Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

History narrates that, from the very beginning of existence itself man started travelling. Food gathering is supposed to be the most primitive reason for the travel. Nomadic hunters and gatherers moved in search of seasonally available wild plants and game. Later people started to travel for a variety of reasons— to satisfy curiosity, to educate themselves and to fight in wars. Travel and tourism have thus become important social activities of human beings from time immemorial. The urge to travel for exploring new places within one’s own country or outside the country has been on the increase since then. Twentieth century has witnessed tremendous development in tourism. In 1903, Wright Brothers first flew in an aircraft, which ignited the emergence of a big industry called airlines. By the technological developments, passenger transportation using aircrafts became popular, and tourism has extended beyond the boundaries of nations. Along with the technological developments, socio-economic changes formulated after the Second World War enhanced the growth of tourism. Increased leisure time, higher disposable income, and falling cost of travel have made tourism an important activity of the modern society. Modern transport facilities with lot of amenities, automated and easy to use ticket reservation systems through Internet, trouble free access to information about places where people want to visit, etc. have made tourism growing.

1.1 Tourism

Etymologically, the word "tour" is derived from the Latin word 'tornare' and the Greek word 'tornus' meaning the movement around a central point or axis. The suffix -ism is defined as 'an action, process, behaviour or quality, whereas the suffix -ist denotes one that performs a given action. When the word tour and the suffix -ism are combined, the word tourism is formed which means the action of movement around a circle. The movement around a circle has a starting point, which ultimately turns to be the finishing point. Like a circle, a tour represents a journey that is a round trip, i.e., the act of leaving and then returning to the original starting point. When the suffix –ist is combined with the word tour, the word tourist is formed, which means, one who performs the action of tour.¹
United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism (Rome, 1963) defined Tourism as “the consumption, production and distribution of services for travellers who dwell in some place other than their domiciles or workplace for at least twenty four hours. Shorter sojourns are regarded as mere excursions”. Tourism not only represents just travel for leisure and holidays, but also travels for education, health, pilgrimage, conventions, conferences, general business and for visiting friends and relatives. The tourism industry is defined as, the “facilities created to cater for the needs of people on a temporary movement away from their normal places of work and residence, and their activities during their stay at destinations”.

Though there are many definitions for tourism, it could be simply defined as a “travel and stay of a non-resident”.

Though the words tourism and travel are used as one and the same, there are some differences among these words. Tourism is a wider concept, which comprises a lot more than mere travel. All tourism consists of some travel, but not vice-versa. People travel from one place to another for a variety of purposes like employment, for meeting friends and relatives, for leisure, etc. But in tourism there will be a journey to a destination and a stay outside one’s usual place of residence for leisure and recreation. Every traveller is a prospective tourist, and at any phase of travel the traveller can take the role into a tourist. Tourism can also be considered as an interaction or an encounter between two persons or two groups, one being the host and the other the visitor or tourist. In between these interactions, there exist the commercial aspects of tourism. Many people are involved in tourism directly or indirectly.

1.1.1 Types of Tourism

United Nations categorised tourism into three types based on the nativity of the tourist with respect to the country of reference. These are domestic, inbound and outbound tourism. Domestic tourism involves the activities of a resident visitor within the country of reference whereas; outbound tourism involves the activities of a resident visitor outside the country of reference. Inbound tourism involves activities of a non-resident visitor within the country of reference. These three forms are combined to derive three classes viz internal tourism, national tourism and international tourism. As per this classification, internal tourism consists of all tourism activities within the country of reference. National tourism consists of domestic tourism and outbound tourism whereas
international tourism comprises of inbound and outbound tourism. This classification is part of International Recommendation for Tourism Statistics formulated to provide a common framework for all countries to use.

1.1.2 Importance of Tourism

Throughout the history of mankind, Travel and tourism remained important social activities. They originated from man’s curiosity and explorative nature and were initially confined to a few privileged ones. Advances in technology and growth of economy triggered widespread growth of tourism. The growth is not only in the number of people travelling but also in the frequency of travel and the extent of travel which now cross the barriers of states, countries and continents. It has also led to the development of a broad spectrum of commercial and economic activities to facilitate the tours and to cater to the needs of the tourists, with direct or indirect involvement of many people. Thus tourism is important for generation of employment and foreign exchange.

The natural environment, culture and tradition of a region are major factors in attracting the tourists. As such tourism plays a crucial role in preserving the environment, culture and tradition. When these aspects are considered along with the economic contribution, it can be argued that tourism is an effective instrument for overall development. Globally, tourism accounts for more than ten percent of global GDP and gives livelihood for more than 200 million people. These figures are rapidly expanding and the growth of tourism as an industry is surpassing the growth of almost all other industries across the world. By recognising its importance, throughout the world policies are formulated for the development and promotion of tourism.

