuring that its global heritage value is accessible and sustainable.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH PROBLEM, AND STUDY OBJECTIVES

2.1. CURATED EVENT MANAGEMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL TOURISM: A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Event studies have evolved into a significant academic discipline, examining domains such as event planning, event tourism, and event management, and exploring their connections with other academic areas (Getz, 2012). This review aims to understand curated events, their fundamental concepts, and how public policies and discourses address them.

2.1.1. LITERARY EVOLUTION OF EVENT TOURISM AS A DISCIPLINARY PRACTICE

Over the past two decades, event tourism has emerged as a vital academic and professional field. It encompasses a wide range of sectors, including festivals, sports, entertainment, and business (Getz & Page, 2016). This growth signifies a notable shift from traditional, community-targeted celebrations to professionally designed and managed events that offer memorable experiences. These events are often carefully curated to attract tourists from across the globe (Getz, 2007). The rise of curated festivals and existing concepts, such as experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and creative tourism (Richards & Wilson, 2006), are closely related. This connection highlights that organizers are increasingly aware of international visitors' evolving expectations. Even small, rural art festivals are part of this trend. Through creative entrepreneurship and robust networks, they can revitalize local cultural regions (Qu & Zollet, 2023). This experiential framework is particularly relevant to Kolkata's Durga Puja, where the 'art installation' (the puja pandal) acts as a stage for a performative interaction between the viewer and the deity.

2.1.2. EVENT EXPERIENCE, CO-CREATION, AND MANAGING ABUNDANCE

Researchers have explored many facets of event management. These facets include examining how events function as cultural performances (Picard & Robinson, 2006) and how they bring together intricate networks of various stakeholders (Mair & Duffy, 2015). Studies consistently show that curated experiences significantly influence what audiences feel, learn, and remember (Duffy & Mair, 2018; Laing, 2018). Today, practitioners view event experience as a co-created phenomenon. Visitors actively shape their own experiences (A. E. Brown, 2023). This action underscores the importance of planning the entire visitor journey – before, during, and after the event. It also requires understanding why different individuals, including solo attendees, choose to participate in these events. Many attend seeking flexible, unique, and immersive experiences (Marshall et al., 2023). The way people remember and discuss an event after it concludes is equally vital. Sharing stories is a powerful method for individuals to build and disseminate memories of festivals (Wood et al., 2024). In the past, festivals might have relied more on spontaneous fun and chance encounters. However, there is now a growing trend towards offering more curated and planned experiences. Organizers, artists, and visitors are all contributing to this shift. This shift influences everything from free street performances to ticketed, curated programs (Ferri et al., 2025).

2.1.3. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, NETWORKS, AND DISTRIBUTION PLATFORMS

Cities and destinations are increasingly leveraging events as strategic tools for growth and development. They use them to attract attention, build networks, and foster communities (Richards, 2021). These networks facilitate resource sharing, while event programs create platforms for learning and enhancing a city's profile. G. Brown (2020), as cited in Richards (2021), introduced the concept of eventscapes. This term refers to cities' development of event portfolios. These are collections of events strategically planned together to yield social and economic benefits and cultivate community spirit. This shift toward event portfolios signals a move away from focusing on significant, one-off events. Now, portfolios are a means to develop more resilient, sustainable event strategies. Hence, further research is needed to examine how event portfolios evolve, how they can mutually support one another, and how different cities implement this approach (Ziakas, 2024). Network governance is also critical. When groups involved in events establish long-term connections, it significantly improves teamwork and leads to lasting outcomes (Lu et al., 2024). Sponsorship also plays a significant role in funding and promoting events. Sponsorships that offer experiences tend to be more effective than those focused solely on advertising (Bredikhina & Kunkel, 2022). Events often take place in public spaces. These spaces gain meaning through the experiences associated with the event. However, there is a risk that these spaces could become overly commercialized or exclusive. Research on how to utilize public spaces during curated events is required. This investigation could reveal patterns that align with urban policies and event strategies (Hallmann, 2024).

2.1.4. EVENT IMPACTS, LEGACIES, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Event studies also investigate the long-term effects of curated events. This effect includes both positive and negative impacts. While substantial research has focused on the economic effects of events, there is also a growing interest in their socio-cultural impacts (Getz & Page, 2016). Large-scale events can be catalysts for change. They play significant roles in national and international development plans (M. B. Duignan, 2021). Such events have the potential to reshape societies, markets, and industries. A new area of research focuses on measuring the long-term benefits of hosting such events. This study involves tracking the skills, knowledge, and networks required to stage events. These can benefit future events and leave a lasting legacy (Lockstone-Binney et al., 2023). Economic sustainability goes beyond just generating revenue. While multiple studies have focused on visitor spending, attention to the impact on community resources and equity distribution is less. Future studies should investigate the long-term effects of events on community well-being. They should also explore how planning can make events more economically sustainable (Mair, Foley, et al., 2024). Environmental sustainability is also a significant concern. Researchers have emphasized the need for proactive measures to ensure events contribute positively to the environment rather than harming it. Future work should also align more closely with the UN SDGs (Mair, Trendafilova, et al., 2024). Events can either uphold or compromise human rights. Concerns exist that they may sometimes act as unfair transfers of wealth, primarily benefiting a select few (M. Duignan & Chalip, 2023). Therefore, it is crucial to carefully consider their costs and benefits. Quinn (2005, 2006) highlights that art festivals play a vital role in urban studies and sustainable development. They illustrate the difficulty

of integrating festivals into broader tourism and urban growth plans. Studies suggest that while many researchers address redundant topics, such as the impact of festivals on communities, few explicitly frame their work in the context of social sustainability. There is significant potential for future research to delve deeper and more systematically into this area (Mair, Wood, et al., 2024).

2.1.5. LITERARY EVOLUTION OF EVENT TOURISM AS A DISCIPLINARY PRACTICE

Recent global crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, have had a profound impact on the event management industry. After their postponement, traditional events re-emerged in new formats, often without live audiences. Organizers enhanced live streaming capabilities, intensified social media efforts, and offered virtual tours (Estanyol, 2022). This shift highlights the importance of contingency plans when physical gatherings are not feasible. It also highlights how online tools and virtual formats can help sustain events. The pandemic underscored the importance of digital technologies for designing curated events during challenging times. It also revealed the critical need for resilience. We must understand what enables event systems to adapt and recover in the face of uncertainty (Kwiatkowski et al., 2023). Social media has revolutionized the way people create and share information. It is no longer merely a tool for posting content. It is now essential for gaining a competitive advantage in events. Tham (2024) conducted a temporal review of journal articles, outlining trends, concepts, and outcomes related to social media in the events sector. This work emphasizes the value of these platforms. Early platforms, such as Bolt and Six Degrees, laid the groundwork for future developments. Later, Facebook and YouTube gained widespread recognition. Specifically designed, these platforms cater to their target audiences' needs.

This conceptual review establishes curated events as creative, evolving, and sustainable platforms to enhance international festival tourism, serving as a platform for the critical contextualization of this case study.

2.2. CAN CROWDED ICH FESTIVALS FROM SOUTH ASIA, LIKE KOLKATA'S DURGA PUJA, BE PRESENTED AS CURATED PERFORMANCES FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS? – AN EMERGING PROBLEM

Festivals are increasingly being recognized worldwide as platforms for international tourism and cultural exchange (UNESCO, 2021a). Taking the example of Brazil's Rio Carnival, experts predicted that the festival would attract over 8 million international attendees last year (Cardin, 2025). Even curated preview events, such as the "Samba School Rehearsal Experience" (Rio de Janeiro by Cariocas, 2026), are organized every year to reduce the overwhelming crowds during the main carnival days. While research exists on such curated events in several Western and Eastern festivals, such as Rio's Samba school rehearsals (Goncalves, 2011) and Kyoto's Yooyama evening previews (Porcu, 2022), there is little documentation of the same in crowded South Asian contexts, such as Kolkata's Durga Puja.

Kolkata's Durga Puja stands out as one of the world's most exceptionally organized urban festivals. It is a six-day religious tradition that culminates in a ten-day ephemeral performance. This performance demands months of meticulous planning and preparation to seamlessly blend art, festivity, and tourism before opening it to the public. Every year, millions of people visit thousands of intricately themed art installations, known as puja pandals, erected to worship the Goddess Durga. From dusk until dawn, people hop from one pandal to another. Many patiently wait in long queues to view the temporary art installations inside and capture them through photos, videos, and livestreams. The COVID-19 pandemic brought this vibrant gathering to a temporary halt. Lockdowns confined global celebrations to local neighborhoods. However, on 15 December 2021, Durga Puja in Kolkata garnered international attention when UNESCO recognized it as an ICH (UNESCO, 2021b). This international recognition revitalized global interest in the crowded festival (S. Banerjee, 2023). It also highlighted the urgent need to develop innovative methods, such as curated preview shows, to welcome international tourists amid overwhelming crowds (T. Banerjee, 2023).

Unlike Western festivals with ticketed gates, the 'open-access' nature of Kolkata Durga Puja requires a unique analytical lens—one that views the crowd not just as a logistical hurdle but as a performative element of the festival's 'aura.' While curated preview events (like Rio's Samba school rehearsals) offer controlled access, we argue they risk 'disneyfication'—the sanitization of raw cultural experiences for tourist consumption. However, an analysis of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) provides a counter-argument. As Mair, Foley, et al. (2024) suggest, without strategic curation and economic viability, community resources and

heritage traditions may collapse under the weight of unmanaged mass tourism. The shift from 'reactive logistics' to 'anticipatory curation' is a response to the 'South Asian' crowd complex. These turns eventually heighten the novel PSDPA model.

2.3. STRATEGIZING PREVIEW SHOWS FOR ATTRACTING GLOBAL VISITORS: CASE STUDY-SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

PSDPA presents a rare and potentially the first documented instance of a curated model in India. This initiative was strategically developed by MassArt in 2022 (S. Banerjee, 2022), following the inscription of 'Durga Puja in Kolkata' as a UNESCO ICH in 2021. PSDPA proactively addresses the challenges posed by severe crowd congestion during the main festival period. It also aimed to significantly enhance the accessibility of the intricate artistic content for international visitors. This initiative represents a crucial strategic shift in event planning paradigms within India. It moves from reactive logistical management to anticipatory festival curation. Unlike long-established pre-festival showcases, such as Rio's Samba school rehearsals (Goncalves, 2011) or Kyoto's Yoiyama evening previews (Porcu, 2022), which have evolved organically over extended periods, PSDPA presents a deliberate and contemporary intervention. Its conceptualization and execution are firmly rooted in modern global event design principles, making it a compelling case for examination.

