Chapter 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Kerala is the first State in India to realize the need for promoting tourism on a sustainable line. The socio-cultural and environmental peculiarities of the State have enabled the launch of diverse tourism products. Recognizing the economic potential, a number of steps have been initiated, both by the public and by the private sectors, to promote tourism. Within a period of two and half decades, since 1986 when tourism was declared as an industry in Kerala, as a productive sector, tourism has achieved commendable progress and this is reflected in the tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings. Again, widespread promotional and innovative practices in tourism have enabled the State to bag several national and international awards.

Tourism in Kerala is really non-seasonal in nature and it is a constantly growing industry. The DoT, KTDC, BRDC, TRKL, DTPC, KITTS, KIHMS, Thenmala Eco-Tourism Development Agency, and a host of other government departments such as Forest and Wildlife, Irrigation, KSEB, Fisheries and Agriculture, Culture, Museum, Zoo and Archaeology play a key role in the tourism development of Kerala. More than 250 tourist spots of varying degrees of importance and potential across the State have been identified. Moreover, the State has innumerable project possibilities which have to be identified and implemented from time to time based on emerging trends.

Among the promotional agencies, DTPCs, set up by the government of Kerala in all the 14 revenue districts, exploit the tourism potential of the State through sustained efforts by coordinating various government departments, voluntary agencies and other agencies interested in travel and tourism, and by ensuring local initiatives and mobilization of resources at local levels. At present, nearly one-third of the identified tourist spots is promoted and maintained by DTPCs. This shows the significant role played by DTPCs in the
promotion of tourism in Kerala. The present study titled “The Role of District Tourism Promotion Councils in the Promotion of Tourism in Kerala” has been undertaken in this context.

The study was carried out with the following specific objectives.

1. To review the tourism promotion in India and abroad and also the organizational structure and functioning of DTPCs in Kerala.

2. To enquire into the identification and implementation of the projects of DTPCs for the promotion of tourism in Kerala.

3. To assess the effectiveness of the programmes of DTPCs in Kerala.

4. To assess the benefits of the projects of DTPCs in Kerala from socio-cultural, economic and environmental point of view.

In line with the objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H₀₁: Not more than one half of the host community perceives that tourism awareness programmes of DTPCs in Kerala through media are effective.

H₀₂: Not more than one half of the host community perceives that tourism awareness programmes of DTPCs in Kerala through campaign are effective.

H₀₃: Not more than one half of the tourists perceive that the product promotion programmes of DTPCs in Kerala are effective.

H₀₄: Not more than one half of the tourists are satisfied with the facilities at the destinations of DTPCs in Kerala.

H₀₅: Not more than one half of the tourists perceive that the price charged for facilities at the destinations of DTPC in Kerala are high.

H₀₆: Not more than one half of the host community perceives that the projects of DTPCs in Kerala are beneficial to the host community.
The study is empirical in nature and is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from three categories of respondents – tourists, host community and officials of DTPC with the help of three separate sets of scientifically pretested structured interview schedules. All the 14 DTPCs functioning in the 14 revenue districts of Kerala form the population for the study. The southern region comprises of four DTPCs (Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta and Alappuzha), the central region consists of five DTPCs (Kottayam, Idukki, Palkkad, Thrissur and Ernakulam) and the northern region comprises of the remaining five DTPCs (Malappuram, Kozhikkode, Kannur, Wayanad and Kasargode). For the intensive study, two DTPCs were selected from each of the three regions on judgment sampling technique by considering the DTPCs which had a large number of tourists and maintained a wide variety of tourism products. Accordingly, Thiruvananthapuram and Alappuzha (representing the south), Idukki and Ernakulam (representing the central) and Kozhikkode and Wayanad (representing the north) were selected. A total of 480 tourists consisting of 360 domestic tourists and 120 foreign tourists were selected conveniently for the detailed study. There were 41 project officers in all the six selected DTPCs. All the Officials were selected for the study. For selecting the host community, 25 persons from various destinations of each DTPC were selected conveniently and thus it constituted a sample of 150.

The secondary data were collected from the official reports of Ministry of Tourism, government of India; Department of Tourism, government of Kerala; State Planning Board as well as from the published and unpublished research reports on tourism of various tourism promotional agencies, research articles, market research agencies, books and the Internet. For data analysis, SPSS has been used. The statistical and mathematical tools such as average, percentage, CAGR, chi-square test, ANOVA and Z test have been used.

The study limits itself to a ten year period starting from 2001 to 2010. It was during this period that the government recognized the importance of a
district level agency for tourism promotion by giving priority to allocating substantial amount to the DTPCs for identification and maintenance of tourism destination and also for creating awareness among host community.

An attempt is made in this chapter to summarize the major findings of the study and also to suggest appropriate measures for the better performance of DTPCs in the promotion of tourism in Kerala.

7.1 Findings of the Study

The major findings of the study, based on the analysis of the data, are summarized below.

1. Personal Profile of the Respondents

(a) Officials of DTPC

1. A large portion of the officials are male (78%) and the average age group of the officials is 36-45. 90.2 per cent of the officials are graduates. Regarding their nature of employment, all are permanent.

(b) Host Community

2. More than two third of the host community (74.0 %) are male. Regarding age, majority of the host community are below the age of 35 and the monthly income is Rs. 5,000. Regarding their education, 39.3 per cent are SSLC qualified, 29.3 per cent are below SSLC. But 23.3 per cent have completed plus two and the rest 8.0 per cent are either graduates or post graduates.

3. Majority of the host community are unemployed (50%) and are born at tourism destinations (90.7%). But, 84.7 per cent have no relationship with tourism.

(c) Tourists

4. Most of the domestic tourists are Keralites (47.5%). The share of other South Indian States is 40.3 per cent. The percentage share from Central and
North Indian States is only 12.2 per cent. The highest percentage of foreign tourists is from European countries with a share of 45 per cent, followed by Asian and Australian countries, North and South American Countries and African countries with a share of 25.8 per cent, 25 per cent and 4.7 per cent respectively.

5. Regarding gender and marital status, majority of the tourists are male and married, both nationality and region-wise.

6. Nearly 50 per cent of the domestic tourists are youngsters in the age group of 28 years or less (46.7%) and 37.5 per cent are in the age group of 29-45. At the same time, majority of the foreign tourists (39.2%) are in the elder generation of 45 years and above. The youngsters among the foreign tourists represent only 26.7 per cent.

7. Majority of the domestic tourists are post graduates (56.9%). But among foreign tourists, 41.7 per cent hold post graduation degree.

8. While a large portion of the domestic tourists are engaged in business, the majority of foreign tourists are salaried. Regarding their income, the domestic tourists belong to a monthly income of Rs. 10,000-20,000 but the foreign tourists belong to Rs. 1,00,000 and above.

**(d) Travel Behaviour of Tourists**

9. Majority of the domestic tourists are regular travelers (51.4%) and they made one time visit at the destination earlier. But majority of the foreign tourists are irregular travelers (55.8%).

10. Considering the source of information about destination, majority of the tourists ranked travel agencies as the first, followed by tourism information centres and websites. It is further noted that all the tourists assigned the last rank to websites of DTPC irrespective of the region.

11. As regards the purpose of visit at tourist destinations, majority of the tourists assigned the first rank to historical monuments followed by scenic beauty, good climate, peaceful atmosphere, pollution free environment and
entertainment as the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth and the sixth rank respectively.

12. Most of the domestic and foreign tourists do not stay at the destinations of DTPCs. Regarding the place of stay, a large number of domestic tourists and all foreign tourists prefer hotel accommodation.

2. Tourism Promotion in India and Abroad and Organization and Functioning of DTPCs in Kerala

1. Kerala and Andhra Pradesh are the two States in India where tourism has become the affair of district level authority. DTPCs have been established in these States to develop the destinations.

2. DTPCs in Kerala are registered as individual units functioning at each of the 14 revenue districts.

3. The primary resource of DTPC is the project specific funds allotted by the DoT and most of the DTPCs are functioning with the assistance of government.

4. There is no uniformity in the staff pattern of DTPCs in Kerala.

5. Most of the employees in DTPCs are appointed on temporary/contract basis and even the post of Secretary is on deputation basis.

3. Identification and Implementation of the Projects of DTPCs in Kerala

(a) Identification of Projects of DTPCs

1. More than one half of the officials (53.7%) stated that the idea for a new project came from own research. Local authorities, tourism club and NGOs also proposed some new project idea, the respective share being 24.4 per cent, 14.6 per cent and 7.3 per cent.

2. The entire officials irrespective of the region opined that they conducted feasibility study-economic, environmental, social and cultural-before implementing a project.
3. Majority of the officials viewed that they themselves developed projects (51.2%). The technical support of the State and Central government was also available for project development.

4. Own fund and financial support from the State government were the major sources of funds for project development.

(b) Implementation of Projects of DTPCs

5. While the Planning Officer in the DoT is responsible for implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes, the Assistant Planning Officer is responsible for implementing State Plan Schemes.

6. The entire officials of DTPC reported that they maintained their destinations properly in order to retain the existing tourists and also to attract new ones.

7. Majority of the officials opined that they themselves maintained the destinations (53.7%). Support of other agencies was also available for project maintenance. But 7.3 per cent stated that they outsourced the project maintenance work to outside agencies.

8. The entire officials stated that they collected fee from the tourists for the maintenance of destinations. Regarding the utilization of fund, majority of them viewed that only 50 per cent of the collected fund was used for the maintenance.

9. Regarding the difficulties in the implementation of projects, it was observed that protest from host community was the first difficulty, followed by lack of basic infrastructure, shortage of staff, financial constraints and environmental issues.

4. Effectiveness of the Programmes of DTPCs in Kerala

(a) Awareness Programmes of DTPCs

1. Regarding the effectiveness of media in providing awareness to the host community, it is evident that visual media and publicity boards are the
most effective media, while website is moderately effective and print media is the least effective.

2. Regarding the effectiveness of campaign programmes in creating awareness to host community, it is evident that campaign among general public, campaign among small entrepreneurs and campaign in educational institutions are viewed as moderately effective by majority of the host community. But the effectiveness of organizing/participating in events is viewed as the least effective by majority of the officials and host community.

(b) Product Promotion Programmes of DTPCs

3. The print/visual media and the functioning of information centres are viewed as the most effective tool for product promotion by majority of the tourists.

4. Majority of the tourists observe that websites and participation in exhibitions are moderately effective in product promotion.

(c) Provision of Amenities/Facilities

5. A large portion of the tourists are highly satisfied with the waste management and tourist guide facilities at the destinations of DTPCs.

6. Majority of the domestic and foreign tourists are moderately satisfied with the functioning of information centres, safety and security facilities and parking facilities at the destinations of DTPCs.

7. Most of the tourists are not satisfied with the facilities viz., entertainment, shopping, telecommunication, food and beverage, drinking water, local conveyance and sanitation at the destinations of DTPCs.

(d) Price Charged for the Facilities at the Destinations of DTPCs

8. A large majority of the domestic and foreign tourists viewed that the price charged for facilities viz., entertainment, tele-communication,
local conveyance, sanitation, tourist guide and parking at the destinations of DTPCs were average.

9. More than 50 per cent of the foreign tourist opined that price charged for shopping facilities at the destinations of DTPCs was high. But, majority of domestic tourist viewed it as average.

10. Majority of the domestic tourists and nearly one-half of the foreign tourists viewed that the price charged for food and beverages at the destinations of DTPCs was low.

5. Benefits of the Programmes of DTPCs in Kerala

(a) Socio-Cultural Benefits of the Programmes of DTPCs

1. Majority of the host community viewed that the level of benefits of DTPCs projects was moderate in ensuring restoration of historical building and promotion of cultural advancement of the destinations.

2. A lion’s share of host community observed that the level of benefits of DTPCs projects was low in supporting the revival of traditional art, craft and culture, preserving the cultural identity of destination, providing cultural exchange and education and promotion of social interaction of the destinations.

(b) Economic Benefits of the Programmes of DTPCs

3. The entire host community viewed that the level of benefits of DTPC projects was high in providing job opportunities, motivating the expansion of local business units, increasing the standard of living, investment income and infrastructure in the destinations.

4. Majority of the host community stated that the level of benefits of DTPCs project was moderate in increasing their shopping opportunities.

(c) Environmental Benefits of the Programmes of DTPCs

5. A large percentage of the host community observed that the level of benefits of DTPCs projects was moderate in increasing the
environmental awareness but was low in conserving and preserving the nature.

7.2 Conclusion

Tourism is one of the most successful and fast growing activities in the world. Economic diversification and technological development have created a very conducive environment for tourism development. As a multi-dimensional activity, it acts as a driving force for employment generation, poverty alleviation and social harmony. The government of India has taken concerted steps in the promotion and development of tourism industry at national, regional and local levels.

Kerala is bestowed with various attractive features for tourism development. It is also blessed with golden beaches, beautiful lakes, splendid waterfalls, calm backwaters, cascading rivers, well-kept wildlife sanctuaries, tempting hill resorts, graceful valleys, exotic spices, numerous historical areas, pilgrim centres, cosmopolitan outlook of the people, colourful fairs and festivals in which tourists are especially interested in. Moreover, a balanced climate, green vegetation, natural tourist spots, fully literate population etc. are considered as Kerala’s strength in tourism to refer it as a paradise for tourists.

The concept of DTPC is a unique feature of the tourism scenario in Kerala. The DTPC mainly concentrates on tourism promotion activities like marketing of local products through private/public participation, improvement of quality/standards and evolving procedure for certification of tourism products, improvement of signages and sanitation, heritage conservation and preservation, coordination of tourism clubs, creation of tourism awareness and preparation of host community, information dissemination and local infrastructure building with the cooperation of local bodies.

From a close analysis, it is revealed that the DTPCs in Kerala undertake a number of programmes for awareness creation, product promotion and
provision of amenities at tourist destinations. But it is observed that these programmes are not found to be effective from the perspective of the tourists and the host community. However, the DTPC projects are beneficial to the host community from the socio-cultural, economic and environmental point of view. Hence, from the study, it is concluded that the DTPCs in Kerala are engaged in a host of tourism promotion programmes, which cannot give the veritable satisfaction to the beneficiaries as envisaged by DTPCs.

7.3 Suggestions

Based on the outcome of the study, a set of specific action plans is suggested. The action plans are meant not only to address the critical issues prevailing in the tourism sector but also to exploit the tourism potential of the State.

1. Initiate Wide Propaganda among the Host Community

The study reveals that majority of the host awareness programmes of DTPCs are either moderate or least effective. So the DTPCs should initiate wide propaganda among the host community to make them aware of its programmes and to ensure their participation to a great extent. The cooperation of voluntary organizations like residents associations, arts and sports clubs, cultural associations, lions clubs, rotary clubs etc. can also sought for the initiative.

2. Conduct Extensive Product Promotion Campaign

The study reveals that Kerala cannot attract the domestic tourists belong to the Central and Northern parts of India. Similarly, the potential of foreign market is also not being tapped to the fullest extent. Hence, it is suggested that the DTPCs should conduct extensive product promotion campaigns to boost the tourist’s inflow by organizing Kerala festivals and road shows in different parts of the country and abroad. Moreover, the DTPCs should host international and national conventions, fairs, traditional sports and game events, and ethnic food festivals in Kerala. As part of promotional efforts, DTPCs should prepare and
distribute printed materials like brochures, leaflets, directories, maps, tourism calendar etc. and wide range of CDs, VCDs, DVDs etc. incorporating the unique features of Kerala's indigenous and traditional tourism products. Moreover, the DTPCs should make tie ups with major TV satellite channels in Malayalam and other Indian and foreign languages for telecasting special programmes about Kerala.

3. Diversify the Activities of DTPCs

The DTPCs have been set up with the intention of exploiting the tourism potential of the State. To a certain extend they could achieve the primary objective. Now it is the time to diversify its activities by setting up multiplexes, shopping malls and departmental stores at important places to attract and entertain the tourists. Thereby the common complaint of the tourists that there is a lack of shopping and entertainment facilities can be addressed very much.

4. Construct Dynamic Websites

From the study it is evident that tourists assign last rank to the website of DTPCs in providing information about the destination. So the DTPCs should either construct a new web site or to revamp the existing one to more user friendly by incorporating information regarding how to reach the destination (by road/rail/air), the distance from important centres, primary attractions, climatic conditions, precautions to be taken, if any, types of accommodation available and its rate, culture of the people, handicrafts and local commodities available, fruits and vegetables and food habits/pattern of the locality etc.

5. Resort Additional Funds for Undertaking New Projects

The primary resource of the DTPC is the project specific funds allotted by the DoT. Meanwhile, some of the DTPCs could also generate funds from their projects. But still the funds are not sufficient to undertake new projects and to maintain the existing ones. Hence it is suggested that the DTPCs should resort to additional sources of funds by way of grants, loans, donations, etc from financial institutions, local bodies, co-operatives, NRI, NGOs and even...
from individual investors. The DTPCs can also approach the government to increase the project specific funds to meet the emerging needs.

6. Collect Feedback of Tourists Periodically

During the course of data collection, majority of the tourists viewed that the DTPCs were not collecting the extent of satisfaction of the tourists regarding the various facilities, their suggestions for tourism development and so on. Hence, it is suggested to collect the feedback of tourists periodically. For this, suggestion and complaint boxes should be placed at all tourist destinations, important railway stations, airports, bus stations, hotels etc. Further, analyse these feedbacks at regular intervals and take corrective steps by the concerned DTPC.

8. Reconstitute the Structure of DTPCs

At present, the Governing Body and Executive Committee of DTPCs consist of one-third non-official members nominated by the government. It is noted that they generally do not have any background on tourism. It is also observed that owing to their influence the DTPCs are sometimes forced to undertake non-viable projects. Hence, it is suggested that the Governing Body and Executive Committee of the DTPCs should be reconstituted by reducing the proportion of non-official members and also ensure that they must have considerable knowledge in the area of tourism.

9. Constitute a State Level Apex Tourism Council

The organizational structure of the DTPCs in Kerala reveals that the DTPCs are registered as individual units in all the 14 revenue districts in Kerala. There is no coordination and cooperation among these Councils. Moreover, there is no apex body for providing guidance, and to control and ensure its functioning for achieving the desired tourism goal. Hence, it is suggested to constitute a State level apex body called ‘STATE TOURISM PROMOTION COUNCIL (STPC)’.
10. Ensure Professionalism in the Management of DTPCs

The DTPCs in Kerala experience lack of professionalism. At present, posts of officials are created indiscriminately and untrained non-professionals are inducted into its management. Even the Secretaries of DTPCs are posted on deputation basis, ignoring the merit of the persons concerned. Hence, it is suggested that a core group of professionals may be recruited to manage the DTPCs.

10. Create a Database of Tourists

As majority of the DTPCs in Kerala are not maintaining database of tourists visited in each destination, in the present study also, the tourists were selected based on the total number of tourists visited in the different districts of Kerala. Hence, it is suggested to create a database of tourists who visited at the various destinations of DTPCs in Kerala.

11. Issue License to Tourist Guides

The facility of tourist guide service is rated as moderate and low by more than 50 per cent of tourists. So, only qualified and trained personnel should be given license to work as tourist guides. Again, their service should be monitored periodically and measures should be taken to improve their service by conducting enrichment programmes. The service fee of the guide should be fixed by the DTPC concerned and it should ensure that no excess fee is collected from the tourists.

12. Preserve the Local Culture and Tradition

Kerala’s unique art forms, festivals, architecture and culture attract tourists from far and wide. However, majority of the host community observed that the effort of the DTPCs in preserving the culture and tradition of the locality at its project site is low. Hence, it is suggested that, in addition to promotional activities, the DTPCs should also should give due weight on the conservation and preservation of the culture and tradition at its sites.
13. Avoid Multiplicity of Control

During primary data collection a large number of tourists made the complaint about the existence of multiplicity of controls in some of the destinations of the DTPCs by DMC, local authorities like Municipality, Corporation, Panchayat, forest department, etc. These agencies/authorities impose different restrictions which often cause difficulty to the tourists. Hence, it is suggested that full authority should be given to the DTPCs for maintaining and controlling the destinations.

14. Ensure Clean and Hygiene Conditions at Destinations

The accumulation of garbage is a serious concern for tourism industry today. In the study it is observed that nearly 15 per cent of the tourists viewed that most of the destinations of DTPCs in Kerala are the dumping yards of garbages. Hence, it is suggested that clean and hygienic conditions should be maintained at the destinations of DTPCs by outsourcing the upkeep and maintenance to NGOs, local bodies etc.