

# **REVISED GUIDELINES FOR IDOL IMMERSION**



## **CENTRAL POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD**

**(Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change)**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

To worship God and Goddess generally natural things like Milk, Curd, Ghee, Coconut, Betel leaves and river water are used. Generally, Idols are made with clay or locally available materials and then coloured with natural materials like Chandan, Turmeric etc. The religious scripts, mythology and religious rituals have attempted to drive the importance of preserving nature by adoring it through the centuries. Bhagavadgita (9.26) states:

***“Patram Pushpam phalam toyam, yo mey bhaktya prayachchati Tadaham bhakt yupahrutam asnaami prayataatmanaha” which means***

*“If one offers me in pure consciousness with love and devotion a fruit, a flower, a leaf or even water, I delightfully partake of that offered article”*

भावार्थ : जो कोई भक्त मेरे लिए प्रेम से पत्र, पुष्प, फल, जल आदि अर्पण करता है, उस शुद्धबुद्धि निष्काम प्रेमी भक्त का प्रेमपूर्वक अर्पण किया हुआ वह पत्र-पुष्पादि मैं सगुणरूप से प्रकट होकर प्रीतिसहित खाता हूँ॥

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, hence are toxic when immersed in water bodies. Hence, need was felt to develop guidelines for idol immersion.

In the matter of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) / W.P.(C) No. 1325/2003 in the matter of Janhit Manch Vs. The State of Maharashtra & Ors., Hon’ble High Court of Mumbai in its order dated 22/07/2008 has given the following directions to the Central Government:-

***“We expect that the Central Govt. will consider laying down of guidelines for immersion of idols and would also consider related matters with regard to pollution of water bodies. Both the Union Government as well as the State Government shall consider it expeditiously because the time lost involving the pollution might prove dangerous for environment of the country in long run”***



In pursuance to the directions of Hon'ble High Court, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board, vide order No. A-22011/1/90-Mon, dated February 10, 2009. In the year 2009. The constituted Committee held meetings with the concerned stakeholders and discussed the issues including designated identification of places for idol immersion in the river stretch, use of natural materials in "Pooja", mass awareness programmes to be initiated every year before commencement of all activities of worship and idol immersion. Subsequently, based on the recommendations of the Committee, in the year 2010, CPCB has finalized "Guidelines for Idol Immersion" and circulated to all the stakeholders for ensuring its implementation. These guidelines have been 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 occurring colors for coloring idols, imposing restrictions on size of the idol, construction of temporary synthetic lined ponds of adequate capacity, etc.

During the last few years, there has been some developments in terms of substitutes for various materials used for idols making as well as disposal of idol immersions in temporary artificial designated ponds/tanks, earlier guidelines circulated by CPCB in the year 2010 has been revised after taking views of stakeholders specially emphasizing use of naturally occurring clay, colors in place of synthetic paints and chemicals for coloring idols, arrangement for the provision of temporary confined ponds or tanks for immersion of idols, imposing spot fine for violation of guidelines, safe disposal of solid wastes generated during visarjan/immersion activities, development of market system whereby manufacturers or craftsman or artisans themselves can buy back the idols for reuse and other aspects have been considered and incorporated appropriately as felt necessary. The revised guidelines for idol immersion are detailed in subsequent paras: -

## **2.0 GUIDELINES FOR IDOL MAKERS-CRAFTSMANS OR ARTISANS**

- (i) Idols made up of only natural, bio-degradable, 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.

- (ii) Only dried flower components, straw etc. for making ornaments of idols and natural resins of trees may be used as a shining material for making idols attractive.
- (iii) Use of Single use plastic and thermocol materials shall not be permitted strictly and only eco-friendly materials as straw structure should be used in making idols or decoration of idols/pandals/tazias in order to prevent pollution in recipient water bodies.
- (iv) Use of toxic and non-biodegradable chemical dyes/oil paints for painting idols should be strictly prohibited. Enamel and synthetic dye based paints on idols should be discouraged instead eco-friendly water-based, bio-degradable and non-toxic natural dyes should be used.
- (v) For beautification of idols, removable and washable decorative clothes made only with natural materials and dyes shall be used in place of disposable material containing paints and other toxic chemicals. Only naturally occurring colors from plants (flowers, barks, stamens, leaves, roots, seeds, whole fruits), feathers of different birds, mineral or colored rocks shall be used for coloring.
- (vi) Craftsmen or artisans or manufacturer involved in making idols should be registered with the civic bodies, and should involve in making eco-friendly idols in accordance with these guidelines. In case of Large Scale Idol manufacturers (at least involved in making more than 100 idols in a day) shall obtain registration from the concerned ULBs (registration fee along with a deposit as decided by the ULB depending on the idol making capacity) and failing to comply with these guidelines or any violation of registration conditions, the deposit shall be forfeited by the ULBs apart from prohibition of idol making at least for two years.
- (vii) In the interest of protection of the environment, the craftsman or artisans prefer to adopt innovative approaches (Eg., use of natural clay, pyramid of sugarcane sticks that represents the pandals, natural clay mixed with alum for making idols (on disintegration of idol made out of mud mixed with alum in water, then alum act as a coagulant) in consultation with the concerned State Pollution Control Board (SPCB)/Pollution Control Committee (PCC).