1.1.3 Tourism in India

In India also, tourism is one of the most vibrant, growing and economically important activity, having wide social and cultural implications. In the ancient times itself, India had trade and cultural relations with many countries and was a rich and prosperous nation. This has been remarked by the great travellers like Alexander the Great and Marco Polo who were very much interested in visiting India. Pilgrimage or pilgrim travel also assumed great importance in the early days. History narrates that many Buddhists monks like Fa-Hsien, Hsuan Tsang and It Sang visited India in the first century
A.D. and trade relationships existed between India and China through the Silk Route. Sri Sankaracharrya the great monistic philosopher has established four ‘mattas’ in the four corners of India. This has really augmented religious tourism and gradually developed into a socio-cultural component.

In modern India, steps for the promotion of tourism were taken even before independence. In 1945, a tourism committee was set up under the chairmanship of Sir John Sargeant, the then Educational Adviser to the Government of India. On the basis of the recommendations of the committee, a tourist traffic branch was set up in the Ministry of Transport in 1949 with the main objective of development of tourist traffic in India. Thereafter, the tourism in India was accorded a privileged status in 1956 with the formulation of 2nd and 3rd Five Year Plans. Owing to a number of encouraging factors like vast geographical spread, great historical and cultural heritage and patronage of government and private agencies the tourism sector has achieved the status of an industry.

1.1.4 Tourism in Kerala

Kerala is a naturally gifted state in India, with unique geographical features. Kerala was known as the land of spices which attracted foreign people from ancient times and became a famous trade point. The earliest traders were the Phoenicians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. They were followed by the Arabs, the Jews and the Chinese. The fame, reputation and prominence obtained through the trade of spices has paved the way of tourism in Kerala, which has developed into one of the most sought after tourist destinations in the world. Tourism in Kerala has been on the increase for the last several years, and has a vital role in the socio-economic development of the state, in terms of employment, income generation, foreign exchange generation, etc.

Kerala is one of the destinations with highest brand recall value and Kerala Tourism has changed into a global superbrand. Kerala, the God’s own Country is visited by thousands of tourists every year from different parts of the world. The state is gifted with various natural tourist resources like beaches, backwaters, rivers, lakes and historical monuments like temples, forts, mosques and churches. Rich Ayurveda and yoga culture, ritual art forms, classical dances and music are highlights of Kerala, with immense tourist
attraction value. World Travel and Tourism Council has selected Kerala as a Partner State. National Geographic Travel has chosen Kerala as one of the 50 must see destinations of a lifetime, after 2 years of research. The only Indian destination that was featured other than Kerala was the Taj Mahal which is in the world wonders category. Kerala has been stated as one of the 10 paradises of the World.

Kerala the evergreen state is a narrow strip of land in the southernmost tip of India. The Arabian Sea in the west and the Western Ghats in the east have bestowed Kerala with numerous tourist destinations. Within 38,863 square kilometers, this virtual paradise holds almost all types of tourist attractions such as serene beaches, mist clad hill stations, exotic wildlife, enchanting backwaters, lush forests, exciting trekking trails, sparkling water falls, invigorating monsoons, exclusive plantations, tropical islands, historic monuments, Ayurvedic health centres, magical festivals, sacred pilgrim centres, spectacular art forms, spicy cuisine, splendid cultural heritage, spectacular boat races, and everything that thrills a visitor. The landscape varies from long golden beaches to cool hill stations and dense green jungle to busy cities. Its unique features are the 1,900 kms. of palm fringed backwaters and 580 kms. long coastline. The art forms like Kathakali and Theyyam and martial art Kalaripayattu are exclusive prides of the State. There is no other place in the world which offers such wide choice of destinations like Kerala. All forms of tourism like leisure tourism, history tourism, adventure tourism, beach tourism, spiritual tourism, health tourism (Ayurveda, Naturopathy and other Indian systems of medicine), etc. are pertinent for the state. The tourism season in Kerala, starts in mid-August and goes on till March.

1.1.5 Importance of Tourism for Kerala

The natural blessings mentioned above which qualify Kerala as God’s Own Country can be put to use to expand the tourism industry in a big way and thereby generate employment and develop the economy of the state. In the circumstances of grave threats facing the agricultural and traditional sectors, pitiable prospects of the manufacturing sector, poor performance of traditional exports and the uncertainties facing non-resident Indians due to the economic recession, tourism in the state is considered as one of the sectors which can drive Kerala economy and take the state to the pinnacle of socio-economic development.
It is estimated that over 7 lakhs international and over 93 lakhs domestic tourist arrive in Kerala every year. It also accounts for annual investment to the tune of about 1,000 crores and employment of about 10 lakhs persons. The income from tourism has also steadily raised. It was in the order of 7,700 crores rupees during the year 2005 with a foreign exchange earnings of ₹ 1,550 crores where as in 2011 the income is ₹ 19,037 crores with foreign exchange earnings of 4,222 crores. In 2011 there was 9.74 percent growth in tourism revenue while foreign tourist arrivals grew 11.18 percent and domestic tourist arrival grew 9.15 percent over 2010.\(^9\) Because of the nature of tourism services which involve transportation, accommodation, food, communication, entertainment, international payments, shopping as well as the industries which supply these final services, there is a great deal of potential for linkages with the manufacturing and service sectors. Thus the thrust from the development of tourism industry can be utilised to rejuvenate the weak economic situation of the state, as well as stimulate other areas of the service sectors.

