



SPECIAL TOURISM AREA - A CRITICAL STUDY OF BEKAL

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Abstract

Bekal in Kerala has been identified as "Special Tourism Area" (STA) for integrated development, as per the National Action Plan of 1992, with the objective of intensive development of the destination in co-ordination with the state governments and the private sector. Bekal is one of the best potential beach resort destinations in South Asia. India has a very few comparable locations that offer the diversity of attractions to be found in Bekal. The area of Bekal beach is still virgin and pristine, offering the opportunity to set up a new planned resort destination. The Bekal Resort Development Corporation (BRDC) Limited was set up by the Government of Kerala to develop Bekal as a tourist destination after the declaration of Bekal as a Special Tourism Area in 1992. BRDC focuses on planned, environmental friendly and geographically viable methods of development. This article is a critical analysis of the potential of Bekal as a beach resort and the present stage development.

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Bekal: A Special Tourism Area

The National Action Plan of 1992 envisaged the intensive development of some of the tourist circuits and destinations in co-ordination with the state governments and the private sector. A number of new destinations and circuits were identified and emphasis was given for the development of these circuits and areas. Sindudurg in Maharashtra, Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, Puri- Konark in Orissa, Bekal in Kerala and Diu are the beach destinations which have been identified as "Special Tourism Areas' (STA) for integrated development. An amount of Rs. 1.25 crore was released to various state governments during 1997-98 for the intensive development of these areas.

Extremely scenic landscape, extensive beaches, numerous estuaries and backwaters and unspoilt environs qualified Bekal as a potential site for an international standard beach destination. It is the first planned beach destination of India. It is unarguably one of the best potential beach resort destinations in South Asia. India has a very few comparable locations that offer the diversity of attractions to be found in Bekal. Yet, unlike most other existing resort destinations which are close to a major urban center, and thus already over developed, the Bekal area is still virgin and pristine, offering the opportunity to set up a new planned resort destination.

In the 1990's, World Tourism Organization projections indicated that global international tourist arrivals would increase at around 4.8% p.a. from around 500 millions in 1993 to 661 millions by the year 2000, and then by 3.6% p.a. to 937 million by the year 2010. The South Asia region, within which India is located, received 3.2 million international arrivals, i.e., 0.7% of global tourist arrivals in the 90's. After analyzing this scenario, the Government of India concluded that more destinations should be identified for integrated resort development. This was implemented by the 'Special Tourism Area' programme aimed at development and popularization of 'Beach Tourism' in the country. Special Tourism Area scheme should attract investment in hitherto unknown destinations, which has immense beach tourism potential.

Integrated Tourism Development in India through beaches

The National Policy for Tourism development in India is based on a broad action plan including:

- Preservation of natural heritage;
- Socio-economic development of the tourism destinations;

- Increasing employment opportunities;
- Development of domestic tourism;
- Development of international tourism and optimization of foreign exchange earnings;
- Diversification of tourism products.

All of which together will increase India's share in world tourism. The basic thrust of the project is sustainable tourism and is considered in terms of the socio-economic and environmental sustainability.

Bekal – An Exotic Beach Destination

The Northern most district of Kerala, Kasargod, is known for its coir and handloom industries. Fishing is a prime source of livelihood. The district has water, forest and mineral resources. Demarcating the North and the South are two rivers – the Thalapadi and the Trikaripur. Grey rocks and barren land amidst visible through the coconut palms along the coastal belt make this district a rare and distinct beauty.

These days most travelers who land in Kasargod head straight for Bekal, 16 Kms South on National Highway 17. The beautiful Bekal beach with the historical and archaeologically significant Bekal Fort in the background is now being developed in to a major beach resort. The Fort is perched a top a hill, giving a strategic view of the countryside. The largest and best-preserved fort in Kerala, belonged in ancient times to the Kadampa dynasty and later came under the control of the Kolathiri Rajas.

Bekal Beach

An unmatched experience of the sun, sea and the sand is this shallow beach, that offers, apart from the charm of unexplored nature, spectacular views of the Bekal Fort nearby. Adding more charm to the spectacular landscape are the swaying palm trees that border the beach.

Bekal Fort

The unique Bekal Fort stands on the bank of the seas along with the external note of the unending waves, carrying the thrilling memories of bygone era. This foremost souvenir of the 'God's Own Country' remains undeterred over the

ages as a silent witness to centuries of eventful yesteryears. The Bekal Fort has been a source of attraction for historians, tourists and nature lovers for centuries since it embodies the memories of the glorious past. It is the largest fort in Kerala.

