CHAPTER 4

TOURISM AGENCIES IN KERALA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The present chapter provides a detailed discussion on the major agencies involved in tourism development in Kerala. Of the various agencies of tourism development, the Department of Tourism plays a significant role. The Department of Tourism functions as a catalyst, co-coordinator and facilitator and plays a regulatory role in tourism development in the State. The other agencies include Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC), Tourists Resorts (Kerala) Ltd. (TRKL), Bekal Resorts Development Corporation (BRDC), The District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs), Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society (TEPS), Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies (KITTS) and the private sector.

4.2. DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

The Department of Tourism had its beginning in the State Guest Department of the erstwhile Travancore State and Hospitality Organisation of the Cochin State. At that time, the functioning of the Department was confined to looking after the comforts of the Guest of Rulers and those of the Government. A few palaces and State Guest Houses were used for accommodating the Guests and a small fleet of cars and boats maintained for their transport needs. The State Guest Department as a small unit was started during 1930 under the control of Superintendent who was redesignated as Director with effect from May 1, 1951. Till the reorganization of States in 1948, the State Guest Department of Travancore State and Hospitality Department of Cochin State continued as such. Later, after the formation of Kerala State in 1956, these two separate organisations were combined as “Tourist Department” on January 1, 1958.

This Department continues to be the Government agency responsible for looking after the comforts of Guest of the Government. It also functions as the Estate office so far as accommodation of VIPs like ministers are concerned. Their conveyance needs are also managed by the Tourist Department. Although the Department continues to handle the hospitality function of the State, more emphasis is now given to promotion, planning and development of tourism. It was only during the Seventh Plan that the tourism promotion activities found a place in the functioning of the Department of Tourism. In 1981, it was again renamed as Department of Tourism.
4.2.1. MAJOR FUNCTIONS

The Department of Tourism has three major functions, viz., (i) Hospitality wing of the State Government (ii) Estate Office Duty and (iii) Tourism Development.

(i) Hospitality wing: The Department provides accommodation and transport to the State Guests including VIPs and VVIPs. It maintains 24 Guest Houses at important centres such as Kovalam, Thiruvananthapuram, Ponmudi, Attingal, Varkala, Kollam, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Aluva, Devikulam, Munnar, Peerumade, Cheruthuruthy, Idukki, Thrissur, Guruvayoor, Malampuzha, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Sulthan Battery, Kannur, Kasaragod, Yathri Nivases at Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam and Kerala Houses at Kanyakumari and New Delhi.

(ii) Estate Office Duty: It is the responsibility of the Department of Tourism to provide furnished Residential Bungalows to the Ministers, Leader of Opposition, Chief Whip, Speaker etc. The transport facility is also provided to the above by the Department.

(iii) Tourism Development: The objective of tourism development in Kerala is to achieve growth in a sustainable manner through:

- Development of selected tourist destinations with proper planning for development so as to retain high quality of aesthetic and environmental beauty and to develop the destinations in a sustainable and eco-friendly manner;
- Development of special tourism sectors such as health tourism, adventure tourism, plantation tourism, rural tourism besides backwater tourism;
- Promotion of domestic tourism especially pilgrim tourism;
- Continuation of extensive and aggressive marketing of Kerala as an international tourism destination;
- New market development;
- Strengthening local tourism initiated by local Government;
- Sustainable development by conservation and preservation of cultural heritage;
- Provision of quality services in the form of regulation and monitoring;
- Development of basic infrastructure in terms of roads, power, drinking water, communication and solid waste disposal/effective waste management and disposal;
• Human resource development;
• Infrastructure development through private sector and private-public sector partnership with Government acting as a facilitator and catalyst.5

A shift in the emphasis from hospitality management to tourism planning, development and marketing was the major change the Department witnessed in the 1980s. The Budget pattern underwent a sea change by the 1990s to provide more for tourism development. Department of Tourism is mainly having a coordination role and is acting as a facilitator between various agencies involved in the development of tourism in the State. It coordinates the activities in planning, publicity and promotion, infrastructure development, destination development, human resources development, investment promotion and enacting legislative measures. Department of Tourism is also directly involved in infrastructure and destination development in less developed area to attract others to invest in these areas. However for the sake of convenience, the main activities of the Department may be categorized into three, viz., (a) Marketing and Promotion, (b) Planning and Development and (c) Support to other agencies.

