

# **Handicapped opportunities on public beaches, example of Stroomi beach.**

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## **Introduction**

More and more people talk about the creation of opportunities for different groups in society. Accessibility to services is different for the disabled persons in the context of participation in the community life. Nowadays the problems of disabled persons and their leisure activities are addressed. However, there is no information about the usage of public beaches for recreation and leisure by the people with disabilities.

The wheelchair-people say that there are wheelchair-adapted facilities for handicapped. As soon they go out of the house, every step reminds them of their disabilities. We should move toward universal accessibility, people with any ability would be adopted by the society. (Miles & Priest, 1999). Young people with disabilities want the same things as their non-disabled coeval, at least accessible opportunities. (Richardson, 1997: 1270). The wheelchair is the primary compensatory tool for people who have reduced muscle strength in the lower limbs, paralysis of the legs, or advanced age. (Franklin jt. 2006: 96). The wheelchair allows people to sit, move, communicate, work and be where a person wants to be and do what he wants to do. (Christiansen, 2005: 12).

This work focuses on opportunities of swimming in public beaches for people with reduced mobility. It describes the subjective experiences and evaluations through the available options. The aim of the research was to clarify if Stroomi beach as a public beach offers leisure services for disabled people.

The survey assessed if disabled people are guaranteed the opportunity for bathing and what are their problems and limitations.

## **Results**

Firstly, Stroomi beach observation was done to fix the condition of the beach buildings and servicing capability of the infrastructure.

It was originally planned to carry out the questionnaire using the convenience sample. However, when searching for the target group, it appeared that the number of suitable candidates is limited. People who spend their free time on the beach for a swim, are hard to find. The author had to decide in favour of the interviews.

The interviews were designed to explore the thoughts and ideas of the disabled people, to find out how the participants see and assess the situation themselves. It also tried to find out whether disabled people themselves are interested in using the beach services.

Three interviews were carried out, transcribed and analysis of important ideas brought out.

## Conclusion

The planning and building of infrastructure for people with special needs are taken into account, but created opportunities and solutions are incomplete and do not meet the standards.

The ramps have too large allowable angles. They are hard to drive by wheelchair.

Based on the research work carried out, the author makes the following suggestions for improvement.

Firstly, one has to maintain and improve roads and bring them in line with regulatory standards.

Another important suggestion is to improve the accessibility of toilets, reconstruct the ramps and install fencing in accordance with the standards.

Finally, the author proposes to investigate the possibility of using floating wheelchairs further. This solution seems to be the simplest solution allowing swimming for disabled people.

## References

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