The Fort appears to have been built up from the seas since almost three-fourth of its exterior is drenched and the waves do stroke the citadel. The Hanuman Temple and ancient Muslim Mosque nearly hold testimony to the age-old religious harmony that prevailed in the area. The zigzag entrance and the trenches around the fort show the defense strategy connected with the Fort.

Bekal fort happens to be the biggest Fort of Kerala spreading over 40 acres. The important features of this Fort are the tank with its flight of steps, the opening of the tunnel towards the South, the magazine for keeping ammunition and broad and wide steps leading to the observation tower is a rarity. From there, one has ample view of all the important places in the vicinity. This observation center has strategical significance in finding out even the smallest movements of the enemy and ascertaining the safety of the fort.

Unlike most other Indian Forts, Bekal fort was not a center of administration because no remains of a place were found within the fort. Probably the fort was built for fulfilling the defense requirement. The outer walls of the fort are specially designed to defend the fort effectively: The holes at the top are meant for aiming at the farthest points, the holes below are meant for hitting when the enemy is near and the holes underneath facilitate attacking when the enemy is very near to the fort. This is a remarkable evidence for the medieval technology of defense strategy. Apart from this the wild and ecstatic beauty of the setting sun is a glorious presence in the fort.

History

During the Perumal age, Bekal was a part of Mahodayapuram. The Kodavalam inscriptions of Bhaskara Ravi II (The King of Mahodayapuram) illustrate the undisputed sway of Mahodayapuram over this region. Following the political decline of Mahodayapuram Perumals by the 12th century A.D. North Kerala including Bekal came by the archaeological excavation conducted recently at Bekal Fort is a manifestation of the strong presence of Mysore Sultans. The martyrdom of The Tipu Sulthan who died while fighting against the British in 1799 saw the end of Mysorean control and subsequently the fort came under the East India Company. During the reign of this Company, Bekal became the headquarters of the newly organized Bekal Taluk of South Canara District in

Mumbai Presidency. Presently, the protection and preservation of Bekal fort has been entrusted to the Archaeological survey under the sovereignty of Kolathunadu. The maritime importance of Bekal increased much under Kolathiris and it became an important fort town of Thulunadu.

The battle of Thalikkottai in 1565 led to the decline of the mighty Vijayanagara Empire and many feudatory chieftains rose in political prominence including the Keladi Nayaks (Ikkeri Nayaks). The Nayaks realized the political and economical importance of Thulunadu and attached and annexed this part of the country. Bekal served as a nucleus in establishing the dominance of Nayaks in Malabar. Hiriya Venkatappa initiated the constructions of the fort and it was completed during the period of Shivappa Nayak. The speedy completion of the port was aimed at the defense of the fort from external attacks.

Bekal served as an important military station of Tipu Sultan when he led the great military expedition to capture Malabar. The coins and other artifacts unearthed of India.

Infrastructural Benefits of Bekal

a) Other varied attractions in the vicinity

Chandragiri Fort

Six km away, perched beside the Chandragiri River, is the Chandragiri Fort. Built during the 17th century by Sivappa Naik of Bedanore, who is said to have built the Bekal Fort too, Chandragiri's western rampart is an ideal place to watch sunsets.

Hosdurg Fort

Further down, 15 km away from Bekal is the Hosdurg Fort – a chain of forts built by Somasekhara Nayak of the Ikkeri dynasty. Today Hosdurg's historic aura has a spiritual touch, thanks to the Nityanand Ashram located there.

Valiyaparamba

Perhaps the most beautiful backwater stretch of Kerala, Valiyaparamba is 19 km from Bekal. Four rivers give shape to this network of waterways that lazily snake through the land between palm groves and paddy fields. Hire a Kettuvallam – the traditional houseboat of Kerala – for an unmatched experience of the

backwaters. Nothing lets you take in the rustic beauty of Kasargod; the refreshing glimpses of life around the waterways, as does a houseboat cruise. Houseboat cruises offer – one / two bedrooms, an attached toilet / bath, a kitchenette plus a crew comprising a cook, oarsmen and guide. And, as one glides past little thatched houses, past the clusters of green; past fleets of ducks; he'll finally discover that serenity has a name. A visit to the turtle hatchery center nearby will provide the perfect finale.

Chandragiri

Unveil more frames of tranquility at Chandragiri River. Flowing beside the famous fort by the same name, boat trips are available from here to nearby islands and palm groves.