Realising the importance of effective marketing and promotional measures to woo tourists and to highlight Kerala as a distinct destination, the Department has recently initiated various measures. These include media advertisement, printing and distribution of multi-colour brochures, hospitality to travel writers, conducting festivals, participating in National and International fairs and festivals etc.

An attempt is made through the following paragraphs to explain some of the major schemes undertaken by the Department of Tourism in recent times:

4.2.1.1. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT
• Development of Veli as an international tourist centre
• Development of Kannur as a major tourist destination in Malabar
  Integrated tourism development of Kannur has been taken up during the Ninth Plan period. Muzhappilangad and Payyambalam beaches have been developed to attract international tourists to these destinations. Development of Dharmadam Island, Thalassery Fort etc. has also been initiated under this project.
• Face-lifting of Kovalam beach
  The Department has recently taken steps to upgrade facilities at Kovalam, which is an international tourist destination. Development of roads and
pathways, augmentation of water supply schemes, construction of tourist information centre with modern facilities etc. have been undertaken by the Department. Beach cleaning and lifeguard services are regularly offered. Development of a sewage disposal system has been initiated.

- Development of Varkala beach
  The Department initiated activities such as construction of pathways, lighting etc. at Varkala to make the cliff, beach and surroundings acceptable to international tourists.

- Integrated Development of Fort Kochi
  Department of Tourism is developing Fort Kochi as an international heritage centre. The cost of the project for the Conservation and Preservation of Fort Kochi Heritage Zone is Rs. 6 cores, which is being implemented through the Central Public Works Department.

- Development of Ponmudi as a major hill station
  Here, tourist information centre, children’s park etc. have been developed. Construction of a tourist complex with luxurious accommodation facilities has been initiated with the financial assistance from the Central Government.

- Development of Vagamon as an international hill resort
  For this purpose, the Government of Kerala had already transferred 751 hectares of land to Department of Tourism. Master plan for the development of this centre is being prepared.

- World class road and backwater signages
  The Department of Tourism has completed the work of installation of international road and backwater signages through National Transportation Planning and Research Centre (NATPAC).

- Intensive backwater development
  The Department is giving thrust for the development of basic infrastructure along the backwaters of the State for tourism promotion. The following are the major projects under implementation:
  ✓ World class houseboat terminals at major backwater nodes
    Construction of house boat terminals has been initiated at Alappuzha, Kumarakom and Thannermukkom.
  ✓ Integrated development of Pamba – Kuttanad backwater region
Tourism infrastructure and basic amenities are being developed along the Pamba - Kuttanad backwater cruise routes through NATPAC. Tourist resorts at Pallathuruthy, Nedumudi, Kotharathode and Vattakkayal are being developed.

✓ Integrated development of Ashtamudi backwaters
  Construction of gateway centre at Kollam and water sports activities etc. are being taken up.

✓ Dispersal of backwater based tourism activities to Malabar area
  House boats have been sanctioned to Neeleswaram, Parassinikkadavu, Kozhikode and Chettuva as a part of dispersing the backwater based activities to Malabar area. Valiyaparamba in Kasaragod district is being developed as a major backwater centre. Studies have been undertaken by NATPAC on the development of basic infrastructure along the potential cruise route in Malabar.

✓ Development of Kovalam–Kollam waterway for houseboat operation
  Detailed study has been carried out through NATPAC for the development of Kovalam – Kollam waterway for houseboat operation.

- Development of budget accommodation facilities at tourist/pilgrim centres
  The Department of Tourism has constructed beach resorts in emerging destinations like Varkala, Kappad, Paravoor and Athirappally. The Department has also completed the construction of Yathri Nivases at Alappuzha, Kochi, Malayattoor, Peerumade, Changanassery and Kozhikode during the period.

