



WATER SPORTS FACILITIES

A popular beach may also have well organized water sports facilities such as boating, water skating, surfing, gliders etc. Other facilities for beach based sports such as football, volleyball, etc. will attract more visitors. These in no way should affect the normal functioning of the beach. A well-managed beach will have beach guards to protect the swimmers. Necessary warning boards may have to be established for the safety of the swimmers explaining the dangers and precautions to be taken.

BEACH MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

It is advisable to have a Beach Management Committee which shall be entrusted with the upkeep of the beach for maintaining a conducive ambience, providing facilities for waste management and amenities for visitors, ensuring cleanliness, sustenance of natural beach and conflict resolution in addition to income generation from beach tourism. Information technology based dissemination of information on status of beach and nearshore waters, adherence to responsible tourism practices and safety measures and precautions should also be the responsibility of the Committee. The Committee should have members consisting of officials of the LSG, Tourism and Fisheries Departments, local NGOs, fishermen, police and local volunteers, and supported with sufficient funds and powers. The constitution and supervision of the Management Committee should vest with the respective LSG. It is better to formulate a Beach Management Plan with necessary guidelines for beach management. The implementation of this plan is the responsibility of the Beach Management Committee.

The Beach Management Plan should have a code of practice which can include recommendations on :

- i. Beach access design
- ii. Beach facilities (comfort services) building and design
- iii. Development control on beach (setback) area
- iv. Beach conservation
- v. Establishing and regulating zones on beaches
- vi. Placement, maintenance and management of public rescue equipment and facilities
- vii. Beach safety information
- viii. Effective beach management and maintenance
- ix. Provide safe food
- x. Mechanisms to ensure social security

Without infrastructure and plans in place these outputs will create a situation where the beach becomes unsafe and unattractive to beach visitors, resulting in environmental damages to the indigenous fauna and flora and finally leading to a direct impact on the local community and economy.

PERIODIC UP-GRADATION BY THE LSG

The Beach Management Plan needs to be regularly renewed and updated. The LSG has to evolve plans for the upkeep and upgradation of the beach and allot necessary funds for this purpose. LSG has to have plans for short term and long term development of the beach and its facilities. There is a need for efficient mechanism for implementing the plans. A feedback mechanism is to be made available for the visitors to give their suggestions for improvement.

COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENTS

There may be programs for other Departments, neighboring beach resorts and agencies for the development of the beach. The LSG shall ensure that these development plans are well integrated with its own programs. It shall have necessary coordination with them. These developments are within the framework of a master plan of the LSG and without violating the provisions contained in the CRZ regulations and environment protection rules.

Finally let's keep our beaches sustainably healthy by keeping them litter and pollution free and preserve the nature's gift for future generations!



BEST BEACH



A healthy beach which restores natural character, maintains clean environment, improves biodiversity and provides space for livelihood and recreational activities

THE BEACH

Beaches are our heritage. The beaches are the life line of fisher and other coastal communities and the spaces of leisure and rejuvenation for larger citizenry. It offers opportunities for beach tourism, sea sports and other economic activities. Beaches in their unspoiled form are landscapes which function as primary buffers against the encroaching sea, protecting human settlements from coastal erosion. With imminent threat of climate change looming on us, the preservation of this natural coastal environment is of paramount importance. The beaches normally undergo seasonal erosion during monsoon season. Generally the portion of the beach lost due to monsoonal erosion, is brought back during post monsoon accretion phase. Various anthropogenic activities like construction and associated development activities damage the natural protection provided by beach, exposing the fisher and other coastal communities to high vulnerability. Pollution, especially plastic, is gradually destroying the environmental and aesthetic quality of beaches and coastal waters. There is an urgent need to ensure balanced and judicious management of our beaches. The ideal approach is to make our beaches accommodate the needs of the fisher and other coastal communities and the wider public, while preserving its ecological integrity. Together we should stand to preserve the beauty of our beaches by adopting a coast friendly approach that prioritize cultural heritage, community well-being and ecological and geomorphological sustainability. With sustainable development we can collectively safeguard our beaches against climate change and preserve them for the present and future generations.

PRESENT STATUS

In recent years, the beauty and quality of our beaches have been deteriorating due to increasing human activities and pollution, including plastic waste. The beaches are prone to erosion due to natural and man-made factors. We have come to realize that the proper management and protection of beaches is a social responsibility and have significant impact on the economic growth of our country, public health and health of organisms living in the ocean. Over the past couple of decades, several initiatives have been undertaken to protect and manage our beaches. These efforts are a combined endeavor of Governments and the general public.



