

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR IDOL IMMERSION



By

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Introduction



- In India, Idol worship has been in practice since ancient times.
- Ganesh festival is celebrated traditionally in the state of Maharashtra as a social and community activity, started by **Lokmanya Tilak**, the objective of the festival was mainly to bring people together and promote freedom movement.
- On festive occasions such as **Vinayaka Chaturthi, Durga Puja, Saraswati Puja etc.**, it has been a tradition to immerse idols in water bodies like rivers, lakes, ponds, estuaries, open coastal beaches, wells etc.

Concerns

- Immersion of idols in water bodies like rivers, lakes, ponds, estuaries, open coastal beaches, wells etc., cause **concerns in terms of water pollution, air pollution, noise pollution etc.**
- It is therefore important that **we celebrate the festival keeping in view the need for environment protection and also prevention and control of pollution.**

CONSTITUENTS OF PAINTS

Inorganic pigments

White	Coloured	Metallic	Extenders
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Titanium dioxide• Zinc oxide• Antimony oxide• White lead• Lead sulfate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iron oxide• Red lead• Cadmium red• Lead silico chromate• Lead chromates• Zinc chromates• Cadmium yellow• Calcium plumbate• Chromium oxide• Prussian blue• Ultramarine blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aluminium• Zinc• Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paris white• Blanc fixe• Barytes whiting• China clay• Mica• Talc

Indian Standard Drinking Water – Specification IS 10500 : 1991

Parameter	Standard	Risk or effects
pH	6.5 – 8.5	Low pH - corrosion, metallic taste High pH – bitter/soda taste, deposits
Total Dissolved Solids	500 mg/l	Hardness, scaly deposits, sediment, cloudy colored water, staining, salty or bitter taste, corrosion of pipes and fittings
Iron, Fe	0.3 mg/l	Brackish color, rusty sediment, bitter or metallic taste, brown-green stains, iron bacteria, discolored beverages
Chromium, Cr	0.05 mg/l	Skin irritation, skin and nasal ulcers, lung tumors, gastrointestinal effects, damage to the nervous system and circulatory system, accumulates in the spleen, bones, kidney and liver

Indian Standard Drinking Water – Specification IS 10500 : 1991

Parameter	Standard	Risk or effects
Copper, Cu	0.05 mg/l,	Anemia, digestive disturbances, liver and kidney damage, gastrointestinal irritations, bitter or metallic taste; Blue-green stains on plumbing fixtures
Lead, Pb	0.05 mg/l	Reduces mental capacity (mental retardation), interference with kidney and neurological functions, hearing loss, blood disorders, hypertension, death at high levels
Zinc, Zn	5 mg/l	Metallic taste
Cadmium, Cd	0.01 mg/l	Highly toxic; causes 'itai-itai' disease-painful rheumatic condition; cardio vascular system affected; gastro intestinal upsets and hyper tension

Public Interest Writ Petition

- Public Interest Writ Petition No. “PIL / W.P.(C) No 1325/2003”, filed in the Hon’ble High Court of Mumbai to restraint immersion of idols and related matters in the water bodies and to prevent water pollution.
- The Hon’ble High Court of Mumbai in its order dated 22/07/2008 has given the following directions to the Central Govt.:

“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”.

Immersion of idols in water bodies



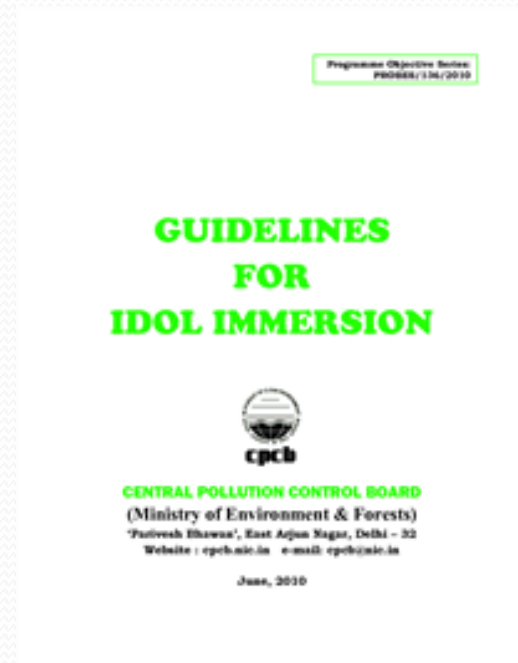
CPCB study - Bangalore

The impact of immersion of Ganesh idols on the lakes revealed the following:

- The acid content in the waters increased.
- The TDS (Total Dissolved Solids) increased by a 100%
- The Dissolved Oxygen content increased during the day due to the agitation of waters during immersion and reduced at night when organic discharge increased.
- The heavy metal content sampling showed an increase in metals such as iron which increased nearly 10 times and the content of copper in the sediments increased by 200 to 300 %.