1.1.6 Information Needs in Tourism

Travel is generally a planned activity and the travellers need detailed information about each place they intend to visit.\(^{10}\) The specific elements of such information needs are:

- Geographical information on location, climate, landscape, etc.,
- Accessibility through air, water, rail and road and availability of scheduled means of transport,
- Attractive features,
- Accommodation, restaurant and shopping facilities,
- Social customs, culture and other special features of the place,
- Seasons of visit and other unique features,
- Activities and entertainment facilities,
- Entry and exit formalities and restrictions, if any,
- Quality of facilities and their standard prices including exchange rates.

Even though the ultimate users of the information are the tourists, the economic benefits go to the local area and the service providers of tourism industry. Information has an importance role and is vital for the successful organisation of tourism. The areas of application of information in the tourism industry are listed below:
**Managing:** For the successful management of a tourism endeavor, different kind of information input is necessary.

**Planning:** Planning has four elements viz. retrospective analysis, current perceptions, introspective analysis and futuristic vision and in all these elements sufficient information is inevitable. For getting the desired results, we have to act well. For acting well, we have to plan. For planning we need information.

**Promotion:** Information about the tourism products is to be presented before the tourists in attractive and useful manner, so as to convert their need into a purchase. The usual methods of promotion of tourism products are presentation, publicity and advertising.

**Image projection:** For the successful marketing of tourism products, image projection is very important. With the support of attractive and informative graphic presentation, the target users can be convinced with the standard and quality of facilities and services available.

**Future Orientation:** Forecasting and planning with future orientation is very important in tourism management. For getting desired results in future and for the development of the organisation, analysis of different factors in the existing and past knowledge and experience is necessary. With the assistance of scientifically and technically generated information, the future requirements can be estimated for planning promotional efforts.

**Feedback:** Careful collection and synthesis of feedback information is very important for incorporating required changes in the products and services, for accomplishment of a well managed and useful tourism organisation.

The development of information and communication technologies has led to many changes in the tourism industry in Kerala. It threw open a new set of challenges and opportunities in marketing of destinations around the globe. Products and services are displayed and described interactively by electronic simulation for selection, and the services are offered directly by eluding the mediators, which help the customers to select the tourism products and services according to their need and in competitive prices. This
will attract more foreign and domestic tourists to explore the scenic beauty and pleasant services of the state. Since tourists are not able to test the product in advance and they have to travel to the place for consumption, acquiring of relevant information is the only means, for sealing the gap. Information sources and information systems are indispensable components of every business organisations and tourism sector is also not an exception to this. Considering the vast and varied potential of tourism and its impact on the economic, social and cultural environment of the state, a detailed study about the information need and behaviour of tourists visiting Kerala is found to be relevant and imperative.

1.1.7 Tourist Information Sources

Different types of information generated by many agencies about tourists, tourism markets and tourism products, which are useful for tourists, destination managers and tourism marketers, are called tourist information sources. Tourist information sources provide the users with an image of a destination or service, while it gives and opportunity of advertisement of the product to the publisher. Government departments and agencies at centre and state levels are collecting statistical data and generating the primary information about the tourism industry in India. This information is used as the basis for estimating the tourism development of the country. Besides, the Tourism Departments at centre and state levels are also collecting and disseminating information on areas of tourist interest, facilities available, services provided, tourism development plans, etc. Supplementing this, different agencies are also generating and disseminating tourist information sources, such as:

- **Travel agencies and tour operators:** For the benefit of the clients, travel agencies and tour operators are generating and publishing different sources of information, like travel brochures, pamphlets, etc. confined to their business area.

- **Hotel Industry:** Many hotels in the country are publishing information about accommodation facilities, historical attractions, cuisines, room rents, services available, etc. for the benefit of both domestic as well as foreign tourists.

- **Newspapers and Magazines:** Newspapers and magazines are important sources of tourist information. Almost all the dailies and magazines are publishing tourism
related information in a big way, which contain information about places of interest, history, geography, topography, shopping, etc. which can be used as the up to date sources of information. Advertisement appearing in the dailies and magazines will inform the tariff, special discounts, tour packages, categories of accommodation available, route, contact details, etc.

**Travel Guides:** Previously tourists were depending on human guides for their assistance, but gradually the written guidebooks have replaced human guides to some degree. Many publishers are bringing out travel and tour guide on commercial basis, which provide necessary information about a tourist destination. Guidebooks are one of the most important sources of tourist information which influences tourists in their destination selection and shaping of itineraries.

