

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 662
ANSWERED ON 08/02/2024

Formulation of National Marine Litter Policy

662 Dr. Dharmasthala Veerendra Heggade:

Will the Minister of **EARTH SCIENCES** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government plans to formulate a National Marine Litter Policy and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Government has undertaken any study on qualitative analysis of marine litter in different beaches, endangering aquatic biodiversity and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the measures taken by Government to prevent littering of plastic waste, including Marine Plastic Litter;
- (d) the categories of waste found on the shores of the coastal States; and
- (e) the steps taken by Government in the last five years to mitigate the harmful impacts of marine litter on ecology of coastal States?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI KIREN RIJU)

- (a) There is no existing National Marine Litter policy in India. However, the following steps have been initiated for the formulation of the National Marine Litter Policy.
 - (i) Several studies have been initiated by Ministry of Earth Sciences through its attached office National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), to monitor the temporal and spatial distribution of marine litter along the Indian coasts and adjacent seas and map the distribution of marine litter.
 - (ii) Further, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 and its amendments, which provide the statutory framework for plastic waste management in the country. MoEF&CC had also issued Gazette notification on “Guidelines on Extended producer responsibility for Plastic Packaging” and Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) rules, 2022 on 16th February to all States/UTs and Ministries. Further, the Government of India has initiated several programmes such as “Swachh Bharat Abhiyan”, National Mission for Clean Ganga and Smart Cities Mission” in order to develop clean and sustainable environment which contribute towards the Marine Litter Policy.
 - (iii) A National level workshop was conducted with Scientists from various research institutes, various stakeholders, and policymakers, industrial and academic experts to prepare a roadmap for formulating the National Marine Litter Policy.

- (b) Yes Sir. The PAN India coastal clean-up programs (2017-2023), Beach litter data collection and characterization have been made at 190 beaches. Also, Studies on the effect of various beach activities on marine litter and microplastic distribution were carried out on selected beaches in India.
- (c) To prevent the flow of marine litter (particularly plastics) and raise awareness among the public, under the PAN India coastal clean-up & awareness programs (2017-2023), about 150 tons of beach litter were removed through 190 beach clean-up events that have been organized by NCCR, MoES. In addition, the Ministry notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, on 12th August 2021, prohibiting identified single use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, from 1st July 2022. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also notified the Guidelines on the Extended Producer Responsibility for plastic packaging vide Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022 on 16th February, 2022. The Guidelines stipulate mandatory targets on EPR, recycling of plastic packaging waste, reuse of rigid plastic packaging and use of recycled plastic content. The guidelines provide for moving towards sustainable plastic packaging and reducing the plastic foot print. The implementation of ban on identified single use plastic items coupled with extended producer responsibility on plastic packaging will reduce pollution caused by littered and unmanaged plastic waste.
- (d) The various categories of waste found on the shores of the coastal states are in the order of (i) Plastic (ii) Glass bottles (iii) Rubber- footwear (iv) Clothes (v) Paper and (vi) Metal.
- (e) The steps have been taken
- (i) To understand the effect of different types of polymers (microplastics) on fisheries and biota, research has been undertaken to estimate the level of contamination.
 - (ii) At regular intervals, webinars are being conducted, and the level of pollution is disseminated through print media to sensitize the people about the ill effects of plastic/marine litter on the marine environment.
 - (iii) A ban on the usage of Identified single-use plastics has been notified by the central government to mitigate the harmful impacts of plastics.
