

Design Resource

Ganesha Idol Making and Festival - Bengaluru

Making Mold for Idols

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

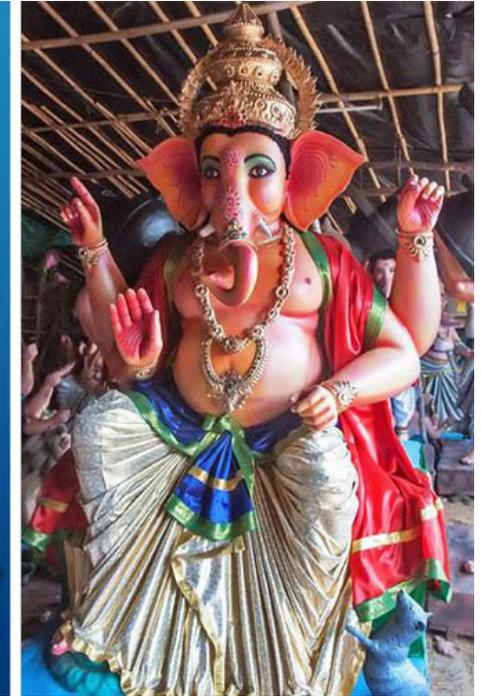
Lija M. G.

NID, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/ganesha-idol-making-and-festival-bengaluru>

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Introduction

It is said that the word Ganesha is generally derived from the Sanskrit word gana meaning group or multitude and isha meaning lord or master. There are also other meanings that says about ruler, horde, lord of hordes etc. Ganesha idols are more celebrated during the Ganesh Chaturthi or the Vinayak Chaturthi festivals. Though Ganesha is known by many names like Ganapathy etc. the elephant head makes it unique and easy in identifying them.

This God is generally referred to as the remover of obstacles, deva of intellect and wisdom, gods of beginnings therefore honoured at the start of rituals and ceremonies. The principal scriptures related to Ganesha are the Mudgala Purana, Ganesha Purana and Ganapathi Atharvashirsa.

The festival of Ganesha is generally observed in the Hindu calendar month of Bhaadrapada that starts on the Shukla Chaturthi (fourth day of the waxing moon period). This festival usually lasts for 10 days that ends on the Anant Chaturdashi. Ganesh Festival is not only a popular festival but also an important commercial activity for most of the people of India. It also provides a platform for the budding artists to present their art to the public.

About Lord Ganesha

It is said that there was a competition among the Gods for the first place of worship and in that it was decided the God who travels the fastest would be declared the winner. All the Gods and Goddess began their race on their vehicles to reach as fast as possible whereas Ganesha took a round of his parents Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati and sat down. Since his parents are declared to be the universe for him and he was declared as a winner. It is said that therefore he is referred and worshipped as the first among the Gods.

The end of monsoon brings one round of India's most beloved festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi etc. The Hindu community all over the world celebrates Ganesha Chaturthi as the birthday of Lord Ganesha. It usually falls in the Hindu month of Bhadra and lasts for about 10 days. On the eleventh day idol is taken through the streets as procession and immersed in a river or sea symbolizing a ritual sendoff of the Lord Ganesha. In his journey towards the Kailash where he was born by taking away the misfortunes of the people.

Lord Ganesha has elephant's head and four arms, holding shell, discus, club and Lily. He has serpent around his waist and his vehicle mouse alongside which shows a tray of sweets (Modak) and having pot belly. In some images he is shown holding sugarcane bow and sometimes in a pose of playful dancing. To signify his association with knowledge and prosperity, sometimes Lord Ganesha is depicted seated along with Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Saraswati. Lord Ganesha's motto is Shubh-Laabh (good prospect and good prosperity). Lord Ganesha, is also known with 9 other names that are Ekdanta, Ganapa, Gajanana, Gajadhipati, Vinayaka, Vighneshwara, Lambodara, Modakpriya and Avaneesh.

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Story Behind Ganesha Chaturthi

Ganesha is popularly held to be the son of Shiva and Parvati, the puranic myths give different versions about his birth. In some he was created by Parvati, in another he was created by Shiva and Parvati. In other reference he appeared mysteriously and was discovered by Shiva and Parvati or he was born from the elephant headed goddess Malini after she drank Parvati's bath water that had been thrown in the river.