**Non Book Formats:** Includes cartographic materials that is map, atlas, globe, microfilm, microfiche, etc.

**Television and Radio:** TV and radio are telecasting many tourism related programmes, which are useful sources of information for tourists. Audio-visual sources have a strong influence on the listeners for inspiring them to travel and see the place unknown to them.

**Internet:** Internet has become the most important medium of communication and promotion of tourism. It provides a variety of information sources. The government departments, public and private sector tourism organisations, tourism service providers, etc. have made their online presence by creating instructive and helpful websites. The www is being tamed, for providing different types of information through Internet.

**Information centres:** The Department of Tourism and Tourism Development Corporations have arranged information centres in major air ports, railway stations, bus stations and tourist centres for assisting the tourists. These centres have been equipped with modern communication infrastructures and trained man power.
Cognitive Wisdom: It is the understanding of a destination derived from the general knowledge and personal experience of a tourist which can help them to gain specific knowledge about a perceived reality. The tourist’s internal information source based on his knowledge, obtained through feelings and experience may help him to generate some image of a destination. This internal information source is called cognitive wisdom.

1.1.8 Type of Tourists

Tourists can be categorised based on many criteria, for studying their dependence on information sources. Demographic characteristics like age has been the favourite segmentation variable for many tourism researchers. Many tourism researchers have categorised tourists as missionary, mass tourist, conservationist, explorer, adventurer, holidaymaker, etc., based on the benefit sought from the travel. Geographic variable like place of origin is another important norm for categorising the tourists. The tourists may be divided into two distinct groups: domestic and foreign travellers. Yet another important segmentation criterion may be the exposure level of the tourists. Based on the experience of the tourist, they can be classified into new, moderately travelled and well experienced tourists. Researches have shown that, as the exposure level builds up the tourists become more sensitive to certain decision criteria.

For the present study, tourists visiting Kerala are categorised based on their need and reason for travelling, as follows:

a) Business and professional tourists:
   - Business tourists (travel related to business or work)
   - Educational tourists (travel for study purpose or for improving qualification)
   - Incentive tourists (company paid holiday travellers for their hard work or for achieving a target)
   - Health or medical tourists (travelling for special medical treatment that is only available away from home)

b) Leisure and holiday tourists
   - Adventure tourists
   - Cultural tourists (who travel to experience different cultures)
- Eco-tourists
- Leisure tourists (who seek rest and relax and have a break from the usual routines)
- Religious tourists
- Shopping tourists
- Special interest tourists (who have particular interest such as bird watching, attending film festival, etc.)
- Sports and recreation tourists

c) Tourists travelling to visit friends and relatives (mainly travel to attend a wedding, funeral or birthday celebration)

d) Youth tourists
- Backpackers (who travel independently with a low budget and have flexible travel schedules)
- Gap year travellers (travel for working and earning pocket money, learn new skills, do volunteer works, etc.)

1.1.9 Information Systems

An information system is a set of people, procedures and resources that collects, transforms and disseminates information in an organisation. It performs input, processing, output, storage and control activities that transform data resources into information products. When executed, it will provide information for decision making, communications and control of an organisation or activity. The structural elements of an information system are people, processes, data, models and technology. Since the information system has to serve the purpose of recording, storing and disseminating data as well as aiding in decision making, its language is mostly semi formal.

Information system originated as an interdisciplinary field of computer science and management and has grown into a major area of research with immediate and profound applications in management. It is taught in major universities and management schools as part of management studies and as a discipline by itself. A tourism information system is a specific type of information system which consists of all the means and ways of information transfer, used in a business or community to promote tourism activities. The collection of information include travel guides, information
centres, brochures, pamphlets, commercials, advertisements, referral sources like repeat visitors, employees, friends, relatives, etc.

1.2 Relevance of the Study

Tourism has been very well documented as an information intensive business.\(^\text{15}\) Tourism is a confidence driven commodity and therefore the choice of destination depends on the information available and not the actual destination itself.\(^\text{16}\) The characteristics of the tourism product make it high risk requiring timely and accurate information relevant to customers’ needs.\(^\text{17}\) Tourists are also demanding better, quicker and more reliable information and the development of ICT is fulfilling this through the provision of timely, appropriate and accurate information. Travellers now have access to a vast amount of information not only provided by suppliers but by tourist organisations, private businesses and by other travellers. Information behaviour is an important part of the purchase decision making process and by dodging the uncertainty and risks in getting relevant information, the quality of the tourism product and service can be assured. Concise, timely, and to-the-point information which is directly usable for decision making of the tourist will definitely encourage tourism.\(^\text{18}\) In short, information is power and by using this information wisely and effectively, the tourist can definitely make benefits.

