Chapter 7
FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

Kerala the ‘God’s Own Country’ is one of the best tourist destinations in the world. Nature has gifted and enriched the state with many serene locations, pleasant climate and other factors and conditions favourable for tourism. These factors and conditions can be used to develop tourism in the state in a big way to meet the employment, revenue and foreign exchange needs of the state. The peculiarities of tourism products and services demand timely and accurate information. The study was based on the assumption that libraries have an important role in providing authentic information required by the tourists visiting Kerala. A set of hypotheses were formulated and a study with clearly defined objectives was carried out to verify the tenability of the hypotheses.

This chapter contains the summary of the major findings of the study, tenability of hypotheses and areas suggested for further research. The following are the revelations of the study.

7.2 Findings

7.2.1 The first objective of the study was to identify information requirements and information sources available to tourists visiting Kerala and to examine their information seeking behaviour. The findings are given below.

1. Tourists generally need two types of information - static and dynamic. Static information is the fundamental information about a destination or attraction, which does not change rapidly over time, like details about location, attraction features, climate, history, facilities available, etc. Dynamic information includes information about weather, availability of transportation, accommodation and eating facilities, its tariff rates, etc., which change very frequently.

2. Tourism information in Kerala is largely generated officially by state and central government departments related to tourism. The information is published through websites, printed reports, guide books, brochures and maps, for free distribution.
Many non-governmental organisations and private agencies working in this sector are publishing information through their websites and promotional materials. Mass media including print, non-print and electronic media are also publishing tourism information in a massive way.

3. Tourism information is available through many communication channels like print media, electronic media, email, SMS, travel blogs, pamphlets, posters, pictures, maps, verbal communications, touch screens, etc. Travellers have diverse inclinations towards these communication channels based on their nature, qualification, experience, etc. Tourists will receive maximum information and they become confident in the tour when the required information is received through their preferred communication channel.

4. Various elements of tourism information are natural attractions, events, hotels, restaurants, tourist destinations, transportation, weather, shops, etc. Many of the information needs arise spontaneously in unexpected situations. The increasing trend towards more independent travels has increased the demand for tourism information.

5. A tourist trip has broadly three phases, selection of a tourist destination, preparation for the trip and the actual travelling phase. Information requirements of tourist in these three phases are different. In first phase the tourist need general information about different tourist destinations. In the second phase he needs information about ticket reservation, food, accommodation, tourist spots, climate, etc. pertaining to the destination. In the third stage the tourist needs a lot of ad-hoc information in a distant unfamiliar place, thousands of miles away from home, involving unknown language, culture and environment.

6. In general, Internet based sources of information are the most favourable source of information for tourists visiting Kerala (15.4%), followed by human sources (13.62%) and cognitive wisdom or own knowledge (10.02%).

7. Majority of the respondents have accepted cognitive wisdom for taking decision in the selection of destination and planning of the trip, even though they have consulted other sources of information for getting awareness about destinations
and tourism products. In the actual trip where unplanned and informal demands for information arise, the respondents have preferred tourist information centres in nearby places.

8. Detailed information about attractions of the tourist destination is considered as essential by 20.56% of the respondents and 27.04% respondents feel that awareness about hotels and restaurants are important. Majority of the tourist feel that information about shops is least important during a trip. Regarding the information about transportation facilities in tourist destination, 27.78% feel it is very important during the trip for making it successful. Weather information is not considered as an important factor during the trip by 21.48% of the respondents.

9. Majority of the respondents’ first preference was to get information through E-mail and SMS (27.41%) followed by verbal source of information (27.04%) and electronic source (16.11%). Communication channels based on information and communication technologies are mostly preferred by the respondents, while printed communication channels were least preferred.

10. The study revealed that, tourists give priority to information required for safe travel, good accommodation and quality food rather than information about attraction and culture of the destination.

7.2.2 The findings based on the second objective i.e. to ascertain whether there exists any relation between the information seeking behaviour of tourists and their age, qualification, country of origin, travel experiences and purpose of visit are given below.

1. The study revealed that young tourists are more proficient in using computers and Internet for locating information. In age group 18-27 years, 40.31% of the respondents have very good skill in using computers and Internet, while 27.91% have good skill, 13.18% have excellent skill and 9.3% have fair skill. In the age group of 28-37 years, 27.63% have very good, 23.68% have good, 19.74% have fair and 11.84% have excellent skill in computers and Internet.
2. As the age is advancing the skills for using computers and Internet is declining, and in the age group 68 years and above, nobody is excellent in the skill.

