

Resource 4.4



# How is the festival of Ganesh Chaturthi changing?

Problems	Solutions
Many <i>murtis</i> are made of plaster of Paris, which is not biodegradable and will take many years to break down.	Traditional <i>murtis</i> are made of clay or other materials like banana leaves, which break down naturally without pollution. A charity is making <i>murtis</i> with vegetarian food inside to feed fish harmlessly.
<i>Murtis</i> can be painted with bright colours that contain toxins such as mercury, which can cause huge damage to water life.	<i>Murtis</i> can be painted with natural plant-based paints that are biodegradable.
Large numbers of <i>murtis</i> are immersed in rivers, which can cause pollution and problems for wildlife.	Mumbai Council has created 162 artificial ponds to immerse the <i>murtis</i> so they are not released into the rivers.



A *murti* being immersed in an artificial pool in Mumbai.



Eco-friendly clay *murtis* for sale.

Photos by Catherine Davison / Eyevine



In my view the festival has become a bit commercialised from what it should be. The focus should be on the Lord and not so much the processions and the huge *murtis* that are made.

When we immerse Lord Ganesh, we are remembering that he was made from mud by his mother, Parvati Devi. It reminds us that we all come from nature and we return to nature.

By making *murtis* from clay we are connecting back to our ancestors who made them this way, and we are connecting with the whole natural world we are part of.

Sunita