

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 33
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2023

Conservation of Coral Ecosystem in the country

33. SHRI S NIRANJAN REDDY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the reduction and degradation of coral reefs in the country in the last five years, the details thereof;
- (b) the measures that have been taken in the last three years to conserve the same, the details thereof;
- (c) whether any fishing guidelines have been issued by Government around these reefs, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether any mapping exercise has been conducted by Government to identify areas of coral habitation, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a)&(b): Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change provides grants-in-aid to coastal States/Union Territories (UTs) for conservation and management of coral reefs and Mangroves under National Coastal Mission scheme. States/UTs prepare and implement Management Action Plan (MAPs) for conservation of coral reefs.

The coral bleaching in 2016 in Gulf of Mannar caused coral mortality of 16.2%, reducing the live coral cover from 38.86% in 2015 to 22.69% in 2016. In the last six years, coral degradation in Gulf of Mannar has been due to algal bloom (2019 & 2021), bio-invasion (2022) and coral disease outbreak in 2021. The conservation efforts helped to increase reef resilience and recovery after bleaching mortality in 2016, and live coral cover has increased from 22.69% (2016) to 27.27% (2021).

(c): Corals are protected as Schedule-I species as per The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Corals and coral reefs are classified as Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) - 1A, Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESAs) under Coastal Regulation Zone Notification 2019 and no fishing activities are permitted in coral reef area.

(d): National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai has completed the task of demarcation of the coral reefs along the Indian coast, outside the marine protected areas (MPA) as part of the exercise to map the Ecological Sensitive Area (ESA). A total of 72 contiguous patches and an area of 1439.55 sq.km outside the protected areas were mapped along the coast of India.
