

THE ORCHID SCHOOL

Baner, Pune

Date: 6.9.23

Circular No.: TOS/FRO/CIR/FS/24-25/27

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

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 Lal Mati rather than Plaster of Paris or Shaadu Maati and advocate for the responsible composting of Nirmalya.

However, due to easy access to it, most homes get Bappas made of Shaadu Maati. Taking our commitment of environmental preservation a step forward, we have also partnered with **Punaravartan**, an organisation dedicated to recycling shaadu maati 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 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 Lal maati (as it belongs to our ecosystem). If you have brought a Ganesh idol which is composed of Shaadu maati, 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 clay in the school between 18th Sep to 20th Sep'24 during school hours.**
- The collected clay will be sent to Punaravartan immediately for further restoration.

Please watch the attached video to know exactly how to collect the shaadu maati and follow the steps for the better outcomes.

Students of TOS can become ambassadors to promote this cause by talking to their 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, ashes, food remnants.
- 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?

- Committed artisans belonging to Pune, Pen and Mumbai District are contacted to inform them of the availability of this clay.
- The Ganesh Murtikar Sanghatanas in various cities are contacted to receive the clay and redistribute it to their members.
- The clay sludge is given back to the artisans **FREE** of charge.

In this unique way, 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.

To know more, do visit www.punaravartan.org website.

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