CPCB Guidelines

- In pursuance to the directions of the Hon'ble Bombay High Court, CPCB evolved the **Guidelines for immersion of idols** and other puja materials reaching in the water bodies during festival.



Guidelines

- Guidelines are divided into 5 parts
 1. General Guidelines for **Idol Immersion**
 2. General Guidelines for **Local Bodies/ Authorities**
 3. Guidelines for Idol immersion **in Lakes**
 4. Guidelines for Idol immersion **in Rivers**
 5. Guidelines for Idol immersion **in Sea**

General Guidelines

- Idol should be made from natural materials as described in the holy scripts. **Use of traditional clay for idol making rather than backed clay**, plaster of paris etc. may be encouraged, allowed and promoted.
- Painting of idols should be discouraged. **In case idols are to be painted, water soluble and nontoxic natural dyes should be used. Use of toxic and non-biodegradable chemical dyes for painting idols should be strictly prohibited.**
- Public should be educated on ill effects of immersion in the holy water bodies through mass awareness programme.

- **Worship material** like flowers, *vastras* (clothes), decorating material (made of paper and plastic) etc. should be removed before immersion of idols. **Biodegradable materials** should be collected separately for recycling or composting. **Non-biodegradable materials** should be collected separately for disposal in sanitary landfills. Clothes may be sent to local orphan house(s).
- The 'Idol Immersion Points' shall be cordoned off and barricaded. **Synthetic liner** may be placed in the bottom, well in advance. The said liner shall be removed on completion of immersion ceremony so that remains of idols would be brought to the bank. Bamboo and wooden logs, if any would be reused. Clay, etc. may be taken to **sanitary land fill for disposal**.

General Guidelines for Local Bodies/ Authorities

- Local bodies /District Authorities generally make efforts to **identify adequate number of designated immersion spots** to avoid overcrowding and also to reduce pollution load on **water bodies**, such spots need to be notified and public & *pooja* committees be informed of such designated sites through awareness programme preferably a month before such events of idol immersion. All the stakeholders such as River Authority, Port Authority, Water Supply Board, Irrigation Department, etc. be consulted for identification of the Immersion *Ghats*, where flow in stream is naturally available.
- A **co-ordination Committee** comprising Police, Non-Government Organizations, Local Authorities, SPCBs, representatives of *pooja* committees and stakeholders **may be set up for guiding the public in carrying out the immersion with minimal impact on water bodies.**

- At the immersion sites, **burning of solid wastes**, so generated comprising of used flowers, clothes, decorating materials, etc. **should be prohibited**.
- In case of immersion of idols in rivers and lakes, **arrangement may be made for construction of temporary confined ponds with earthen bunds for the purpose of immersion of idols**. After the completion of immersion, supernatant water may be allowed to flow in river, pond and lake, as the case may be, after checking for colour and turbidity. Lime may be added in temporary confined ponds.

- The *Pooja* organizers be involved in a 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. Specific leaflets and poster for mass awareness may be prepared and the *Pooja* committees persuaded to be display such posters and distribute leaflets among worshipers.
- Within 48 hours of the immersion of idols, the left over material at idol immersion points on the banks of rivers, lakes, beaches, etc. should be collected by the local bodies for disposal.

Role of SPCBs

- Concerned SPCB/PCC should conduct water quality assessment of the water body, preferably in Class-I cities (having population more than one lac), at three stages i.e. pre-immersion, during immersion and post immersion. 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. For ascertaining water quality, Physico-chemical parameters such as pH, DO, BOD, COD, Conductivity, Turbidity, TDS, Total Solids and Metals (Chromium, Lead, Zinc and Copper) may be analyzed and results posted on the SPCB's website.
- SPCB/PCC shall help to local administration in preparing material for mass awareness for the purpose.

Guidelines for Idol Immersion in lakes

- In case of immersion of idols in lakes or ponds, all the flowers, leaves and artificial ornaments of idols should be removed and idols may be immersed into a corner of pond using removable synthetic liners in the bottom. Post immersion, liners may be taken out along with remains of idols and lime should be added to the pond water for settling the solids. De-sludging of the pond should be undertaken afterwards.

Guidelines for Idol Immersion in Rivers

- Temporary ponds having **earthen bunds along river bank should be created as idol immersion spots**. Removable synthetic liner may be placed well in advance in bottom of pond. The said liner along with remains of idols should be removed from the point within 48 hours of immersion of idols.

Guidelines for Idol Immersion in Sea

- In case of Idol immersion in sea, immersion may be done between low tide line and high tide line (irrespective of its depth). The low-tide line and high tide lines may be identified and marked well in advance. Motor Boats with security personnel/home guards with adequate safety equipment be deployed to supervise the immersion.

Let us celebrate



make the idols small, of non-baked, quick-dissolving clay, and with "natural colours used in food products

Thank you



*Let's create a better - tomorrow
Let's preserve nature - today.*