### 3.0 GUIDELINES FOR POOJA ORGANISING COMMITTEES

- (i) As far as possible, low height and eco-friendly idols (made with natural clay, idols stuffed with eco-friendly food materials such as corn, spinach, wheat and vegetable powder), idols decorated with biodegradable, organic colours such as turmeric, chandan and gerua etc., (list of natural, bio-degradable and non-toxic annexed as **Annexure-I**) only should be used for offering poojas to avoid impact on environment.
- (ii) Use of cleaned multi-use metallic or glass or plastic utensils is ideal choice, especially when such material is available from utensil banks. Only biodegradable plates such as Patravali or Pattal or Vistaraku or Vistar or Khali or trencher made with broad dried leaves such as Areca/Banana/Banyan/Sal leaves, biodegradable paper cups/plates and earthen pots may be used in place of single use plastic and polystyrene (Thermocol) for prasad distribution and other purposes.
- (iii) Worship material like flowers, Patri (leaves), *vastras* (clothes), decorating materials (made of paper and bio-degradable or compostable plastic but not single use plastic) etc. should be ensured to remove before immersion of idols and segregated in colour coded bins provided at the designated idol immersion areas/spots.
- (iv) In the interest of protection of the environment, Pooja Organizing Committees should procure eco-friendly idols only from the respective ULBs registered or authorised craftsman or artisans.
- (v) Pooja Organising Committees should seek prior permission from concerned ULB as the case may be by providing management plan and the required provisions (as per the format to be issued by the ULBs) for ensuring safe idol immersion during festival season well at least one month in advance for making necessary arrangements in consultation with the concerned departments.

### 4.0 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL AND URBAN AUTHORITIES

- (i) Licenses/permits may be granted by the Local and Urban Bodies within the respective jurisdiction to only those Idol manufacturers or makers or craftsman or artisans who uses only eco-friendly natural clay materials (but not PoP or baked clay) in making idols, prior to festive times.

Also, large scale manufacturers (involved in making idols more than 100 in a day) shall obtain registration from the concerned ULB along with the prescribed fee and a deposit (as decided by the ULB depending on the idol making capacity). Registered idol manufacturer or maker or craftsman or artisan failing to comply with these guidelines or any violation of registration or permission conditions, registration or permission granted shall be cancelled apart from prohibition of idol making manufacturer at least for two years and in case of idol manufacturer, the deposit shall be forfeited by the respective ULB.

- (ii)** While granting licenses or permits to the idol makers a list of permitted and non-permitted substances to be used for making/coloring/decorating idols may be provided to the Idol makers or craftsman or artisans.
- (iii)** Only registered or licensed idol maker or craftsmen or artisans should be strictly allowed to make idols within the jurisdiction of the respective Urban and Local Bodies as the case may be, in accordance with these guidelines.
- (iv)** As far as possible, instead of immersion of idols in water bodies, all the resident welfare associations or individual households in a city or town should be encouraged to create temporary ponds/tanks of suitable size and adequate capacity with necessary provision for collection and storage of segregated waste prior to immersion, and public should be involved for immersion of idols in such temporary/artificial ponds/tanks made by the resident welfare association or individual household within their campus itself. The waste generated from designated idol immersion activity sites shall be collected and disposed of safely by the ULBs within 24 hours of completion of the idol immersion activity.
- (v)** Arrangements for temporary artificial idol immersion ponds or tanks in close vicinity of the public or on the banks of water bodies with all necessary safety provisions and waste collection centres prior to idol immersion should be arranged for ensuring safe idol immersion during festive season, by the concerned ULBs in association with the other departments as well as Pooja Organizing Committees.
- (vi)** The temporary 'Idol Immersion Ponds/Tanks with the liner made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco synthetic liner should be arranged at suitable locations including on the banks of rivers or stagnant water



bodies such as ponds or lakes shall be cordoned off and barricaded by ULBs and with all other necessary provisions keeping in view safety of the public (such as proper access, approach roads, sign boards, fire safety measure, barricades, designated space for keeping idols prior to immersion, suitable platform with crane provision for idol immersion).

- (vii) In the interest of protection of environment, Urban and Local bodies (ULBs) shall impose restrictions on height of the idol to the idol making agencies or manufacturer or craftsman or artisans (as lesser the size of the idol better would be the immersion process and less consumption of materials required for making idols) depending on the availability of water bodies, provisions made for idol immersions by the ULBs.
- (viii) Waste collection centre in the vicinity of the designated temporary/artificial idol immersion sites or locations should be arranged for ensuring collection of segregated materials (such as flowers, leaves, decorating materials etc.) prior to idol immersion. All waste collection centres should have a provision of colour coded bins of adequate size for collection and storage of segregated materials.
- (ix) Also, all the collected and segregated materials should be transported and disposed of periodically or within 24 hours of completion of idol immersion in accordance with the prevailing provisions of Solid Waste Management Rules 2016, as amended notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (i.e., Reusable clothes may be sent to local orphan homes for reuse, bio-degradable materials for composting and non-biodegradable materials for ultimate disposal in sanitary landfills by the concerned Urban or Local Authorities, as the case may be).
- (x) After completion of the idol immersion ceremony, within 24 hours, the liner material shall be removed and the temporary pits or tanks should be filled with native soil and levelled properly. Other disposable materials shall be managed in accordance with these guidelines (i.e., Clay, Bamboo and wooden logs, if any may be reused). The straw structure materials recovered from designated temporary or artificial immersion areas or spots shall be retrieved and processed for converting into organic manure.
- (xi) Public should be educated on aspects relating to procurement of eco-friendly idols only from the licensed or permitted idol makers or craftsman or artisans, location details of idol makers, type of materials to be used for ill effects of immersion of idols/Tazias in the holy water bodies



and the existing guidelines for idol immersion through mass awareness programme.