- Tourist reception centres at major tourist centres
  The Department has completed the construction of tourist reception centers at Kovalam, Varkala railway station and international airport, Nedumbassery.

- Thrust on development of tourism roads
  The development of major tourism roads such as Thekkady – Munnar road, Thekkady – Kumily road, tourism roads in Wayanad and Kollam districts are being taken up.

- Illumination of historic buildings
  The illumination of Vadakkunnatha temple, Thrissur and the Secretariat building, Thiruvananthapuram has been undertaken by the Department of
Tourism. A project has also been sanctioned for light and sound at Kanakakkunnu Palace.

- Sooryakanthi Exhibition ground at Kanakakkunnu
  As an important mile stone in improving the facilities in the capital city, Thiruvananthapuram, the Department has taken up the construction of Sooryakanthi Exhibition ground at Kanakakkunnu Palace premises with an idea of converting it as a world class landscaped garden. The Nishagandhi auditorium in the Kanakakkunnu Palace premises is the venue of the Nishagandhi Dance Festival, which has become a major event in the national cultural calendar and is major attraction for the foreign tourists interested in India’s cultural heritage.

- Beautification of Munnar
  Works have been initiated to beautify Munnar town through Public Works Department

- Use of potential dam sites for tourism
  Works have been started for using the potential dam sites such as Pazhassi, Kannur, and Malampuzha and Neyyar dams as a part of tourism promotion.

- Construction of Pay and Use Toilets
  The Department of Tourism is constructing pay and use toilets in 8 major KSRTC bus stands, viz. Thiruvananthapuram, Kottarakkara, Kollam, Kottayam, Ernakulam, Thrissur, Guruvayoor and Kannur. Actions have also been initiated to construct toilet blocks through DTPCs and local bodies at all major city tourist centres.

- Large-scale investments in basic infrastructure development
  The Department of Tourism has taken up three major infrastructure projects under Rural Infrastructure Fund of NABARD. As per the Government Order (MS) No. 959/2001/Fin. dated 07-08-2001 sanction was obtained to borrow an additional amount of Rs. 50 crores for implementing projects such as development of water link from Kochi to Nedumbassery, development of road link between Nenmara and Nelliyamopathy, and development of road link between Chalakkudy and Vazhachal.

- Priority to tourism projects in Malabar
Department of Tourism is trying to give priority to the projects in Malabar to tap the vast tourism potential of this virgin area. The following are some of the initiatives in Malabar:
- Beautification of Malampuzha Dam
- Development of Kanhirampuzha Dam
- Development of Kozhikode beach
- Development of Houseboat activities including boat terminal at Chettuva
- Development of Backwater based activities at Parassinikkadavu, Neeleswaram and Valiyaparamba
- Single Window System to clear tourism projects
  Government of Kerala has constituted a State level committee headed by the Chief Secretary for aiding tourism projects and to issue necessary clearance within sixty days to major tourism projects coming up in the State.
- Seaplane services to connect major destinations
  The Department of Tourism has chalked out plans to introduce seaplane service to link major tourism destinations as part of its efforts to improve connectivity between Kovalam, Kumarakom, Munnar and Bekal. The project envisages creating the necessary infrastructure facilities at these four prime tourist destinations. The launching of services would go a long way in solving the issue of connectivity.
- Setting up of artificial reef
  The Department of Tourism plans to set up an artificial reef with the capacity to change the nature of waves on the Eve’s Beach and to make Kovalam a destination for water sports. This is a Rs. 4.05 crore project. Tan seekers arriving from all over the world can look forward to water sports such as surfing, wave riding, scuba diving, snorkeling, boating and water skiing once the reef is set up.