This paper explores the second edition of PSDPA, i.e., PSDPA2023. It presents this show as a curated event management strategy designed to promote Kolkata's Durga Puja internationally. It addresses the intersection of intangible heritage, innovative design, and international tourism in the present ICH period of Kolkata's Durga Puja. The case study's specific objectives are as follows:

- 1) To deconstruct the strategic design of PSDPA2023 as a pioneering curated preview model for attracting international visitors to crowded ICH festivals, such as Kolkata's Durga Puja.
- 2) To explore how public-private partnerships, media advertisements, and digital technologies facilitate the planning, promotion, and performance of PSDPA2023.
- 3) To experience how PSDPA2023 mitigates crowd-related barriers and enhances cultural accessibility for diverse international visitors before Kolkata's Durga Puja starts.
- 4) To determine if PSDPA2023 can strike a balance between global tourist outreach and local cultural authenticity, and serve as a replicable model for crowded ICH festivals from South Asia.

Situating this unique case study within the existing conceptual framework, this research addresses the challenges and opportunities presented by crowded festivals in the South Asian context, using this mega-event as an exemplar.

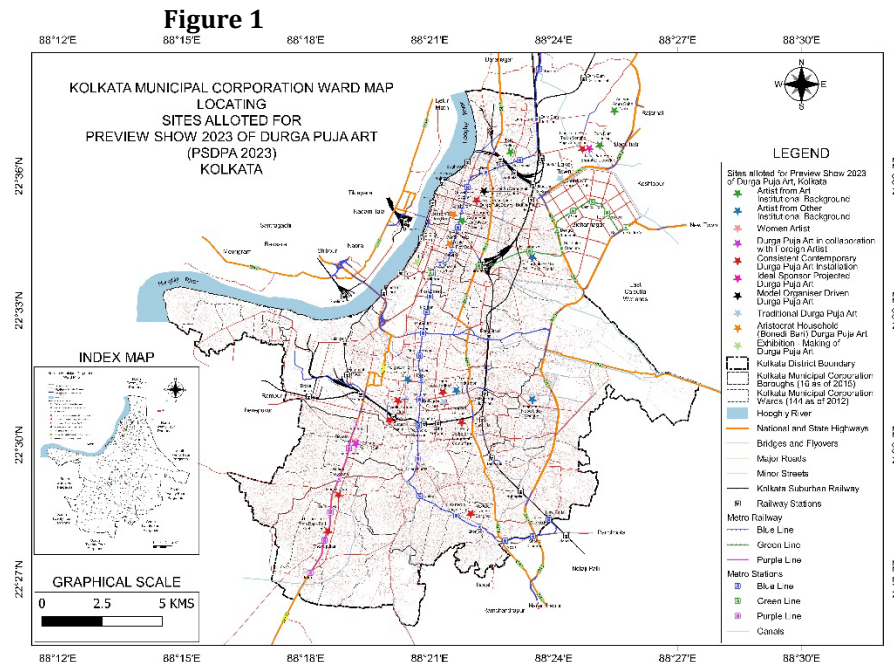
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

This research employed a qualitative approach and adopted a case study design (Priya, 2020), which is ideally suited for in-depth exploration of PSDPA2023. The author chose this design for its capacity to observe the nuanced, context-specific nature of the event as it unfolded, directly addressing how and why it operates (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). By perceiving it as a bounded system, the study deconstructs its strategic design as a pioneering curated preview model for attracting international visitors (Objective 1). The methodology was grounded in a single-case embedded design (Yin, 2018). While PSDPA served as the primary analytical unit, the study also incorporated secondary units, such as public-private partnerships, media advertisements, and digital technologies (Objective 2). Additionally, capturing the experiences of both self and others within this embedded framework facilitated an understanding of crowd mitigation and cultural accessibility during the event (Objective 3). Aligning with a constructivist paradigm (Lim, 2023), the research emphasized the co-construction of meanings by author-stakeholders, providing rich insights into PSDPA's potential as a replicable model that balances global outreach and local authenticity (Objective 4). This approach ensured the documentation of the phenomenon as it unfolded in real time within a puja pandal, without controlling its natural environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

PSDPA2023 unfolded over five days, from 11 to 15 October 2023, at twenty-seven sites across Kolkata (Figure 1). The author's preview pass granted access to twenty-four of these sites (twenty contemporary, one traditional, two aristocratic, and one exhibition), which became the total number of sites for this study.



To ensure methodological transparency and analytical rigor, this section details the systematic execution of data collection methods and data analysis techniques, directly linking them to the study's objectives. Primary data were collected directly from the pre-defined 24 locations through observations, visuals, interviews, and reflections, providing rich material, contextual understanding, and immediate insights into the event. Secondary data, particularly from post-event reports and virtual media platforms, helped contextualize this primary data within broader discussions of festival tourism and event management, especially following the 2021 ICH inscription and the 2022 PSDPA curation of Kolkata's Durga Puja. The following subsections outline the objective-specific methods and techniques used for both primary and secondary data collection and analysis for PSDPA2023.

3.2.1. OBJECTIVE 1: ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS – DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

To fulfill this objective, event archiving served as a crucial data-collection method. The author obtained the official post-event report for PSDPA2023 directly from the Lead of the Audience Development & Partnership at MassArt in Kolkata, West Bengal, India. This comprehensive report, serving as the foundational background for this case study, details the event's conceptualization, operational mechanisms, and outcomes. Its sections, particularly "the preview show and us," "why it works," "how it works," "the implementor," "partners on board," and "participants in...preview show" (MassArt, 2023), are instrumental in deconstructing the strategic and curated aspects of the preview model. This post-event report underwent document analysis. As a systematic procedure for evaluating documents to elicit meaning and gain understanding, document analysis was ideal for interpreting this key organizational text. Bowen (2009) emphasizes that documents provide contextual information and insights, and this report offered an invaluable 'behind-the-scenes' look into PSDPA2023's design. The analysis focused on identifying patterns and themes within the report's structure and content, directly addressing the strategic and curatorial elements employed to attract international visitors.

3.2.2. OBJECTIVE 2: DIGITAL PLATFORMS – DOCUMENT AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

To fulfill this objective, the study employed virtual ethnography, drawing heavily on the digital ethnography framework developed by Pink et al. (2016). This approach enabled the collection of digital remnants across diverse virtual platforms. These data sources included official websites of implementors and partners (e.g., MassArt, UNESCO ICH, and British Council; 3 documents), electronic platforms of national newspapers (e.g., The Telegraph Online, and The Times of India; 2 transcripts), state newspapers and broadcasting channels (e.g., Zee 24 Ghanta – Broadcast, 8 September 2023, and Anandabazar Patrika – Print, 8 October 2023; 2 transcripts), implementor’s social media profiles (MassArt’s Facebook page – 14 posts, and YouTube channel – 18 videos; 32 transcripts), and author’s app-based digital archives (Paytm Insider – Preview pass packages, and Gmail – Preview pass invoices; 4 documents). These diverse datasets were analyzed using specific techniques. Official website documents and personal digital archives were analyzed using document analysis (Bowen, 2009). This analysis involved identifying patterns and themes in ‘stakeholder partnerships’ and ‘digital infrastructure.’ Digital media content from news platforms and social media, extracted as textual and visual transcripts, underwent discourse analysis (Mann, 2006). This analysis decoded how ‘digital language and platforms’ framed the event, revealing the ‘innovative use of media’ for ‘audience outreach and engagement.’

3.2.3. OBJECTIVE 3: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS AND SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS – THEMATIC ANALYSIS, VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHIES – CONTENT ANALYSIS, AND AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC REFLECTIONS – NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

To fulfill this objective, the study employed a multimodal primary data collection and analysis framework.

The author conducted 24 participant observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), one from each pre-defined site over 5 days, dedicating an average of 6-8 hours per day. Under a structured protocol, the observations focused on ‘spatial logistics and infrastructural arrangements,’ ‘tourist mobility within preview sites,’ ‘tourist engagement with preview participants,’ and ‘security control and crowd management.’ Observations, recorded as field notes, captured real-time impressions. For analysis, the author applied thematic analysis (Naeem et al., 2023) to the notes. This manual, iterative process involved familiarizing oneself with the notes, selecting quotations, identifying keywords, assigning codes, developing themes, and connecting them to literary concepts. To ensure consistency, the author applied intra-coder reliability by re-coding these notes at a later period. The Percentage Agreement Method (Roaché, 2017) yielded an intra-coder reliability of 80%, indicating strong consistency in the coding practice.

Following participant observations, the author concurrently employed visual ethnographic methods guided by Pink’s (2001) work. They clicked 90 photos, recorded 18 videos, and drew 22 maps from the selected sites. These visuals effectively captured ‘organizer-tourist interactions’ and mapped ‘logistical arrangements and crowd flow,’ building a dataset that complemented the field notes. The author then examined this visual dataset through a content analysis framework (Rose, 2012). This process involved coding textual interpretations of the visuals using pre-established keywords, themes, and concepts derived from observation notes.

The author conducted 36 semi-structured interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) with participants from the selected sites. These included 10 club representatives, 6 pandal architects, and 20 traditional artisans. They initiated these interviews in Bengali and translated them into English. Each interview lasted between 15 and 30 minutes. The interview guide consisted of 3 general questions for all interviewee groups. In contrast, the number of specific questions varied from 7 for club representatives, 9 for pandal architects, and 11 for traditional artisans. The author also conducted informal conversations with 12 fellow visitors. These included 5 international, 4 national, and 3 local and state tourists. They initiated these conversations in English, Hindi, and Bengali and translated them into English. Each conversation lasted between 5 and 10 minutes. Conversations among tourists differed and centered on their experiences of the curated event. Interviews and conversations, audio recorded with verbal consent, were transformed into dialogic transcripts. For analysis, the author applied thematic analysis (Naeem et al., 2023) to these transcripts, following the same iterative process used for observation notes. Intra-coder reliability for the transcripts, as measured by the Percentage Agreement Method (Roaché, 2017), was 70%, indicating a strong consistency again.

The author concluded data collection for this objective with an autoethnographic exercise (Ellis et al., 2011). They autobiographed 24 self-reflections, one from each of the pre-defined sites. This method provided in-depth insight into

‘mitigating crowd-related barriers’ and ‘enhancing cultural accessibility.’ The author analyzed these autoethnographies under a narrative analysis framework (Riessman, 2008). This process identified key narrative arcs related to the author’s experiences of ‘cultural immersion’ and ‘navigation challenges’ during the curated event, adding a personal experiential dimension to the study.

Ultimately, the author triangulated the themes derived from all four analyses to enhance the validity, credibility, and confirmability of the research claims.

