

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. - 497
ANSWERED ON – 02/12/2021

MARINE LITTER IN OCEANS

497 Shri John Brittas

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government takes serious cognizance of the surge in plastic waste in oceans due to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- (b) if so, steps taken by Government to mitigate this issue; and
- (c) whether Government is conducting research for development of effective techniques to manage marine plastic pollution, and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER
THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
AND EARTH SCIENCES
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)

- (a) Yes, Sir.
- (b) The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is working towards containment of plastic usage with the institutes of the MoES by banning the single use plastics within their premises. Further, Institutes of MoES such as National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Centre for Marine Living Resources & Ecology (CMLRE), Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) and National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) are conducting the beach clean-up activities. In addition, the Ministry is also engaged in creating awareness to the public on plastic waste pollution via conducting campaigns, lectures and series of webinars.
- (c) Yes, Sir. Ministry through NCCR is undertaking research activities in quantifying litter (mainly meso, macro and microplastics) in the beach, and microplastics in the water and sediment and in different biota including commercial fish, bivalves and Mollusca. Samples from coastal water, beach and offshore sediment, and biota are analyzed for micro/ meso/ macro plastics pollution. An increase in the abundance of microplastics is observed along the east coast during the monsoon. The stations nearer to the river mouth had higher numbers of microplastics concentrations. The Beach litter survey has revealed that the maximum accumulation occurs in the backshore than in the intertidal zone. Moreover, Urban beaches have higher accumulation rates than rural beaches. It is also noted that more than 50% composition of the majority of the waste on the beaches was contributed by single use plastics.