- (xii) Immersion of Tazia during Muharram should be performed in Eco- friendly manner.
- (xiii) Local Bodies /Urban Bodies/District Authorities should make efforts to identify and arrange adequate number of designated temporary or artificial immersion ponds or tanks in consultation with River/Pond Authority, Port Authority, Water Supply Board, Irrigation Department and other concerned State/UT Departments, in the close vicinity of the public colonies (such as open grounds) to avoid overcrowding at the water bodies and also to reduce pollution load on receiving water bodies. In case, the designated temporary artificial ponds or tanks are required to be arranged on the bank of the river, in such a case, it should be arranged at suitable places where flow of river/ stream is not harmful to the public, does not inundate in case of increase in flow of river during idol immersion period and river is cordoned off and barricaded suitably to avoid any loss of life specially during immersion activities.
- (xiv) A co-ordination Committee comprising local Police Department, Non-Government Organizations, Local Authorities, SPCB/PCC, representatives of *pooja organizing* committees and other concerned stakeholders may be set up for guiding the public in carrying out the immersion without affecting environmental damages to the water bodies.
- (xv) To ensure safe immersion of idols during festive season, ULBs should deploy adequate number of staff at all the designated idol immersion spots under overall supervision of the nodal officer to be designated by the concerned ULBs. The Nodal Officers also should co-ordinate with the co-ordination committee constituted by the ULBs.
- (xvi) Details regarding arranged designated temporary or artificial immersion spots or areas need to be notified and public as well as *pooja organizing* committees preferably at least one week in advance of idol immersion through electronic and local media in vernacular language.
- (xvii) Sanitary workers shall also be deployed at all the temporary immersion sites for ensuring removal of bio-degradable items like flowers, leaves, clothes, ornaments etc. prior to idol immersion at the designated areas. ULBs shall provide separate colour coded bins for collection and

segregation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes at immersion spots.

- (xviii) Littering or burning of solid wastes comprising of used flowers, clothes, decorating materials, recovered material such as Bamboo and wooden logs, straw structures etc. so generated at the immersion sites or on the banks of water body should be prohibited strictly.
- (xix) In case of immersion of idols in rivers, lakes and ponds is inevitable, arrangement may be made for construction of adequate capacity temporary confined areas at designated places with earthen bunds for the purpose of immersion of idols atleast 50 m away from the waterbody. Temporary immersion ponds shall have a free board of at least 50 cm. Temporary ponds should be constructed with impervious liner (made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco synthetic liner) with a provision of adequate landing platform for keeping the crane for idol immersion. Water in the temporary or artificial immersion ponds or tanks may be drawn from the nearby water body. After completion of immersion, only supernatant water may be allowed to flow into river/pond/lake, as the case may be, after checking for colour and turbidity as per BIS specification for Drinking Water IS 10500:2012. Natural coagulants shall be used for pre-treatment of wastewater mainly composed of polymers of natural origin extracted from plants, algae or animals. Among these are polysaccharides and water soluble substances that act as coagulation and / or flocculation agents. include microbial polysaccharides, starches, gelatin galactomannans, cellulose derivatives, chitosan, glues, and alginate.
- (xx) Concerned ULB Authorities also should consider option of construction of permanent cemented large sized artificial tanks for immersion of idols/Tazias at suitable places for a village or town or city to avoid direct immersion of idols into lakes/rivers/ ponds/sea.
- (xxi) Proper Sign Boards showing location of temporary idol immersion ponds/tanks, route charts to be provided at all salient points and also create awareness through local newspapers/electronic media in vernacular language, atleast one week in advance at all the salient points. by the ULBs.
- (xxii) The Pooja Organizing Committees/Local or Urban Bodies/ District Authorities be involved in organizing a public campaign on the ill effects of



the toxic components of coloring materials, not only of the idols, but also other decorating materials used during the festive season, for immersing (visarjan) the idol or 'pratima' or tazias only in designated temporary artificial ponds or tanks. Specific leaflets and poster for mass awareness may be prepared in vernacular languages and displayed at salient points. Further, the Pooja committees/Local or Urban Bodies/ District Authorities also be persuaded to display such posters and distribute leaflets among worshippers involving Eco Clubs, NGOs, Education Institutes/Universities and Schools.

