

Title: Need to set up a separate department to assess and utilize millions of tonnes of Titanium Ore and other minerals deposited at the beaches of coastal areas in the country after the Tsunami wave of 26 December, 2004.

DR. K. DHANARAJU (TINDIVANAM): Sir, nature plays a very important role in one's life. When something bad is done to us, we curse the nature on the one hand. But on the other hand, nature gives us many things which we never dream of.

Sir, amidst the tragic news coming in the wake of the Tsunami on 26th December, 2004, there is something which will bring some cheer to Indians. The natural phenomenon seems to have left behind millions of tonnes of titanium ore on the beaches of the coastal areas of the country particularly Tamil Nadu.

On account of high strength to weight ratio, titanium is a very important metal. It is 45 per cent lighter than steel and also stronger compared to steel. It is twice stronger than aluminum. It is very useful because of its specific qualities. It is used in aerospace industry because of its strength, lightness, extraordinary corrosion resistance and ability to withstand extreme temperatures. It is also very useful in the products of automobiles, computers and mobile phones. Sir, a year and a half earlier to 26th December, 2004, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research had set up a network project involving six of its own institutions and several other academic and industrial institutes to examine the possibility of 'Placer Mining'. A placer deposit consists of some valuable mineral or gemstone that accumulates in weathered rock, stream sediments or beach deposits as a result of natural weathering and erosion.

A team of scientists led by Dr. V.J. Loveson of the Central Mining Research Institute, Dhanbad has been monitoring the level of placer deposits on Tamil Nadu's coastline. When Dr. Loveson was contacted by the reporter of *Times of India*, he stated that fresh deposits of titanium are expected to be about 40 million tonnes. This figure is reportedly based on back-of-the envelope calculations extrapolating the observed thickness of the deposits on roughly 500 kilometres of the coastline that was hit by tsunami.

MR. SPEAKER: Which State are you talking about?

DR. K. DHANARAJU : It is about Tamil Nadu, Sir.

Obviously, nature has given wealth to the country by way of the painful tsunami. The Government should give special attention to find out other deposits in the seabed which tsunami seems to have dumped on the beach. Apart from titanium which is a very valuable ore for the country, many other deposits such as limonite and rutile reserves are there. I request the Government to set up a special and separate Department to find out the natural deposits which are left behind by navigational activities.

MR. SPEAKER: I believe that this is a matter on which the Government should pay attention.

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12.30 hrs.