

Recommendations

1. The Interconnectedness of Beaches, Coastal Seas, and Human Rights

It is recommended that the Kerala State Human Right Commission (KSHRC) suo motu investigate if the VISL and AVPPL have adhered to the foundational principles of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

2. Balancing Vizhinjam's Heritage, Fishing Communities, and Development

It is recommended that the consent of Local Self-Governing institutions (LSG) and grama sabhas must be obtained before any new plans for any infrastructure development are implemented.

3. Challenges and Imperatives for Transparent Infrastructure Projects

It is recommended that the Janakeeya Samara Samithi should appoint a person of high repute as "People's Ombudsman" who can investigate complaints from individuals and groups who have been treated unfairly.

4. Environmental Impact Assessment Deficiencies in Vizhinjam Port Project

It is recommended that the Government take steps to address the deficiencies identified in the Vizhinjam port project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and prevent a repeat of such happenings in the future, the following steps should be considered:

5. Addressing Irregularities and Ensuring Fairness in Vizhinjam Port Project

It is recommended that the facts mentioned in the CAG report about the unfair advantage to the Concessionaire and potential loss to public revenues be reviewed by a government constituted Finance Standards Committee.

6. Environmental Consequences of Vizhinjam International Seaport Construction

It is recommended that given the dynamic nature of the marine ecosystem, and its crucial economic, social and cultural importance to Kerala society, the Government should constitute a special Task Force for Review of Coastal Development Projects, with members consisting of appropriate independent experts to consider a long-term plan to balance economic development with environmental sustainability.

7. Protecting Biodiversity and Ecosystems in Vizhinjam Bay

It is recommended that the Government, in keeping with the guidelines of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, and the obligations under the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), should commission the Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) to address the imminent threat to biodiversity from the Vizhinjam port project before further phased development of the port is initiated.

8. Economic and Ecological Value of Coastal Ecosystem Services

It is recommended that the Government request the appropriate Departments of the University of Kerala to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the true economic, ecological, and cultural value of these services by an inter-disciplinary team with the full and informed participation of the fishing communities.

9. Impact of Vizhinjam Port on Local Fishing Communities

It is recommended that the Government constitute an inter-departmental committee to oversee the speedy and correct implementation of all resettlement and compensation matters promised by both the Government and the AVPPL to the affected fishing communities. Efforts should be made to ensure the following:

- ❖ *Equitable Compensation: Ensure that compensation for income losses and other adverse impacts is distributed fairly among all affected parties, particularly the traditional fishing community.*
- ❖ *Rehabilitation and Support: Provide proper accommodation and facilities for those who lost their houses and assets, allowing them to continue pursuing fishery-related livelihood activities.*
- ❖ *Community Spaces: Compensate of lost cultural, social, and religious spaces, with the same priority, manner, and spirit as AVPPL was given land for commercial use.*
- ❖ *Habitat Regeneration: Priority efforts to regenerate lost habitats, especially beaches, should be a priority*
- ❖ *Sustainable Development: Emphasize informed decision-making that balances economic development with the preservation of the environment and the cultural and socioeconomic heritage of vulnerable coastal communities.*
- ❖ *Safety Measures: Implement safety measures to address concerns related to the reduced depth and increased turbulence at the fishing harbor mouth, ensuring the safety of traditional fishermen.*
- ❖ *Modernise fishing harbour: Provide good landing facilities, hygiene and waste management, facilities for marketing and processing with active co-management giving women fishworkers proper representation in governance.*

- ❖ *Community Involvement: Engage the local community, particularly the women, in the decision-making process and consider their perspectives when planning and implementing the future phases of the project to minimize adverse impacts.*

10. Coastal Erosion and Damage to Coastal Homes

It is recommended that there be an immediate, comprehensive, and transparent environmental impact assessment (EIA) rectifying the shortcomings of the earlier EIA by accounting for the characteristic physical, social, and occupational features of this coast to assess damage caused by the Vizhinjam port construction to the homes north of Vizhinjam.

11. Priority Rejuvenation of Lost Beaches

It is recommended that immediate measures be undertaken in Panathura, Poonthura, Beemapalli, Cheriyaathura, Valiyathura, Kochuthope and Shangumukham as a priority. VISL and AVPPL should take the responsibility for developing the beaches under an emergency programme with help of institutions with proven credible experience in designing and executing such projects. Sand which is available from maintenance dredging and dredging the Vizhinjam fishing harbour should be used for this compensatory nourishment in the northern villages. Continuous consultation and monitoring of the progress should be done with full, informed community participation.

12. Compensation and Remedial Measures for Fishing Communities

It is recommended that: The Government should engage an independent agency to re-assess the current and possible future disruptions which can be caused for fishing communities in the operational and expansion phases of the port. Pressure should be applied on AVPPL to take appropriate measures, in consultation with the communities, to raise the funds and ensure timely and effective implementation of all current and future remedial measures.

13. Shifting from Seawalls to Strategically Managed Coastal Retreat

It is recommended that government should choose social infrastructure (housing) over protective infrastructure (seawalls) and constitute a "Coastal Community Housing Fund" for Rs 2000 crore with participation of government, public and private sector housing finance agencies. The government should use special powers for acquisition of land for this purpose paying market prices. Designed villages should have all community amenities, socio-cultural facilities, waste management and be planned with community participation, with structured involvement of all relevant departments, and logistic and financial support of the Government.

14. Preserving Sandy Beaches and Their Tourism Potential

It is recommended that the Janakeeya Samara Samithi (JSS) should initiate alliances between the fishing communities, stakeholders involved in coastal tourism, and those concerned with cultural and religious significance of beaches, to push for a new policy for “Revival and Sustenance of Sandy Beaches”. This must be parallelly combined by resettling the active coastal fishing communities close to their occupational beaches but away from harm. Also promoting pesca-tourism initiatives that involve community participation and profit sharing can empower the local community and ensure their participation in and benefit from the tourism industry in the region.

15. The Conflict Between Port Development and Fishing Community Futures

It is recommended that the Janakeeya Samara Samithi, with the support of the local self-governing institutions and relevant community organisations, during the Public Hearing ordered by the MoEFCC’s Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) for the next phase of the port expansion, should demand that a Social Licence to Operate (SLO) be constituted.