- (xxiii) Idol makers, pooja Committees may also be awarded for promotion of clay idols made with natural colors, consistent awareness for ensuring compliance to these rules. Imposing Spot fine for violation of these guidelines also be practiced by the Local and Urban Authorities.
- (xxiv) ULBs also shall make arrangements for movable artificial tanks to reach residential welfare societies where people can do idol immersion without crowding and polluting the water bodies to avoid uncontrolled crowd conditions at Ghats during idol immersion and also to avoid accidents that may likely to happen at the time of idol immersion in rivers, lakes and ponds.
- (xxv) Management of idol waste and treatment of polluted water from the designated temporary Idol Immersion ponds or tanks should be carried out as detailed below:-
  - (a) Practices that would lead to some economic benefits like returning the visarjit idols to the idol maker or management of solid wastes generated during visarjan activities in different localities for household as well as large community festivals shall be ensured in accordance with the prevailing rules by the Local/Urban bodies. As far as possible, only non-recyclable/non-biodegradable/non-recoverable materials should be disposed of in sanitary landfills by the Local/Urban bodies.
  - (b) Community festivals with large idols should be given permission by ULBs only when the organisers submits a detailed management plan prepared in line with the prevailing rules or by the guidelines issued from time to time on environmental management charge basis to be decided by the Local/Urban Bodies. The bamboo scaffolding/metal sub structure on which large idols are built shall be reused as far as possible and may be collected separately from the degradable remains.

- (c) The charges of hiring/outsourcing agencies to clean-up the wastes from the designated idol immersion sites should be collected as 'visarjan charges' from every individual citizen or community. The visarjan charges collected should be utilized to clean-up the visarjan sites, to manage polluted water from the artificial temporary tank/ponds and for environmentally sound management of the solid remains of idol, etc. The waste water collected from the designated temporary artificial ponds/tanks after ensuring on-site pre-treatment shall be discharged into or public sewers leading to the Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)/ Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs).
- (d) Disintegrated material/Non-biodegradable materials shall be dealt as per provisions of the Solid Waste Management Rule 2016, as amended.

## **5.0 GUIDELINES FOR IDOL IMMERSION IN RIVERS, LAKES AND PONDS**

- (i) As far as possible idol immersion in Rivers/Ponds/Lakes shall be encouraged only at specific designated artificial confined tanks/ponds with liner made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco synthetic liner, on the banks shall be promoted.
- (ii) A temporary artificial tank or pond with liner made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco synthetic liner (HDPE), and having earthen bunds on the bank of the river/lake/pond shall be created for Idol Immersion by the concerned ULBs. Temporary artificial tank or pond.

In case of immersion of idols in rivers, lakes or ponds is inevitable, a designated location (having proper approach, access, corner portion of a river/pond/lake, having shallow depth of water in river or lakes or ponds) should be identified and safety provision preferably steel or wooden barricades shall be made by concerned ULBs.

- (iii) All the flowers, leaves and artificial ornaments of idols should be removed prior to immersion of idols and only such idols may be immersed in a designated place provided with safety provisions.
- (iv) Lime or alum or any other equivalent coagulant should be added in designated temporary lined pond/tank as pre-treatment option for ensuring settling of solids. After completion of immersion, only



supernatant water may be allowed to flow into river/pond/lake, as the case may be, after checking for colour and turbidity as per BIS specification for Drinking Water IS 10500:2012.

- (v) Post immersion, with remains of idols and activities such as desludging of the designated area should be undertaken and ensured its disposal as per Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 as amended thereafter, within 24 hours by the concerned ULBs, as per these guidelines.

## **6.0 GUIDELINES FOR IDOL IMMERSION IN SEA**

- (i) In case of Idol immersion in sea, immersion may be done between low tide line (LTL) and high tide line (HTL) (irrespective of its depth) and only at designated areas identified by the Coastal Zone Management Authorities in the States/UTs. The low-tide line and high tide lines may be identified and marked well in advance by the ULBs in consultation with the concerned authorities.
- (ii) Immersion of Idols in High Tide Line (HTL) & Low Tide Line (LTL) into the sea may be permitted only in Non-Eco-Sensitive Areas earmarked previously in consultation with all the concerned agencies approved by Govt. of India for demarcation of HTL, LTL, Eco-sensitive area etc.
- (iii) Concerned authorities in State Govt./UT Administration dealing with safety & security in coastal areas shall take care of the necessary arrangements such as Motor Boats with security personnel/home guards with adequate safety equipment be deployed to supervise idol immersion activities during festive season.

## **7.0 GUIDELINES FOR IDOL IMMERSION BY HOUSEHOLDS**

- (i) Individual households should be encouraged to use only eco-friendly idols made of natural clay and bio-degradable materials as decorative and pooja materials.
- (ii) As far as possible, immersion of small idols should be done at their homes in eco-friendly manner i.e., in a bucket filled with water and idol be kept in immersed state until it dissolves completely. After settlement of settleable and colloidal solids (if required alum powder or any other equivalent coagulant may be mixed and stirred vigorously using a stick at least for 30 seconds and thereafter slow mixing at least for 30 seconds and

then allowed to settle), the supernatant liquid may be used either in gardening or discharged in a drain. Settled mud can be dried and then reused further for future idol making or may be used in gardening as soil).

- (iii) In case, individual households intend to perform idol immersions, then idols should be immersed only in the designated on-land temporary artificial ponds or tanks located nearby or artificial movable tanks arranged by the ULBs.