Kappil Beach

Five km away is Kappil Beach. Vast, remote and secluded, it is refreshingly different from popular beach destinations in its inspiring settings and ambience. Nearby is the Kodi Cliff that looks as if it sprang straight out of the sea. Take in one of the most panoramic views of the sea from here.

Kanwatheertha Beach

Located 3 km from Manjeswaram. What makes this beach special is a large swimming-pool like formation of the sea on the vast beach.

Azhithala Beach

Serene, secluded and punctuated with casuarinas trees, Azhithala Beach, located 25 km to the south of Bekal, is the ideal setting for long walks and out-of-this-world moments.

Ranipuram

Shola woods, monsoon forests and grasslands... Ranipuram, 58 km from Bekal is a stunning landscape in every shade of green. Situated at a cool 750 m above sea level, it is popular not just as a natural haven, but also as an adventure hotspot. For hidden beneath the evergreen canopy are delightful trekking trails that nature enthusiasts are slowly discovering. Formerly known as Madathumala, Ranipuram's extensive forests merge with those of the nearby State of Karnataka. While the varied vegetation will make this place a favourite with nature lovers,

the wild elephants that wander the mountains will offer the experience of a lifetime for wildlife enthusiasts.

Kottancherry

Visitors can have more of adventure at Kottancherry which resembles the famous hill station of Kodaikanal in its scenic beauty. The rainforests near Konnakkad present excellent options for trekking.

Possadigumpe

Ideal for an enchanting one-day tour is Possadigumpe, located on a hillock 323m above sea level and 18 km east of Mangalpady in Dharmathadka. The delightfully cool environs of this place make it the right place for a picnic.

ArtForms

Perhaps the most enduring image of Kasaragod is the *Theyyam*, the oldest ritualistic temple art form of India and one of the most spectacular in artistry and symbolism. Watch a grand display of this unique ritual art at the numerous *Kaliyattoms* held here from October to May every year. Two other art forms that are performed in Kasaragod are *Kalaripayattu*, the martial art form of Kerala and *Yakshagana*, the art form that has its roots in Karnataka.

Places of worship

Kasaragod has the rare distinction of housing some of the historically and religiously important places of worship in India. Foremost among them is the *Malik Dinar Juma Masjid* – believed to have been built by Malik Ibn Dinar – at Thalankara. Equally significant is the 9th century *Ananthapuram Lake Temple*, said to be the original abode of Ananthapadmanabha, the presiding deity of Kerala's most famous place of worship, Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple. Situated 30 km from Bekal, this is the only lake temple in Kerala. Other prominent pilgrim centres include *Madiyankulam Durg Temple* at Kanhangad, famous for the Bhutha dance held during the annual festival, the *Sree Mahalingeswara Temple* at Adoor on the banks of River Payaswini, the *Madhur Temple* with its rich architecture and copper plate roofing and *Manjeswaram*, home to 15 mosques and two Jain temples. *Anandashram* is an internationally renowned spiritual centre, 15 km from Bekal.

Aralam Wildlife Sanctuary (120 km from Bekal) :

Elephants, sloth, bears, sambars, mousedeer etc. can be found in this 55 sq.km sanctuary

Muzhappilangad Beach (105 km from Bekal):

Kerala's only drive-in beach of 4 km long, is a swimmer's paradise.

Parassinikadavu (68 km from Bekal):

Famed for the Muthappan Temple, where Muthappan Theyyams are performed every morning and evening.

Wayanad (150 km from Bekal):

Known for its picturesque hill stations, spice plantations, luxuriant forests. Attractions include the Pookot Lake, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and Edakkal Caves. Wayanad receives a good number of tourists in the recent years, which accounts 200% growth in tourist arrivals.

Kappad Beach (165 km from Bekal):

Historic beach where Vasco da Gama landed on the 27th of May, 1498.

Coorg (120 km from Bekal):

Hill station famous for rolling hills, forests, coffee plantations.

Nagarhole Wildlife Sanctuary:

643 sq. km of rich and varied flora and fauna.

Kabini:

65 km from Nagarhole Wildlife Sanctuary; famous for the Kabini River Lodge, formerly a Maharajah's hunting lodge.

Sringeri:

Famed as the Southern seat of the orthodox Hindu hierarchy.

Mookambika (210 km from Bekal):

Famous for the Mookambika Temple, an important pilgrim centre of South India.

Gokarna:

A Centre of Sanskrit learning; boasts of a beach.