4.2.1.2. CONSERVATION AND REGULATION
- Kerala Tourism (Conservation and Preservation of Areas) Act 2005
  Government Passed the Kerala Tourism (Conservation and Preservation of Areas) Act 2005 on 9th February, 2005. The Act envisages the conservation, preservation and integrated development of ‘Special tourism Zone’ in any area which is identified and declared by the notification of Government in Gazette as Special Tourism Zone. As per the Act, no development activity including construction in Special Tourism
Zone shall be carried except in accordance with such guidelines as may be issued by State Tourism Conservation and Preservation Committee constituted under Section 4 of the Act. As the first phase of the above enactment, Department of Tourism desires to declare Kovalam, Munnar, Kumarakom, and Fort Kochi as Special Tourism Zones.

- **Focus on Conservation of Heritage**
  
  A major project being implemented at Fort Kochi for the conservation and preservation of heritage zone has been partially commissioned. Other projects such as restoration of Hill Palace, Napier Museum, Chennamangalam Synagogue, Pallippuram Kotta, Kottapuram Kotta and landscaping of Cheramanparambu are also being undertaken. A new scheme called Grihasthali has been formulated to assist conservation of private heritage buildings.

- **Stress on sustainable development of tourism centres**
  
  With the objective of ensuring quality tourism and sustainable development of tourist destinations, the Department of Tourism focuses on conservation of ecology to reduce the negative impact of tourism on environment. Carrying capacity studies of the fragile tourist destinations such as Kumarakom and Munnar have been taken up through the centre for Earth Science of Studies. The destination level master plan for Kovalam, Kumarakom, Fort Kochi and Kannur are being prepared to streamline the development of destinations in a planned way.

- **Classification systems for Houseboats**
  
  The number of houseboats in the backwaters of Kerala have proliferated and reached about 200 numbers during the last few years. There was no system to control the quality of the house boats such as quality of materials of construction, facilities including size of rooms, quality of furniture, quality of services or the safety and security measures offered by the house boat operators. This had given freedom to the operators to use this product in their own way with the only intention of maximizing the profit. Considering the sustainability of this unique tourism product and the fragile backwater environment, Department of Tourism has brought out a new scheme for the classification of houseboats to grade the boats into Gold and Silver categories based on the quality of facilities and services offered by them.

- **Classification of Ayurveda Centres**
The elevation of ‘Ayurveda’ as a USP of Kerala Tourism has brought a substantial increase in the Ayurveda massage centres in and around all the major tourist destinations in the State. Most of these operate according to their own terms and often flout safety and health regulations. To preclude any such misuse and maintain a uniformity of practice, Government of Kerala has brought out a scheme for the Approval of Ayurveda Centres vide G.O. (MS) 140/98/GAD dated 23-03-1998. According to this order, a uniform approval is given to all the centres fulfilling the conditions prescribed, irrespective of its class in quality. It is now felt that classifications of the centres are necessary to differentiate in the level of quality of facilities and services provided in the approved Ayurveda centres and Department of Tourism has brought out a new scheme for the classification of Ayurveda Centres into Green Leaf and Olive Leaf categories based on the qualities in facilities and services.7

4.2.1.3. TOURISM PROMOTION AND MARKETING

During the Ninth Plan, the Department of Tourism concentrated more on tourism promotion and publicity. From a mere Rs. 150 lakhs for tourism promotion and publicity in 1995-96, the allocation was increased to Rs. 700 lakhs in 2001-02.6

Kerala tourism has been participating in all the international and domestic tourism trade fairs along with the private sector. As part of its promotional efforts, Kerala Tourism has participated in the following major international fairs:

- PATA Annual Conference
- PATA Travel Mart-05, Malaysia
- China International Travel Mart, China
- ITB Berlin, WTM London and ATM Dubai
- Sri Lanka Travel Mart-05
- BIT-06, Milan
- FITUR-06, Spain

