

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
LOKSABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1377
TO BE ANSWERED ON 9th FEBRUARY, 2022**

SURGE IN PLASTIC WASTE

1377. SHRI TALARI RANGAIAH:
SHRI T.R.V.S.RAMESH:
SHRI D.K.SURESH:

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

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

ANSWER

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

- (a) Yes, Sir.
- (b) The Government has issued guidelines/Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face covers/masks from time to time. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has issued "Guidelines for Handling, Treatment and Disposal of Waste Generated during Treatment/Diagnosis/ Quarantine of COVID-19 Patients". The Guidelines provide steps for handling, treatment and disposal of wastes including plastic wastes. There is a separate section in the guidelines dealing with disposal of waste masks and gloves being generated from households, commercial establishments, shopping malls, institutions, offices etc. Further, the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, and its amendments, mandate the responsibilities of local bodies, gram panchayats, waste generators, retailers and street vendors to manage plastic waste. Further, to track the generation and disposal of COVID-19 Bio-medical Waste (BMW), CPCB has developed an app namely COVID19 BWM.
- (c) Yes, Sir.
- (d) National Center for Coastal Research (NCCR) an attached office of the Ministry of Earth Sciences is undertaking research activities in quantifying litter (mainly meso, macro and microplastics) in the beach, and microplastics in the water and sediments and different biota including commercial fish, bivalves and Mollusca. 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 revealed that the maximum accumulation occurs in the backshore than in the intertidal zone. Moreover, Urban beaches have higher accumulation rates than rural beaches. Under Beach Clean-up program/activity of NCCR, it was found that the majority of the waste (more than 50%) was contributed by single use plastics.