## **8.0 ROLE OF STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARDS (SPCBs) IN STATES & POLLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEES (PCCs) IN UNION TERRITORIES**

- (i) Concerned State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) in the State/Pollution Control Committee (PCC) in the Union Territory Administration should conduct water quality assessment of the water bodies, preferably in Class-I cities (having population more than one lac), at three stages i.e. Pre-immersion, during immersion and post-immersion. During post-festival, samples should be collected preferably after 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> day of the festival.
- (ii) Considering the size of water body, appropriate number of sampling locations may be determined in order to get a fairly representative assessment of water quality during the afore-said periods. Sampling should be done at least 100 m away (downstream side in case of flowing water bodies-rivers) from the immersion site/location to avoid turbulence effect. For ascertaining water quality, Physico-chemical parameters such as pH, DO, Color, BOD, COD, Conductivity, Turbidity, TDS, Chloride, TSS, Hardness, Total Alkalinity and Metals (such as Chromium, Lead, Zinc, Copper, Cadmium, Mercury, Antimony, Barium, Cobalt, Manganese, Strontium) may be analyzed. Apart from the water samples, sediment samples also be collected during pre-immersion, during immersion and post-immersion and collected sediment samples be analysed for the metals (such as Chromium, Lead, Zinc, Copper, Cadmium, Mercury, Antimony, Barium, Cobalt, Manganese, Strontium)
- (iii) Detailed reports should be posted on the SPCBs/PCCs website in public domain and also shall be shared with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF & CC), Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) and CPCB, within two months of completion of last sampling conducted for a particular festival.



- (iv) SPCBs/PCCs shall help ULBs and District Administration in preparing material for creating mass awareness purposes as well as to assess innovative approaches for eco-friendly idol making by the idol makers or craftsman or artisans.

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**Annexure-I****Major Types of Natural Dyes and Their Origin**

<b>Chemical class</b>	<b>Coloring matter</b>	<b>Origin</b>	<b>Color obtained</b>
<b>Vat dyes</b>			
Indole	Indigotin	Woad, indigo	Blues
Quinone	Juglone	Walnut	Browns
<b>Mordant dyes</b>			
Anthraquinones	Alizarin	Madder roots	Reds, oranges, browns
	Pseudopurpurin	Madder roots	Reds, oranges, browns
	Munjistin	Munjeet stems	Reds, browns, maroons
	Laccaic acids	Lac insects	Reds, purples, Maroons
Flavoid tannins	Catachin	Cutch	Browns, grays
Saffron, Flavone	Luteolin	Weld	Yellows, khaki
Flavonol	Quercetin	50% of all plants	Yellows, khaki
Anthocyanins	Cyanidin	Elderberries	Purples
Neoflavanoidones	Haematoxylin	Logwood	Violets, blacks
	Brazilin	Brazilwood	Reds, purples
Isoflavanoid	Pterocarpin	Sanderswood	Oranges
<b>Direct dyes</b>			
Cartinoid	Curcumin	Turmeric	Yellows
	Crocin	Saffron, gardenia	Yellows
Alkaloid	Berberine	Mahonia wood	Yellows
Orinol	Orcein	Orchil	Purples
Benzoquinone	Carthamine	Safflower	Pinks
<b>Reactive dyes</b>			
Depsides	Atranorin	Lichens	Fawns
Despidones	Salazinic acid	Lichens	Browns

**Source:-** Eco-friendly dyes and dyeing (<http://sciedtech.eu/journals/advmtenvsci/current-issue/>)





F. No.:L-25011(13)/7/2019-LME NMCG/01

Dated 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2019

**DIRECTIONS UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE ENVIRONMENT (PROTECTION) ACT, 1986 REGARDING THE IMMERSION OF IDOLS IN RIVERS AND WATER BODIES ON FESTIVE OCCASIONS.**

**WHEREAS**, on festive occasions such as Ganesh Chaturthi, Viswakarma Puja, Durga Puja, Deepawali (Lakshmi/ Kali Puja), Chath Puja (Surya Sasthi), Sarswati Puja etc., there is large scale immersion (visarjan) of idols of gods and goddesses as well as puja materials/religious offerings in water bodies like rivers, lakes, ponds, wells etc. which cause alarming rise in water pollution level. Studies carried out to assess deterioration in water quality due to idol immersion reveal deterioration of water quality in respect of Conductivity, Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand and Heavy Metal Concentration.

**AND WHEREAS**, an increasing trend of making idols using non-biodegradable materials like plaster of Paris (PoP), baked clay, resin fibers and thermocol etc. has been popular during festivals. The chemical dyes /synthetic paints and colours applied on idols contain hazardous chemicals/toxic metals and carcinogenic compounds like Mercury, Chromium, Lead, Cadmium, Zinc Oxide etc. which causes harmful effects to aquatic life. The PoP also contains chemicals/ elements like Gypsum, Sulphur, Potassium and Magnesium which causes harmful effects to aquatic flora & fauna and in turn causes harmful diseases like cancer, respiratory ailments, skin infections etc., if such aquatic life is consumed by human beings.