3. Analysis of data shows that, as the educational qualification of the respondents goes up so does their usage of Internet. Among domestic tourists 58.67% of those who are post-graduates and 41.33% of those who are graduates use websites for getting information, every time when they plan a travel.

4. In the case of foreign tourists, 32.26% of graduates, 27.42% of post graduates and 12.90% of PhD holders visit websites for getting information, every time when they plan a travel. Respondents who use travel websites many times are also mostly graduate and post graduate degree holders.

5. The study revealed that there are clear and distinctive dissimilarities between domestic and foreign tourists in their preferred sources of tourism information. Within the class of foreign tourists there exists no significant variation in the information seeking behaviour based on the country of origin. Informal or human sources are the most favourable tourism information source for the domestic tourists (16.09%), followed by Internet sources (14.77%) and cognitive wisdom (14.53%). Foreign tourists’ first three chosen sources of tourism information were Internet sources (15.81%), informal or human sources (12.05%) and travel guides/maps/atlases (9.59%).

6. There is no statistically significant association between the exposure level of the respondents and their satisfaction of information sources used. The study shows that, 49.81% of the respondents are visiting Kerala for the first time, 11.11% for the second time, 9.81% for third time and 16.11% for fifth time or more. Even if the exposure level of the tourist is high, their satisfaction level on the main source of information is less, compared to that of tourists with less exposure.

7. Different types of tourists prefer different sources of information, and there is no significant relation between the purposes of visit of tourists with the sources used for getting tourism information.

8. Among adventures tourists 14.89% preferred Internet sources of tourism information, followed by 13.21% preferred informal sources like human source,
9. Internet was the most preferred source of tourism information for 23.81% of tourists who are on official duty, 19.42% of educational tourists, 18.84% of sports and recreation tourists, 18.64% of leisure tourists, 18.64% of shopping tourists, 17.44% of tourists who travel to visit their friends and relatives, 15.54% of business tourists and 15.41% of special interest tourists.

10. Human sources, words of mouth, friends and relatives constitute the informal sources of information, which was selected as the favourite information source by 15.22% of the medical tourists, 15.23% of backpackers, 13.81% of cultural tourists, 27.59% of missionaries, 15.71% of eco-tourists, 19.42% of religious tourists, 18.99% of gap year travellers and 17.44% of those who travel to visit friends and relatives. Among the incentive tourists, 14.04% have selected travel magazines as their favourite tourism information source.

7.2.3 Based on the third objective i.e. to examine whether the tourists experience any difficulties in getting the desired information, the major findings can be summarised as:

1. Tourists visiting Kerala are facing many difficulties due to information explosion. Majority of the respondents faced difficulties in ensuring the obtained information is valid (19.89%), followed by problems of dealing with large amount of information available (19.61%) and problems in finding relevant information (14.71%).

2. Among foreign tourists, 23.02% have also reported that their primary difficulty was in ensuring the validity of information, followed by the ‘difficulties in dealing with large amount of information available’ (19.56%) and difficulties of finding relevant information (15.26%).

3. In the case of domestic tourists, the primary difficulty reported was ‘dealing with large amount of information available’ (19.67%), followed by ‘ensuring the validity of information’ (16.78%) and ‘how to access the information sources’ (15.13%).
4. Significant relation exists between the complexity of information retrieval and duration of tourists’ stay in Kerala. As the duration of stay increases, tourists were facing more complex difficulties in seeking the required information. Tourists who are staying for one or few days in Kerala have not faced many difficulties in locating the required information. As the length of stay is increased, information requirements also increased and the respondents have faced many difficulties in obtaining relevant information.

5. There are distinctive difficulties in information retrieval for each type of information sources. In the case of audio-visual sources, 19.19% have reported that, ensuring the validity of obtained information was the most difficult problem.

6. Difficulties of dealing with large amount of information were reported by 26.94% of Internet users, 20.19% of the users of brochures and pamphlets, 18.83% users of informal/human sources of information, 24.08% of library document users, 24.77% of travel magazine users, 23.50% users of ‘professionals sources like tour operators and travel agents’, 23.25% users of the travel guides/maps/atlasses, 23.46% users of tourism fairs and road shows and 23.38% users of tourism facility centres.