According to Buhalis and Law\(^\text{19}\) more research leads to more information and a more informed customer can identify the products and services that best cater to their needs. They are also able to interpret and interact better with the local culture and resources. By quickly identifying the needs of the tourists and providing them with comprehensive, personalised, updated and relevant information, their tastes, choice of destination, products and services can be shaped. By scanning through blogs, online communities and discussion forums to see what the tourists write about their experiences, the service providers can predict the trend and accordingly provide better service to them.

The goal of this study is to assess the information needs and information seeking behaviour of both Indian and foreign tourists visiting Kerala and to know how it makes an impact on ongoing library services. In order to develop the tourism industry of the state, the visitors should be provided with information according to their needs, specifications
and use pattern. Tourists do not want to, nor have time to, sort through information that is confusing and disorganised. They need organised information so that it becomes easier to acquire and make decisions. When it is easy to get information the tourists will feel more comfort and the trip will be enjoyable for them. Tourists who are satisfied with their trip are more likely to return to their native places and tell their experiences to others, personally or online, perhaps making them prospective tourists. A study for ascertaining the information seeking behaviour will help to take measures to improve the information services by libraries and other agencies and help to provide need based information to the tourists visiting Kerala. For this reason, user studies on tourists are of great significance.

1.3 Title of the Study

The title of the study is “An investigation into information needs and information behaviour of tourists and design of a tourist information system for Kerala.”

1.4 Definition of Key Terms

1.4.1 Investigation

Investigation is the act or process of investigating; a careful search or examination in order to discover facts. It is the work of inquiring into something thoroughly and systematically. New investigations are acquired through various senses and are usually assimilated tumbling with pre-existing knowledge and actions. Questioning is a major form of human thought and interpersonal communication, and plays a key role in investigation. Investigations are mainly acquired through questions. In this study the term “investigation” means, observation of new phenomena, new actions, or new events and providing new reasoning to explain the knowledge gathered through such observations in correlation with previous knowledge, abstract thought and everyday experience.

1.4.2 Information Need

Information is “the data presented in readily comprehensible form to which meaning has been attributed within the context of its use”. A specific data can be considered as information if it conveys a meaning to the person who receives it. The term information need has been used in a variety of ways. Belkin and Croft suggest that a
search begins with a problem and a need to solve it - the gap between these two is defined as the information needs. Each user has a different type of information need depending on what he's trying to find and why he's trying to find it. Information need leads to information seeking. If we are able to determine the most common information needs of a category of users, we can select the few best architectural components to address those information needs. The term “information need” is used in the study to denote the desire of an individual or group to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need.

1.4.3 Information Behaviour

T.D. Wilson\textsuperscript{22} defines information behaviour as the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use. Information behaviour is the short form of human information seeking behaviour, which includes face-to-face communication with others, as well as the passive reception of information. It is the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems, such as library documents, or with computer based systems like online databases, digital libraries, etc. Information searching behaviour is the 'micro-level' of behaviour employed by the searcher in interacting with information systems of all kinds, which will also involve mental acts, such as judging the relevance of data or information retrieved. Information use behaviour consists of the physical and mental acts involved in incorporating the information found into the person's existing knowledge base. In this study the term “information behaviour” is used to explains how people need, search, obtain, manage and use information in different contexts.

1.4.4 Tourist

The World Tourism Organisation defines tourists as “people who travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty four hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited”.\textsuperscript{23} Hunziker and Krapf\textsuperscript{24} defined tourist as a “person who travels for pleasure of travelling, out of curiosity and because he has nothing better to do”. He is adventurous to take any travel hardship out of
curiosity for sightseeing or to explore alien culture and civilization. He is different from a 
traveller, who moves from one place to another for a definite purpose. Tourism Society 
of England defined Tourism as the “temporary, short-term movement of people to 
destination outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities 
during the stay at each destination. It includes movements for all purposes.”

1.4.5 Design

Design is a graphic representation, especially a detailed plan for construction or 
manufacture, illustrating the purposeful or inventive arrangement of parts or details. Design is the plan that lays the basis for the making of every object or system. It is an 
important tool for originating and developing a product, service, structure, system, or 
component with an intention.

1.4.6 Tourist Information System

A Tourist Information System is a combination of people, hardware, software, 
communication devices, network and data resources that processes data and information 
for tourists. At bare minimum, it provides tourists all the information they need to know 
about travelling in particular country. It is important that the information is well organised 
and readily accessible at any point of time and place. It should aid in searching for places 
of interest and give directions with respect to the current position. Tourist Information 
System also serves as a worldwide announcement of tourism services and activities. For 
this purpose it should consist of all the information channels used in a business or 
community to promote itself as a tourism attraction. It provides information to anybody 
who connects to the global network.