The State is in the process of preparing market-specific and time-specific marketing campaigns. To reduce seasonality in tourist arrivals, major “Monsoon and Ayurveda Campaign” has been launched in the Gulf region. The Department of Tourism organized road shows at major cities in the country to tap new targeted markets. New package with Indian Airlines has been launched to promote new tourism package to the State. A new Rail Tourism package has been launched for tourists visiting Kerala by allotting an air conditioned coach in Mumbai - Thiruvananthapuram sector.
Traditional festivals of Kerala are also being promoted in the State. The following are some of the major festivals and fairs conducted by the Department:

- Kerala Travel Mart
- India International Boat Show
- Mystique of Malabar
- Nishagandhi Dance and Music Festival
- Onam week celebrations
- Flavour Food Festival

Tourism Kiosk has been installed at three international airports in Kerala viz., Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode. ‘Touch Screen Information Kiosk’, the audio visual database developed by the Department of Tourism provides information on the physical and cultural landscape of Kerala. The system serves as a reliable guide and a confirmation point before a visitor starts exploring ‘God’s Own Country’. All the information centres and the offices of the Department have been computerized to make the dissemination of information fast and effective. The Department has also developed a comprehensive database. Recently the Department has switched on to the television media also for promotion. The advertisement clips developed by the best professionals in the area have been telecast in the major international television channels.

The following paragraphs highlight some of the comprehensive initiatives enunciated by the Department of Tourism, Kerala in recent times:

- **Vazhiyoram**
  
  Vazhiyoram, the wayside facility with minimum standardized facilities is proposed to be set up along all the major roads/waterways in the State through private sector initiatives. This project will be implemented in phases after prioritizing the roads/waterways with respect to their importance. Approval to function the unit will be given by a committee after inspection.

- **Clean Destination Programme**
  
  Department of Tourism has introduced a scheme called ‘Clean Destination Programme’ for upgrading the quality of destination by upkeeping them in clean and hygiene conditions. ‘Kudumbashree’ is entrusted as the executing agency of this campaign. Kudumbasrees are self help groups functioning all over the State with Government support on operations and organizational matters.

- **Town Squares as Tourism Nodes**
Department of Tourism recently decided to formulate a new scheme for the development of Town Squares at important centres which act as tourism nodes where sufficient open space is available to create quality facilities such as public toilets, parking area, large open space for relaxing, meeting space, information and facilitation centres within tourism important urban nodes.

- **Pilgrim Facilitation Centres**
  The Department of Tourism decided to formulate a new scheme for the development of Pilgrim Facilitation Centres at important pilgrim centres in association with the temple/church/mosque authorities in charge of the pilgrim centre, to promote the unique cultural heritage of Kerala.

- **My Village, Tourism Destination Village**
  In partnership with Local Self Governments, this new project is to ensure tourist friendly environment in the villages.

- **Alappuzha to be back as the ‘Venice of the East’**
  The Department of Tourism has decided to develop Alappuzha as a major tourist destination. Various projects are being taken up for the development of backwaters of Alappuzha, cleaning up of various canals in the district etc. Government of India has sanctioned the following projects at Alappuzha during 2005-06:
  - Rejuvenation of heritage canal
  - Development of Backwater Tourism Complex, Alappuzha
  - Backwater-front walkway, Punnamada
  - Beach beautification

- **Registration of Tourism Societies**
  Government have conferred as per the G.O. (P) No. 11/05/GAD dated 5-01-2005 the powers of Registrar of Co-operative Societies to Director of Tourism in respect of all Tourism and Hospitality Co-operatives Societies.

- **Restructuring of DTPCs**
  The District Tourism Promotion Councils are restructured so as to enable them to undertake new responsibilities such as implementation of district level tourism projects, coordination of various tourism projects being implemented by the Department of Tourism, implementation of Tourism Awareness Programmes etc.

- **India’s First International Boat Show**
  Kerala tourism organized India International Boat Show (IIBS), the country’s first international boat show from 26 to 28, September, 2003 in Kochi in association with the Government of India and the National
Institute of Water sports, Goa. This was partnered by the Southern Naval Command, Cochin Port Trust, Coast Guard, Cochin Shipyard and Kerala State Inland Navigation Corporation Ltd. The show was participated by 75 boat and marine equipment manufacturers and dealers from all over India.