7. Difficulties for ensuring the validity of obtained information were reported by 20.09% of users of general magazines and 17.8% users of newspapers. Another 17.8% users of newspaper felt ‘difficulty in knowing where to find relevant information’.

7.2.4. The fourth objective of the study was to find out the use pattern of different types of formal and informal sources of tourist information. The findings are given below.

1. Informal sources of information were selected as the favourite tourist information sources by 44.83% of missionaries, 35.92% of religious tourists, 31.65% of gap year travellers, 27.7% of those who travel to visit friends and relatives, 24.76% of eco-tourists, 22.84% of backpackers, 25% of the medical tourists, 28.71% of special interest tourists, 24.72% of leisure tourists, 23.31% of educational tourists and 23.9% of cultural tourists.
2. Of the total respondents 23.17% already knew about the state without consulting any information source and 22.83% have got information about Kerala from their friends and relatives.

3. Internet based sources of information were used by 15.4% of the respondents, human sources used by 13.62% and cognitive wisdom used by 10.02% for getting general tourism information.

4. Each information source has varying effects on tourists in deciding the duration of stay in Kerala. Tourists staying for more than one month in Kerala are mostly influenced by information from other sources like official communications, travelogues, etc. (27.78%) and general magazines (12.5%). Tourists staying for one month have been well influenced by information received from audio-visual media (30.11%) library sources (27.88%) and travel magazines (20.47%).

5. A greater proportion of tourists who used brochures and pamphlets published by tourism departments (34.71%) and Internet sources (32.52%) preferred to stay less than one month, but greater than one week in Kerala.

6. The analysis also shows that 34.71% who consulted with human sources, 32.83% of Internet users, 39.42% of those who consulted library sources, 36.9% of information seekers from magazines, 35.67% of those have used travel magazines, 39.74% of those who have selected news papers, 41.33% who depended professional sources like tour operators and travel agents, 48.48% who got information from tourism fairs and road shows and 37.85% who depended their own intelligence for tourism information, have stayed for one week in Kerala.

7. Based on their expectation of obtaining required information, tourists give importance to both formal and informal sources of information. On scientific analysis it is found that the tourists’ expectation about these information sources and their satisfaction on it do not match. i.e. the obtained information was not satisfactory when compared to their expectations.

8. A perfect positive correlation exists between the rating given to the importance of tourism information used by the respondents and the rating of satisfaction by
them. The tourists have given higher rates of satisfaction to the information which they feel very important for the trip.

9. The study revealed that, even though the respondents selected Internet as the most preferred single source for getting tourism related information in general, they have given importance to informal sources also for getting information about Kerala.

7.2.5 The major findings to fulfill the fifth objective to find out whether there exist any difference between domestic and foreign tourists in relation to their information behaviour, are given below.

1. Tourism information comes in many different forms and it should have some qualities to make it suitable for the tourists. Tourists need relevant, accurate, complete, easy to use, understandable, useful and up-to-date information that is communicated in time, through appropriate channels.

2. The score of satisfaction level about the relevance of obtained information was higher for domestic tourists who have used informal sources, tour operators & travel agents and audio-visual media for getting tourism information.

3. In the case of foreign tourists, the score for relevance was higher for those who have used cognitive wisdom, tourism fairs & road shows, travel magazines and Internet sources.

4. Majority of the domestic tourists who have used travel guides, tourism facility centres and Internet have agreed that the information obtained from the sources was accurate.

5. More than 60% of the foreign tourists who have used tourism facility centres, audio-visual media, tour operators and travel agents have got accurate information.

6. More than 60% of the domestic tourists who have depended Internet sources, newspapers, and tourism facility centres for their tourism information have agreed that the information was comprehensive enough for serving their purposes.
7. More than half of the foreign tourists who have used audio-visual media, informal sources, Internet sources, general magazines, travel magazines, professional sources and cognitive wisdom have also expressed that the information was comprehensive.

8. Of the domestic tourists, all who have visited tourism fairs and road shows, 67.82% who used audio-visual media, 57.03% who utilised informal sources and 56.19% who have used Internet sources for getting travel information have agreed that the information was easy to use.