3.2.4. OBJECTIVE 4: ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS – DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

To fulfill this objective, the author archived the official post-event report for PSDPA2022 (MassArt, 2022) and conducted a document analysis (Bowen, 2009) using themes derived from the prior study of the PSDPA2023 report (MassArt, 2023). This comparative analysis focused on two broad areas. First, the author evaluated PSDPA’s potential to balance global outreach with local cultural authenticity by comparing its diverse presentation formats (inaugural, exhibition, exploratory, welfare, and competitive) across both editions. Second, they assessed the replicability of PSDPA as a model by comparing categorical tourist inflow (local, state, national, international) across both editions using growth factors and rates. Dongre et al. (2026)

This comprehensive methodological framework (Table 1) enabled a robust investigation of PSDPA2023. By systematically applying document, discourse, thematic, content, and narrative analyses, the study ensured a grounded understanding of the event and directly addressed all research objectives with rigor and depth.

Table 1

Table 1 Data Collection and Analysis Summary © Author									
Study Objective	Data Collection		No	Data Analysis					
	Method	Type and Source		Technique	Theme & Sub-theme				
1. To deconstruct the strategic design of PSDPA2023, a pioneering curated preview model for attracting international visitors to crowded ICH festivals, such as Kolkata’s Durga Puja.	Event Archiving	Official Post-Event Reports	1	Document Analysis	Pioneering Curated Preview Models				
					1. PSDPA2023 Report.	1. Centralized Management and Selection.			
						2. Targeted Timing.			
						3. Crowdfree Accessibility and Navigation.			
					Attracting International Visitors				1. Global/International Partnerships.
									2. Artistic Exposure and Cultural Mediation.
									3. Testimonial/Feedback Collection.
					Uncrowding ICH Festivals				1. Crowd Mitigation.
									2. Controlled Access and Guided Tours.
									3. Curated Experience.
2. To explore how public-private partnerships, media advertisements, and digital technologies facilitate the planning, promotion, and performance of PSDPA2023.	Virtual Ethnography	Official Websites of Implementor and Partners	3	Document Analysis	Public-Private Partnerships				

		1. MassArt.			1. MassArt – Local Implementor.
		2. UNESCO ICH.			2. UNESCO ICH – Global Promoter.
		3. The British Council.			3. The British Council – International Partner.
		Electronic Platforms of National Newspapers	2	Discourse Analysis	Media Advertisements
		1. The Telegraph Online.			1. Promoting Global Legitimation.
		2. The Times of India.			2. Advertising Crowd-free Tours.
					3. Promoting Strategic Collaborations.
					4. Advertising Participant Applications.
					5. Promoting Event Updates.
					6. Advertising Tourist Co-creation.
					7. Promoting Diversity and Inclusivity in Events.
		State Newspapers and Broadcasting Channels	2	Discourse Analysis	8. Advertising Multi-sensory Engagement.
		1. Zee 24 Ghanta – Broadcast.			9. Promoting Global Exchange.
		2. Anandabazar Patrika – Print.			
		Implementor’s Social Media Profiles	32	Discourse Analysis	
		1. MassArt’s Facebook Page – 14 Posts.			
		2. MassArt’s YouTube Channel – 18 Videos.			
		Author’s App-Based Digital Archives	4	Document Analysis	Digital Technologies
		1. Paytm Insider Account – Preview Pass Packages.			1. Tiered Pricing and Audience Segmentation.
		2. Gmail Account – Preview Pass Invoices.			2. Financial Structuring and Revenue Optimization.
					3. Digital Marketing and Online Distribution.
3. To experience how PSDPA2023 mitigates crowd-related barriers and enhances cultural accessibility for diverse international visitors before Kolkata’s Durga Puja starts.	Participant Observation	Field Notes from Selected Sites	24	Thematic Analysis	Mitigating Crowd-Related Barriers
		1. Contemporary Sites –			1. Security Orchestration and Visitor Welfare – Photos and Videos.

		20 Puja Pandals.			2. Curated Routing and Explicit Navigation – Maps.
		2. Traditional Site –			
		1 Puja Pandal.			
		3. Aristocratic Site –			
		2 Bonedi Baris.			
		4. Exhibition Site –			
		1 Town Hall.			
	Visual Ethnography	Visual Datasets from Selected Sites	130	Content Analysis	
		1. Photos – 90.			
		2. Videos – 18.			
		3. Maps – 22.			
	Semi-structured Interview	Participants from Selected Sites	36	Thematic Analysis	Enhancing Cultural Accessibility
	and	1. Club Representatives – 10.			1. Event Professionalism – Participants' Testimonies.
	Informal Conversation	2. Pandal Architects – 6.			2. Immersive Live Experience – Tourists' Feedback.
		3. Traditional Artisans – 20.			3. Festive Storytelling – Author's Narratives.
		Tourists from Selected Sites	12		
		1. International Tourists – 5.			
		2. National Tourists – 4.			
		3. State/Local Tourists – 3.			
	Auto-ethnography	Author's Reflections from Selected Sites	24	Narrative Analysis	
		1. Contemporary Sites –			
		20 Puja Pandals.			
		2. Traditional Site –			
		1 Puja Pandal.			
		3. Aristocratic Site –			
		2 Bonedi Baris.			
		4. Exhibition Site –			
		1 Town Hall.			
4. To determine if PSDPA2023 can strike a balance between global tourist outreach and local cultural authenticity, and serve as a replicable model for crowded ICH festivals from South Asia.	Event Archiving	Official Post-Event Reports	2	Document Analysis	Balancing Global Tourist Outreach and Local Cultural Authenticity
		1. PSDPA2022 Report.			1. Event Portfolios – PSDPA2022 vs PSDPA2023
		2. PSDPA2023 Report.			Replicating Curated Preview Model for Crowded ICH Festivals
					1. Tourist Flow – PSDPA2022 to PSDPA2023

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: STRATEGIZING PSDPAS FOR PROMOTING KOLKATA'S DURGA PUJA FROM INDIA TO THE WORLD

4.1. DECONSTRUCTING THE 'STRATEGIC DESIGN' OF PSDPA2023

4.1.1. PIONEERING CURATED PREVIEW MODELS

PSDPA2023 emerges as a significant innovation in event management, strategically positioning itself as a pioneering curated preview model. Unlike the typically decentralized and unorganized nature of Kolkata's Durga Puja, often described as a "collage of disconnected installations put up by independent entities," MassArt (2023) introduced this centrally managed preview show. This approach aligns with the evolving field of event tourism, which has transitioned from community-centric celebrations to professionally managed and designed events that offer memorable experiences (Getz & Page, 2016). A core curatorial catalyst is the meticulous selection process. From over 3,500 pujas, only 26 were "chosen for the preview show, keeping quality and variety in mind" by MassArt (2023). This exclusive selection ensures a high-profile, manageable experience, crucial for shaping audience engagement and perceptions of value through careful curation (Ferri et al., 2025). Furthermore, the targeted timing of the preview show, "for a week or so before the actual ritual starts," is a strategic innovation that allows international visitors to experience the artistry "before the pandals are opened to the public and avoiding the crowd" (MassArt, 2023), transforming the event into a more accessible and navigable one. This pre-festival engagement offers a unique "behind-the-scenes" look, allowing tourists to "watch the craftsmen at work" in pandals nearing completion (MassArt, 2023). Such practices resonate with the concept of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and creative tourism (Richards & Wilson, 2006), in which events are carefully curated to offer innovative and memorable experiences. Globally, similar pre-festival engagements are observed, such as Rio's Samba schools, which offer rehearsal experiences to tourists before Carnival (Goncalves, 2011), or Kyoto's Yoiyama evenings, which allow visitors to view floats before the grand processions of Gion Matsuri (Porcu, 2022). PSDPA, therefore, stands as a novel initiative from South Asia, adapting these popular international practices to its unique cultural context.

4.1.2. ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

The design of PSDPA2023 demonstrates a clear strategic intent to attract international visitors, aligning with the growing trend of using events as strategic tools to brand cities as festive destinations (Prentice & Andersen, 2003). Promoting Bengal's art and culture globally and expanding "their reach to a global arena" is the explicit objective of MassArt (2023). The organization fosters international partnerships, exemplified by UNESCO and the British Council, which are crucial for building networks and facilitating communities on a global scale. Testimonials from foreign dignitaries, such as Dr. Philipp Ackermann (Germany's Ambassador to India), who praised MassArt for integrating modern art into the festival's traditional elements, further underscore its international appeal. This approach reflects an understanding of the evolving expectations of international visitors who seek flexible, unique, and immersive experiences (Marshall et al., 2023). By offering a "centrally managed property," MassArt (2023) brings together local organizers, national and international artists, and global tourists on a single platform. This strategy aligns with UNESCO ICH international standards for heritage-oriented event management. For instance, Kyoto's Gion Matsuri, a UNESCO ICH since 2009, holds Yoiyama evenings each year, offering global tourists the opportunity to experience elements of the festival before the main event (Porcu, 2022). Similarly, Kolkata's Durga Puja, a UNESCO ICH since 2021, is embracing this curated PSDPA model to offer a comparable, inclusive, and managed preview for international audiences, demonstrating how crowded ICH festivals can adapt to balance global tourist outreach with local cultural authenticity.

4.1.3. UNCROWDING ICH FESTIVALS

One of the most significant challenges for international visitors attending crowded ICH festivals, such as Kolkata's Durga Puja, is the disorganized nature of the events and the overwhelming crowds (Getz & Page, 2016). PSDPA2023

directly addresses this by strategically designing an experience that mitigates crowd-related barriers and enhances cultural accessibility. The targeted timing, which avoids peak public days, ensures “avoiding the crowd” and allows for “relatively snarl-free” streets and parking spots (MassArt, 2023). This arrangement contrasts sharply with the “notoriously unorganized” main festival, which can “overwhelm visitors from outside” (MassArt, 2023). Firstly, it created a curated experience by selecting 26 pandals based on their “quality and variety.” Secondly, it implemented controlled access, where entry was either “ticketed or by invitation”, ensuring a manageable flow of visitors. Finally, it facilitated guided tours by providing “a route map with Google map locations” for visitors, enabling organized navigation through the venues. These initiatives ensured a focused, high-quality engagement (Ferri et al., 2025), preventing visitors from being overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the mega-festival. Figure 2 outlines the strategic design of PSDPA2023.