**AND WHEREAS**, Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) in the matter of O.A. No. 6 of 2012 - *Manoj Mishra Vs. Union of India & Ors.* and connected matters had pronounced various directions in respect of any type of visarjan in river Yamuna (an important tributary of river Ganga) vide orders dated 13.01.2015 and 16.09.2015. These orders prohibit throwing Pooja material or any other material like idols, flowers, havan samagri, food-grain, oil, etc. into river Yamuna except at the designated sites. Any person who is found disobeying this direction shall be liable to pay compensation of Rs. 5,000/- on the "Polluter Pays" Principle. Hon'ble NGT is monitoring various activities causing pollution in River Ganga and its tributaries through O.A. No. 200 of 2014 - *M. C. Mehta Vs. Union of India & Ors.* and connected matters and has observed idol immersion to be a major factor causing pollution in the river Ganga. Hon'ble Tribunal completely prohibited disposing of any kind of waste into the river Ganga vide orders dated 11.04.2017 and 13.07.2017. Defaulter to this direction would be liable to pay Environmental Compensation of Rs 50,000 per default for such dumping and/or throwing of waste of any kind into the river.

**AND WHEREAS**, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has issued the Guidelines for immersion of idols and other puja materials during festival and Hon'ble Tribunal directed respective District Magistrates and other authorities to ensure implementation of the guidelines of CPCB to curb pollution due to immersion of idols in rivers and water bodies.

एन.एम.सी.जी., (जल शक्ति मंत्रालय, जल संसाधन, नदी विकास और गंगा संरक्षण विभाग, भारत सरकार)

प्रथम तल, मेजर ध्यान चन्द नेशनल स्टेडियम, इन्डिया गेट, नई दिल्ली-110002

NMCG, (Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India)

First Floor, Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, India Gate, New Delhi-110002

Ph.: 011-23072900, 23072901



**AND WHEREAS**, National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has been constituted as an authority by Govt. of India vide its Notification S.O.3187(E) dated 07.10.2016 and has been conferred with the power under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for prevention, control and abatement of pollution in River Ganga and its tributaries. As per the provision of the said notification, NMCG has been empowered to issue directions in writing that are necessary for abatement of pollution and rejuvenation, protection and management of the River Ganga and its tributaries.

**AND WHEREAS**, as per the provisions of Section 15 of Environment Protection Act, 1986 "Whoever fails to comply with or contravenes any of the provisions of this Act, or the rules made or orders or directions issued there under, shall, in respect of each such failure or contravention, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years with fine which may extend to one lakh rupees, or with both, and in case the failure or contravention continues, with additional fine, which may extend to five thousand rupees for every day during which such failure or contravention continues after the conviction for the first such failure or contravention".

**AND WHEREAS**, Director General, NMCG in a meeting held with representatives of Government of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal on 12.09.2019 urged for strict implementation of prohibitions related to immersion of idols/disposal of puja refuse, flowers etc., into river Ganga and its tributaries and directed concerned authorities to make suitable arrangement for immersion of idols/disposal of puja refuse, flowers etc., in an environmental friendly manner.

**AND WHEREAS**, in spite of directions against use and immersion of idols made of non-biodegradable and toxic materials like PoP etc. in rivers and water bodies, River Ganga has been facing serious threat due to idol immersion and also disposal of pooja materials into River Ganga, bank of River Ganga or its tributaries.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in view of the above and in exercise of powers delegated to Director General, NMCG under the Notification dated 07.10.2016 of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (now Ministry of Jal Shakti), Government of India, following directions are issued for compliance by all concerned State Government, authority or local authority or other authorities or Board or Corporation:

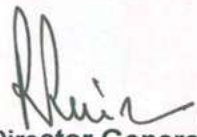
- i. No use of synthetic material/non-biodegradable material, PoP, baked clay, resin fibers and thermocol etc., for making of idols (for immersion/visarjan thereof). Use of toxic and non-biodegradable chemical dyes/synthetic paints for painting of idols should be strictly prohibited.
- ii. No idol immersion into River Ganga and its tributaries and on their banks.
- iii. River banks and ghats should be cordoned off and barricaded to prevent any stray immersion of idols in the river or its banks.
- iv. Adequate arrangements should be made for designated idol-immersion sites within municipal area or bank of river Ganga and its tributaries by constructing temporary confined ponds with removable synthetic liners at the bottom.
- v. Sufficient numbers of separate bins/containers should be provided at designated idol-immersion sites for collection of flowers, garlands and decorating materials/clothing/metal items.