OCEAN SOCIETY OF INDIA (OSI) INITIATIVE

OSI, a leading professional Society of ocean scientists and technologists in the country, is also working towards creating awareness among people to conserve and use the oceans and their resources sustainably. The Society promotes the dissemination of the message of conservation through educational programs, awareness campaigns, and on-field initiatives such as beach cleaning. It also shares success stories and good practices to inspire and guide the coastal dwellers and all others associated with the coast. This brochure is prepared as part of a novel initiative of the Cochin Chapter of OSI to rank the beaches in Kerala. The ranking will be done by an Expert Committee constituted by OSI based on inputs received from each Local Self Government (LSG). The Committee will evaluate the filled up Questionnaire (see Annexure) received from the LSG coupled with field visits and discussions. As can be seen in the Questionnaire, several factors relating to aesthetics, recreational facilities and beach management contribute in making a good beach. The top-ranked LSGs will be honored in a function organized by the OSI for their commendable efforts. An attempt is made in the following sections to highlight on what constitutes an ideal beach.

NATURAL BEACH

Most of the coasts in the country are bestowed with beaches which have developed through geological processes over thousands of years. The functional support and the aesthetics of beaches have become an integral part of human psyche. The beach takes different shapes depending on the seasons and the prevailing coastal processes. A good beach shall be sufficiently large to maintain its functional integrity. If beach is not natural and if it is artificially nourished, there must be a system in the LSG to maintain and replenish it periodically. Necessary funding shall be earmarked in the LSG to ensure this.

There may be some coastal protection structures like seawalls, groins, breakwaters in the vicinity. The beach under consideration may not have been affected by them negatively and they in fact help in the protection and sustainability of the beach.

CLEAN BEACH

A beach is said to be clean when its natural character is maintained without any plastic or other litter both on the beach and the neighboring sea area. If trash such as plastic bags, bottles, cans, clothes, cigarette filters, and other such wastes are not properly disposed off they can eventually reach our beaches. When they are carried by the rain into streams and flow all the way to the sea, they get washed up on the beach. Other wastes typically found on our beaches are used hospital needles, fish waste, broken fishing nets, concrete, and other discharges from boats and other vessels, etc.

Pollution of coastal environments limits our ability to use beaches for economic, recreational and aesthetic purposes. Permanent arrangements for clearing the beach of all plastic and other waste materials help to maintain its aesthetic value and natural character. A proper waste management system needs to be part of a beach management plan. Pamphlets on responsible tourism, and duties of beach users and commercial establishments may have to be made available for visitors and tourism industry.



COASTAL WATER QUALITY

The coastal waters also should be clean and free from health hazards for recreational use of the beaches. The water must be sufficiently free from microbiological and chemical hazards to ensure that there is minimum risk to health and safety of the user.

AMENITIES FOR VISITORS

Sufficient washrooms and permanent systems to clean and maintain them should be available. There should be running water and a system to dispose of the drainage without affecting the beauty of the beach. The food vendors, food courts and other vendors are to be properly organized without affecting normal functioning of the beach and its beauty. It must be ensured that all wastes originated in the beaches by stakeholders are properly disposed of.

BEACH SAFETY

There should be sign boards indicating the risks and hazards and precautionary measures for the visitors, especially those involving in water recreation activities. Danger zones during different seasons should be clearly indicated. Beaches with tourism importance should have sign boards (pictorial) to direct / instruct the visitors on the 'dos' and 'don'ts'. A good administration makes these boards attractive with periodic maintenance and upgradation so that the visitors are tempted to read them. Sufficient number of trained life guards should be deployed in tourism destinations. A Monitoring Committee can have a permanent observation system to ensure this.



LIVELIHOOD FACILITIES FOR FISHER COMMUNITY

There is freedom for the fishermen for shore seining and line fishing. Traditional fishers' requirements should coexist harmoniously with the requirements of visitors. The visitors also can do line fishing. There should not be any structures constructed for this purpose, except for utilizing natural systems like rock outcrops.

GARDENS AND BEAUTIFICATION

Trees and gardens at the boundary will add to the attraction of the beach. It needs to be ensured that they are well maintained. Open gyms, children's parks, benches, walkways, bicycle tracks, aquariums, running water, WIFI facility, drinking water, showers for swimmers and other facilities are to be provided to the visitors.

ROAD ACCESS AND PARKING SPACE

Well-developed roads leading to the beach facilitates easy access for visitors and users. A well-managed beach will have separate bus bay, parking facilities for four, three and two wheelers and bicycles.

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS

The beach may have some historic importance and there may be some important historic monuments nearby. The LSG may have a permanent arrangement to protect them and explain about them to the visitors with appropriate sign boards. Displays detailing the history and heritage of the area will be useful for visitors. There may be a museum in the vicinity to explain the history.