9. More than half of the foreign tourists who used information sources like audio-visual media, Internet sources, library documents, popular magazines, travel magazines, travel guides, maps, atlases, tourism fairs, road shows, tourism facility centre and cognitive wisdom have also agreed that the information was easy to use.

10. The level of satisfaction of domestic tourists about the easiness of understanding of the obtained information was higher for those who have used audio-visual media, tourism brochures and pamphlets, Internet sources, newspapers, services of tour operators and travel agents, tourism fairs and road shows.

11. More than 50% of the foreign tourists who have used travel magazines, tourism fairs, road shows and popular magazines have strongly agreed that the information provided was easy to understand.

12. Of the domestic respondents, 62.96% who have depended on tour operators and travel agents strongly agreed that the information was useful for their trip, while all those who have used tourism fairs and road shows, 78.79% of library users and 69.23% of users of brochures and pamphlets have agreed to it.

13. In the case of foreign tourists, 71.43% of those who have depended on tourism fairs and road shows, 69.57% of respondents who have selected tour operators and travel agents and 68.81% of those who have chosen newspapers for tourism information have agreed that the information was useful for their trip.
14. More than 70% of domestic tourists who have used informal sources, Internet sources, library documents, travel agents, tour operators, travel guides, maps, atlases, cognitive wisdom and all those who have visited tourism fairs and road shows have agreed that the information was up-to-date.

15. More than 60% of foreign tourists who have used library documents, popular magazines, travel magazines, tourism fairs and road shows as sources of tourism information, have also agreed that the information was up-to-date.

16. More than 65% of the domestic users of all the information sources, except library documents, have agreed that the information they got from the sources was reliable.

17. Among the foreign respondents, 67.61% who used library documents, 63.87% who used travel magazines and 64.52% who depended on cognitive wisdom have agreed that the information was reliable.

18. The score of satisfaction for information provided in suitable format was higher for domestic tourists who have used informal sources, tourism facility centres and Internet.

19. In the case of foreign tourists, the score of satisfaction for tourism information provided in suitable format was higher for those who have consulted with tourism facility centres, library documents and tourism fairs and road shows.

20. Majority of domestic tourists who have used newspapers, cognitive wisdom, brochures and pamphlets have agreed that all their required information were collected from the source, and did not have to consult any other sources.

21. Majority of foreign tourists who have used tourism fairs, road shows, cognitive wisdom and informal sources have given the same response.

22. Of the domestic tourists, 13.33% who have consulted library documents for tourism information have disagreed that all the required information was obtained from the source, but only 7.04% of foreign tourists have the same opinion. In foreign tourists, 12.71% of those who have used travel guides, maps, atlases and
12.2% who visited tourism facility centres for tourism related information have disagreed that they have collected all the information from the source.

23. The rating of satisfaction of information sources used for planning the trip is higher for domestic tourists who have depended on tour operators, travel agents, travel guides, maps, atlases, tourism fairs, road shows, brochures and pamphlets, informal sources and travel magazines.

24. Higher satisfaction levels were showed by foreign tourists who have used library documents, tour operators, travel agents, tourism fairs, road shows, magazines, audio-visual media and informal sources for planning their trip.

25. While 73.91% of foreign tourists who have used library documents have satisfied with it for planning their trip, only 40% of domestic tourists from this category have agreed with this.

26. The frequency of domestic tourists who have strongly confirmed that they are confident enough to use the information source in future also for the travel planning is higher for those who have got travel information from tour operators, travel agents, news papers, library documents, tourism fairs, road shows, audio-visual media, Internet sources and travel magazines.

27. The same response was obtained from foreign tourists who have used brochures, pamphlets, Internet, cognitive wisdom, tourism facility centres, library documents, news papers and audio-visual media.

28. Majority of domestic tourists who have obtained tourism information from fairs, road shows, cognitive wisdom, tour operators, travel agents, informal sources, travel magazines, Internet sources and libraries have agreed that they will recommend the information source to other tourists.

29. In the case of foreign tourists, those who have used audio-visual media, tour operators, travel agents, tourism fairs, road shows and library documents for getting tourism information have shown more willingness to recommend the information source to other people.
7.2.6 The major findings to fulfill the sixth objective of the study i.e. **ascertain whether there is any significant difference of awareness between domestic tourists and foreign tourists about the library services available to them**, are given below.