The family includes his brother the war god Kartikeya who is also called Skanda and Murugan. Regional differences dictate the order of their births. In northern India, Skanda is generally said to be the elder, while in the south Ganesha is considered the first born. In northern India, Skanda was an important martial deity from about 500 BCE to about 600 CE after which worship of him declined significantly. As Skanda fell, Ganesha rose and several stories tell of sibling rivalry between the brothers and may reflect sectarian tensions.

Ganesha's marital status, the subject of considerable scholarly review, varies widely in mythological stories. One pattern of myths identifies Ganesha as an unmarried brahmachari. This view is common in southern India and parts of northern India. Another pattern associates him with the concepts of Buddhi (intellect), Siddhi (spiritual power) and Riddhi (prosperity) these qualities are sometimes personified as goddesses said to be Ganesha's wives. He also may be shown with a single consort or a nameless servant. Another pattern connects Ganesha with the goddess of culture and the arts Sarasvati. He is also associated with the goddess of luck and prosperity.

Lakshmi is another pattern that is mainly prevalent in Bengal region that links Ganesha with the banana tree. The Shiva Purana says that Ganesha had begotten two sons Ksema (prosperity) and Labha (profit). In northern Indian variants of this story, the sons are often said to be Subha (auspiciousness) and Labha.

Celebration Base

Today, the Ganesh Festival is not only a popular festival, it has become a very critical and important economic activity for people in India. Many artists, industries, and businesses survive on this mega-event. Ganesh Festival also provides a stage for budding artists to present their art to the public.

The idol is sculpted out of mud taken from nearby one's home. After the festival, it was returned back to the Earth by immersing it in a nearby water body. This cycle was meant to represent the cycle of creation and dissolution in Nature.

People who keep a Ganesh in their homes choose to perform the immersion much before the Ananta chaturthi. The idol is taken through the streets in a procession accompanied with dancing, singing, and fanfare to be immersed in a river or the sea symbolizing a ritual see-off of the Lord. The statues are carried by the individuals into the sea or river and then immersed into it.

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Ganesh Chaturthi During the Independence Time

It is said Ganesh Chaturthi was first celebrated by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaja from Maharashtra, the great Maratha ruler and since then it is being continued. When slowly and steadily the custom started to fade out, freedom fighter Lokmanya Tilak brought back the tradition in the form of a 10-day festival. All thanks to Lokmanya Tilak who rightly believed that it would help to bring Indians together during the freedom struggle.

A clay model of Lord Ganesha is made before arrival of the festival and the idols are easily available in sizes from 3/4th of an inch to 25 feet tall. Lord Ganesha is always placed on high platforms and nicely decorated for paying homage. On this day, devotees chant mantras and songs related to Lord Ganesha and this ritual is termed to be 'pranapratishttha'. There are several ways of paying tribute and prasada or naivaidya in the form of coconut, jaggery and modak are offered to Lord Ganesha. Lord Ganesha's idols are brought home and installed with great ceremony, which is known as "sthapana" on a decorated platform. The idol is offered pure water along with libations such as honey and milk.

This puja is performed twice a day until the idol is submerged in the sea. This could happen on the 2nd, 5th, 7th or last day. On this day, the uttarpuja ritual (a sort of farewell) is performed, after which visarjan takes place and the idol is submerged in the sea, river or even a token dip in a bucket (depending on where in the world you are). The final visarjan day sees crisscrossed by throngs of worshippers trailing their idols to the shore. It is customary to bring home a smidgen of sand and the paat on which the murti rested before visarjan. Kept at home for a day or two, they serve as panacea for the emptiness brought on by Lord Ganesha's departure.

That's not all. Lord Ganesha is so popular in Jharkhand that, decorators are invited from Bengal for the decorative pandal (tents). Jaipur's "Mutt Doongari" temple sees a slew of devotees, anxious to view the temple's famous Modak Tableau, Hyderabad has one of the world's largest idols and Mumbai city is occupied with a huge music and millions of people visit Mumbai to attend the festival.

As the world keeps turning, Ganesha idols keep evolving. This year, you will spot a selfie-taking.

Ganesha, a Bahubali - inspired Ganesha with bulging biceps and plenty of environmentally-friendly Ganeshas. Navi Mumbai even has a Ganapati swathed in the colors of the Brazilian football team.

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The reason why Goddess Gouri idols is placed besides Lord Ganesha in the southern part of India:

Goddess Gouri's Puja is an important ritual during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival. Married women worship Goddess Gouri with Sindoor (Holey powder) or kumkum (Holy powder applied by married women) for their sowbhagam (marital bliss). Unmarried girls worship her in order to get virtuous husbands. One prays to Goddess Gauri because according to Puranas, she is the Divine Mother and the origin of the Universe. Mother Goddess, Shakti, has various celestial manifestations like Goddess Sri Raja Rajeshwari, Goddess Gauri, Lalitha Tripura Sundari Devi etc.