Dharmasthala:

Home to the famous Manjunatha Temple

Udupi (126 km from Bekal):

Important Vaishnavite town.

b) Accessibility factor

By Air

Mangalore	-	80 Km
Nedumbassery	-	370 Km
Calicut Airport	-	200 Km
Bangalore Airport	-	390 Km
Mumbai Airport	-	950 Km
Goa Airport	-	450 Km

By Rail

Bekal is right on the main railway line. The station from where the Bekal Fort can be seen is Pallikkare, a site in the Bekal Project. Mumbai is just 15 hrs ride Goa is just 5hrs ride from Bekal by Konkan Railway.

By Road

Bekal is situated on the National Highway 17.

Bekal - Calicut	-	140 Km
Bekal - Bangalore	-	417 Km
Bekal - Mangalore	-	70 Km
Bekal - Chennai	-	750 Km
Bekal - Mumbai	-	1022 Km
Bekal - Goa	-	440 Km
Bekal - Trivandrum	-	540 Km

The Proposal for Bekal as Special Tourism Area

A quiet, sleepy little town at the northern tip of Kerala, Bekal is just the right locale for a mega tourism destination. Many breath taking beaches, a magnificent fort by the main beach, a calm, peaceful ambience, vast stretches of land that can be developed, warm, friendly, enterprising people, two airports within about 140 km. In short, the right ingredients to begin with.

Bekal has been declared as SPECIAL TOURISM AREA (STA) and tourism has been earmarked as the major contributor for the overall development of the region. A detailed techno-feasibility study has been conducted and a tourism led urban structure plan prepared. The proposed plan for Bekal is simple. Identify acquire and develop potential resort sites, strengthen infrastructure- roads, power, water supply systems, invite promoters and investors, devise strategies for marketing Bekal as a destination and co-ordinate development at every level.

The operative works in the Bekal game plan is based on planned growth. No cluttered development No high rise buildings. No breaking of coastal regulations. The architecture will be traditional. The number of resorts limited to a sustainable level and the resorts categorized to cater to the high-income traditional tourists, the budget traveler and domestic tourist.

The Bekal Tourism Authority, a statutory body prepared a master plan. BTA regulate urban growth, monitor environment parameters and ensures that the eco system is not endangered.

Bekal Resorts Development Corporation Ltd (BRDC)

The BRDC Limited was set up by the Government of Kerala to develop Bekal as a tourist destination after the declaration of Bekal as a Special Tourism Area in 1992. BRDC focuses on planned, environmental friendly and geographically viable methods of development. The company concentrates on setting up comprehensive tourism infrastructure at the same time ensuring that the development is beneficial to the local community. The corporate office is at Trivandrum and field office at Udma, Bekal.

Proposed- Developmental Area

The control area of the Bekal project is in the district of Kasargod which form the broad zone of influence within which the foreign based development activity will

Infrastructural Development

Water supply system

The water source identified was River Karicheri, a tributary of the Chandragiri River. The system would be implemented in two stages. The initial investment during 96-97 would meet the requirement up to the year 2003.

Sanitation

Small sewage treatment plant with a combined capacity of 16mld would be installed to meet the sanitation requirement of the core area. This would have a collection network of 25 km along the coastal stretch. Solid waste treatment and management of 28 metric tones form in 1996 and augmentation of capacity by 30 metric tonne by 2003 was proposed.

Roads

The transport plan identified, an upgradation of 10 km of coastal highway from two lanes to four lanes, widening of 22 km of existing roads. Strengthening of 3 bridges, construction of 1.5km of new roads, construction of 2 new bridges and development of a transport terminal apart from the maintenance of 200km of existing roads and improvement of 12 road junctions.

Street lighting

Street lighting was envisaged on the basis of new transportation facilities. The total number of streetlights required was expected to be 630.

Phase II 2001-2010

In this phase it was proposed that 12 resorts would be built. In addition to upgrading infrastructure comprehensive tourism facilities like a golf course, convention center and so on would be created.

The uptake of resorts in Bekal in between 2001-2010.

Year	Deluxe	3-4 star	Budget	Total
2002		105	150	255
2003	450	-	150	600
2004	400	-	150	550
2-005	300	-	150	450
Total	1150	105	600	1855

Tourism facilities

To offer varied experience to tourists within a short distance and time, attractive tourist spots have been developed nearby. Facilities include ;

- Thanal Vishrama Kendram (tourist facility near Bekal Fort);
- Beautification of the surrounding areas of the Bekal Fort;
- Seaside pathway along the Bekal Fort;
- Erection of display and signboards in Kasargod district;
- Public beach at Pallikkara near Bekal Fort;
- Aqua Park and Chandragiri Boat Club;
- House boating cruise in Tejaswini backwaters in Valiyaparamba;
- Backwater Tourism - Houseboat;
- Children's parks at Bekal Fort and Thanal Vishrama Kendram;
- Trekking and adventure tourism.