1. The frequency of library visits by the domestic tourists shows that, 28.68% visiting libraries twice or thrice a week, 25% visiting every day, 19.12% visiting very rarely, 17.65% visiting once or twice in a month and 9.56% visiting libraries once in a week.

2. While the foreign tourists, 33.81% visit library once or twice in month, 21.9% visit every day, 19.05% visit very rarely, 12.38% visit twice or thrice in a week and 9.05% visit once in a week.

3. Of the domestic tourists who have library membership, 45.59% spend 30 minutes to one hour in libraries per week, 19.85% spend one to two hours, 16.91% spend 6 to 8 hours, 5.88% spend 2 to 4 hours, 5.15% spend 8 to 10 hours and 3.68% spend less than 30 minutes in libraries in a week.

4. In the case of foreign tourists, 28.57% of those who have library membership are spending 30 minutes to one hour in a week, followed by 27.62% are spending less than 30 minutes, 16.19% are spending one to two hours, 11.43% are spending 4 to 6 hours in a week, 7.62% are spending 2 to 4 hours, 2.38% are spending 8 to 10 hours and 1.43% are spending more than 10 hours in libraries in a week. The data analysis shows that foreign tourists are more aware about the library services available to them.

5. Majority of the respondents have not considered library as a good source for tourism information and in aggregate only 27.96% have depended libraries for getting tourism information. Only 23.91% of domestic tourists and 30.97% of foreign tourists have visited libraries for getting required information for their trip.

6. When analysing the purpose of domestic tourists for visiting libraries, it has shown that 27.12% are for reading books, 23.97% for borrowing and returning documents, 17.19% for reading popular magazines, 15.5% for getting reference
information 14.04% for reading subject journals and 2.18% for chatting with friends.

7. The percentage analysis of library visits by foreign tourists reveals that, 26.29% visit for reading books, 21.95% for borrowing and returning documents, 20.29% for getting reference information, 14.7 for reading popular magazines, 13.04% for reading subject journals and 3.73% for chatting with friends.

8. Even though only 27.96% of the respondents have visited libraries for tourism information, a great majority of them have obtained the information from libraries, to an agreeable level.

9. Among domestic tourists who visited libraries, 52.73% have found the required tourism information very often, 27.27% found often, 10.91% found sometimes and 9.09% never found.

10. The data for foreign tourists revealed that, 39.58% found very often, 40.63% found often and 14.58% found some times the necessary information from libraries.

11. Data analysis using chi-square test shows that, there is statistically significant association between domestic and foreign tourists, as they are not using libraries in Kerala for getting tourism information.

12. Of the tourists who have visited libraries in Kerala for getting tourism information, 60% of the domestic tourists and 38.18% of foreign tourists have visited libraries directly in person, while 16.36% of the foreign tourists have accessed the libraries remotely through websites alone. Libraries in Kerala were visited both directly in person and remotely through websites by 40% of domestic tourists and 45.45% of foreign tourists. This perhaps points to less awareness of domestic tourists about the availability of library services through websites.

7.2.7 Analysis of the data relating to the seventh objective, study the extent of the infrastructure and facilities made available in the libraries of Kerala to the tourist, has given the following findings.
1. Kerala has a very good public library system, and rural libraries are functioning in the nook and corner of the state and many of them are situated close to important tourist destinations.

2. The queries about visits of respondents to the libraries in Kerala for getting information revealed that only a very few (12.96%) have visited libraries in Kerala.

3. This low utilisation of libraries in Kerala by tourists is due to the lack of knowledge of tourists about the availability of tourism information in libraries and due to the difficulties in locating a library near to their tourist destination. Many of the local level libraries in Kerala have not yet made their online presence.

4. As far as the provisions and services of libraries in Kerala are concerned, 32.86% of the total respondents who have visited libraries in Kerala have rated as ‘very good’, 52.86% as ‘good’ and 8.57% as ‘fair’. No one has rated the library services in Kerala as ‘excellent’ while 2.86% have rated as ‘poor’. From the findings, it can be deduced that the provisions and services of libraries in Kerala are below average, and it is not adequate to provide required information to the tourists visiting Kerala and to those who are interested to know about Kerala.

