



*“Vakra tunda mahakaya Suyakoti Samaprabha
Nirvignam kurumedevah sarbakarye susarvada”*

Lord *Ganesha*, the patron deity is the God of wisdom. The auspicious day when Lord *Ganesha* was born - begins with great enthusiasm all over the state. The 11-day festival (Some parts of India it is celebrated for 11 days) begins with the installation of beautifully sculpted *Ganesha* idols in homes and *mandaps* (large tents). The *mandaps* are colourfully decorated, depicting religious themes. The *Ganesha* idols are worshipped with in families and among friends. Many cultural events are organized on the eve of *Ganesha Puja* and people participate in them with keen interest.



The Legend

There is a curiously interesting tale about the birth of *Ganesha*. It is believed that once while *Parvati* was bathing, she created a human figure from some unguent and balm, gave it life and asked the new born to guard the entrance door of *Parvati*'s living Place. After a long period of meditation on Mountain *Kailash* (Lord *Shiva*'s abode), Lord *Shiva* chose that very moment to drop at *Parvati*'s door in order to meet her, but was abruptly stopped by the new born child (whom *Parvati* created from balm) to whom *Parvati* had posted at the door as guard to restrict strangers. When Lord *Shiva* tried to enter into the door with out obeying the word of that little child he was stopped at he door. Outraged by the check of this stranger, *Shiva* cut off his head only to discover moments later that he had killed *Parvati*'s son! For fear of enraging his wife, Lord *Shiva* immediately despatched his *ganas* (attendants) and instructed them to get him the head of a living creature, which sleeps lying its head to to the north direction in the vicinity. Coincidentally the first living creature happened to be an elephant. As per the instruction, the head was chopped off and brought back to Lord *Shiva*, who placed it on *Parvati*'s





son's body, bringing him back to life. This elephant-headed God was welcomed into the first family of the Hindu heavens and named Ganesha or Ganapati, which literally means the chief of the *ganas*, or the attendants of Shiva. Ganesha is the foremost God of the Hindu pantheon. He is first worshipped during every sacred institution in Hindu religious beliefs. People also pray Lord Ganesh before undertaking a journey or starting a new venture. You will also see him carefully guarding entrances to temples and homes, peeping out of calendars and happily gracing marriages and other such occasions.

Celebration



As per the Hindu scriptures 'Sri Ganesha' emerged on the earth on the day of '*Bhadraba Sukllapakshya Chaturthi Tithi* (as per the Hindu calendar between August-September)'. So it is called '*Ganesha Chaturthi*' through out India. Comparing to Maharastra, Gujurat, Andra Pradesh etc. Orissa is not far behind in celebrating *Ganesha Puja*. In Orissa *Ganesha Puja* is celebrated in every nook and corner, with lot of joy and happiness. People celebrate this occasion by arranging special pandals for the God. *Ganesha Puja* is the biggest occasion for students of Orissa. Schools, Colleges, Universities, Coaching centers and other institutions attached with education also celebrate Ganesh Puja with immense love. Students wear new clothes and observe fasting as a mark of devotion to their loving God. The students break their fasting by offering '*Puspanjali*' to *Sri Ganesha*, while reciting '*Mantras*'. *Sri Ganesha* is worshiped with '*Sodasa Upachar*' and offered '*Rasiladoo*' and '*Modak*' as his most favorite '*Prasad*'. It is a day on which every student pays God Ganesha to make his/her educational career bright. Students also offer new writing material like pen, note pad etc. to God, which are used by them after the Puja is over. It is believed in Orissa, not to be involved in study related activities on this day. The trading community of Orissa also worships '*Sri Ganesha*' for prosperity in their business. A lot of cultural programmes are arranged in many parts of Orissa for this occasion. The students of educational institutions start their regular work after the emersion of '*Sidhivinayak*'.