Future activities planned

- Heritage tourism projects for conservation and development of 8 Forts around Bekal;
- Development of Valiyaparamba as a Backwater destination of north Kerala;
- Development of Bekal Fort Beach;
- Setting up of Eco lodges and other tourism products;
- International standard water sports centre;
- Theme Parks;
- Augmenting facilities for tourists visiting Bekal.

Actual Development

This beautiful beach can attract thousands of foreign tourists. BRDC acquired 278 hectares of land in the development area and intends to sell the same as

resort and housing plots and provide a network of improved roads, water supply and waste mgt system in the area. BRDC has co-ordination with public work department for roads, fisheries for coastal side development and infrastructure and also for financial assistance, revenue department, irrigation department for water supply and backwaters development, and railway for the construction of overbridge and telecom for the telecommunications network.

Accommodation

In the 278 hectares of land, 6-resort sites are identified instead of the proposed 22 resort sites and all are leased out. Work of the 3 properties is on the verge of completion. Though 3154 varied units of accommodation is there in the proposed plan, there is only a tented accommodation, which is operational at present, owned by private parties and promoted by BRDC. An international attraction like Bekal should have taken more aggressive steps to provide accommodation facilities for tourists since it has been declared as Special Tourism Area before 15 years.

Intercontinental, Holidays Group (UAE Based), Khanna Hotels (Mumbai based), Bharath Hotels, Air Travel Enterprises, cghearth are the companies who have leased the land for constructing hotels. Leela Group has dropped plans of developing a beach resort at Bekal citing the lack of infrastructural facilities especially roads. The cghearth has been given Plot I with an area of 13.39 hectares at Chithari and Ajanur. The resort will blend with the landscape and will construct 30 unique units. Air Travel Enterprises has been given 18.48 hectares at Chithari and Keekan, which is the largest plot, for constructing 250 units. BRDC expects the first unit will be operational before the coming monsoon.

Beautification

Beautification of the site includes installation of two sculptures of Theyyam created using laterite at the beach and a shed with walls adorning murals created by artisans from Nilambur. Apart from these, a rock garden at the parking area has been developed where laterite boulders of various size has been utilized. Under the social forestry scheme, planting trees has been done in the beach area.

Roads, walkways and Parking Facilities

BRDC has developed the roads in and around Bekal but not in par with an international standard. BRDC is to get an assistance of 7 crores for road

development from NABARD. Parking facilities are all available. 3 acres of land is acquired and made as parking area near the Bekal Fort. A beautiful walkway has been made for tourists to explore the beauty of the fine coastal line and enjoy the panoramic view of the Bekal Fort.

Entertainment

BRDC has developed Kerala's largest beach park in the vicinity of Bekal, which is 12 acres. The one and only accommodation is also situated in this area. A park has been developed here for children below 14 years. BRDC aims to develop another 11 acres of land at the beach for constructing water park, theme park etc. The beach has been illuminated during the evening hours so that tourists can spend more time at the beach even after the sunset. BRDC is planning to develop Valiyaparamba as a satellite destination which can be connected to Kannur backwaters. At present there are 4 houseboats and 8 seedboats for operation.

Safety and Security

Tourist Police assistance is provided at Bekal fort and beaches.

Toilet and resting facilities

Toilets have been provided for the use of tourists and eco-friendly bamboo waste bins are also provided in the entire beach site for keeping the site clean. Multi Shed and Eru Madam (Tree House) would provide the tourist enough facility to take rest and enjoy the sea breeze. By using locally available materials, seating arrangements have been provided for the tourists at the beach.

Housing Sites

Housing Sites project in 75 hectares has been dropped out when BRDC revised the plan.

Sewage Disposal

BRDC has given the sewage disposal duty to the local panchayaths as the proposed number of resorts have come down to 6 from 22 and the plan for the

housing sites have been dropped. The companies, which are going to be operated there, will be having scientific sewage disposal system as suggested by BRDC

Marketing strategies

In fact Bekal is not promoted nationally or internationally, as the development is not in par with the world standards. It has not developed as it was planned, even after 15 years. The District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) is taking some steps to promote but it is not all sufficient for a planned international destination. An information counter by BRDC is working in a full-fledged manner. Now in the globalize world, where everything is very well marketed as it is essential for a decision-making and purchase, Bekal should be developed first and then take innovative steps for aggressive marketing.