Figure 2

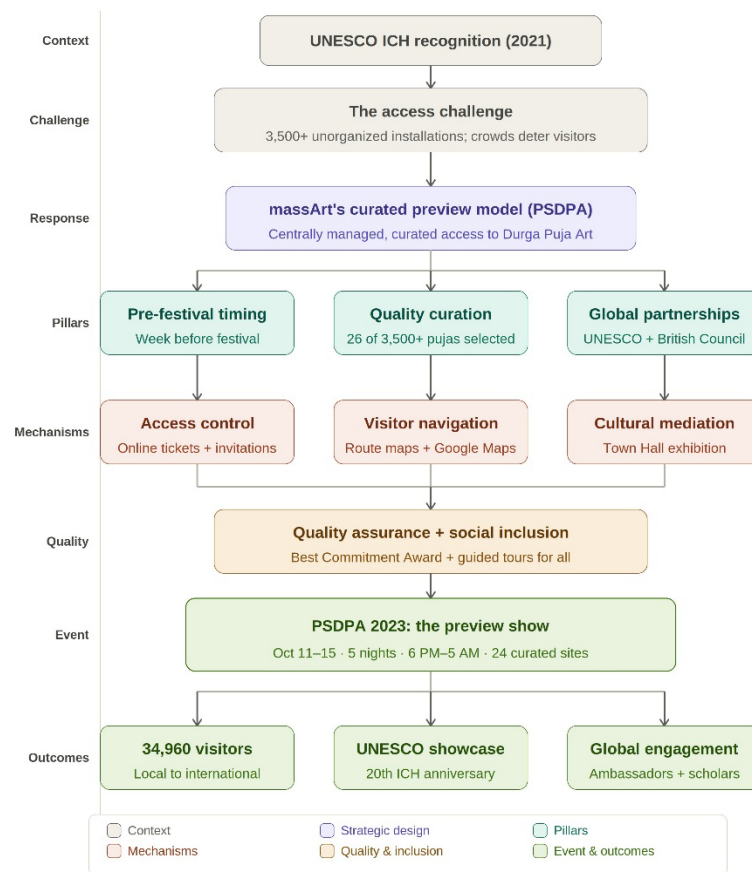


Figure 2 Deciphering the Strategic Design of PSDPA2023 © Author

4.2. FACILITATING 'PUBLIC-PRIVATE RELATIONSHIPS,' 'MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS,' AND 'DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES' FOR PSDPA2023

4.2.1. PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

PSDPA2023 represents a strategic collaboration among MassArt, UNESCO, and the British Council to facilitate effective planning. This collaborative model integrates local cultural initiatives with global institutional frameworks alongside critical knowledge domains, which is crucial for fostering sustainable event management in international festival tourism.

- **MassArt:** Local Implementor: As the primary local implementer, MassArt (2024b) played a pivotal role in pioneering and curating PSDPA2023. Their vision was to transform Kolkata’s Durga Puja into a global platform for showcasing West Bengal’s local artistry. It functioned as a cultural intermediary (Bourdieu, 1984) by bridging the gap between local community creativity and global tourist expectations. This approach provides a

managed experience for international visitors, as visible in their “journey through the entire process, from conception to the final outcome” (MassArt, 2024a). Their initiative also resonates with the idea of festivals as platforms for international consumption (Quinn, 2005), which is evident in their claim that this “immersive experience” will leave the tourists with “unforgettable memories” of the festival and convince them of “its rightful claim” for being the “world’s biggest public art exhibition” (MassArt, 2024a).

- **UNESCO: Global Promoter:** UNESCO’s inscription of the Durga Puja in Kolkata on its ICH list in 2021 provided crucial global legitimization, elevating the festival’s perception from a locally practiced small religious festival to the “world’s biggest public art festival” (UNESCO, 2023). Correspondingly, MassArt curated PSDPA to support UNESCO in completing 20 years of the Convention for Safeguarding of ICH (UNESCO, 2003). UNESCO reverted by promoting PSDPA. This association of a local implementing body with a global cultural organization enhanced the event’s cultural authenticity on the international platform as a heritage-induced tourism product (Timothy & Boyd, 2003), attracting “art aficionados from across the globe” (UNESCO, 2023). This form of cultural authentication from an international organization amplifies the festival’s intrinsic symbolic value in the city’s creative tourism industry (Richards & Wilson, 2006). Evidence includes the “hassle-free visits to the art installations,” “interactive sessions with the artists and artisans...,” and “exposure to the process of creation of the art” (UNESCO, 2023).
- **British Council: International Partner:** The British Council served as a prominent international partner for MassArt in staging PSDPA2023. Their prior work on “Mapping the Creative Economy around Durga Puja 2019” (British Council, 2021) allowed them to showcase their “thought leadership and insights work on the creative economy” (British Council, 2023) to MassArt. Following this partnership, MassArt and the British Council advocated for a “creative economy roundtable with the state government”, which led to the establishment of the multilateral PSDPA platform. This intellectual collaboration transcended the festival’s focus, extending beyond mere ritualistic celebration to embed it within broader discussions of urban policy and cultural diplomacy, making a significant contribution to the city’s creative destination branding (Prentice & Andersen, 2003; Richards, 2021).

This synergistic convergence of MassArt’s local innovation, UNESCO’s global recognition, and the British Council’s knowledge investment demonstrates a robust PPP model (Figure 3) that implementers can adopt to stage similar curated preview events in the region.

Figure 3



Figure 3 PPPs of PSDPA2023 © MassArt

(<https://massart.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/lowerbanner-min-1-1024x132.jpg>)

4.2.2. MEDIA ADVERTISEMENTS

PSDPA2023 represented media advertisements that played a crucial role in shaping public perception and extending the event’s reach, reflecting innovative uses of digital platforms for audience outreach and engagement.

- **Promoting Global Legitimation:** Broadcasting media channels consistently legitimized PSDPA2023 by promoting its association with UNESCO ICH. News channels like Zee 24 Ghanta (2023) promoted “UNESCO and MassArt’s Preliminary List of Durga Pujas,” positioning the public art festival as a globally recognized phenomenon. This strategy effectively extended the event’s outreach to international audiences, transcending geographical boundaries and fostering global engagement, crucial for events seeking a competitive advantage (Tham, 2024).
- **Advertising Crowd-free Tours:** Print media platforms advertised a unique, enhanced, and crowd-free viewing experience for PSDPA2023. Newspapers like Anandabazar Patrika (2023) printed on their cover: “Pujor Age Pujor Dekha – Samil Hon Apnio,” meaning “Seeing the Puja before the Puja – You can join us too.” This headline promoted curated access before the regular crowds. Similarly, calls for action, such as “GET TICKETS ONLY ON

– Paytm Insider,” streamlined accessibility, making the artistic experience more comfortable and immersive. This call aligns with the importance of media efforts in making events accessible (Estanyol, 2022).

- **Promoting Strategic Collaborations:** Digital media platforms also highlighted the collaborations between stakeholders of PSDPA2023. The Telegraph Online (2023) reported that “MassArt has joined hands with UNESCO and British Council to host the pre-puja event...” Such promotions assured audiences of the event’s robust organizational foundation and credibility, reflecting the critical need for resilient event systems in uncertain festive gatherings (Kwiatkowski et al., 2023).
- **Advertising Participant Applications:** Social media platforms, such as MassArt’s Facebook page (“Durga Puja Art”), actively engaged potential participants in PSDPA2023 through their discourse. Posts like “enter the world’s biggest public art show” invited direct applications to “sarbojanin (baroari) Durga Puja Art organizers” from the “Kolkata Municipal Corporation” area and adjoining municipalities, including deadlines like “29th August, 2023 till 11:59 pm” (Durga Puja Art, 2023a). This call fostered community engagement (Richards, 2021) in the curated event. See Figure 4.

Figure 4

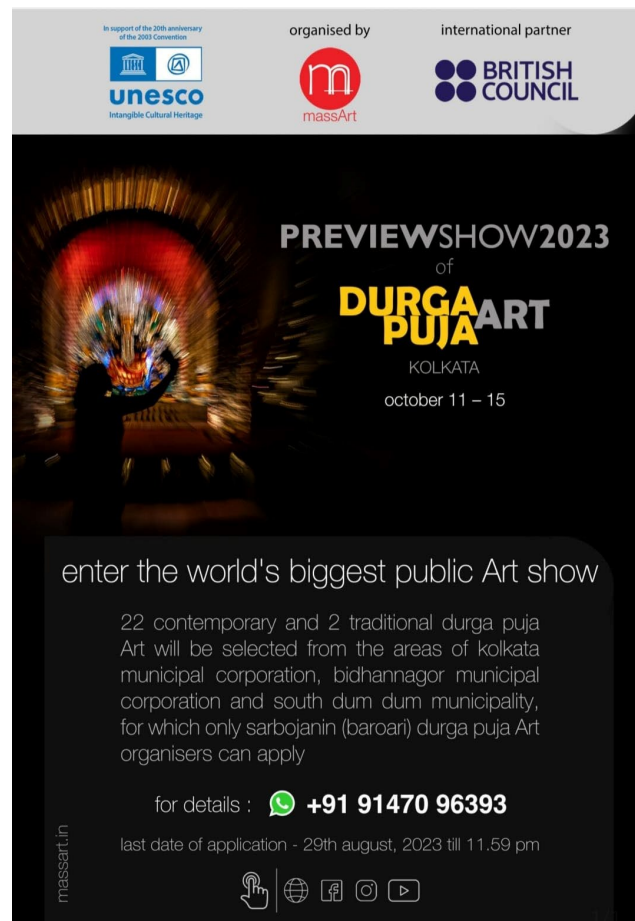


Figure 4 Advertising Participant Application via Facebook for PSDPA2023 © MassArt
(<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=261405706699953&set=pcb.261405756699948>)

Promoting Event Updates: Additionally, MassArt’s Facebook posts (Durga Puja Art, 2023a) consistently disseminated event updates, including event dates (“October 11 – 15”) and site locations (“Kolkata”). The Inaugural PSDPA2023 Ceremony, an exclusive (dignitary-focused) event, was also livestreamed on Facebook, showcasing how enhanced live streaming capabilities (Estanyol, 2022) serve as a direct tool for audience engagement.

Advertising Tourist Co-creation: Another innovative aspect of MassArt’s Facebook posts was encouraging user-generated content, inviting visitors to “capture still & video photographs of the making process” (Durga Puja Art, 2023c)

at the various PSDPA2023 venues, thereby transforming the audience into active participants (A. E. Brown, 2023). See Figure 5.

Figure 5

world's biggest public Art festival
PREVIEWSHOW2023
 of
DURGA PUJA ART
 KOLKATA
 october 11 - 15

In support of the 20th anniversary of the 2003 Convention
 UNESCO
 Intangible Cultural Heritage

international partner
 BRITISH COUNCIL

organised by
 massArt

- ❑ Art elements of the world's biggest public Art festival are of immense value for documentation and appropriate usage
- ❑ please capture still & video photographs of making process of your durga puja Art
- ❑ it should be in high resolution
- ❑ send them to - text.psdpa@gmail.com for using in many creatives and documentaries to globalise durga puja Artworks

+91 91470 96393

Figure 5 Advertising Tourist Co-creation via Facebook for PSDPA2023 © massArt
 (<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=277464438427413&set=a.127378510102674>)

Promoting Diversity and Inclusivity in Events: Concurrently, MassArt’s Facebook posts promoted a broad spectrum of artistic expressions, evident through the detailed categorization of selected PSDPA2023 sites, such as “Artist from Art Institutional Background,” “Artist from Other Institutional Background,” “Women Artist,” “Durga Puja Art in Collaboration with Foreign Artist,” and so on (Durga Puja Art, 2023b). This diverse selection promoted inclusivity in non-artistic, gender, and foreign aspects of the event portfolio (Ziakas, 2024).