Gauri's themes are spring, protection, fertility, harvest, beauty, humor, youthfulness, wishes and equality. Her symbols are balsam, golden-colored items, milk, mirrors and lions. This fertile Hindu Goddess extends spring-like youth, beauty and tenderness into our lives. Gauri has a sympathetic ear for all human needs and wishes. In works of art she is depicted as a fair maiden, attended by lions and bearing wild balsam and a mirror. She was born of a milky sea, and her name translates as 'golden one', indicating a connection with the sun. She is offered rice to ensure a good rice crop.

Hindu custom suggests eating sweets to generate Gauri's beauty and pleasantness in your spirit today. Or, pour her a libation of milk while making a wish for something you'd like to 'harvest' in your life. Hang balsam in your home to foster Gauri's fairness in your family's interactions."

Goddess Gauri is one of the manifestations of Goddess Parvathi. She is the divine energy, Mother Goddess. She is considered as a perfect wife for her husband, Lord Shiva. She is a clear representation of purity and austerity. She is the Kanya (Kumari or unmarried girl) who performed severe tapas (penance) to marry Lord Shiva. After the conclusion of her ferocious form Goddess Kali, She observed a severe penance to get rid of her black complexion.

Goddess Parvathi first sought out Lord Shiva to get attracted towards her, Lord Shiva found her dark skin to be unattractive. Goddess Parvathi was retreated into the forest, where she lived a very austere life, developing her spiritual powers. Brahma took notice of Goddess Parvathi's mastery of her physical self, and decided to grant her one wish. Goddess Parvathi asked that her dark skin be taken away, so that Lord Shiva would love her. Brahma took the darkness and created the Goddess Kali with it, leaving Goddess Parvathi with golden skin, and she became the Goddess Gauri. Because of Her golden color, she is associated with rice and grains, taking on the role of a fertility Goddess. Gauri Ji's name means "golden,"

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Significance of Lord Ganesha's trunk direction:

Lord Ganesha's trunk on left side:

1. Meaning when Lord Ganesha's trunk is facing towards left side – Lord Ganesha's trunk facing towards left is meant to be auspicious for house, it's also said that it develops cooling, nourishing and relaxing energy. According to the priest, Lord Ganesha's statue should be in sitting position, as lord remains seated in your home. For pandals (Tent's), it could be in standing position.

2. Here the laddu represents material gain and prosperity. If you want to have spiritual wisdom or spiritual bliss then the trunk should be close or touching the modak.

Lord Ganesha's trunk on right side:

1. This posture is called as Siddhi Vinayaka and if worshiped in an appropriate manner. It provides quick result which is mainly seen in temples, as Lord Ganesha needs to be worshiped according to rituals daily.

2. The right-sided ganesha trunk statues are believed to be representing your pingala nadi, which is related with sun energy.

Lord Ganesha's trunk on right side:

1. It signifies that the sushumna nadi is entirely open; such idols are very rare and special.

2. Even more special is the trunk where the trunk is swung up right in the air. It means the kundalini shakti has reached the sahasrara (crown chakra) permanently.



Life size clay idol making requires more open area.



Many idols are dried under indirect sunlight to avoid cracks.

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Key artisans, who decides the shape, colour and expression in idols.

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An open area where a community migrates and stays in tent from Kolkata.



Many times idols are also used for marketing purpose, near the main road near Hebbal circle in Bengaluru.



Idols are made as group for the festival like a group playing various musical instruments.



Detailing of eye in the idol which gives a real effect.

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Idols inspired by the movie “Bahubali”.



Idols of Lord Vishwakarma for built for an occasion.



Rice straw is used as base material on which layers of clay is applied.