- vi. Separate bins/receptacles should be also provided at ghats on river Ganga and its tributaries for collection of flowers, garlands and decorating materials/clothing/metal items.
- vii. Three bin system to be provided at all pooja pandals for proper segregation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable pooja refuse and other materials for ensuring efficient disposal.
- viii. Biodegradable pooja materials like flowers, garlands, etc. should be composted while non-biodegradable materials like decorating materials (made of paper, plastic and clothing) and metal items etc. should be recycled, in an eco-friendly manner.
- ix. No pooja material to be disposed directly in the river.
- x. A Co-ordination Committee comprising of District Administration Officials, Municipal Officials, Police, NGOs etc. may be set up for guiding the public & Puja Committees for carrying out puja and immersion with no adverse effect to the environment.
- xi. Within 48 hrs. of the immersion of idol (visarjan), the left over material at all designated idol immersion sites within municipal area/ panchayat/bank of river should be collected by the local bodies for disposal as per CPCB guidelines.
- xii. Notification of designated idol-immersion sites to Pooja Samitis, mela authorities, general public through newspaper advertisements and other means of information dissemination.
- xiii. Public and Pooja Samitis be educated regarding ill effects of idol immersion in the rivers and water bodies through mass awareness programmes. Messages should be constantly played by Pooja Samitis for information of devotees regarding the arrangements of designated idol-immersion sites.
- xiv. Adequate numbers of hoarding boards/banners to be placed at various locations within municipal area and near Pooja Pandals with Do's and Don'ts in respect of idol immersion during festivals. Similarly, hoarding boards/banners related to ban of idol immersion in rivers/water bodies/ill-effects of idol immersion in rivers and water bodies to be placed at designated idol immersion sites and important ghats on river Ganga and its tributaries.
- xv. District Magistrate shall enforce the above directions by issuing relevant instructions to the concerned officials for monitoring and enforcement of the directions. If any person violates above directions, then Rs. 50,000 as environment compensation should be levied, collected and deposited with State Pollution Control Boards.

An action taken report on compliance of above said directions shall be submitted to NMCG by concerned officials within seven (07) days from the end of each festival like Ganesh Chaturthi, Viswakarma Puja, Dussehra, Deepawali (Lakshmi/ Kali Puja), Chath Puja (Surya Sasthi), Sarswati Puja.

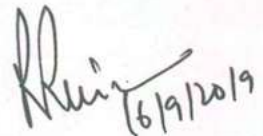
  
Director General 16/9/2019

National Mission for Clean Ganga

To,

1. The Chief Secretary  
Government of NCT of Delhi  
Delhi Secretariat  
I.P. Estate, New Delhi-110002

2. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Uttarakhand  
4, Subhash Road,  
Secretariat, Dehradun - 248001
3. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Uttar Pradesh  
Secretariat, Lucknow - 226001
4. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Bihar  
Old Secretariat, Patna - 800015
5. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Jharkhand  
Secretariat, Ranchi - 834004
6. The Chief Secretary  
Government of West Bengal  
Nabanna, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
325, Sarat Chatterjee Road  
Shibpur, Howrah - 711102
7. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Himachal Pradesh  
Shimla-171002
8. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Madhya Pradesh  
M. P. Mantralaya  
Vallabh Bhawan  
Bhopal, MP
9. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Chhattisgarh  
Mahanadi Bhawan, Mantralaya  
Naya Raipur-492002
10. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Rajasthan  
Secretariat  
Jaipur
11. The Chief Secretary  
Government of Haryana  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Haryana Civil Secretariat  
Sector-I, Chandigarh

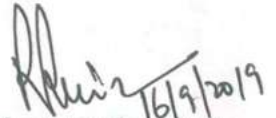
  
6/9/2019

**Director General**  
**National Mission for Clean Ganga**



**Copy for kind information to:**

1. The Secretary  
Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change  
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan  
Jorbagh Road,  
New Delhi -110003
2. The Secretary  
Ministry of Urban Development  
Nirman Bhawan, C - Wing  
Dr. Maulana Azad Road  
New Delhi - 110011
3. The Secretary  
Dept. of Water Resources River Development  
& Ganga Rejuvenation,  
Ministry of Jal Shakti,  
Shram Shakti Bhawan  
Rafi Marg, New Delhi -110001
4. The Chairman  
Central Pollution Control Board  
Parivesh Bhawan, CBD-cum-Office Complex  
East Arjun Nagar, Delhi - 110032



**Director General**

**National Mission for Clean Ganga**

Item No. 01

(Pune Bench)

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

(By Video Conferencing)

Original Application No. 38/2021(WZ)

Shree Ganesh Murtikar Pratishthan & Ors.

Applicant

Versus

Union of India & Ors.

Respondent(s)

Date of hearing: 05.07.2021

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ADARSH KUMAR GOEL, CHAIRPERSON  
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUDHIR AGARWAL, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE M. SATHYANARAYANAN, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE BRIJESH SETHI, JUDICIAL MEMBER  
HON'BLE DR. NAGIN NANDA, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant: Mr. Jaydeep S. Deo, Advocate

**ORDER**

1. This application seeks quashing of Clause 2.0(i) of the *Revised Guidelines for idol immersions* dated 12.05.2020 issued by the CPCB is so far as it states that “*the idols made of Plaster of Paris (POP) shall be banned*”.

