

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF MINES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4737
ANSWERED ON 24.03.2021

BEACH SAND MINERALS

4737. SHRI PINAKI MISRA

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

- (a) the size and value of the beach sand minerals industry including Ilmenite, Rutile, Zircon, Garnet, Sillimanite and Monazite and the details of its growth in the last five years;
- (b) the production to reserve ratio of beach sand minerals in India as compared to the global average;
- (c) the policies guiding intervention in this sector and the steps taken to improve mineral extraction under the National Mineral Policy 2019;
- (d) whether private sector intervention has been prohibited in this sector and if so, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether the Government would consider allowing private sector investment in the sector and if so, the details thereof;
- (f) whether it is a fact that beach sand minerals have recently been listed under atomic minerals and if so, the reasons therefor; and
- (g) whether it is a fact that IREL (India) Limited continues to export beach sand minerals despite their strategic value and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF MINES, COAL AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
(SHRI PRALHAD JOSHI)

(a): Beach Sand Mineral (BSM) sand comprises of suite of seven minerals viz. Ilmenite, Rutile, Zircon, Garnet, Sillimanite, Monazite and Leucoxene. The size of the BSM industry is around 8.24 lakh tons per annum. The annual growth of the industry is about 10%. The value of BSM industry in India is estimated at about Rs 1,400 crore.

(b): Production (per annum) to reserve ratio of BSM in India is 0.0007, while the global ratio (Ilmenite, Rutile & Zircon) is 0.005 (as per IBM year book-2019).

(c): The various policies guiding the BSM sector are:

- i. Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act 1957,
- ii. Atomic Minerals Concession Rules, 2016,
- iii. Mineral Concession and Development Rules, 2017,
- iv. Atomic Energy Act 1962 and the Rules framed there under,
- v. Radiation (Protection) Rules, 2004,
- vi. Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Rules framed there under,
- vii. Mines Act 1952 and the Rules & Regulations made there under,
- viii. Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and the Rules framed there under,
- ix. Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1974 and the Rules framed there under, etc.

The principles of NMP 2019 for BSM are in place and complied in conformity with the mining and other related laws conforming to national security requirements and established international protocols. Para 6.9 of the National Mineral Policy (NMP) 2019 deals with BSM. Extraction of the replenishable deposits of BSM is carried out in a sustainable manner for improved economic growth.

(d): Ministry of Mines vide Gazette Notification G.S.R. No. 134(E) dated 20.02.2019 has amended the threshold value in respect of monazite in total heavy minerals for BSM from 0.75% to 0.00 % in Atomic Minerals Concession Rules (AMCR), 2016. As a result, mining leases in respect of BSM above threshold shall be granted to Government Company or Corporation owned or controlled by the Government.

(e): No such proposal is under consideration in this Ministry.

(f): BSM have been listed under atomic minerals vide Gazette notification No.S.O 2356(E) dated 11.07.2016. BSM is a suite of seven minerals including Monazite which is a radioactive and prescribed substance and is a source of Uranium and Thorium.

(g): BSM sand and BSM concentrate have strategic value due to the presence of Monazite, a Prescribed Substance as per the Atomic Energy Act 1962, as one of the constituents. IREL do not export BSM sand or BSM concentrate. Upon processing the BSM concentrate, radioactive free mineral products viz. Ilmenite, Rutile, Zircon, Garnet, Sillimanite and Leucosene are extracted, which are not restricted items and private sector can have access to these materials as per their requirement. More than 1500 industries in private sector, mostly MSMEs have been using these mineral products liberated from radioactivity in downstream industry to produce value added products and there are no restrictions on export of these mineral products. It is the first priority of IREL to meet the strategic requirement of the country and to cater to the domestic industrial requirement of these minerals thereafter. The surplus available low value (low grade) product after fulfilling the strategic and domestic requirement are only exported, which does not find domestic consumption in the country.