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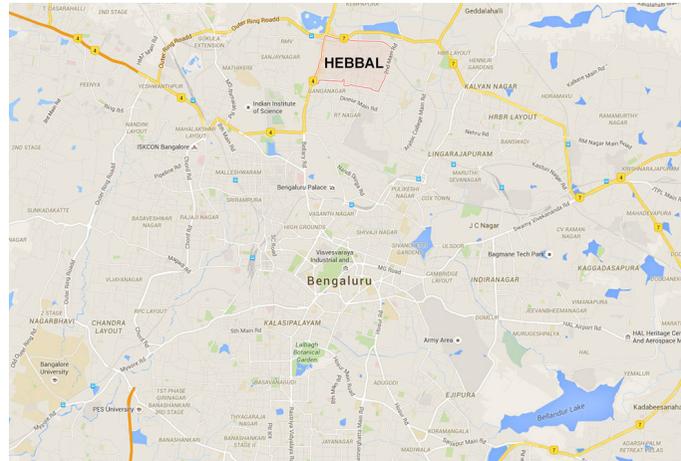
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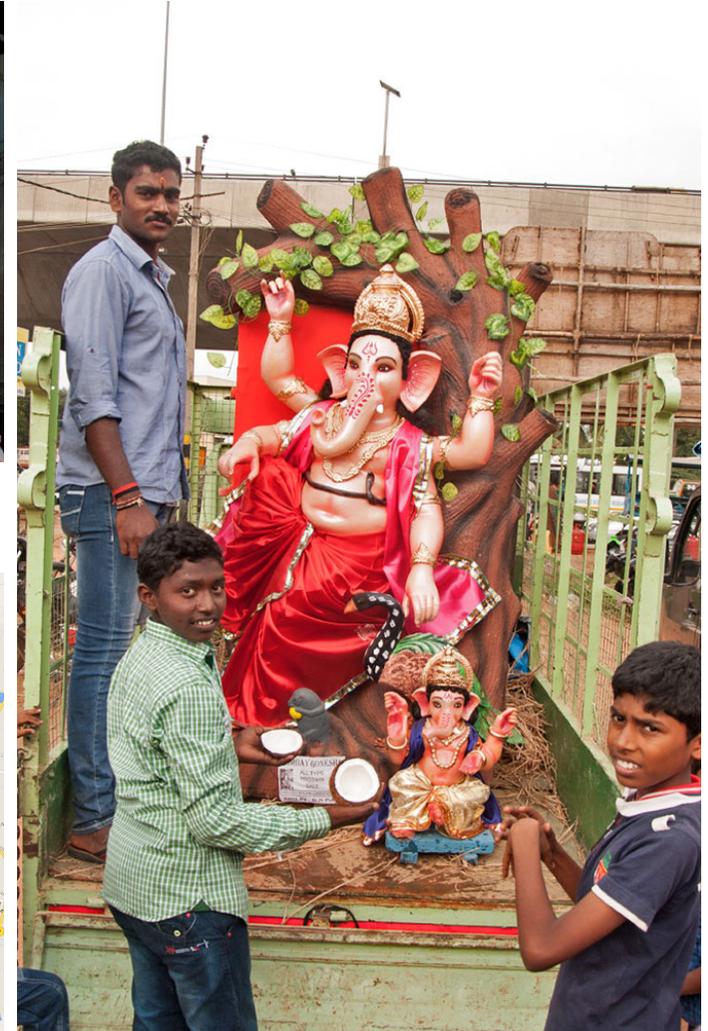
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Representation of Lord Ganesha with Lord Shiva.



Location of the idol making area on Bangalore map.



Devotees worship while transporting the lord for the festival.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Following are the tools and raw materials required for Ganesha Idol making at Hebbal are:

- **Varied Shaped Sticks:** It is used as tool to carve the shapes as per the idol to be made.
- **Plywood:** It is used as a base for making the clay to roll forms.
- **Hay:** It is used to make the required base structure of the idols.
- **Thin Ropes:** It is used to hold the hay together for the required shapes and sizes.
- **Sticks:** It is used as a base to make the idols.
- **Bamboo Sticks:** It is used as the bottom base in making of the idols.
- **Rice Husk:** It is used to mix with clay to make it stiffer.
- **Clay (from local and Ganga):** It is used for the base and the final touch ups of making the Ganesha Idol.
- **Water Colours:** It is used to colour the Ganesha Idol as per its forms.
- **Moulds:** It is generally used to make jewellery, chains etc. for the Ganesha Idols by the craftsmen.
- **Plastic Covers:** It is used to store the clay in moist conditions.
- **Tarpaulin:** It is used as a protection from sunlight and rain by the craftsmen.
- **Twine:** It is placed in between for the making of chains/ jewellery for Ganesha.
- **Water:** It is used to keep the clay in moist conditions for better making of the clay objects.
- **Cotton Cloth:** It is used to cure the idol to avoid breakages during drying.
- **Paint Brushes:** Different sizes of paint brushes are used to paint the details of the idols.
- **Nails:** It is used to fix the sticks to make the structure of the idol.
- **Tamarind Seed Glue:** It is used for mixing with the water colours.
- **Kodi Matti:** It is used to mix with water colours for painting.
- **Spray Guns:** It is used to spray the water colours to the idols.

