GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 3891
TO BE ANSWERED ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 9, 2017

DEEP OCEAN MISSION

3891. SHRI CH. MALLA REDDY:
SHRIMATI POONAM MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of EARTH SCIENCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to launch a Deep Ocean Mission and if so, the objectives of the mission, costs incurred and the technology developed for the said mission;
(b) whether the technology is being either developed in various research institutes of the India or being imported and if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether the Government has conducted a study on the impact on ocean biodiversity that could be caused by deep-sea metal extraction through the Deep Ocean Mission, and if so, the details of findings thereof; and
(d) the details of funds allocated/utilized and progress achieved under national programe on polymetallic nodules during each of the last three years and the current year so far?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI. Y. S. CHOWDARY)

(a) Yes, Madam, Government proposes to launch the Deep Ocean Mission. Development of technologies for exploration and harnessing of living and non-living resources, survey and exploration of deep sea and Marine biodiversity and bio-technology are the broad objectives of this mission. The total cost of the mission would be more than 5000 crores for 5 years.
(b) National Institute of Ocean Technology, an autonomous institute under Ministry of Earth Sciences has developed some of the technologies for Deep Ocean. They would be further developing the technology.
(c) An artificial benthic disturbance was created to simulate impact of deep sea mining in 1997 in Central Indian Ocean Basin and to study the effect of sediment re-suspension and resettlement. Results of periodic monitoring up to 2005-06 indicated that the benthic conditions steadily moved towards restoration and recolonization, and effect of disturbance was waning off.
(d) A vibration sinkage system was developed in 2014-15 to measure sinkage in seabed. Configuration and handling studies of flexible riser system was carried out in 2015-16. A dedicated seabed minerals laboratory was set up in 2016-17 at Institute of Minerals and Materials Technologies, Bhubaneshwar. Expenditure of Rs.24.60 crore, Rs.38.00 crore and Rs.9.95 Crore were incurred for Polymetallic Nodules programme (PMN) during 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 respectively. No funds have been released so far during the current year for Polymetallic Nodules Programme.

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