5. All the libraries who participated in the survey have a collection of more than 1,000 books. Majority of the libraries (59.34%) were having book collection in the range 1,001 and 5,000, more than a quarter of the libraries have collection in the range of 5,001 to 10,000 and 15.38% have more than 10,000 books in their collection. But most of the public libraries and special libraries participated in the study does not have any special collection useful for tourists, like geographical information sources such as maps, atlases, tourist guides, etc.

6. All the libraries involved in the study are subscribing to at least 3 Indian newspapers, and some libraries are subscribing to 10 to13 newspapers. Only 40% academic libraries and 1.19% public libraries are subscribing to foreign newspapers, 60% academic libraries and 1.19% public libraries have subscription to Indian travel magazines, 20% academic libraries are subscribing foreign travel magazines. All the libraries are subscribing to at least 5 Indian magazines.
7. All the libraries are lending books to the members, but no libraries provide referral service to the visitors. Highly professional services like SDI service and current awareness service are provided only by special libraries. No public libraries provide indexing and abstracting services. Most of the public libraries are not providing reference service to the members due to lack of standard reference books, and some are providing this service in a limited way, informally. Reference service is very efficiently done in academic and special libraries.

8. Even though the public libraries in rural areas are kept open throughout the day for reading newspapers and periodicals, other library services like issue and return of documents, reference services, reprographic services, etc. are done only for a few hours in a day.

9. Most of the public libraries who participated in the study have only part-time staff, and the average number of staff is one, and even that may not be a professionally qualified librarian. Most of them are poorly paid for their job. But the academic libraries and special libraries have good staff pattern and attractive salary packages.

10. No libraries have provision for permanent or temporary membership to tourists visiting Kerala. Even though, most of the libraries are visited by tourists for getting general awareness, reading newspapers and for reference information about places, festivals, tourist spots, nearby places, etc., no library is giving any special services exclusively to the tourists.

11. The study found that, 18% of the libraries are having online presence either through websites or through social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube, blogs, etc. and these are used for communicating important information to the members.

12. No libraries have any extension services, specially developed databases or specially designated sections or staff, for the service of the tourists.

7.2.8 Based on the eighth objective i.e. **to examine the impact of online library sources for the development of tourism**, the major findings are summarised below.
1. Majority of the foreign tourists (79.35%) are using travel websites for getting tourism related information and for reserving itineraries and other facilities, while majority of the domestics tourists (51.3%) are not using any travel websites.

2. All the respondents from Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Malaysia, Netherland, Singapore, Slovenia, Switzerland and UK have used travel websites for getting tourism information for their trip. 46.96% of the Indian tourists have sought assistance from travel websites for their trip. None of the respondents from Maldives, Norway and Sri Lanka have used any travel websites for their trip.

3. Of the travel website users, 56.21% have visited the sites every time when they planned a travel, 29.94% visited travel websites many times and 13.84% visited websites sometimes for different travel related purposes.

4. The frequency of tourists visiting Kerala, who are having access to online and digital libraries, is found to be small. Only 26.52% of the domestic tourists and 40.65% of the foreign tourists have such facility. The analysis discloses that, majority of the tourists visiting Kerala do not have any exposure or awareness about digital libraries.

5. Among the domestic tourists who are having access to online library sources, 27.87% visit them every day, 50.82% visit twice or thrice in a week and 13.11% visit very rarely. In the case of foreign tourists, 41.27% visit online libraries daily, 27.78% twice or thrice in a week and 15.87% once in a week. Majority of respondents who are having access to online library sources are utilising it regularly.

6. The percentage analysis shows that the tourists visiting Kerala are not using any online library sources either for retrieving tourism related information or for any tourism activities.

7. The Chi-square test shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the domestic tourists and foreign tourists, as most of them are not using any online library sources for their tourism activities.
7.2.9 The ninth objective was to propose a model tourist information system for Kerala. In order to fulfill the objective, a model information system was designed for tourists visiting Kerala, which is given in chapter 6.

7.3 Tenability of the Hypotheses

Seven hypotheses were formulated for the study and the tenability of these hypotheses based on the analysis is discussed below:

The first hypothesis states that, “tourists visiting Kerala are positively influenced by Internet in the selection of destination and tour planning”. The percentage analysis in chapter 5 shows that, Internet based sources of information have a positive influence on tourists visiting Kerala in the destination selection and tour planning. The analysis in the Tables 5.49, 5.50, 5.51 and 5.52 shows that a large number of tourists use Internet sources for searching and selecting tourist destinations and for finalising their travel plans and itineraries. E-mail services provide free direct contacts with different tourism service providers and many travel websites facilitate the tourists to create customised packages by combining their different favourite and economical choices after searching various travel websites. Thus the first hypothesis gets fully substantiated.