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Dry grass as base material for making mold for idols.



Dry clay with water to get softness locally sourced.



Processed clay.



Ganga Mitti (Clay) brought from Kolkata used as final layer.

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Rice husk is mixed with clay to increase the density.

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Grub hoe tool used for mixing clay.



Paint – water color.



Brush used to color the detailing part of idol.

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Normal water for wetting the surface.



Waste wet cotton cloth which is applied on the idol to avoid cracks.



Thermocol molds used to prepare jewels for the idols.



Glue made out of the tamarind seeds.

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Kodi mitti is clay from river Ganga used in finishing process.

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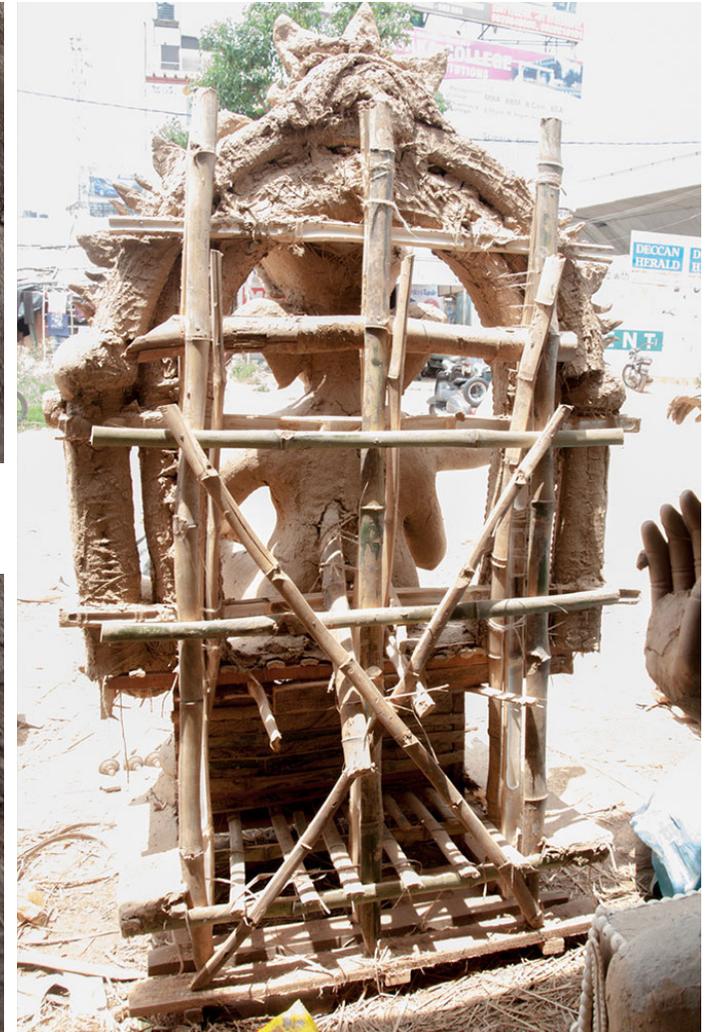
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Sculpting tools.



Different size of brushes used in the process of painting.



Bamboo sticks: Used as a support for the idols.

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Various water colors used for painting.



Spray gun used for painting.



Thermocol molds for creating ornaments to idols.



Thermocol molds for creating ornaments to idols.

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Different sizes of nails for fastening.



Saw and other tools to cut the bamboo.



Hand driller.



Artificial hairs to decorate Lord Ganesha.

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Making Process

Different types of clay, colours, jute, Kodi matti etc. are brought from Kolkata. Bamboo, hay and other things are brought from the local markets. The local clay brought from the nearby field is mixed with the rice husk for the clay to be stiff and prepared to be applied.

The hay is tied as per the required human figures in the forms and pasted with clay mixed with the rice husk. It is then heated with the flames, such a way that the husk burns and takes the forms as per the posture of idol to be made and applied with the fine clay or the Ganga clay brought from the banks of river Ganges. The final touch is given by the different shaped wood pieces (edges as per the required shape) used as tools to shape and then the final touches are given to obtain the full outline of the idol to be made.

