



HCLFoundation



M S Swaminathan
Research Foundation
SCIENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



MSSRF Launches MSS@100 Coastal Clean-up Week to Tackle Plastic Pollution Across 100 Indian Beaches

To celebrate **International Coastal Clean-up Day 2025**, **M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)** launched a weeklong coastal clean-up drive that will run from 17th to 23rd September, in partnership with **HCL Foundation, Tamil Nadu Forest Department, INCOIS, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board**, local and government partners. This campaign also commemorates **the birth centenary of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan Bharat Ratna awardee** and his lasting contributions to sustainable fishing and livelihood security of coastal communities.

On 17th September, this MSS@100 Coastal Clean-up Week was inaugurated at **Kasimedu Beach, Chennai** by **Supriya Sahu IAS, Additional Chief Secretary for Environment, Climate Change & Forests**, along with **Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, Chairperson, MSSRF, Dr. Jayanthi M. IFS, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB)** and **Kasimedu Fishers Association**.

About the Inauguration:

Addressing over **127 fishers, participants, and local and government officials**, our Chief Guest and Guests of Honour shared their perspectives on collaborating with fishing communities, addressing ghost gear and plastic pollution in our oceans, and the scope of the MSS@100 Coastal Clean-up Week. With the support of **Rialto**, they also unveiled **two Plastic Bottle Collection Bins** that were donated by MSSRF.

Supriya Sahu, IAS:

"We still have fish in our waters now, but our future generations might not if plastic continues damaging marine life. We need to safeguard the future for our youth and stop polluting our oceans." "The MSS@100 Coastal Clean-up initiative's efforts aren't just for today. Dr. M.S. Swaminathan told us that protecting our world is an everyday duty." "The Tamil Nadu Government's Meendum Manjapai Thittam replaces plastic bags with cloth bags. Unlike plastic bags that take 5,000 years to decompose, cloth bags break down much faster."

Dr. Soumya Swaminathan:

"The fishing communities are on the frontlines - they see the impact of plastic pollution better than anyone. They're in the waters with marine animals getting caught in plastic bags and waste materials."

"When we throw plastic into the environment, it doesn't decompose like food waste. It breaks down into microplastics that fish consume, and when we eat those fish, we ingest harmful microplastics that damage our health."

Dr. Jayanthi M.I.F.S.,

"Engaging fishing communities is a priority in coastal clean-up initiatives. Thank you to MSSRF and HCL Foundation for initiating clean-ups across 100 beaches."

Coastal Clean-up Drive on 17th September:

MSSRF staff, district-level authorities, partners and volunteers organized simultaneous clean-up efforts **across 18 beaches in 10 districts spanning 4 coastal states** – Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. Embarking on a 1KM stretch to conduct these clean-ups, the volunteers collected ghost gear, glass bottles, plastic slippers and other plastic debris. On 17th September, they engaged **1250 volunteers** to mobilise clean-up efforts across **19 kilometers** and collected **5074 KGs of debris**, that was handed over to recycling centres including, MSSRF's centre in Gulf of Munnar, Forest Department of Tamil Nadu and Local Municipalities.

About the MSS@100 Coastal Clean-up Week:

MSS@100 Coastal Clean-up Week 2025 is estimated to mobilise **5,000** fishers, students, community members and volunteers to clear **50–70 tonnes of debris** from a **75–100 km** stretch of coastline. Spanning 100 beaches across Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, West Bengal, Odisha and Gujarat, this drive will primarily target **plastic debris and ghost gear**.

In addition to the core cleanup activities, the initiative will also feature interactive sessions and community engagement programs aimed at empowering participants with knowledge and tools for long-term coastal conservation. By fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility within local communities, MSSRF hopes to create a ripple effect that extends beyond the cleanup week, inspiring ongoing efforts of the foundation on marine litter management to protect and preserve our coastal environments. This series of events also serves as a tribute to the **100th birth anniversary of the late Prof. M.S. Swaminathan** and his steadfast commitment to integrating the ecological security of coastal areas with the livelihood security of coastal communities—creating mutually reinforcing pathways toward sustainable coastal resource management.

Learn more about MSS@100 Coastal Cleanup Week : <https://www.mssrf.org/mss100-coastal-clean-week-2025>