

**AN APPEAL FROM THE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND  
CLIMATE CHANGE FOR ECO-FRIENDLY GANESH CHATURTHI,  
31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2022**

Ganesh Festival is one of the main festivals celebrated blissfully and joyfully all over Tamil Nadu. Traditionally, clay is used to make Ganesh idols. Over the years however, plaster of Paris (PoP), which is lighter and cheaper, has become the favoured material to mould idols. PoP contains chemicals such as gypsum, sulphur, phosphorus and magnesium. The dyes used to colour these idols may also contain mercury, cadmium, arsenic, lead and carbon. Plastic and thermocol accessories are used to decorate these idols, such materials are not biodegradable.

Idols made up of only natural, biodegradable, eco-friendly raw materials without any toxic, inorganic raw materials (such as traditional virtuous clay and mud as well as free from Plaster of Paris (PoP), plastic and thermocol (polystyrene) should be encouraged, allowed and promoted and Idols made up of Plaster of Paris (PoP) shall be banned.

The central government has issued guidelines for prepared with a view to ensure environmental friendly idol immersion without affecting the quality of water bodies while ensuring religious observance. These guidelines emphasize the need for restriction on single use plastic materials for making idols, use of naturally curing colours for colouring idols, imposing restrictions on size of the idol, construction of temporary synthetic lined ponds of adequate capacity, etc.

The use of thermocol and plastic in pandals as well as for garlands and other decorations increases non biodegradable waste. The toxic waste from these materials kills plant and animal life in the water bodies.

**Following are some useful tips for celebrating eco-friendly Ganesh festival:**

**USE ECO FRIENDLY GANESH IDOL:**

- Going green is the new mantra, say no to idols made of chemical, Plaster of paris, clay, plastic, thermocol (polystyrene).
- Opt for natural, biodegradable material so that after immersions (visarjan) it does not pollute water and surroundings.
- Natural products can be used to make the idol such as unbaked clay, coconut, paint with natural colours, etc.



**Limit Size and Number of Ganesh Idols in Your Community:**

- Bigger size idols take much space. The height of the Ganesh idol should be limited maximum to 5 feet or 1.5 meters.
- Huge idols also consume more clay or POP for its making, adding more waste to environment.



### SAVE ENERGY:

- Switch on decorative lights during the “aarti” or “pooja” and evenings only when necessary.
- Replace traditional bulbs such as incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFL).



### NATURAL COLORS FOR RANGOLI:

- Use natural biodegradable colours for making Rangoli such as turmeric, henna, mehendi, rice powder, gulaal.
- Such colours do not pose a threat to human health and do not affect the environment also.

### ECO FRIENDLY DECORATION:

- Natural materials like cloth, wood, paper can be used to make dolls, puppets, and bells to decorate around Ganapati idol.
- Make beautiful paper decoration instead of thermocol, which is also not degradable.



### BAN PLASTIC:

- Avoid plastic covers materials packed with single use plastic items during festival season Offerings

**I appeal to all celebrating eco-friendly Ganesh festival enables you to celebrate festival grandly without harming environment and other living beings. Follow covid19 protocols issued by Government to stop the spread of pandemic.**



Director of Environment and Climate Change