The second hypothesis states that “the information seeking behaviour of the tourists is differed according to their country of origin, age, education, purpose of visit and duration of stay”. Analysis of data in Tables 5.49, 5.56 and 5.57 shows that the most frequently used sources of information by the tourists from different countries are different and domestic and foreign tourists have distinctive preferences on the selection of travel information sources. Tourists visit Kerala for different purposes based on their motives as described in Table 5.11 and 5.12. Analysis of Table 5.50 shows that different categories of tourists, based on the motives for visiting Kerala, have a variety of preferred information sources for getting tourism information. The analysis of information sources used in relation to the age of respondents given in Table 5.51 shows that, distinctively different preferences exist between different age groups in the usage of tourism information sources. The analysis of the data in Table 5.30 discloses that, based on the educational qualification, the approach of tourists to Internet also varies. Table 5.52 shows that the usage of different information sources by the tourists seem to be
proportionate with the increase in the duration of stay in Kerala and table 5.54 shows that as the duration of stay increases, tourists are facing more complex difficulties in obtaining relevant information. Hence, the hypothesis is almost fully substantiated.

The third hypothesis states that “the impact of information sources is not related to the exposure level of the tourist”. The analysis given in the table 5.72 clearly shows that there is statistically no significant association between the travel exposure level of the respondents and the impact of information sources. The finding supports the hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis was “tourists use different information sources at different stages of their travel, for decision making”. Selection of a destination for the trip, planning of the trip and the actual trip are the three phases of the travel process. The analysis of data in table 5.58 shows that, for selecting the destination and planning the trip, majority of the respondents have used their own knowledge. In actual tour, tourist information centres became the most demanding information source. The hypothesis is partially substantiated statistically by the analysis of variance calculated.

The fifth hypothesis states that “the libraries of Kerala are not playing any significant role in providing information to the tourists”. The observations of the library survey conducted, given as item no 5.3.11 reveal that, no libraries in Kerala have any extension services, specially developed databases or specially designated sections or staff, for the service of the tourists. Even though Kerala has a very good public library system, the libraries in Kerala are not contributing anything to the development of tourism in the state. The findings based on the library survey support the hypothesis and call for a thorough restructuring of the scholarly libraries and public libraries of the state to become a decisive factor for the development of tourism in Kerala.

The sixth hypothesis states that “tourists are not depending on libraries in Kerala for their information requirements”. Analysis of data in Tables 5.45 and 5.46 shows that a great majority of the respondents have not visited any libraries in Kerala, either directly in person or remotely through Internet, for satisfying their information requirements. It has been found out that most of the tourists, whether domestic or foreign follow similar pattern and they are not aware about the availability of tourism information in libraries. Locating a nearby library is very difficult to the tourists who are new in a
tourist destination in Kerala and many of the rural public libraries have not yet made their online presence. Through the related findings, the sixth hypothesis also holds good.

The seventh hypothesis states that “ICT enabled library information sources have not developed to compete with the tourism industry”. The analysis in Table 5.47 reveals that only 12.86% of the respondents who have used libraries for getting tourism information have visited the libraries through Internet. Also, the analysis in the Table 5.44 shows that only 23.4% of the respondents have used online library sources for getting tourism information and more than 75% of the tourists do not use any online library sources for tourism activities. The seventh hypothesis is fully substantiated statistically by the analysis of variance calculated in the two tables.

7.4 Areas for Further Studies

Apparently due to the limitations of an individual research, the present study and its findings are somewhat limited in scope with regard to many aspects. By understanding the limitations of this study and the constraints under which it was conducted, it is not claimed as an exhaustive one for a wide generalisation. Therefore, the following topics are suggested for further detailed studies and scientific investigations.

