

Towards eco friendly city

ERIC REGO

On the last day of Ganesh Chaturthi lakes, rivers and seas are filled with Plaster of Paris due to the immersion of the idols. To mitigate this pollution and create awareness about the hazards to the ecosystem, the Green Cell of Aditya Birla World Academy recently organised a workshop on Eco-Friendly Ganesha.

The Green Cell of the school was initiated two years ago by the vice chairperson Neerja Birla to promote the values of the 3 'R's, namely "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle." The cell aims to promote eco-friendly methods through assemblies, guest lecturers and participation in awareness campaigns.

This year the team began spreading awareness on the importance of clay Ganeshas and their impact on the environment. Bhavana Shah, who has specialised in the art of making clay Ganeshas since the past 30 years, demonstrated the making of the idols in a simplistic yet very artistic form. Due to the huge popularity of this festival, the Green Cell took the first step to make Gen Y aware of the difference between the Ganesha idols made out of plaster of paris and clay. Shah also explained to the students the impact of POP on soil and water pollution during immersion. "Clay disintegrates very easily in water and is eco-friendly. Food colour can replace chemicals to avoid any harm to the sea life," said Shah. "Though it's a bit expensive, the cost would reduce if more people opt for the clay," she added.

The children were seen having fun



Bhavana Shah teaches students the technique of making clay Ganesh idols

making their favourite deity. Padmaja Kothari of class VIII said, "I feel that it's very important to preserve our environment. If we don't take proper care now then the future will be adversely affected. People usually prefer idols made in Plaster of Paris as it's less expensive than eco or mud idols. However they do not realise the harmful effects the chemicals have on aquatic life. Each one of us should enjoy all festivals without spoiling the environment. It would be great if we all celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi in an eco-friendly way."

This collaborative workshop with art was planned by the Green Cell of the school. The students of class VIII would shortly be displaying the 'Idols of Ganesha' made by them for the entire school. They are even planning to stage a short skit, make presentations and also sing Ganesh Stuti in the assembly once the school completes the awareness campaign.



Students display their clay idols