Advertising Multi-sensory Engagement: Another unique strategy employed by MassArt’s YouTube channel was the virtual audio-visual tours for PSDPA2023. For example, a video on Thakurpukur SB Park (a contemporary site) virtually transported viewers to the venue and streamed its artistic installation in the form of a musical journey, “Elem Notun Deshe,” meaning “Came to a New World” (MassArt, 2024c), which was the theme of their installation. Videos like these offered a digitally immersive aesthetic experience (Estanyol, 2022), especially for those unable to attend the event in person.

Promoting Global Exchange: Another digital media platform, The Times of India, highlighted international artistic collaborations, promoting how “Indian and Dutch artists” – Ayan and Benjamin-Martina – “Collaborate in Kolkata” at Behala Nutan Dal (a contemporary site) for PSDPA2023 (Jawed, 2023). This highlight positioned the eventscape (G. Brown, 2020) as a dynamic platform for global artistic exchange.

In essence, PSDPA2023 leveraged diverse media advertisements to strategically position itself as a globally legitimate, accessible, and culturally rich event, effectively utilizing digital platforms for broad outreach and engagement.

4.2.3. DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Strategic financial management is crucial for festivals seeking to achieve optimal tourism returns. PSDPA2023 adopted a digitally driven approach for its preview passes, unveiling a multifaceted strategy to generate revenue and expand outreach.

Tiered Pricing and Audience Segmentation: PSDPA2023 employed a tiered pricing strategy, offering six distinct preview pass options based on duration in days and the number of individuals. For instance, Silver passes provided basic 3-day access to 1-2 individuals at INRs 1,749 and 2,999, while Gold and Platinum offered advanced 3-day and 5-day access with additional benefits, including food and beverages (Figure 6). This approach aligns with the event experience literature (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), which recognizes the diverse preferences and financial capabilities of visitors (Marshall et al., 2023). It facilitates managing abundance (Ferri et al., 2025) by catering to varied demand levels, optimizing visitor flow, and maximizing revenue through a bundle pricing model that increases footfall and per-ticket revenue.

Figure 6

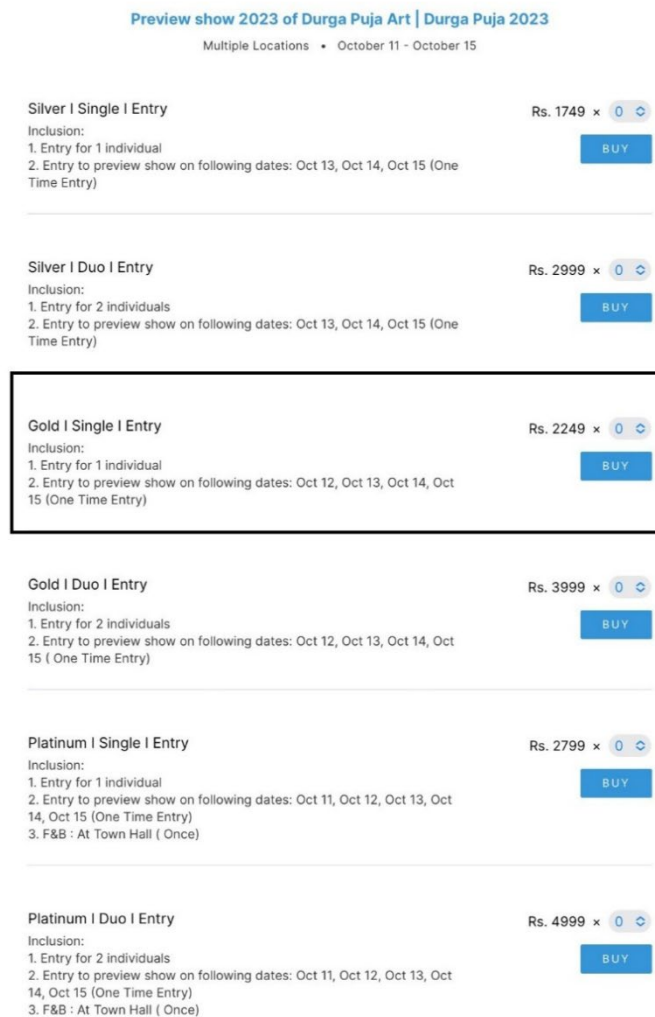


Figure 6 Marketed Categories of Preview Passes for PSDPA2023 © Author

- Financial Structuring and Revenue Optimization:** The financial structuring of MassArt’s preview passes demonstrated meticulous economic control. Analyzing the author’s Gold Single Entry pass revealed a breakdown into base event price, booking platform fee (Paytm Insider), and Goods and Services Tax (GST), including CGST and SGST. This adherence to tax regulations ensures economic impacts extend to both central and state governments (M. B. Duignan, 2021). Such transparent billing is fundamental for event management, facilitating cost recovery and profit generation while enabling forecasting of festival revenue, thus contributing to sustainable development (Mair, Foley, et al., 2024).
- Digital Marketing and Online Distribution:** Digital platforms played a crucial role in the marketing and distribution of PSDPA2023. In partnership with Paytm Insider, MassArt leveraged its broad customer base to engage a wider audience, particularly international tourists. This digital distribution streamlined the purchasing process through electronic tickets and invoices, minimizing logistical challenges (Figure 7). The use of such distribution platforms, which focus solely on advertising (Bredikhina & Kunkel, 2022), exemplifies effective stakeholder engagement in the creative economy (Richards & Wilson, 2006). It also facilitated data collection for post-event analysis, informing future marketing strategies in curated festival management (Hallmann, 2024).

Figure 7

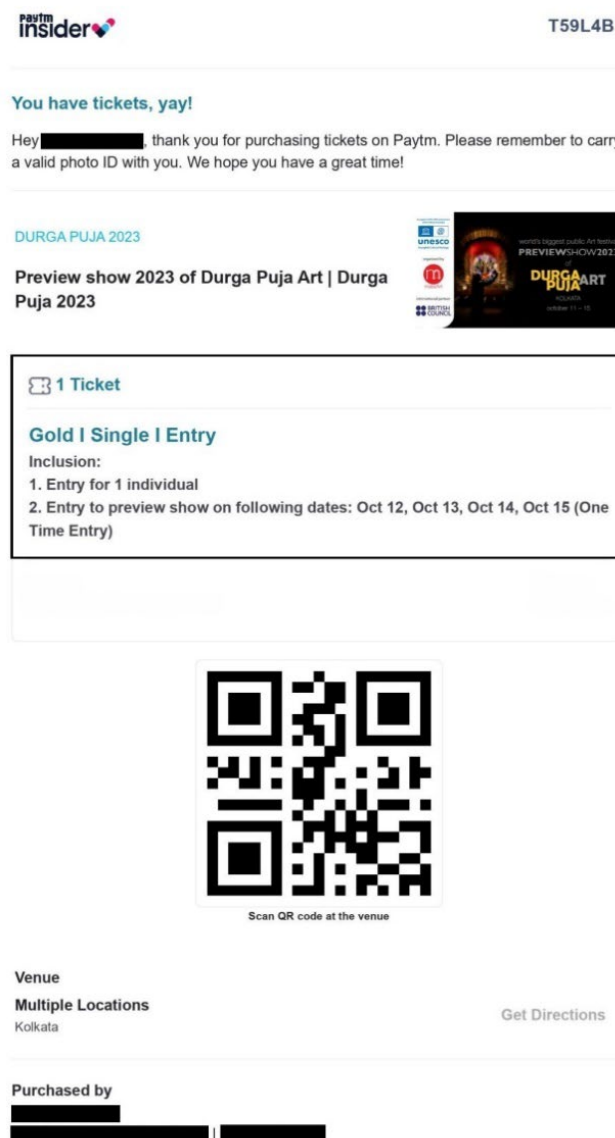


Figure 7 Electronic Distribution of Preview Passes for PSDPA2023 © Author

Thus, PSDPA2023 exemplifies how integrating financial acumen with targeted digital strategies can enhance a festival's appeal, demonstrating a curated model for large-scale celebrations such as Kolkata's Durga Puja.

4.3. MITIGATING 'CROWD-RELATED BARRIERS' AND 'ENHANCING CULTURAL ACCESSIBILITY' USING PSDPA2023

4.3.1. MITIGATING CROWD-RELATED BARRIERS

PSDPA2023's design proactively addressed typical crowd-related issues, creating a more comfortable and safer environment, a crucial need often overlooked in studies of crowded intangible heritage festivals.

- **Security Orchestration and Visitor Welfare:** Security orchestration used a two-tier screening system to ensure a controlled flow of preview tourists to the participating pandals. "Tier one screening commenced outside the site, where deployed officials from Paytm Insider diligently conducted electronic verification of preview passes. Tier two screening followed immediately, involving a thorough security check of preview tourists by club-appointed guards for any hazardous materials, before they entered the site" (Observation, Beliaghata 33 No Pally, Kolkata, 14.10.2023). See Figure 8. This two-tiered screening system facilitated seamless tourist navigation, which was crucial for the event's managerial success, directly mitigating physical discomfort and safety concerns associated with overtourism (S raphin et al., 2019). Additionally, puja pandals implemented safety measures to ensure visitor welfare within the venue by installing iron barricades. "These barricades served to prevent tourists from approaching too closely, thus safeguarding the installations and idols from potential damage and ensuring their safety" (Observation, Chetla Agrani, Kolkata, 12.10.2023).