- The present study is based on data collected from visitors of 24 major tourist destinations in Kerala, and it may be extended to cover other destinations in the state, since studies on a larger sample will give more reliable and precise results.
- There is a vast scope for further research in terms of different types of tourists, different aspects of information needs and information behaviour of tourists.
- The present study examined only 13 different types of information sources used by the selected tourist respondents, and additional information sources should be explored, if any.
- Study on the influence of psychological and human factors in the selection and use of information sources by the tourists may provide further insights into their information needs and behaviour.
Studies about tourists’ unmet needs of information, the ways in which their unmet needs dissipated, impact of information explosion, etc. can be explored in future studies.

The library survey conducted as part of the study was based on the responses received from the library staff. Studies based on the responses of tourists who have visited libraries in Kerala, have to be taken up by the future researchers.

A study can be conducted to explore the effects of globalisation in the information needs and behaviour of tourists visiting Kerala.

7.5 Suggestions

In Kerala there are no libraries or information systems for the service of tourists. According to the findings of this study, tourists need up-to-date and comprehensive information for decision making. Kerala State Library Council, the apex body of library movements in Kerala has about 5250 libraries affiliated to it. The council has various programmes and services including, orphanage libraries, tribal libraries, heritage libraries, model village libraries, taluk reference libraries, hospital libraries, etc. Under the auspices of the library council, tourism libraries can be started in every district headquarters and important tourist destinations of the state.

Since Internet is being used by most of the tourists visiting Kerala, a web based tourist information system will be very useful to provide up-to-date information to them. The system should be designed in a manner which facilitates provision of information to the tourists in the form and media in which they demand.

Steps should be initiated at the government level for strengthening the reference sections of the public libraries near important tourist destinations to cater to the information needs of tourists. State level tourism libraries can be organised and these libraries should be well built in terms of collection, services and staff. Each library should be fully equipped with both print sources and electronic sources to answer queries from the tourists both in person and in online.

District level libraries should be identified for working as nodal agencies for the coordination of tourism information dissemination in the district level, and these nodal libraries should work in association with the tourism promotion council of the district.
Under the district level nodal tourism libraries, regional or taluk level tourism libraries should be organised, where the tourists will get reference and referral services and Internet facilities for communication purposes. In view of the fact that, tourists are primarily searching for information about services, attractions and facilities in the tourist spot, these libraries should be equipped to provide information that have a local flavour, and the librarians should understand how to customise information to different travellers depending on their characteristics and preferences. The district level libraries and taluk level libraries should become part of the state tourism information system.

The tourism libraries can adopt marketing and promotional strategies like setting up call centres, publishing books and tourist guides, organising events, giving tourism related information through media, websites, blogs and social networking sites, etc. Identified library staff from selected libraries should be given training by the tourism department for working as professional promoters of tourism in their area.

Many of the libraries in Kerala can be visited from a tourism point of view also for its rich traditional collection of manuscripts, palm-leaf manuscripts and rare books. There are several historically important libraries in Kerala, which have been preserved in their original form and collections. They can be developed into favourite destinations of cultural, heritage and educational tourists. Tourism journeys to these libraries can be included in educational tour and sightseeing trips of students. Equipping libraries for cultural tourism, making library resources accessible to tourists, etc. are important elements of developing library awareness. The state library council and tourism department can jointly work for adopting the heritage libraries of Kerala for the development of tourism along with preservation of historical libraries.

7.6 Conclusion

The distinctiveness of tourism gives importance to information, but too much information can be overwhelming and confusing to the tourists. The purpose of this study was to investigate how the tourists really find out, select and use the required information from the immense resources available to them and to probe the attitude and behaviour of tourists to know what will affect their degree of satisfaction.
Even though the information and communication technologies can provide concise, precise, timely and up-to-date information which can be used directly by the tourists for decision making and Internet is said to be replacing libraries, the status of libraries as the authenticated information sources for the tourism information have not really changed. What has changed is the way of accessing the resources.

The local public libraries near the tourist destinations of the state can be changed into points of interest among the tourists by providing necessary facilities and infrastructure. The tourists can see and engage with the local population at the library, and can get awareness about the local culture, its historical and geographical individualities, arts, literature, etc. The librarians who are working near tourist destinations can function as human encyclopaedias about that region as they know the history, geography, climate and facilities available and are also normally involved in the cultural, social and political activities of the region. By suitably transforming in tune with the demands of the tourists for information and assistance for successful completion of their trip, the libraries in Kerala can proudly become an important and contributing component of the state economy.