

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5368
ANSWERED ON:27.04.2015
EXPLORATION OF RARE EARTH ELEMENTS
Rathwa Shri Ramsinh Patalyabhai

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Government is planning to formulate any policy or has undertaken any study for the exploration and exploitation of Rare Earth Elements in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINES AND STEEL (SHRI VISHNU DEO SAI)

(a)& (b) Yes Sir, exploration and exploitation of Rare Earth Elements (REE) are being undertaken.

Monazite is a mineral of Thorium and REE. It is the only commercial source of REE in the country. It is a prescribed substance under the provisions of Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and also appears as Atomic Mineral in Part B of First schedule of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulations) Act, 1957. Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMDER), a constituent unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) carries out the exploration and development of atomic minerals in the country, including Monazite.

Geological Survey of India (GSI) is also carrying out exploration in different parts of the country for other sources of REE.

Indian Rare Earths Limited (IREL), a PSU under the administrative control of DAE, has been processing Monazite at its Rare Earths Division at Alwaye, Kerala. During the period 1952 to 2004, IREL has processed Monazite to produce Rare Earths compounds. In 2004, this has stopped due to lack of market, as materials from another Asian Country became available at a much lower cost. Recently IREL has set up a plant at Orissa Sand Complex (OSCOM), Odisha to process 10000 tonnes of Monazite per annum. IREL has set up a facility at its Rare Earths Division, Alwaye, Kerala, to produce Separated High Purity Rare Earth utilising mixed rare earth chloride produced from Monazite processing plant at Odisha.