Complete online information about tourist services will promote tourism by 
enhancing the number of tourists. Advances in computer hardware, software, and 
 networking technologies have spurred an evolution in the structure, design, and use of 
Tourist information systems. An information system is not only the technology an 
organisation uses, but also the way in which the organisation interacts with the 
technology and the way in which the technology works with the organisation's business 
processes.”
Kerala

Kerala (Malayalam: കേരള്‍; Kēralam), is a state in south India. It was formed on November 1, 1956, with the passing of the States Reorganisation Act, bringing together the areas where Malayalam is the dominant language. The state has an area of 38,863 sq. kms. and is bordered by Karnataka to the north and Tamil Nadu to the south and east and Arabian sea towards the west. Thiruvananthapuram is the capital of Kerala. Kochi and Kozhikode are the other major cities. Kerala lies between north latitude 8°04’ and 12°44’ and east longitudes 74°54’ and 77°12’. Today, growing at a rate of 9.74%, Kerala is one of the most visited tourism destinations in India.

1.5 Objectives

The objectives of this study are to bring out, the attitude and behaviour of tourists visiting Kerala, towards information sources, in order to show what will affect their degree of satisfaction and to review a framework of an information system for Kerala. The study was conducted among those visited the important tourist places in Kerala and was aimed to explore the following:

1. To identify information requirements and information sources available to tourists visiting Kerala and to examine their information seeking behaviour.

2. 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.

3. To examine whether the tourists experience any difficulties in getting the desired information.

4. To find out the use pattern of different types of formal and informal sources of tourist information.

5. To find out whether there exist any difference between domestic and foreign tourists in relation to their information seeking behaviour.

6. To ascertain whether there is any significant difference of awareness between domestic tourists and foreign tourists about the library services available to them.
7. To study the extent of the infrastructure and facilities made available in the libraries of Kerala to the tourists.

8. To examine the impact of online library sources for the development of tourism.

9. To propose a model tourist information system for Kerala.

The overall objective of the study was based on the fact that libraries have an important role in providing authentic information required by tourists visiting Kerala. The government agencies and different departments engaged in the tourism sector can work together with the academic and public libraries of the state, to develop a consortium for serving the information required by the tourists. Libraries in Kerala should make their online presence, for providing information about Kerala and its tourist potentials to those who are planning trips to the state, since the information provided at the planning stage of a trip is considered as vital for deciding a tourist destination. If the library websites and other online information sources can provide sufficient information to the prospective customers about the advantages of Kerala tourism, it will help the developments of tourism in the State. Also the role of libraries and librarians in tourism development will be appreciated and their importance in the State’s economy will be emphasised. In the circumstance, where the existence of at least some of the libraries are challenged in the society, expanding the service area will be beneficial for the survival and face upliftment of those libraries and recognition by the authorities.

1.6 Research Design

This study was conducted among all the categories of tourists visiting Kerala. Various classification criteria were used to segment the tourists, and to study the interrelationship, if any, among these tourist groups and their dependence on information sources. Tourists were grouped based on the variables like age, benefit sought (motivation of travel), place of origin, exposure level (experience), etc. Having identified the different categories, the categories were tested significantly for finding the impact of different information sources.

The study was based on primary and secondary data which was collected by the standard methodological tools like review of literature, qualitative and structured
interviews, questionnaires, sampling methods, etc. The data collected for the study were tabulated, analysed and presented with the help of appropriate tools of analysis.

**Figure 1.1**
**Theoretical Framework of the Research**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEPENDENT VARIABLES</th>
<th>DEPENDENT VARIABLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Attributes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Information Sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Age</td>
<td>• Audio-visual media like TV, Radio, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gender</td>
<td>• Brochures and pamphlets published officially by Tourism Departments</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Marital Status</td>
<td>• Cognitive wisdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Educational Qualification</td>
<td>• Informal sources- human source, word of mouth, Friends/relatives, etc.</td>
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<td>• Computer skill</td>
<td>• Internet sources</td>
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<td>• Profession</td>
<td>• Library documents/ sources</td>
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<td>• Travel experience</td>
<td>• Magazines</td>
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<td><strong>Destination Attributes</strong></td>
<td>• Newspapers</td>
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<td>• Domestic versus foreign</td>
<td>• Professional sources- tour operators and travel agents</td>
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<td>• Traveller’s previous visits to the destination</td>
<td>• Tourism Facility Centre KTDC/ ITDC</td>
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<td>• Purpose of visit to the destination</td>
<td>• Tourism fairs and road shows</td>
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<td><strong>Trip Attributes</strong></td>
<td>• Travel guides/ Maps/ Atlases</td>
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<td>• Duration of the trip</td>
<td>• Travel Magazines</td>
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<td>• Single destination versus package tour</td>
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<td>• Type of holiday</td>
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### 1.6.1 Questionnaire Method