Figure 8

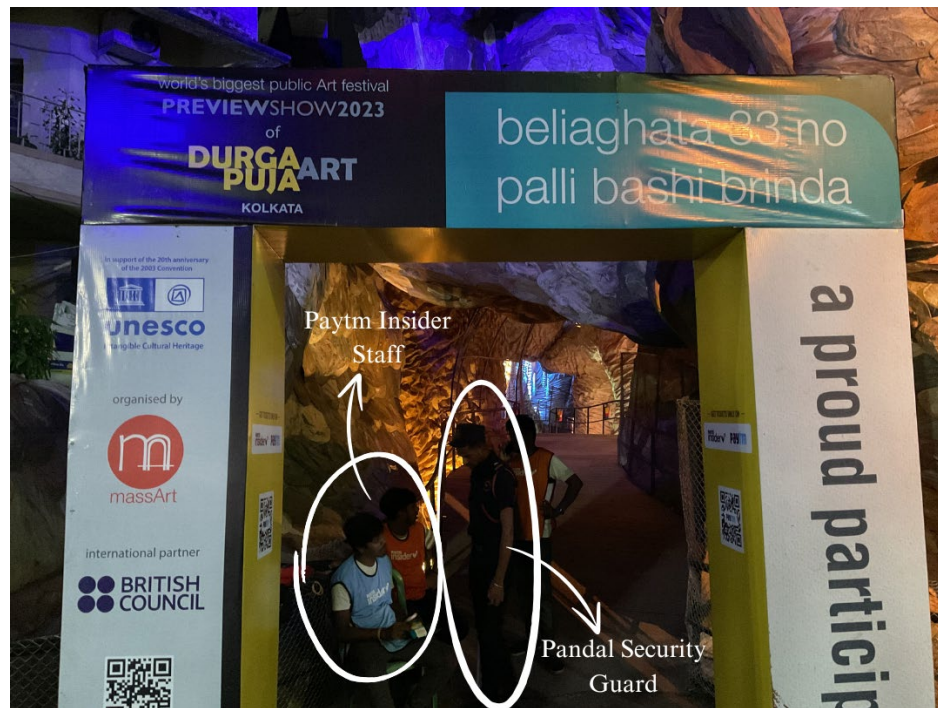


Figure 8 PSDPA2023's Two-Tiered Screening   Author

- **Curated Routing and Explicit Navigation:** Curated routing focused on enhancing on-site accessibility for its target demographic of diverse international visitors, which was achieved through explicit navigation within the puja pandals by MassArt. "Upon entering the pandal, navigation signboards with arrow directions were clearly visible. These signs effectively guided tourists along the prescribed route for their tour of the pandal" (Observation, Jodhpur Park 95 Pally, Kolkata, 13.10.2023). See Figure 9. Additionally, MassArt officials targeted outreach to international and interstate visitors with dedicated volunteers throughout their curated tours. For

instance, “seating arrangements were made on the first floor...reserved for invited dignitaries and foreign ambassadors” (Observation, Town Hall, Kolkata, 12.10.2023). This deliberate segmentation added a tailored experience to the crowded ICH festival (Tkaczynski & Rundle-Thiele, 2011).

Figure 9

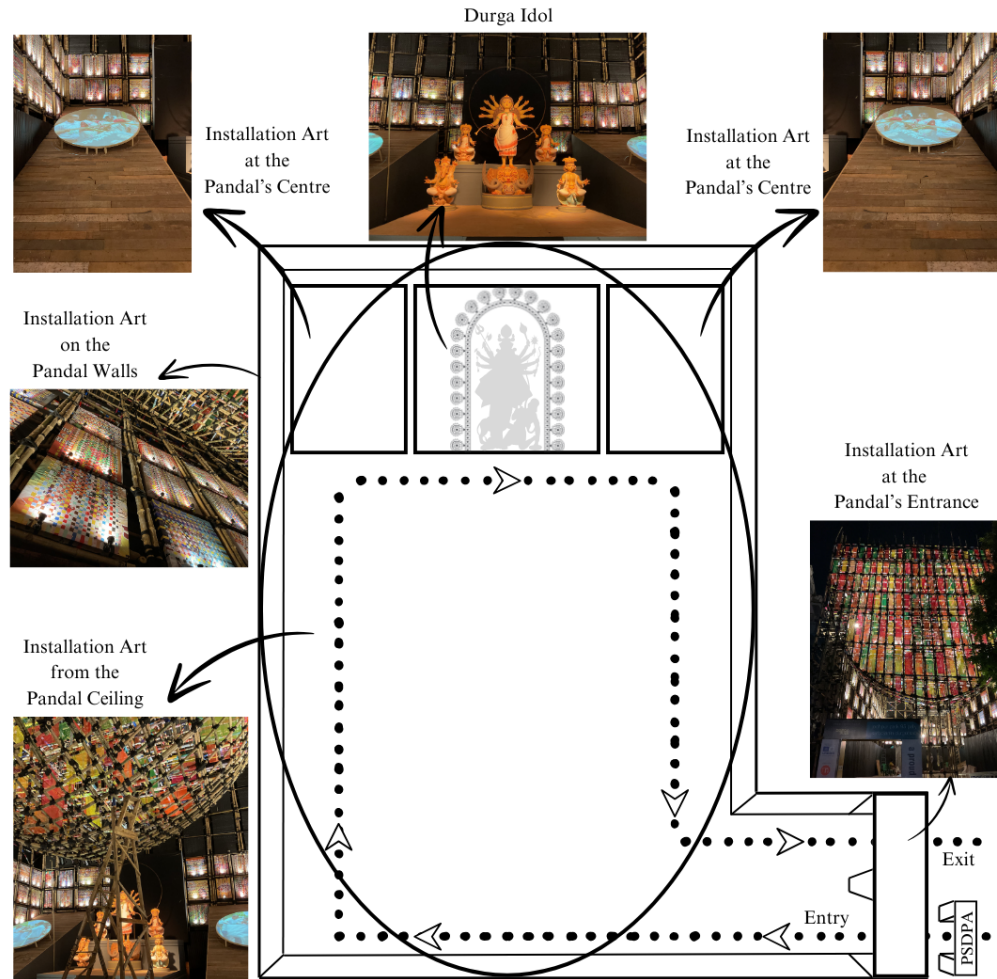


Figure 9 Curated Route Map of Jodhpur Park 95 Pally Sarbojanin from PSDPA2023 © Author

In sum, PSDPA2023’s methodical approach to crowd control before Durga Puja provides a valuable case study for similar South Asian festivals.

4.3.2. ENHANCING CULTURAL ACCESSIBILITY

Beyond crowd mitigation, PSDPA2023 also significantly enhanced cultural accessibility, ensuring a richer, more engaging, and sustainable experience for its international audience.

- **Event Professionalism:** Crucial to the overall success of PSDPA2023, interviews with club representatives, pandal architects, and traditional artisans detailed their respective roles within the organization. Club representatives highlighted the security arrangements at their puja pandals, their managerial roles during the curated event, and the logistical support provided by MassArt throughout the process. For instance, a club representative said, “We have made comprehensive arrangements for the comfort and safety of our visitors. These include insurance coverage for the puja pandal and for all visitors entering our premises...In addition to these provisions, we maintain close coordination with the local fire brigade and police station, ensuring they are prepared to respond swiftly to any accidental fire outbreaks or potential crime scenes” (Interview, Club Representative, Behala Nutan Dal, Kolkata, 12.10.2023). Pandal architects, although extremely busy with the

finishing process of their art installations, genuinely addressed the preview visitors and urged them to attend this curated event every year. For instance, a pandal architect said, "All I want to convey is a sincere invitation. Please do come to the preview show. At least during this dedicated preview time, we are present in the pandal, and it is less crowded...We will do our utmost to provide you with an excellent tour and experience" (Interview, Pandal Architect, Chetla Agrani, Kolkata, 12.10.2023). Traditional artisans, exhibiting their craft at the Town Hall, praised MassArt for its comprehensive arrangements, including travel, accommodation, and hospitality, which encapsulated the latter's support for the former's craftsmanship. They were also happy to showcase their indigenous artistry to an international audience. For instance, a traditional Patua artisan said, "Our craft is traditionally known as Patachitra paintings...we are coming from Paschim Medinipur District, located in the state of West Bengal...our community has been living and practicing this art there for generations...MassArt has provided a unique platform for artisans like us who come from remote corners of the state, to showcase our traditional craft to an international audience" (Interview, Traditional Artisan, Town Hall, Kolkata, 12.10.2023). Such professionalism underscores robust organizational efforts, contributing to a lasting legacy by supporting local skills and networks (Lockstone-Binney et al., 2023).

- **Immersive Live Experience:** A key aspect of enhancing cultural accessibility was the immersive live experience at the Kolkata Town Hall Exhibition. First in line was a miniature idol-making studio resembling Kumartuli (the traditional idol-making neighborhood) in Kolkata, where tourists watched a Kumar (idol-maker) sculpt a clay idol of Goddess Durga. A local visitor said, "I visited Kumartuli a few days back. I was amazed by the breathtaking idols there. Just look at this setup. It takes me back to Kumartuli. That beautiful smell of riverine clay freshly taken from Kumartuli Ghat at the bank of the Hooghly River. Those perfect Kumar touches on the clay, transforming it into Maa Durga. Amazing, isn't it!" (Conversation, Local Visitor, Town Hall, Kolkata, 12.10.2023). See Figure 10.

Figure 10



Figure 10 Mini Kumartuli Studio at Town Hall from PSDPA2023 © MassArt
(<https://massart.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ex4-min.jpg>)

Following this, MassArt escorted the visitors to the craft exhibition stalls. Traditional artisans from various indigenous lineages welcomed them with live demonstrations of craft-making. For example, the patachitra painter we

were talking about earlier was painting folk tales on various handicraft items, such as shawls, teapots, trays, etc. See Figure 11.

Figure 11



Figure 11 Patua Artist's Patachitra Stall at Kolkata Town Hall from PSDPA2023 © Author

Evagoras Vryonides (Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to India) said, "It is very impressive to see the commitment of the people and the authorities in relation to Durga Puja, especially in the Town Hall. We have witnessed several artists. We have been amazed to see the variety of handicrafts and their artwork" (MassArt, 2023). This live artistic engagement fostered visitors' curiosity and enabled direct art interpretation, moving beyond superficial engagement to genuine cultural immersion (Mair & Duffy, 2015).

- **Festive Storytelling:** It played a vital role in fostering cross-cultural understanding. We are sharing a personal experience from Town Hall. "I, along with other visitors at the Town Hall Exhibition, was guided into a room housing an Indo-German artistic creation called 'Jol Kotha Bole,' meaning 'Water Speaks'. German light designer Thomas Eichhorn and Indian sound artist Sukanta Majumdar collaborated in this creation, narrating an audio-visual story. This story touched me emotionally and transcended my conscience into the everyday livelihoods of people dwelling along the German Elbe and Indian Ganga rivers" (Autoethnography, Author, Town Hall, Kolkata, 12.10.2023). See Figure 12.

Figure 12



Figure 12 Cross-Cultural Storytelling at Town Hall from PSDPA2023 © MassArt
(<https://massart.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/ex2-min.jpg>)

Similarly, our walkthrough tours at the installation pandals felt surreal. We are sharing a personal experience from Kashi Bose Lane. “After entering the pandal, the startup installation shook me. It was a sack hanging from the roof with a baby girl’s head, depicting female infanticide...Upon entering the pandal, where the Goddess Durga was seated, another installation moved me deeply. A girl child, dressed in bridal attire, sat at the idol’s feet, symbolizing child marriage. These evil societal depictions created a strong resistance in me, and I couldn’t think of anything else emotionally” (Autoethnography, Author, Kashi Bose Lane, Kolkata, 14.10.2023). See Figure 13.

Figure 13



Figure 13 Self-guided Walkthrough Tour at Kashi Bose Lane from PSDPA2023 © Author

This festive storytelling highlighted the event’s potential for dialogue and connection, aligning with broader goals of sustainable development through art tourism (Quinn, 2005, 2006).