➤ India’s First Gold Festival
Modelled after the Dubai Shopping Festival, the Department of Tourism and the All Kerala Gold and Silver Merchants Association in association with the World Gold Council organized the "Kerala Gold Fest – Swarnam 2003" in November, 2003

➤ Mystique of Malabar
A three day event termed ‘Mystique of Malabar 2003’ was held from August 14 to 16, 2003 in Kozhikode to highlight the vast tourism potential of Malabar region.

➤ Kerala Travel Mart 2002
Held for the second time, Kerala Travel Mart 2002, India’s premier international travel mart, witnessed the participation of trade from new markets like USA, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Korea, Malaysia, Mauritius, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Sweden.

➤ Initiatives in Promoting South India
A South Indian ministers’ conference was conducted by the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala in January, 2002 in Kovalam. Tourism ministers, Secretaries and Directors of Tourism and Managing Directors of State Transport Corporation of all the South Indian States participated in the conference.

➤ International Television Campaign
Kerala tourism’s campaign is now featured in CNN, BBC and Discovery Channels. Kerala is the first Indian destination to be featured in the Discovery Channel. Kerala was also the first Indian destination to be featured in CNN’s Sight and Sounds infocommercial programme, which was telecast in Europe, Asia and Asia Pacific beams.

➤ Dubai Shopping Festival 2004
Kerala was the Theme State at the Indian pavilion at the world’s largest shopping festival in Dubai. Tourism, culture, handicrafts and the Islamic heritage of the State were the major highlights of Kerala presence.

➤ Toll Free Phone Service
The exclusive Kerala tourism toll free phone number 1600-444-747 has been widely promoted through brochures/flyers, television campaigns and print advertisements.

- **New International Tourism Marts**
  As part of its promotional efforts, Kerala tourism entered new markets and participated in new international trade fairs. These include OTDYKH Leisure, Russia, China International Tour Mart, PATA Travel Mart, Singapore, and Colombo Travel Mart.

- **Road Shows**
  To market Kerala to a wide range of domestic audience, road shows are being held in new destinations in India, identified as potential markets. The first set of road shows were held in Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai and the second set were held in Goa, Jaipur, Surat, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Pune, Kolkata. Sadya, Kerala food festival and God's Own Moments, a photo exhibition on Kerala were part of the Bangalore Road Show.

- **Holistic Health Village**
  To market Kerala as a unique health destination, the Department has initiated steps for setting up a holistic health village on a 25-acre plot assigned by the Government from the Orange and Vegetable Farm at Nelliampathy Hills for the purpose.

- **Sarovaram Project**
  Sarovaram Project (earlier known as the Dream City) is viewed as a cornerstone in the development of ecotourism in Malabar region. Recently, the Department of Tourism has initiated the implementation of the first phase of the project. The project when completed is expected to be a showpiece in ecotourism with the deepening of the wetlands, conservation of the bird habitats in the vast expanse of the mangrove forests and gardens for relaxation.

- **Responsible Tourism**
  The Department of Tourism has decided to implement Responsible Tourism practices in four destinations in the State on a pilot basis. Wayanad in Malabar is one of the destinations, the other destinations being Kovalam, Kumarakom and Thekkady.

### 4.2.1.3.1. Website on Kerala Tourism

In the present era of Information Technology (IT), the Department of Tourism too seized the opportunity to make use of the best in IT to highlight its initiatives made in various tourism sectors as well as its inherent potentials as
of the premier destinations in the country. The name of the official web site of the Department of Tourism is www.keralatourism.org. It is now one of the most sought after gateways to Kerala tourism, prompting more foreign tourists to visit India. The Kerala Tourism website bagged the prestigious Award of Excellence for the years 2001 and 2004 instituted by the Government of India, for the most innovative use of Information Technology /Best Tourism Portal. The following are the key features of the website:

- The website is available in English and other international languages, viz., French and German
- A monthly newsletter sent to over 50,000 subscribers worldwide carries all major and minor developments and events relating to tourism in Kerala.
- One can access the GIS Map of Kerala in the website, which gives spatial data with regard to 300 tourist locations in Kerala. This map has links to various sections in the Kerala tourism website.
- The online reservation system available on the website supplies information on categories of hotels, resorts and types of accommodation available to choose and to make reservations online.
- The facility of message board in the website enables visitors to post queries on services and guidance related to Kerala tourism. Tourism service providers can respond to these queries, which would be helpful to those interested in visiting Kerala.

4.2.1.3.2. Experience-based Campaign

Recently the Department of Tourism has launched a new campaign projecting Kerala as an "experience that will totally transform life of a traveller" and how "God's Own Country works on you" as a part of the focus on responsible tourism. This campaign focuses on how the State reaches out to visitors and transforms their lives. Five stories of visitors whose lives have been transformed after holidaying in the State figure in the campaign. A message board has been created on the home page of the website of Kerala Tourism so that visitors can write about their personal experience.

4.2.1.3.3. Multimedia Titles

Recently, the Department of Tourism has produced a host of CD-ROMs/VCDs/DVDs with an objective of disseminating authentic, comprehensive and up-to-date information on Kerala tourism. These titles are given in the form of the following table (Table IV.1).
### Table IV.1
MULTIMEDIA TITLES DEVELOPED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Nature of CD</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kerala–The Green Symphony</td>
<td>Interactive CD CD ROM in English, German, French and Japanese languages</td>
<td>A mini encyclopedia of 'God's Own Country'. Quite popular as a tourist and promotional aid for India, especially for Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ayurveda – The Mantra of Nirmaya</td>
<td>Interactive CD. CD ROM in English and German languages</td>
<td>Basic and essential information about Ayurveda and its various therapeutic regimens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Panchakarma – Ayurveda's Mantra of Rejuvenation</td>
<td>Video CD in English, German, Japanese, Hindi, Italian and Portuguese languages</td>
<td>Explains about 27 treatment methods followed in anchakarma like oil massage, dhara, pizhichil, swedam, vasti, nasyam etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Where The Season Never Ends: Malabar Mystique</td>
<td>Video CD/DVD</td>
<td>Highlights the geographical wonder of Malabar, a region with untapped tourism potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sculpting Time, sculpting colours</td>
<td>Video CD/DVD</td>
<td>Features spectacular and elegant art forms of Kerala like Koodiyattam, Kathakali, Mohiniyattam etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rhythms of Kerala</td>
<td>Video CD</td>
<td>Explores traditional instruments of Kerala that are used on different occasions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sailing Beyond Dreams</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>Features some of the breathtaking destinations of Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kalarippayattu - Unique Martial Art of Kerala</td>
<td>VCD/DVD</td>
<td>Portrays Kerala's renowned martial art form – Kalarippayattu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Racing the Waves</td>
<td>VCD/DVD</td>
<td>Feature four important boat races of Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Return With A Glow</td>
<td>8 minute movie – English, French and German languages</td>
<td>Dispels wrong notions about Ayurveda and also highlights Kerala as the best place of experiencing Ayurvedic rejuvenation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The Rhapsody of Rain</td>
<td>8 minute movie in betacam format converted into VHS, VCD/DVD – English, French and German</td>
<td>Features the weather phenomenon – Monsoon in Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Onam</td>
<td>Interactive CD. CD ROM</td>
<td>Highlights the tradition and customs related to Onam. Also collection of 40 odd songs relating to Onam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Training Centres of Kerala</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>Contains an exhaustive list of training centres located in different parts of Kerala – Kerala Kalamandalam (the seat of performing art forms in Kerala), the rustic kalaris of CVN Kalari, the Vastu Vidya Gurukulam at Aranmula and Kottakkal Arya Vaidaya Sala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Kathakali</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>An authentic reference tool to understand Kathakali and its genesis, history, evolution and performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Koodiyattom</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>Features the centuries old art form of Kerala, Koodiyattam which has been acknowledged by UNESCO as one of the masterpieces of oral and intangible heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Nature’s Myriad Blooms</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>Portrays some of the best wild life sanctuaries in Kerala and mesmerizing hill stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Beaches and Backwaters of Kerala</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>Unravels the placid and tranquil backwater stretches of Kerala and its immaculate beaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Festivals and Pilgrim Centres of Kerala</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>This CD is full of colours and sounds unique to Kerala and contains a host of pilgrim centres some of which are well known in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Tours and Travel</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>Comprehensive visual directory on the hospitality of services and traditional health practices of Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Heritage Tours</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>Portrays the leading heritages in different parts of the State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Cuisines of Kerala</td>
<td>Interactive CD</td>
<td>Features 101 delectable culinary specialties of Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Expressions</td>
<td>A collection of 7 CD ROMS and 3 VCDs</td>
<td>Features some of the artistic excellence, cultural marvels and natural splendour of Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>GIS map of Kerala</td>
<td>CD ROM</td>
<td>Gives spatial data pertaining to about 300 tourism locations in Kerala</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2. Encouragement to the private sector through incentives