2. Case set out in the application is that the applicants represent manufacturers of idols in Maharashtra. Prohibition of POP in use of idols to be immersed is arbitrary and illegal. POP is produced by heating gypsum (which is found in abundance in Paris). Its composition is (CaSO<sub>4</sub>) H<sub>2</sub>O, better known as calcium sulphate hemihydrate. It is used widely for preparation of casts around fractured bones, to make moulds in dentistry etc. POP is fire resistant and is used as coating on wood, metal etc. to avoid fire hazards. POP is also used in medicines and



cosmetics. Traditionally, clay collected from the river banks was used for the idols which has following drawbacks:

“

- a. *Lack of availability of clay in abundance to meet need of mass production of idols.*
- b. *There is Destruction of natural sedimentation on river banks while extracting clay (Shadu)*
- c. *Clay Idols are fragile and susceptible to frequent breakage.*
- d. *Clay Idols have limited shelf life and start disintegrating.*
- e. *Clay Idols are difficult to transport.*
- f. *Number of manufacturers of clay idols is limited.*
- g. *Clay contains Silica, Iron, Aluminum, Manganese, Magnesium, Potassium, Sodium and 8 other similar minerals along with their compounds.*
- h. *Clay disperses in water and settles at bottom causing sedimentation.*
- i. *Clay idols are not recyclable.*
- j. *The Applicants state that since the last 60-70 years, the idol manufactures opted for mass production of idols made from plaster of Paris as the idols made from PoP have the following advantage.”*

3. For the last 60-70 years, POP replaced clay because of following benefits:

“

- a. *PoP Idols are durable and have high shelf life and are easy to transport.*
- b. *PoP Idols are made of Calcium and Sulphate which is not easily soluble in water.*
- c. *PoP from Idols does not disperse in water when immersed and causes less pollution.*
- d. *PoP Idols are attractive and light in weight and hence sedimentation is less as compared to clay idols.*
- e. *PoP idols can be mass produced to meet demand of the people.*
- f. *PoP Idols are affordable than clay idols and can be purchased by all strata of society*
- g. *PoP is easily recyclable.”*

4. According to the applicants, POP is obtained from naturally occurring gypsum and is not hazardous. Manufacture of idols by itself does not cause any pollution and it is only immersion which raises the issue. The applicant has referred to a report prepared by a NGO 'Srishti Eco' dated 05.09.2004 to the effect that POP idols are less polluting. Further reliance is on an article dated 01.07.2014 published in

International Journal of Scientific Engineering and Technology (Vol. No. 3, Issue No. 71) about recycling of POP.

5. Applicants have submitted that a detailed scientific study is required to prove that POP causes pollution. On the contrary, use of POP will prevent degradation of environment on account of excavation of clay from the river banks. Alum in clay idols is harmful for humans. In spite of immersion of 500 idols every year, Lake in Hamarpur village in Pen Taluka, District Raigad is clean. Similar is the position of a lake at Wagholi, Taluka Haveli, District Pune. Applicants have also relied upon report from a lab that clay has more harmful ingredients compared to POP. The applicants have then referred to order of the Bombay High Court dated 22.07.2008 in PIL (W.P.) No. 1325/2003 requiring issuance of guideline on the subject of immersion of idols containing toxic colors and other toxic materials. This led to Guidelines dated 18.06.2010 by CPCB. Thereafter, further guidelines were issued on 23.01.2012 by Gujarat Pollution Control Board which were quashed by order of this Tribunal dated 09.05.2013 *inter-alia* on the ground that directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (EP Act) could not be issued by the State Government. It was further observed that powers under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 could be invoked only when there was a discharge of toxic material into the water body. A direction was issued to study whether POP made idols pollute water. There is also an order of this Tribunal dated 05.08.2016, following the judgment dated 09.05.2013, declining to issue a direction to impose ban on manufacture of idols from POP, in absence of a study warranting such ban.



6. We have heard learned counsel for the applicants and perused the record.

7. It will be appropriate to reproduce the impugned direction which seeks to revise the pre-existing 2010 Guidelines on the subject. The relevant clause from the impugned Guidelines reproduced below:-

*“Idols made up of only natural, bio-degradable, 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.”*

8. We find that the application under Section 14 -15 of the NGT Act can be filed only by a victim of damage to the environment in view of the judgment of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Techi Tagi Tara Vs. Rajendra Singh Bhandari & Ors.*<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the application is not maintainable. Moreover, as per 'Precautionary' principal of environmental law, required safeguards can be adopted in anticipation of damage even in absence of a scientific study. CPCB being an expert body, has issued guidelines in pursuance of order of the Bombay High Court and 2010 guidelines earlier issued on the subject, which were admittedly upheld, have been now revised. The same are to prevent immersion of idols containing harmful component which may result in degradation of water quality. While there may be some opinions about POP being less polluting or less harmful, the same cannot be taken as conclusive. There can be differing opinions on the subject. We may only note that POP idols need use of chemical paints which are certainly harmful for water quality. We note that the impugned revised guidelines are reiteration of NMCG statutory order under section 5 of the EP Act dated 16.9.2019 passed in

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<sup>1</sup> (2018) 11 SCC 734

pursuance of orders of this Tribunal in the case of abatement of pollution of Yamuna and Ganga, being orders dated 13.1.2015 and 16.9.2015 in OA 6/2012 (Yamuna) and orders dated 11.4.2017 and 13.7.2017 in OA 200/2014, holding that immersion of idols in the rivers was an identified cause of pollution which was required to be controlled.

9. In these circumstances, we do not find any ground to entertain this application which is accordingly dismissed.

Adarsh Kumar Goel, CP

Sudhir Agarwal, JM

M. Sathyanarayanan, JM

Brijesh Sethi, JM

Dr. Nagin Nanda, EM

July 5, 2021  
Original Application No. 38/2021(WZ)  
A