

The Orchid School  
Baner, Pune

**Date:** 11.9.23

**Circular No.:** TOS/FRO/CIR/FS/23-24/17

**Subject: Punaravartan-** Renewal and Recycle of Clay (Shaadu Maati)

Dear Parents,

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only one that ever has. – Margaret Mead*

Dear parents,

As the Ganesh festival approaches many of us are deeply engrossed in the preparations. We recognize that while this festival holds immense cultural, traditional and spiritual significance, it also carries a significant environmental impact.

Each year, we extend invitations to volunteers from **Jeevit Nadi** an organisation dedicated to promoting the importance of river conservation. They emphasize the use of Ganesh idols crafted from shaadu mati rather than plaster of Paris and advocate for the responsible composting of Nirmalya.

Taking our commitment to environmental preservation a step forward we have partnered with **Eco Exist** an organisation dedicated to recycling shaadu mati and returning it to artisans for reuse the following year. The initiative aligns with our goal to minimise the festivals in environmental footprint while preserving its rich traditions.

**What is shaadu maati and how does it affect the environment?**

- Natural clay, popularly known as shaadu maati, is a mineral that is extracted from the ground. Also known as Bentonite or white clay – it can be found in several locations across India, but the largest mines are in Gujarat and West Bengal – it is then transported to other states.
- It is a mineral that is non-renewable – which means that once you extract it out of the ground you cannot put it back nor can it be grown.
- The mining industry negatively impacts the ecology of the location where it is situated. Additionally, when the clay from one ecosystem is disposed of in another ecosystem it takes longer to integrate with the environment.
- When this happens at a very large scale as is the case in the Ganesh festival it damages the environment. Huge deposits of natural clay on the riverbed make them unbreathable and harm marine life.

**What is Punaravartan?**

- Punaravartan- meaning Punah and Avartan or recycling.
- This is a city-wide campaign to collect and redistribute the shaadu maati clay sludge after the visarjan of the Ganesh idols.

- Their main task is to ensure that the clay is kept clean and stored carefully so that it can be reused by the artisan.

### **Ways in which TOS families can participate-**

It is our sincere appeal to all the parents who bring Ganesh idols at their homes to consciously purchase idols made of shaadu maati and follow the steps given below while immersing the idols at home-

- Keep a piece of cloth at the bottom of the water bucket or the vessel in which visarjan is done.
- Remove the items that are not required like flowers, ornaments etc.
- Collect and dry the clay and wrap it into a cloth bundle for handover.
- Deposit the bundle in the school on **Friday, 29.9.23.**

Parents may watch this video to know exactly how to collect the shaadu maati:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RNY-z0TDFV55K-ef4qjxXjf8vao34z3j/view?usp=sharing>

Students of TOS can become ambassadors to promote this cause by talking to the extended members of the family, friends and neighbours and spread awareness.

### **Care is needed to ensure-**

- The sludge is clean and does not contain other organic waste such as flowers.
- Different clays are not mixed with shaadu maati.
- PoP, paper, and idols made of any other materials like turmeric, flour etc, do not get mixed with the clay sludge.

### **What happens to the clay after it is collected?**

- Artisans in Pune, Pen and Mumbai are being contacted to inform them of the availability of this clay and to get their commitment to reuse it.
- The Ganesh Murtikar Sanghatanas in various cities have also been contacted to receive the clay and redistribute it to their members.
- The clay sludge will be given back to the artisans **FREE** of charge.

The Punaravartan campaign aims to create a circular economy through the respectful reuse of natural clay after immersion and achieve a zero waste Ganesh Chaturthi. Sign up to donate clay <https://forms.gle/Qyn4AZTa3LfcGLpt5>.

visit [www.punaravartan.org](http://www.punaravartan.org) to know more.

So let us come together and join hands to support this great cause.

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