This study was aimed at a deeper understanding of the information need and information search behaviour of tourists visiting Kerala, to generate requirements for designing an information system. Therefore, the questionnaire was designed in a manner to allow the travellers to express their opinion unrestrictedly. The questions selected for the study were covering all the three phases of travelling viz. selection of destination phase, where the traveller thinks about his personnel interests and choose a location for travel, preparation phase, where the traveller prepares for the trip at his home and the travelling phase where traveller has to deal with ad-hoc information needs. A perfectly
designed and well structured questionnaire was prepared and presented before the tourists from different nationalities, by visiting important tourist places of Kerala. The questionnaire was divided into eight parts. The first part included questions for collecting personal information of tourists. The second part intended to assess the library usage and third part was for knowing the travel details of tourists. The fourth part concentrated on the Information technology skill and fifth part aimed to collect their information behaviour. Assessment of tourist information sources constituted the sixth part. The seventh part of the questionnaire invited the tourists to rate their opinion about the sources of information they used and its satisfaction in a five point scale. Eighth part of the questionnaire was intended to collect descriptive information from the tourists for evaluating their knowledge about Kerala tourism and tourist information sources.

Before conducting the actual survey, a pilot study was conducted among 50 respondents with the help of a draft questionnaire for evaluating the relevance of each question and for ensuring that instructions, wordings, explanations and questions are clear and formatted properly. Based on the feedback, some irrelevant questions were removed, some questions were added and minor changes were made in the structure and language of the questionnaire.

Since the number of tourists visiting Kerala every year is very large - over 9 lakhs international and over 80 lakhs domestic tourist arrivals per year- and all of them cannot be surveyed, sampling method was used. Questionnaires were circulated among 1000 selected samples, as 50:50 ratio of Indian and foreign tourists selected from the major tourist spots of Kerala, during the 2012-2013 tourist season. An online survey was also conducted for getting data from visitors who were busy when approached for answering the questionnaire. For this an online questionnaire was designed using Google Doc and the link was mailed to the tourists for answering. (http://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?fromEmail=true&formkey=HRpNG1VRHRnY0c1cEVoaklFQUqMFE6MQ)

The elicited data was then transferred to an electronic spreadsheet for data analysis using SPSS software (version 20). Frequency tables with valid and cumulative percentages were developed; correlations of variables were done to identify the influences. Statistical techniques such as percentage analysis, cross tabulations, t-Tests,
Chi-Square Tests and Mann-Whitney tests were employed as and when required to establish the significance of hypotheses statistically.

1.6.2 Structured Interviews

For getting awareness about the tourism industry in Kerala and for developing a strategy for data collection, discussions were held with higher officials of tourism department, information officers at tourism facility centres and information centres, managers of resorts and hotels of public and private sectors, tourist guides, etc. Face to face and online interviews were conducted with randomly selected Indian and foreign tourists and short interviews were held with some tourists upon arrival at Thiruvananthapuram international airport.

1.6.3 Literature Search

Documentary evidence mainly from published materials like articles, books, statistical publications, dissertations, etc. were consulted for getting primary information.

1.6.4 Observation

The tourists who are in pleasure trips may not be always in a mood to answer questionnaires and interviews. The investigator collected data from such tourists through observation and discussions.

1.7 Hypotheses

On the basis of objectives framed for the study, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H01. Tourists visiting Kerala are positively influenced by Internet in the selection of destination and tour planning.

H02. The information seeking behaviour of the tourists is differed according to their country of origin, age, education, purpose of visit and duration of stay.

H03. The impact of information sources is not related to the exposure level of the tourist.
H04. Tourists use different information sources at different stages of their travel, for decision making.

H05. The Libraries of Kerala are not playing any significant role in providing information to the tourists.

H06. Tourists are not depending on libraries in Kerala for their information requirements.

H07. ICT enabled library information sources have not developed to compete with the tourism industry.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Since its formation as a separate state in 1965, Kerala followed democratic socialist principles and government policies adopted were for a welfare based state. Much of the budgetary provisions were earmarked for health, education and social development of the people, which resulted in a high standard of living, education level and high Human Development Index among the people. This has created an aversion among the youths against agriculture and other traditional industries, which lead to unemployment of the educated youth, poor economic development and economic stagnation in the 1980s. The economic inconsistencies which prevailed in the state forced a large number of educated unemployed to seek jobs in Middle East and European countries. A new type of business called travel agency was blown up in almost all the nook and corner of the state for facilitating the travel needs of overseas job seekers. The travel agents were the main mediators for airline ticketing, emigration clearances, visa stamping and for other travel related services. Gradually the travel agents also started facilitating travel arrangements of the foreigners to the state and arrangements of their accommodation, which started to bring out the hitherto unknown potentials of the tourism industry.

Though Kerala’s natural beauty and historical monuments had attracted tourists from different countries for several years, the phenomenal growth of tourism in Kerala started after it gained the status of an industry in 1986. Tourist are now equally attracted by Ayurveda, Yoga, naturopathy, etc. and schools for learning and appreciating classical art, dance and music. The tagline ‘God's Own Country’ distinguished the Kerala tourism in the advertisement campaigns and enabled to invite a considerable investment in this
sector. By the year 2000, tourism developed into a fully fledged, multi-billion dollar industry and the state was able to carve a niche place for itself in the world tourism industry. In 2003, it became a legendary tourism destination with 'highest brand recall value'. Kerala, a hitherto unknown tourism destination, became the fastest growing tourism destination of the world.