Collectively, PSDPA2023’s focus on professional curation, immersive experiences, and meaningful storytelling exemplifies a model for sustainable cultural engagement that enriches both international visitors and indigenous communities.

4.4. BALANCING ‘GLOBAL TOURIST OUTREACH’ WITH ‘LOCAL CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY’ AND REPLICATING THE ‘CURATED PREVIEW MODEL’ FOR ‘CROWDED ICH FESTIVALS’ – A COMPARISON BETWEEN PSDPA2022 AND PSDPA2023

4.4.1. PSDPA’S POTENTIAL TO BALANCE ‘GLOBAL TOURIST OUTREACH’ WITH LOCAL CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY’

PSDPA demonstrates a robust capacity to balance global outreach with local cultural authenticity. Comparing PSDPA2022 and PSDPA2023 (Table 2), the model expanded its diverse presentation formats. PSDPA2023 introduced ‘welfare events’ (for differently abled children, elderly people, and orphans) and a ‘competitive event’ (a photography contest), alongside existing inaugural, exhibitory, and exploratory portfolios. This expansion aims to foster social sustainability and community well-being (Mair, Wood, et al., 2024; Mair, Foley, et al., 2024), thereby enriching engagement with local communities and enhancing the overall festival portfolio for diverse audiences.

Table 2

Table 2 Comparing Event Portfolios – PSDPA2022 and PSDPA2023 © Author

Event Portfolios					
PSDPA2022 vs PSDPA2023					
PSDPA2022		Presentation Format		PSDPA2023	
massArt		Local Implementor(s)		massArt	
UNESCO, British Council		Global		UNESCO, British Council	
Partner(s)					
Contemporary Durga Puja Art		22 Participants(s)		Artist from Art Institutional Background	
Alipore Sarbojanin				Arjunpur Amra Sabai Club	
Arjunpur Amra Sabai Club				Chorebagan Sarbojanin Durgotsab Samity	
Bakul Bagan Sarbojanin Durgotsab Committee				Dum Dum Tarun Dal	
Barisha Club				Tala Pratay	
Behala Nutan Dal				Artist from Other Institutional Background	
Beliaghata 33 No Palli Bashi Brinda				Kalighat Milan Sangha	
Chetla Agrani Club				Rajdanga Naba Uday Sangha	

Chorebagan Sarbojanin Durgotsab Samity		Beliaghata 33 No Palli Bashi Brinda	
Dum Dum Park Bharat Chakra Club	Woman Artist	Behala Friends	1
Dum Dum Tarun Dal	Durga Puja Art	Behala Nutan Dal	1
	in Collaboration with International Artist		
Gariahat Hindusthan Club	Consistent Contemporary Durga Puja Art Installation	95 Pally Sarbojanin Durgotsab Committee	10
Hatibagan Sarbojanin Durgotsab Committee		Barisha Club	
95 Pally Sarbojanin Durgotsab Committee		Chetla Agrani Club	
Kalighat Milan Sangha		Dum Dum Park Tarun Sangha Puja Committee	
Kashi Bose Lane Durga Puja Samity		Kashi Bose Lane Durga Puja Samity	
Khidirpur 25 Pally Club		Naktala Udayan Sangha	
Shibmandir Sarbojanin Durgotsab Samity		Samaj Sebi Sangha	
Suruchi Sangha		Suruchi Sangha	
Tala Pratay		Thakurpukur SB Park Sarbojanin	
Thakurpukur SB Park Sarbojanin		Tridhara Akalbodhan	
Tridhara Akalbodhan	Ideal Sponsor Projected	Dum Dum Park Bharat Chakra Club	1
	Durga Puja Art		
Vivekananda Park Athletic Club	Model Organiser Driven	Hatibagan Sarbojanin Durgotsav Committee	1
	Durga Puja Art		

Traditional Durga Puja Art	Ballygunge Cultural Association	2		Traditional	Ballygunge Cultural Association	2		
	Baghbazar Sarbojanin Durgotsab o Pradarshani			Durga Puja Art	Shreebhumi Sporting Club			
Distinguished Household Durga Puja Art (Bonedi Bari)	Daw Bari	2		Aristocratic Household	Colootola Roy Bari	2		
				Durga Puja Art (Bonedi Bari)	Jorasanko Daw Bari			
22, 23, and 24 September 2022	Sovabazar Rajbari	3	Dates	11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 October 2023		5		
Online	26,184	Invitation Cards	19,243	Entry	Preview Passes	Silver Single Entry	INR 1,749	34,960
Pre-registrations						Silver Duo Entry	INR 2,999	
						Gold Single Entry	INR 2,249	
						Gold Duo Entry	INR 3,999	
						Platinum Single Entry	INR 2,799	
						Platinum Duo Entry	INR 4,999	
Inauguration Ceremony	Tala Pratay	1	Inaugural	Inauguration Ceremony	Tala Pratay			1
			Event(s)					
'Making of Durga Puja Art' - An Exhibition	Town Hall, Kolkata	1	Exhibitory	'Making of Durga Puja Art' - An Exhibition	Town Hall, Kolkata			1
			Event(s)					
Contemporary Tours		22	Exploratory	Contemporary Tours				22
Traditional Tours		2	Event(s)	Traditional Tours				2
Aristocratic Tours		2		Aristocratic Tours				2
Not Applicable			Welfare	Differentially Abled Children Tours				32
			Event(s)	Elderly People Tours				25
				Orphan Tours				27
Not Applicable			Competitive Event(s)	Photography Contest				1
Not Applicable			Closing	Best Commitment Award				1
			Event(s)					

4.4.2. PSDPA’S REPLICABILITY AS A ‘CURATED PREVIEW MODEL’ FOR ‘CROWDED ICH FESTIVALS’

PSDPA’s replicability as a curated preview model is evidenced by its significant growth in international visitors. Total tourist numbers increased from 19,243 in PSDPA2022 (MassArt, 2022) to 34,960 in PSDPA2023 (MassArt, 2023), representing a growth rate of 81.68% (Table 3). Notably, international tourist inflows grew by 124.90% from 482 to 1,084. This substantial growth, particularly among international visitors, highlights the model’s effectiveness in attracting a global audience and its potential for long-term benefits and legacy building for crowded ICH festivals (Lockstone-Binney et al., 2023).

Table 3

Table 3 Comparing Tourist Flows – PSDPA2022 and PSDPA2023 © MassArt				
Category of Tourists	PSDPA2022	PSDPA2023	Growth Factor (2022-23)	Growth Rate (2022-23)
Local Tourists	4041	8,390	2.08	107.62%
State Tourists	2405	2,552	1.06	6.11%
National Tourists	12315	22,934	1.86	86.23%
International Tourists	482	1,084	2.25	124.90%
Total Tourists	19243	34,960	1.82	81.68%

5. CONCLUSION

The investigation into the 2023 edition of the PSDPA event reveals a significant transformation in the management of high-density South Asian mega-festivals. The study successfully deconstructed how PSDPA transitioned from a decentralized collage of disconnected installations to a centrally managed, professionally curated preview show. By selecting only 26 high-quality sites from over 3,500 candidates, the organizers created a manageable and high-profile experience tailored for a global audience. The core outcome of this strategic design was the effective mitigation of traditional crowd-related barriers through security orchestration and explicit navigational routing, which allowed international visitors to engage with the festival’s artistic core before the chaotic peak of the public ritual.

A primary insight from this research is the efficacy of anticipatory curation over reactive logistics. The findings indicate that by introducing a dedicated pre-festival window, organizers can offer a behind-the-scenes look at the craftsmanship, creating a performative interaction between the viewer and the artisan that is often lost in mass gatherings. Furthermore, the comparative analysis between 2022 and 2023 provides a clear empirical insight into the model’s scalability; the 81.68% growth in total attendance and the staggering 124.90% surge in international visitors underscore the increasing global demand for managed ICH experiences. This growth suggests that international tourists do not merely seek the spectacle of the crowd but require cultural accessibility and managed narratives to derive value from their visit.

The significance of this study lies in its alignment of cultural heritage management with broader global frameworks, specifically the UN SDGs. By facilitating decent work and economic growth (SDG 8) for indigenous artisans and promoting sustainable urban communities (SDG 11), PSDPA serves as a blueprint for heritage sustainability. Practically, the study offers a robust framework for stakeholders—such as UNESCO, the British Council, and MassArt—to leverage public-private partnerships (PPPs) and digital technologies (e.g., app-based ticketing and social media storytelling) to segment audiences effectively. This model proves that global open-access festivals can be curated without succumbing to ‘disneyfication,’ provided the process remains rooted in local cultural authenticity.

While PSDPA2023 has established a pioneering model for South Asia, this research opens several avenues for continuation. Future studies should examine the long-term legacy effects of these curated shows on the year-round economic well-being of the traditional artisan communities. Additionally, as cities move toward developing eventscapes or portfolios of interconnected events, research is needed to see how curated preview events can be integrated with crowded regional festivals to create a resilient, year-long circuit. As digital technologies evolve, the role of virtual ethnography and immersive digital twins should be further explored to enhance the ‘preview’ experience for those

unable to travel in person, ensuring that the aura of local festivals like Kolkata's Durga Puja continues to resonate globally.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to all participants who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the successful compilation of this study. Firstly, the authors would like to acknowledge MassArt, a socio-cultural organization based in Kolkata, for organizing the PSDPA2023 event, which inspired them to design and conduct a case study on the topic. Secondly, the authors would like to express their gratitude to Ms. Priyanka Sarkar, Lead of Audience Development and Partnership at MassArt, Kolkata, for providing them with the requisite secondary information on PSDPA2023, which contributed to their study's analyses and findings. Lastly, the authors would like to acknowledge all the PSDPA2023 Participants, including pandal representatives, installation artisans, traditional artisans, organizing members, and preview tourists, who generously shared their time and engaged in meaningful conversations with the authors about the event that ultimately informed the findings of this research. globally.

