Indian Idol

With a number of people getting environment conscious, eco-friendly idols are the true blessings of the season. Prathamesh Jadhav finds more on the same.

It’s the festival of the lord who is considered to remove all obstacles; the Vignaharta. Every year Ganeshotsav is celebrated with pomp and reverence. All these days have a flavour of spirituality and mystic freshness as the elephant headed god makes his presence felt not only in our homes but also at various pandals across the country. Idols of different sizes and shapes stand for awe-inspiring creativity and the vibrant, glossy colours used, do not fail to catch our attention.

Earlier idols were made from clay, which is very difficult to mould and very heavy in nature. So idol makers started using plaster of paris (PoP) instead. But these idols made from PoP are harmful to the nature. After immersion of these idols due to its reactivity it harms the marine environment immensely. And causes water pollution in which marine life suffers. Artificial colours which look pleasant to the eyes make the matter worse, as when they come in contact with water body they become toxic in nature and contribute to environment pollution.

On the other hand, many of us are getting environment conscious – its changing scenario for the better.

“Ever since I came to know about the harmful effects that PoP made idols caused, I decided to make idols made of soil, that is used to make earthenware. Idols made out of this material gets dissolved fast in the water and does not deteriorate marine life” says 23 year old Amey Wadekar, a commercial artist who is been making environment friendly idol for past four years. Today many people prefer to buy idols made of paper. Though these idols are little expensive compared to PoP made idols, the fact remains that they are feather-light and gets dissolved very quickly. “We use paper, as it is bio-degradable in nature and does not cause pollution.”

Colours get diluted very easily. “Natural colours made from herbs and vegetable dyes are used for various eco-friendly idols. Many floral extracts and barks of trees are used for different colours. Though these colours are not equally glossy, they are pollution free. It’s a little sacrifice we can afford for a clean environment” concludes Purva Adarkar who brings eco-friendly idols every year at her place.

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Police are leaving no stone unturned to keep the festive spirit of Mumbaikars alive, given the increasing threat of terrorism creeping into our cities

So will the threat this year hamper the festive mood? “Nothing will affect devotees’ enthusiasm. Preparation is the same as before, Ganpati Bappa is always welcomed,” claimed Suresh Patekar, a devotee.

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Festive season has gripped Mumbaikars yet again this year. Devotees are busy preparing for the celebration of Ganesh Utsav. Magnificent pandals are being set and colourful idols are being made. Nothing is more supreme than Ganesh Utsav for Hindus; and ever increasing crowd that turns every year is unbeatable.

Around Bandra, the festive mood is much zealous, this year around. Most of the Ganpati pandals are located in Notan Nagar, ONGC Colony, S V Road and Kishen Chand road.

The Ganpati pandal at Kishen Chand is headed by corporator Ashish Shalat. This particular pandal is being constructed for over the last one month and it is in its final phase of construction. The pandal cost around Rs 7-8 lakhs every year and this amount is collected from the local people. Traditionally, they have been installing Ganesh idol for last 12 years which is immersed on the 11th day. “Forty-five workers are involved in the construction of this pandal and it takes almost a month to complete the work,” informs Shashikumar Khokar, a member of the mandal.

But importantly, it is the threat to Ganesh, which is keeping the mandals as well as police forces around the city on their toes. With festivals like Ganesh Utsav being a sitting target for terrorist, pandals are making elaborate measures as far as security is concerned. Bigger pandals are introducing CCTV, metal detectors and scanning machines. “We have police guards and also our private security for the vigilance during these 11 days of festivity,” says Prashant Raut, another member of the mandal.

Where devotees are preparing for the celebration, security forces are all geared up to combat any kind of mishaps or terror threat. “After series of bomb blasts and live bombs found across the prime locations in India, we will have to make extra efforts to tighten the security, particularly around pandals and routes of procession. On the immersion days, lakhs of people join the procession and those routes will be under severe vigilance,” said Dhanraj S Gaikwad, inspector with Bandra Police Station.

Prathamesh Jadhav finds more on the same.

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