There is a judicious need for the development of an organised method for providing the tourists visiting Kerala with right information at the right time. To improve the situation, library centered information systems, in co-operation with government and non-government agencies working in tourism sector should be developed, in order to take full advantages of information system applications. The tourism sector in Kerala has yet to develop its online presence. The available literature on information study reveals the fact that, there are no previous studies conducted in the area of information need and information behaviour of tourists in Kerala. This study will focus on designing a system to improve Kerala tourism, by analysing the information needs and information seeking behaviour of tourists, to adopt information system technologies in an effective manner.

1.9 Scope and Limitations

Tourist destinations in Kerala are scattered from Poovar in south to Bakel in North. Kerala is gifted with diverse tourist attractions like backwaters, lakes, rivers, beaches, Ayurveda, yoga, ritual art forms, classical dances, music, historical monuments such as temples, forts, etc. The present study is based on the perception of different categories of domestic and foreign tourists visiting some of the important tourist destinations of Kerala.

However, the present study suffers from a few limitations related to the scope of the study.

i. Tourism in Kerala is a vast subject with a large set of segmentation variables. Out of these only a few are explored in this study. However it is ensured that all the widely used variables are considered.

ii. Another important limitation of this study is that the samples selected are tourists presently available in Kerala, who have already selected their tourism
destination(s). There are several others who didn’t select Kerala as their destination and probably selected somewhere else. The influence of the information sources at different stages of decision making for selecting Kerala among their other destinations was not possible to take into account in this study.

iii. Responses of people who have selected Kerala as their tourism destination, but not reached Kerala till now, were not able to collect.

iv. The study on interrelationship between different information sources is only exploratory in nature.

v. Internet is considered solely as a source of tourist information by many people now a day, even though many other sources are available. This may partially influence the responses from variables.

vi. Getting relevant data from tourists who were not well versed with English was very difficult, since the questionnaire was prepared only in English and Russian languages.

vii. The findings of the study are based on expressed opinions of the respondents, which might have its own limitations. The possibility of hiding certain facts or expressing some misleading opinions by the respondents could not be discarded, even though all possible measures were taken to elicit correct information.

viii. A good number of leisure tourists were not willing to answer the questionnaire, because, in most of the time they were in the ambiance of enjoyment from the travel pleasures.

ix. The library survey conducted as part of the study was based on the responses received from the librarians. No efforts were undertaken to validate the data received, by verifying with the library records. Similarly, no libraries were known to have provisions for the service exclusively to tourists visiting Kerala, for fixing a standard for assessing the library services for tourists.
x. There was no scope for further deep study on the information behaviours of tourists visiting Kerala, since follow up studies are not possible due to non-availability of the samples within reach.

1.10 Organisation of Chapters

This study is organised in seven chapters. The thesis commences in chapter one by providing background information of the research topic. A brief introduction of tourism, tourism in India, tourism in Kerala and importance of tourism is followed by description of the role of information in tourism development and definition of key terms. Research design, hypotheses, significance of the study and scope and limitations are also discussed in this chapter.

In chapter 2, the literature obtained through survey were reviewed and presented under six headings such as information needs, information seeking behaviour, Kerala tourism, tourist information needs, tourist information behaviour and IT applications in tourism industry. The reviews gave an idea about the various facts of the topic and helped in devising the research study in a guided way. It has provided a clear understanding of what has been thought and done previously in the field of study and what remains to be done.

Chapter 3 gives an illustration of the Kerala tourism. The role and importance of tourism in the present economic development of the state, categories of tourists, major tourism destinations and important festivals of Kerala are featured in this chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the need of information by tourists and their behaviour on searching the needed information for their travel. Various information sources were studied and presented in this chapter along with the general principles of information search behaviour.

Chapter 5 presents the results of analysis of data collected through the survey of domestic and foreign tourists, to obtain their direct feedback on information need and information behaviour.
Designing of a tourist information system for Kerala is an important segment of the present study. A detailed framework and step by step modus operandi is detailed in the chapter 6.

Finally, chapter 7 presents the findings, suggestions and conclusion of the study. The chapter also discusses the overall research outcomes and potential directions for future research in the study area.

Each chapter is followed by references and a comprehensive bibliography is given at the End. American Psychological Association style is used to cite the sources. The following appendices are also provided at the end.

Appendix I : Kerala geographical features  
Appendix II : Kerala tourism map  
Appendix III : Awards received by Kerala tourism  
Appendix IV : Questionnaire for tourist (English & Russian)  
Appendix V : Questionnaire for librarians

References:


