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Ban sinks: Over 12,000 PoP idols immersed

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But activists claim this year, over 90% Ganesha idols at homes were made of clay.



Ganesha idols that were immersed in Ulsoor Lake on Friday (Photo:DC)

Bengaluru: Despite tall claims made by the KSPCB and BBMP on the ban on plaster of Paris Ganesha idols, 12,077 such idols made their way into the city's lakes on the first day of idol immersion. A total of 2,08,585 idols immersed in the waterbodies across the city on Saturday.

Of the 48,000 idols immersed at Yediyur Lake, 8,000 were made out of PoP. Ulsoor Lake, which falls under the BBMP east zone, saw 2,600 PoP idols out of 21,200, according to the statistics released by the BBMP.

Environmentalists said, "If this is the figure on the first day, in the coming days thousands of PoP idols will be immersed in city's lakes, polluting them. The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board and BBMP could have done much



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more to implement the ban on PoP idols. At a time when city's lakes are dying because of pollution, these two authorities could have used their powers effectively. They could have banned idols from entering the lakes."

An environmentalist, who was talking to Deccan Chronicle on condition of anonymity, questioned the purpose of passing the ban orders, while allowing PoP idols to be immersed in city's lakes.

"Isn't this countering the very purpose," he asked.

Water expert and lead scientist at IISc, Dr T.V. Ramachandra, felt that civic bodies should have banned not only the sale, but also manufacturing of PoP idols.

Taking a dig at Mayor G. Padmavathi, who said that PoP idol immersion cannot be banned because of religious sentiments, Dr Ramachandra asked if the chemicals from PoP getting into the food chain was acceptable.

Dr Ramachandra said that he will visit city's infamous Bellandur and Varthur lakes on Sunday to assess the situation. But he said that with increased awareness, more people have shifted to eco-way of celebrating the festival.

Mr Ram Prasad, co-founder of Friends of Lakes, said that this year, over 90% of Ganesha idols kept at homes were of made of clay. This is the biggest achievement ever towards environmental-friendly celebrations, he said.

"It took us three years to reach where we are today. Only with patience and continued efforts, we can implement a total ban on PoP idols," he said.