A mixture of Ganga clay made into paste form with water, a piece of cotton cloth immersed in this paste is further spread all over the idol to avoid the formation of cracks that will be formed. The idol is kept for drying under shade and then under sunlight for the proper setting (curing) of the clay. Separately made jewellery / ornaments with the help of moulds are placed on the idol and left for complete drying.

The idol is sprayed with water colour and then it is painted as per the forms of Gods/ Goddess. Final touches for the eyes of the idol is done and then the normal painting. The bottom portion of the idol is tied with the cloth material as per the forms of the Lord Ganesha. The idol is ready to be taken to various places for placing them, for the celebrations. As said by few people, while taking the idol, the puja is performed, then the face of the idol is closed with the cloth material (face till chest is closed with the cloth material). Similarly while removing the cloth from the face of the idol, puja is performed at the particular timings and then the cloth from the face is removed after placing it.



Dry clay is separated to mix with water.



Rough clay is kneaded with the help of legs.

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Further it is kneaded with hands to get fine clay.

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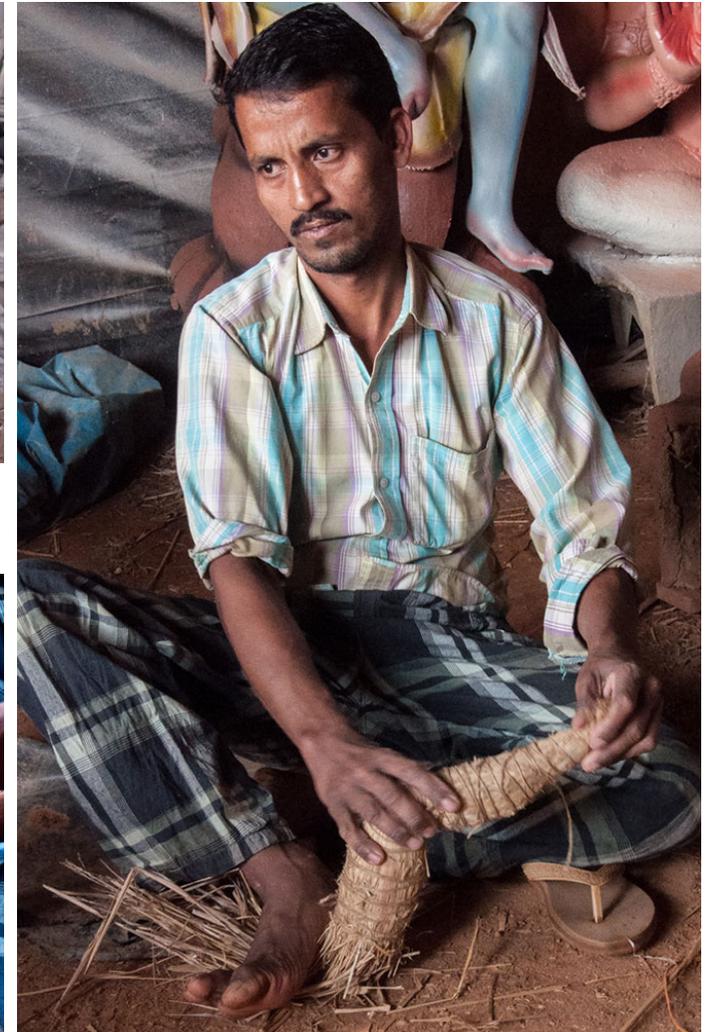
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Basic armature is being prepared.



Rice dry grass is used as a filling material.



Basic structure (skeleton) of lord Shiv lingam.

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Basic structure (elephant) is ready to apply clay.



Clay is applied layer by layer on armature till an even shape is achieved.



Idol kept for drying after applying the clay all over.