REFERENCES

- Banerjee, S. (2022, September 3). Three-day pre-event to showcase Durga Puja artistry, minus crowd for tourists. *Telegraph India*. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/three-day-pre-event-to-showcase-durga-puja-artistry-minus-crowd-for-tourists/cid/1884278>
- Banerjee, S. (2023, September 8). Unesco boost for Durga Puja preview show. *Telegraph India*. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/unesco-boost-for-durga-puja-preview-show/cid/1964593>
- Banerjee, T. (2023, July 18). Inbound tourism hope for puja as queries pour in from foreign tourists. *The Times of India*. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/inbound-tourism-hope-for-puja-as-queries-pour-in-from-foreign-tourists/articleshow/101841812.cms>
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (R. Nice, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Bredikhina, N., & Kunkel, T. (2022). Make It Count: Examining Outcomes of Activation and Advertising-Like Event Sponsorship. *Event Management*, 26(7), 1447–1467. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599522X16419948391131>
- British Council. (2021). *Mapping the Creative Economy around Durga Puja 2019*. https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/mapping_the_creative_economy_around_durga_puja_sept_2021.pdf
- British Council. (2023). *India Report 2023*. https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/india_report_2023_final_for_web_-_lower_res.pdf
- Brown, A. E. (2023). Co-creation and Engagement: What Festivalgoers Want in the Uk Rock Festival Experience. *Event Management*, 27(2), 201–216. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599521X16367300695690>
- Brown, G. (2020). *Eventscapes: Transforming Place, Space and Experiences*. Routledge.
- Cardin, A. (2025, February 25). Brazil's Carnival 2025 Poised to Break Records with Over 53 Million Participants. *The Rio Times*. <https://www.riotimesonline.com/brazils-carnival-2025-poised-to-break-records-with-over-53-million-participants/>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Duffy, M., & Mair, J. (2018). *Festival Encounters: Theoretical Perspectives on Festival Events*. Routledge.
- Duignan, M. B. (2021). Utilizing Field Theory to Examine Mega-event-led Development. *Event Management*, 25(6), 705–720. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599520X15894679115583>

- Duignan, M., & Chalip, L. (2023). Exploring the Nexus Between Events and Human Rights: Building Agendas for Research, Theory, and Practice. *Event Management*, 27(6), 815–821. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599523X16923678342422>
- Durga Puja Art. (2023a, August 25). Enter the world's biggest public art show. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=261405706699953&set=pcb.261405756699948>
- Durga Puja Art. (2023b, September 7). Selected Durga Puja Art. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=268262852680905&set=pcb.268262966014227>
- Durga Puja Art. (2023c, September 23). #DurgaPuja2023 #unescoworldheritagesite #BritishCouncil. Facebook. <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=277464438427413&set=a.127378510102674>
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: An Overview. *Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung*, 36(4 (138)), 273–290. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23032294>
- Estanyol, E. (2022). Traditional Festivals and Covid-19: Event Management And Digitalization in Times of Physical Distancing. *Event Management*, 26(3), 647–659. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599521X16288665119305>
- Ferri, P., Napolitano, S., & Zan, L. (2025). Organizing abundance and shuffling at festivals: the Ferrara Buskers Festival case. *Poetics*, 110, 101997. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2025.101997>
- Getz, D. (2007). *Event Studies: Theory, Research and Policy for Planned Events*. Elsevier.
- Getz, D. (2012). Event Studies: Discourses and Future Directions. *Event Management*, 16(2), 171–187. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599512X13343565268456>
- Getz, D., & Page, S. J. (2016). Progress and prospects for event tourism research. *Tourism Management*, 52, 593–631. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.03.007>
- Goncalves, R. (2011). The traditional samba school dance as a performative experience. SIEF2011 10th Congress: Lisbon, Portugal, 17-21 April 2011. <https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/sief2011/paper/6753>
- Hallmann, K. (2024). Public Spaces and Events. *Event Management*, 28(6), 949–954. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599524X17095118412081>
- Jawed, S. (2023, October 5). Indian and Dutch artists collaborate in Kolkata for Preview Show of Durga Puja Art 2023. *The Times of India*. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/spotlight/indian-and-dutch-artists-collaborate-in-kolkata-for-preview-show-of-durga-puja-art-2023/articleshow/104180443.cms>
- Kwiatkowski, G., Ossowska, L., Strzelecka, M., Dragin-Jensen, C., Hannevik Lien, V., Janiszewska, D., & Kloskowski, D. (2023). Building a Resilient Event Sector in Times of Uncertainty. *Event Management*, 27(4), 481–498. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599522X16419948695071>
- Laing, J. (2018). Festival and event tourism research: Current and future perspectives. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 25, 165–168. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.11.024>
- Lim, W. M. (2023). Philosophy of science and research paradigm for business research in the transformative age of automation, digitalization, hyperconnectivity, obligations, globalization and sustainability. *Journal of Trade Science*, 11(2/3), 3–30. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JTS-07-2023-0015>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage.
- Lockstone-Binney, L., Mair, J., & Holmes, K. (2023). Developing “Eventful” Mega-Event Hosting Legacy Indicators. *Event Management*, 675–690. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599523X16820528697852>
- Lu, L., Zhou, R., Chen, G., & Misener, L. (2024). Examining the Evolution of Network Governance Forms of an Event Leveraging Collective: A Longitudinal Investigation. *Event Management*, 28(5), 673–690. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599524X17066809545638>
- Mair, J., & Duffy, M. (2015). Community events and social justice in urban growth areas. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 7(3), 282–298. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19407963.2014.997438>
- Mair, J., Foley, C., & Edwards, D. (2024). Events and Economic Sustainability: A Critical Commentary. *Event Management*, 28(8), 1225–1234. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599524X17095118412090>
- Mair, J., Trendafilova, S., & Werner, K. (2024). Environmental Sustainability in Event Management: A Critical Commentary. *Event Management*, 28(3), 477–484. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599524X17046754077334>
- Mair, J., Wood, E., & Quinn, B. (2024). Social Sustainability in Event Management: A Critical Commentary. *Event Management*, 28(7), 1101–1108. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599524X17046754077352>
- Mann, B. L. (2006). Virtual Ethnography and Discourse Analysis. In B. Mann (Ed.), *Selected Styles in Web-Based Educational Research* (pp. 439–456). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-59140-732-4.ch027>

- Marshall, H., Johnson, J., & Brown, A. E. (2023). Going Alone: The Experience of Solo Eventgoers at Music Events in the UK. *Event Management*, 27(4), 591–606. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599522X16419948695260>
- MassArt. (2022). Preview Show 2022: Report. https://massart.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/a-report_psdpa2022.pdf
- MassArt. (2023). Preview Show 2023: Report. <https://massart.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/report-2023.pdf>
- MassArt. (2024a). Home. <https://massart.in/>
- MassArt. (2024b). What Are We. <https://massart.in/about-us/>
- MassArt. (2024c, June 18). Durga Puja Art: Thakurpukur SB Park. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3VsVC-t4LA&t=35s>
- Naeem, M., Ozuem, W., Howell, K., & Ranfagni, S. (2023). A Step-by-Step Process of Thematic Analysis to Develop a Conceptual Model in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22, 16094069231205788. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231205789>
- Picard, D., & Robinson, M. (Eds.). (2006). *Festivals, Tourism and Social Change: Remaking Worlds*. Channel View Publications.
- Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The Experience Economy: Work is Theatre & Every Business a Stage*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- Pink, S. (2001). *Doing Visual Ethnography: Images, Media and Representation in Research*. Sage.
- Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tachhi, J. (2016). *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice*. Sage.
- Porcu, E. (2022). The Gion Festival in Kyoto and Glocalization. *Religions*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13080689>
- Prentice, R., & Andersen, V. (2003). Festival as creative destination. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30(1), 7–30. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(02\)00034-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00034-8)
- Qu, M., & Zollet, S. (2023). Rural Art Festivals and Creative Social Entrepreneurship. *Event Management*, 27(8), 1219–1235. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599523X16830662072107>
- Quinn, B. (2005). Arts Festivals and the City. *Urban Studies*, 42(5–6), 927–943. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980500107250>
- Quinn, B. (2006). Problematising 'Festival Tourism': Arts Festivals and Sustainable Development in Ireland. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 14(3), 288–306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580608669060>
- Richards, G. (2021). The Value of Event Networks and Platforms: Evidence from a Multiannual Cultural Program. *Event Management*, 25(1), 85–97. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599520X15894679115501>
- Richards, G., & Wilson, J. (2006). Developing creativity in tourist experiences: A solution to the serial reproduction of culture? *Tourism Management*, 27(6), 1209–1223. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.06.002>
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Sage.
- Rio de Janeiro by Cariocas. (2026). Carnival tour - Samba School Rehearsal Experience. <https://riodejaneirobycariocas.com/carnival-tour-samba-school-rehearsal-experience/>
- Roaché, D. J. (2017). Intercoder Reliability Techniques: Percent Agreement. In M. Allen (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods* (Vol. 1, pp. 751–752). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483381411.n260>
- Rose, G. (2016). *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials* (4th ed.). Sage.
- Seeing the puja before the puja – You can join us too. (2023, October 8). Anandabazar Patrika.
- Segurado Severino, F., & Silva, F. (2025). Japanese Pop Culture Events as Catalysts for Otaku Tourism: Shaping Destination Choices and Tourist Experiences. *Event Management*, 29(2), 275–293. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599524X17265263360340>
- Séraphin, H., Zaman, M., Olver, S., Bourliataux-Lajoie, S., & Dosquet, F. (2019). Destination branding and overtourism. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 38, 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2018.11.003>
- Tham, A. (2024). Social Media and Events: A Curated Collection of Articles Published in *Event Management* From 2015 to 2022. *Event Management*, 28(8), 1215–1224. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599524X17046754077307>
- The Telegraph Online. (2023, September 14). 24 Durga pujas from Kolkata to take part in UNESCO Preview Show. *Telegraph India*. <https://www.telegraphindia.com/my-kolkata/news/24-durga-pujas-from-kolkata-to-take-part-in-unesco-preview-show/cid/1966141>
- Timothy, D. J., & Boyd, S. W. (2003). *Heritage Tourism*. Prentice Hall.
- Tkaczynski, A., & Rundle-Thiele, S. R. (2011). Event segmentation: A review and research agenda. *Tourism Management*, 32(2), 426–434. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.03.010>

- UNESCO. (2003, October 17). Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>
- UNESCO. (2021a, March 1). Cutting Edge | Bringing cultural tourism back in the game. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-bringing-cultural-tourism-back-game>
- UNESCO. (2021b, December 15). Durga Puja inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/durga-puja-inscribed-unesco-representative-list-intangible-cultural-heritage-humanity>
- UNESCO. (2023). Preview Show 2023 of Durga Puja Art – Kolkata. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/activities/preview-show-2023-of-durga-puja-art-kolkata-00325>
- UNESCO and MassArt's Preliminary List of Durga Pujas. (2023, September 8). [Broadcast]. Zee 24 Ghanta.
- Wood, E. H., Kinnunen, M., & Coll, P. F. (2024). The Structure and Purpose of Shared Festival Memories: A Storytelling Approach. *Event Management*, 28(4), 511–529. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599523X16907613842273>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6th ed). Sage.
- Ziakas, V. (2024). Studying Event Portfolios (2003-2023): Vistas of Multievent Program Organizations. *Event Management*, 28(5), 803–810. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599523X16957834460295>
- Dongre, S., Padroo, B. S., and Nair, R. (2026). The Study of International Marketing Strategies of a Global Makeup Brand: Huda Beauty., *ShodhPrabandhan: Journal of Management Studies.*, 3(1), 30-34. <https://doi.org/10.29121/ShodhPrabandhan.v3.i1.2026.74>