Tourist Arrivals

There is a significant growth of tourist arrivals per year, which is approximately 10%. An average of 1500 foreigners visit Bekal every year. Around 3 lakhs of domestic tourists also come to enjoy the unique serenity and diversity of Bekal. Apart from these, the walk-in tourists on the Goa-Coorg-Wayanad-Mysore route also visit this place on which statistics are not available. The neighboring district, Wayanad receives 200% growth in tourist arrivals. But even then, Bekal is not able to make use of this opportunity due to many reasons. When the Malabar tourism circuit is developed, it will contribute more tourists to Bekal.

Problems in the way of development

Though it was identified as Special Tourism Area in 1992, BRDC was set up only in 1995. It started functioning in 1996. Initially there was resentment from the local population for land acquisition. It took 3-4 years to convince them about the project and the land was acquired only in 1999-2000. In 2000, the investors came down and as per the government legislation. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) had to be carried out for each site for development, which took not less than 1 year. Even after the investors came, they were not keen as they had a hesitation towards the project due to the lack of infrastructural services like roads, communication facilities etc.

Suggestions and Conclusion

Development of Bekal will give an additional momentum to tourism development in the Malabar region. The Ezhimala Naval Academy, the textile boom in the

district, the proposed Kannur Airport should give further impetus to tourism. BRDC is a competent authority who could develop Bekal to the present level after going through a lot of hurdles. The legal and governmental formalities held up the project from the east development.

Central government has been keen on tourism development and gives a lot of financial and non financial incentives and subsidies for the same. But the Bekal tourism project has received merely 1.75 crores even though it is being declared as Special Tourism Area by the Government of India. After the release of this money, nothing has been offered or received for this project. It is still worse in the case of Sindudurg, Mahabalipuram, Puri- Koprark and Diu. Compared to other areas in the same scheme, Bekal has gone far ahead. Due to this reason itself, the Central Tourism Department can give more assistance to this project.

Kerala which has bagged many awards for tourism development and known with a sobriquet, "God's Own Country" is also not very keen on this project. Kerala Tourism has spent 50 crores on this project and of which 25 crores itself was used for land acquisition. Furthermore, the central government has not taken any effort in including Bekal in the tourism Map.

- Even though Bekal has been declared as Special Tourism Area, the project got merely 1.75 crores of central financial assistance. So there should be more assistance from the Department of Tourism if it has to be developed as a world destination.
- Bekal is not there in the tourism map of India even after the identification of its potential. If it is there, that will attract more tourists and tourist entrepreneurs as well. It is a project, which aims the development of the whole region. So if the benefits of tax holiday and Tax Exemptions are available, that would bring more development.
- Bekal is blessed with varied attractions like beaches, folklore, martial arts etc. These aspects too should be promoted which will benefit the local community to the maximum.
- Bekal has been developing at a very slow pace. It took 15 years to have a start up infrastructure. So the concerned authorities should take drastic steps to develop it as early as possible.
- Since it is given a special status, Kerala government should adopt single window clearance system, as redtapism is the main bottleneck in the developmental process.

- BRDC should do the necessary works to make use of the Malabar Circuit and boost the visit of the tourists enroot.
- Goa is an international destination where millions of tourists come every year. Bekal is just 5hrs ride by rail from Goa. The visitors of Goa can be attracted to this destination by putting more marketing efforts.
- Now there is a fair increase in the number of tourist arrivals to Malabar region especially to Wayanad which is a neighboring district of Kasargod. This also can be made use of.
- If the proposed Kannur Airport comes true, that will allow to achieve a fair share of the leisure market, both domestic and international.
- BRDC has been able to take up several schemes along with Kerala Tourism for creating infrastructural facilities. So the Government should accelerate the developmental activities of Bekal by providing more financial assistance, incentives and subsidies that will help BRDC to hasten the developmental activities.

Conclusion

Bekal has the location, potential tourism sites, access and community acceptance and the conditions necessary to develop as an integrated resort destination that could be as large, if not, larger than that of Goa. In a nutshell, Bekal can stand proudly with all beautiful colors and the declaration of Bekal as Special Tourism Area added one more feather to it. Bekal is a tropical paradise from the tourists' trail at the southwestern peninsular tip and it will be the India's first well-planned tourist destination and Asia's finest if suitable actions are taken. The proposed development is still there in the paper even after 15 years and if at all Bekal has to be developed as an international destination by 2010.

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