3. Research Methodology

Each research design is unique in the sense that it tries to ensure that the research questions are properly addressed through the collection and analysis of data to meet the research objectives. In this research the main objective was to understand the process of the development of tourist attractions, especially those in the small and medium enterprises, in the peripheral areas. In Chapter 1 we saw the need for the development of the peripheral areas and tourism being one of the vehicles through which the development could occur. Small and medium enterprises in any tourism destination form a large section of the supply side be it in the area of accommodation, transport, eateries or facilitating agencies such as tour operators, guiding services, etc. Attractions are no exceptions to this as one finds many attractions that are owned/managed by small and medium enterprises at a tourist destination. But just how do these attractions develop? This was the question that needed answers.

The case study method was found appropriate for this because of the nature of the inquiry of the research. Yin (1984) identifies that case study as a research methodological tool is better for studies that are
exploratory in nature where the emphasis is on contemporary events. Questions related to “How” and “Why” are best answered through the case-study method. Literature on attraction development had not particularly focused on the development of small and medium attractions but most research on the attractions was based on case studies. Moreover the small and medium attraction development in peripheral areas of a destination is not explored in research. This was an uncharted area and as such the case method was better equipped to identify the nuances that could exist in the development of Small and Medium Attractions (SMAs).

3.1 The objectives of the research were:

1. To explore the development of tourist attractions in the peripheral areas of a destination.

2. To identify and highlight similarities and differences, if any, in the attraction development process across the two destinations, Portugal and Goa.

3.2 Organization of the research.

Four attractions were taken up for studying in terms of Case Studies. Two of these were from Goa and two were from Portugal. In terms of the choice of an attraction to be taken up as a sample case study there was
no particular method. Precaution was taken to see that the attractions that were to be studied were in the peripheral areas, defined as, away from the core destination attraction, or involving time and money on the part of the tourists to access the attraction. 'Number of people employed' was taken as a measure of the small/medium nature of the attraction. All the attractions had less than 50 employees, which was the basis for measuring the size of the attraction. The comparison across the attractions in Goa and Portugal was from the point of view of their being peripheral, being small or medium enterprises and being man-made/nature-man-made combination.

Case studies from Goa were:

1. Ancestral Goa
2. Hydrosports Pvt. Ltd

Case studies from Portugal were:

1. Paco D'Anha
2. Casa do Ameal

Ancestral Goa depicts Goa as it was 100 years ago. It depicts the culture of Goa and provides educative as well as leisure value to the tourist. Hydrosports Pvt. Ltd is an organization that deals with adventure sports using the sea as a resource base. Paco D'Anha and Casa do Ameal are
ancient Manor Houses in North Portugal, which have been converted into places of residence for tourists. They have historical importance in that area and are exquisite. They come under the rural tourism ventures in Portugal and offer quiet, peace and rural life experience as added value.

3.3 Data Collection

The Owners/owner-managers of these attractions were interviewed personally by me apart from observing the guests at the attraction. All the information given by the owner/owner-manager of the attraction was noted down and the facts from the attractions were taken. Unfortunately one of the limitations of the research in Portugal was that the owner-managers of the attractions did not provide me with the details of their sales figures or any other documents. However the owner of Paco D’Anha gave promotional material inclusive of the price lists that could corroborate the research data.
3.4 Questions

The questions for which answers were sought through the process of case study analysis were:

1. How do small and medium attractions develop in the peripheral areas of a destination?

2. Do small and medium attractions in peripheral areas develop differently in two different countries?

3.5 Analysis

The case studies were analyzed descriptively. This was done through the theoretical frameworks developed by three authors, MacCannell's (1976) Semiotic Attraction Development theory, Gunn's (1988) Tourism Attraction Design theory and Leiper's (1990) Tourism Attraction System theory. Each case study was analyzed through these three theoretical frameworks to find if they conform to these theories or there exist some differences in terms of the development process. Initially an analysis was done to identify any probable differences in the development process of each attraction when compared to the theoretical frameworks. This formed the Within-case analysis. Later on, a cross-case analysis was done
to identify whether there existed any similarities across the case studies in Goa and in Portugal. The cross case analysis was done across attractions studied in Goa and in Portugal. This was done to get answers to the second question identified above.

Both the case analyses were descriptive in nature and involved the process of in-depth analysis of the observations and the case study data. The findings and conclusions of the case-study analysis are given in Chapter Five and the implications are discussed in Chapter Six. The analysis was done using the theoretical frameworks. Yin (1984) identifies two strategies to analyze the case studies. One general strategy is to use the theoretical propositions or the existing theory that formed the lead to the case study research. The second one is the development of a descriptive framework for case study analysis. I have utilized the first strategy of analyzing the case studies from the theoretical frameworks. As this research was an exploratory one I had to rely on the existing theories of attraction development and then benchmark the case study analysis against them to identify any deviation that could exist. A scope to examine the existing attraction development theories using the case studies of small and medium attractions in the peripheral areas of a destination existed prior to the beginning of the research. The research was designed and carried out based on the above-mentioned aspect.