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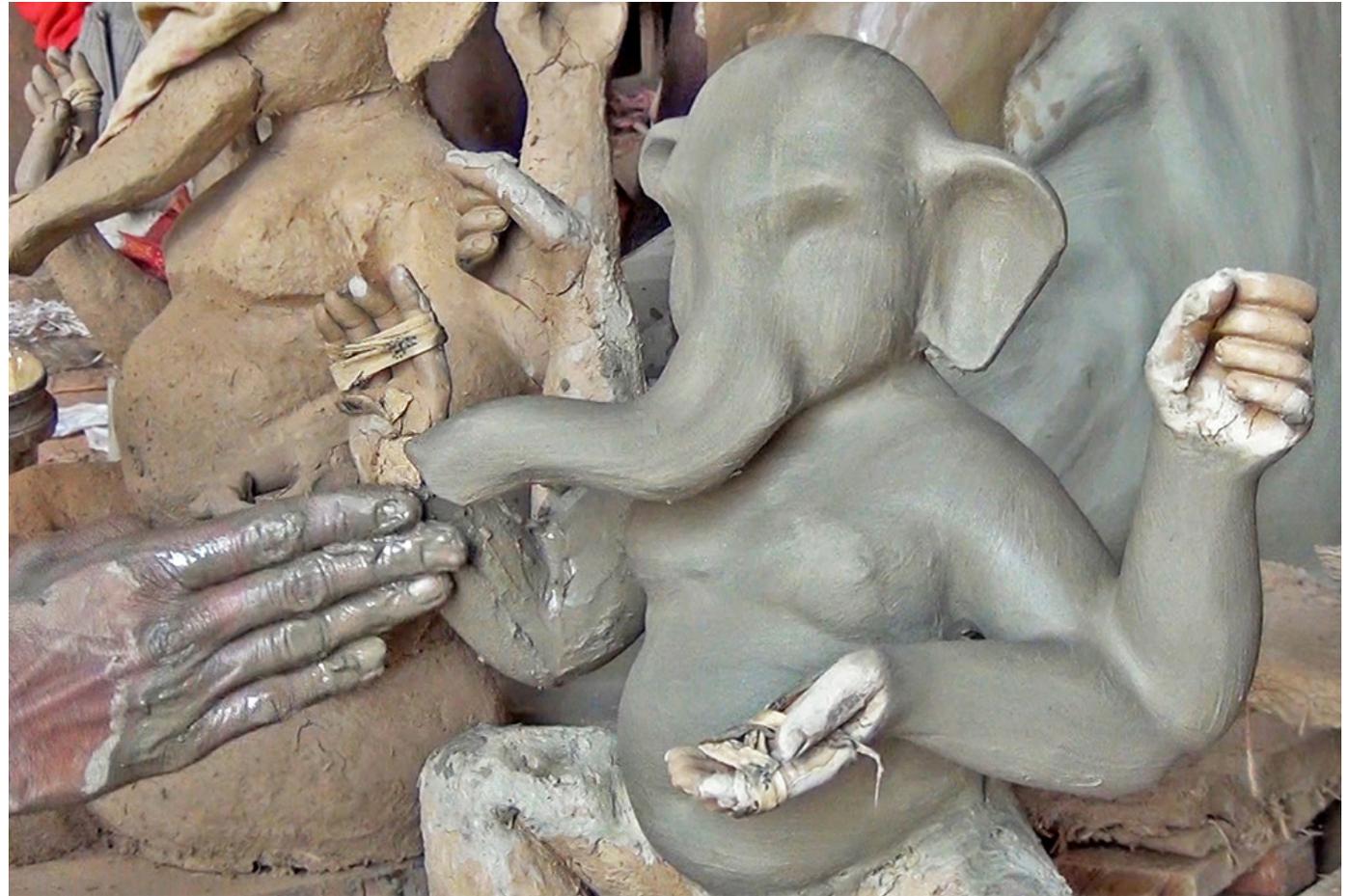
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At last Ganga Mitti (Clay) is applied for smooth finishing.

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Idol kept for drying under shade.



Minor corrections and cracks are filled on the idol.



Wet waste cotton cloth is embedded on surface to avoid the cracks.

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Cotton cloth is wet in normal water before applying on the idol.

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Waste cloth is neatly applied on the face.



Cloth is split and applied all over on the idol.



On other side, Jewelries are made separately for the idol.



Thread is being inserted as a structure member for long necklace ornaments.

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Thread acts as ejector is covered with clay in the jewel mold.

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Clay jewel and other ornaments are dried in diffused sunlight.



Detailing is done using carving tools before applying the color.



Watercolors are used to paint as per the requirement.

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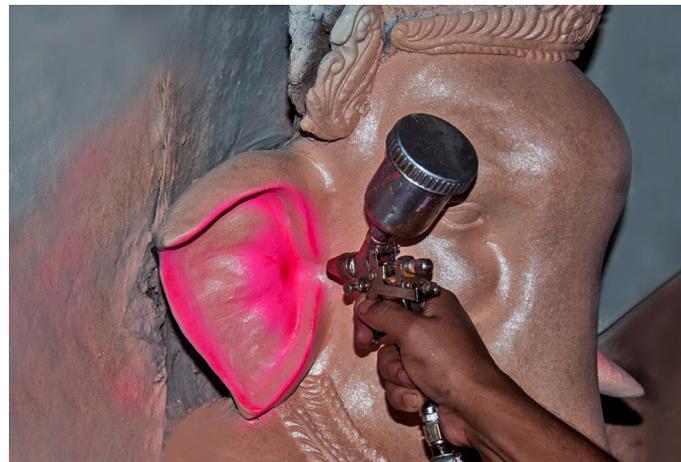
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Unwanted clay is removed from certain areas before painting.



