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Assessment of Plastics Along the West Coast of India

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Why in News

Recently, **National Institute of Oceanography (NIO)** conducted a study which states that beaches in Maharashtra are more polluted with microplastics and macroplastics than those in Goa and Karnataka.

The study is titled '**Assessment of macro and micro plastics along the west coast of India: abundance, distribution, polymer type and toxicity**'.

Key Points

- The assessment of **macro and microplastic contamination** was conducted for two years on 10 beaches along the western coast of India and their toxic effects on marine organisms.
 - Plastics **less than five millimeters** in length are called '**microplastics**' and the relatively larger particles, of **more than five millimeters**, are classified as '**macroplastics**'.
- **Reasons for Pollution:** Land-based contaminants coming from near shore plastic industries, port areas, petroleum industries and high tourism activities.
- **Recommendations:** The government should frame policies to **shun single-use plastic**, increase its recycling and also conduct community awareness programmes to prevent the marine environment from being affected by plastic contaminants.

National Institute of Oceanography

- It is a **multi-disciplinary oceanographic research institute** and is one of the constituent laboratories of the **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi**.
- Its **headquarter** is at **Dona Paula, Goa** with **regional centres** at **Kochi** (Kerala), **Mumbai** (Maharashtra) and **Visakhapatnam** (Andhra Pradesh).

- It was **established on 1 January 1966** following the **International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE)** in the 1960s.
- The **principal focus** of research has been on observing and understanding special oceanographic characteristics of the Indian Ocean.
- The major research areas include the **four traditional branches of oceanography - biological, chemical, geological/geophysical and physical**, as well as ocean engineering, marine instrumentation and marine archaeology.

International Indian Ocean Expedition

- During years **1962-1965**, it was one of the greatest international, interdisciplinary oceanographic research efforts to explore Indian Ocean in which 40 oceanographic research vessels belonging to 13 countries surveyed the Indian Ocean and collected useful data in almost all disciplines in the marine sciences.
- This was **one of the first coordinated efforts** to explore the Indian Ocean.
- The **Second International Indian Ocean Expedition (IIOE-2)**, for the period of **2015-2020**, is a major global scientific program which will reveal new information on the Indian Ocean which is fundamental for future sustainable development and expansion of the Indian Ocean's **blue economy**.

Source: BS