

## Ganesh Immersion Impact on Environment

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Ganesh idol immersions are done all over the country now. Last year due to pandemic, government did not allow any public idols. But in 2021, permissions are granted and public gathering is immense in all the pandals. Here we are concerned about two issues; one is using artificial colours to the POP idols and crowd pulling without following Covid rules. People stopped following precautions to contain the spread of virus. Public is found not wearing masks, not maintaining social distance and of course no provision of sanitization in many Ganesh Pandals. Even if sanitizer is provided, people have become careless by not using it. We all have to be cautious during the festival which is not taken seriously now. However one good sign is increase in awareness about mud idols. Compared to previous years, this year making and selling of mud idols is increased by 15%. Earlier only small idols used to be made in mud but now from one foot to 10 feet, idols are made in mud and some are coloured with natural colours to protect the environment from water pollution.

Since chemical paints have mercury and lead which are toxic elements increase the acidity in water bodies when idols are immersed, causing harm to the aquatic flora and fauna. Though for the past few years, green Ganesha concept is being popularized, still chemical paints are being used by the idol makers for huge idols. Government needs to be strict in banning the use of chemical paints for idols. Then only to some extent we can reduce the pollution. Moreover huge size idols used lot of iron frames which are being recovered from the water bodies. Many cities have designated areas for immersion so the process was decentralized thus causing less harm to major water bodies. Still more and more awareness needs to be created among the public to reduce the pollution through the use of chemical painted idols. Potters need to be encouraged in making huge idols of Ganesh. Natural colours should be used for painting them. After Ganesh chaturdhi, Dussehra comes where in again in some parts of the country Goddess idols are used. Even they should be made of mud which is less done at the moment. But in all these public celebrations, strict rules need to be implied in maintaining sanitization, social distance and wearing masks.

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