Spray paint gun is used to apply the colour on Idols.



All the parts are painted and colour is decided by the artist.



Golden paint is applied on ornaments of Ganesha idol.

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Minute details are painted with small brush.



Vibrant colours are used in painting the idol to give a lustre look.



Rudraksha mala on Lord Shiva idol is painted by its natural colours.

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Products

Various sizes of idols are generally made by the artisan in various forms as per the references or the pictures given by the customers. Different types of the idols are also tried by the craftsmen by the trial and error method where the new idols are chosen by the people and later given for bulk orders. The smallest size of the idol made by the craftsmen is said to be about 2 feet of size and the biggest size is said to be of about 16 feet of size.

Idols are made as per the seasons, during those period of months the craftsmen shifts completely to Bengaluru. As per the craftsmen there are about 150 idols made from the four to five months of that they have shifted and remaining orders of idols are still yet to be done.

The cost of the smallest idol will cost of about INR2000 - INR3000 and bigger ones will cost of about INR50,000 - INR60,000. It is said that it takes minimum of about 1 week to make an idol. As per the craftsmen they make idols of Vishwakarma, Durga Maata, Sheravali Durga Maata and so on for the people of their community who live in and around of Bengaluru.

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Composition of Ganesha idol with lord Shiva.



Ganesha idol in lord Shiva avatar.

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Bahubali Ganesha.

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Ganesha idol painted in white color.



Ganesha idol replicating lord Shiva avatar.

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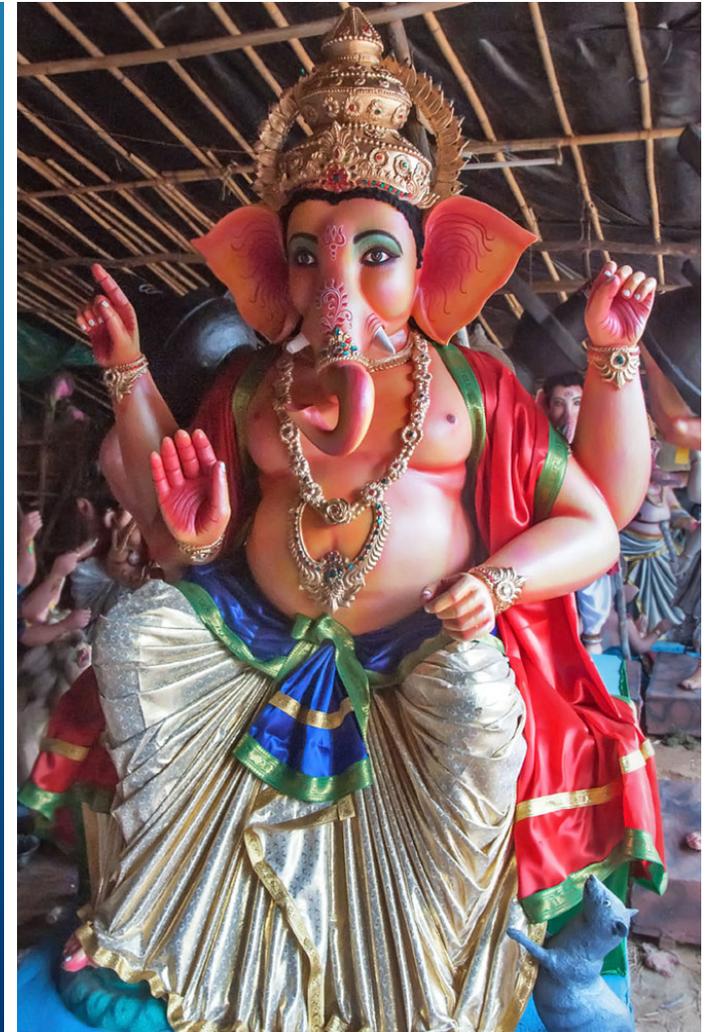
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Ganapati embellished with golden shade.



Large size Lord Ganesha.

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Idol of Ganesha sitting on peacock.

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Contact Details

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