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Title : Need to utilize the Titanium Dioxide minerals found in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.

SHRIA.V. BELLARMIN (NAGERCOIL): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, India has large reserves of beach sand minerals such as Ilmenite, Rutile, Zircon and other atomic minerals mainly as placer deposits. These reserves are mostly located in the coastal stretches of peninsular India, with the exception of a few inland placer deposits. The total reserves of Ilmenite according to preliminary exploration amount to 348 million tonnes. Out of the total reserves, about 87 million tonnes are located in Tamil Nadu, especially in Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and Tuticorin districts. The deposits at Kanyakumari are of superior grade in that the TiO<sub>2</sub> content in Ilmenite is as high as 55 to 56 per cent as against other places.

The total mineral reserves of Ilmenite in Kanyakumari are about 15 million tonnes. A major portion of this deposit lies in and around Manavala Kurichi village which is about 25 km. away from Kanyakumari and about 75 km. from Trivandrum.

There is already a public sector undertaking, Indian Rare Earths Limited, working in Manavala Kurichi, which is engaged in mining and production of all the prescribed minerals including Ilmenite, Monazite, Rutile, Zircon, etc. The Manavala Kurichi plant presently produces one lakh tonnes per annum of Ilmenite and it is understood that they have plans to double the capacity of Ilmenite production.

There is a good scope for starting a Titanium pigment industry in Kanyakumari district using Ilmenite from Manavala Kurichi plant of Indian Rare Earths Limited. All the infrastructural facilities are available in and around Manavala Kurichi such as proximity to raw mineral, skilled labour, land, water, chemicals and effluent discharge. The market potential is very high and availability of Ilmenite is guaranteed for 100 years or more.

So, I urge upon the Union Government to initiate steps to set up a Titanium Dioxide manufacturing unit at Manavala Kurichi in Kanyakumari district.

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