PREFACE

As tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world, it has become one among the world’s most competitive industries. The competition is increasing day by day since more and more countries seek to attract tourists and more companies and organisations become involved in the highly skilled business of transporting, accommodating and catering for tourists. Just as any other products tourism too needs to be marketed persistently, as it is an industry in which the customer still has an immense variety of choices. Tourism organisations are adopting newer methods, techniques and strategies for marking tourist destinations and the products and services associated with tourism.

The concept of tour package is one among such innovative marketing methods adopted by several organisations across the globe. At present it has become a major contributing factor to the growth of tourism industry in India as well as worldwide. The increasing growth of tourist inflows in Kerala is also significantly influenced by the tour packages conducted by the travel agents, tour operators and other government and private tourism organisations such as Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) etc. Tourist surveys and studies in Kerala brought into light that about 14-20% of the tourist inflows in the state are through tour packages offered by such organisations and agencies.

KTDC, the government agency to undertake tourism promotional efforts in Kerala, has been designing and developing varied tour packages and other tourism products in order to identify and market all the beautiful spots and destinations in the state. Even though the Corporation has undertaken several marketing and promotional effort in the state, much of Kerala’s enchanting tourist places and spots are still remain unexposed to the nature lovers. KTDC, hence, should be very vigilant in formulating and implementing tourism marketing plans, policies and strategies for its varied tourist products and services in order to accomplish the stated objectives. The plans, policies and strategies thus formulated would be helpful to take the state to the pinnacle of socio-economic development. Through this study, therefore, the researcher made an earnest attempt to investigate the marketing strategies adopted by the Corporation for its varied tour packages offered in Kerala State.
For giving the study a systematic and articulate outlook, it is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter consists of the introductory background, statement of the problem, review of literature, objectives and hypotheses, methodology and design of the study. The second chapter explores the concepts and philosophies of marketing strategies of tourism products and tour packages by different scholars and outlines the different marketing strategies which can be applicable for tour packages. Chapter 3rd consists of two sections. Section first analyses and discusses the performance of Kerala tourism industry with regard to the tourist inflows and generation of income from tourism in the State. While the latter section analyses the resource potential of Kerala tourism industry with special focus on the attraction dimension.

Chapter four analyses and sketches out the organisational structure and overall operations of Kerala Tourism Development Corporation with special focus on the marketing function and operations. It also estimates KTDC’s contribution to tourist inflows in the state by way of tour packages with the help of a simple random sample survey. Fifth chapter focuses on the marketing strategies of tour packages in Kerala state with special reference to Kerala Tourism Development Corporation. It analyses and evaluates the various strategies adopted by KTDC for marketing tour packages

Chapter six analyses empirically the satisfaction levels of tourists both domestic and foreign. It presents the results of various statistical analyses in the form of tables and figures. The last chapter highlights the major findings of the study in a summarised form and put forward important suggestions based on the major findings.

The last part of the thesis contains bibliography and appendices which include two set of questionnaires administered to tourists and the details of the conducted tours and tour packages offered by the Corporation.