Nowadays the Department is giving stress on public – private partnership in promotion. The promotional activities are being undertaken with continuous interaction with stakeholders in tourism. The Department of Tourism has decided to float joint venture companies with private sector participation for implementing three projects for the promotion of health and spiritual tourism and to cater to the demand of trained personnel for tourism and hospitality industry. The development of an Ayurvedic Health Resort and Herbal Garden at Wagamon, an International Hospitality Management Institute at Alappuzha and a Holistic Health Care Resort and Organic and Spice Garden at Nelliampathy are the three projects. The projects have been chalked out on the basis of the suggestions made in the address to Kerala Assembly by the former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for a mission on “Tourism, including General, Spiritual, Health and Science” for the sustainable development of the State.

As a part of encouraging private sector investments in the State, the concessions and incentives announced for tourism projects include investment subsidies, electricity tariff concession, technical guidance, marketing assistance, publicity through Government publications, and help in availing loans.

4.2.3. Tourism Vision 2025

Government of Kerala has published it Draft Tourism Vision 2025. This is intended to serve as a guiding force which will provide a clear vision and direction for optimal use of the tourism potential of the State in a sustainable manner. The Vision envisages increase of earnings at 10 percent per annum and generation of employment opportunities at 10,000 persons per year and also an annual rate of growth of 7 percent in foreign tourist arrivals and 9 percent in domestic tourist arrivals. The main focus areas include:

- Development of infrastructure,
- Quality assurance through classification and monitoring,
- Conservation of heritage sites, development of tourism oriented infrastructure,
- Promotion of souvenir industry, and
- Developments of specific tourism products like eco-tourism, ethnic cuisine and Ayurveda, tourists’ security and so on.
4.3. KERALA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (KTDC)

Among the various agencies involved in the development of tourism in the State, the Department of Tourism plays a significant role. The functions of the Department of Tourism are service oriented and not profit motivated. The Department of Tourism is the apex body in the State to monitor, supervise and regulate the various promotion activities of tourism in Kerala. In addition to this service sector, Government of Kerala promoted an industrial unit to earn profit by exploiting the tourism potentials of the State. Kerala Tourism and Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited was incorporated on 26th December, 1965 which commenced its business on 1st April, 1966. Later on, the Corporation was renamed as Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) on 15th July, 1970. The Corporation was converted into a deemed public limited company from 1st July, 1984 under Section 43 A of the Companies Act, 1956.

KTDC is Kerala’s largest tourism service provider. It owns and operates largest hotel chains in Kerala which includes 16 hotels (consisting of 7 high end hotels and 9 budget hotels), 7 yathrinivases, 12 motels, 4 restaurants, 28 beer parlours, bars, 4 boat clubs, 2 pilgrim facilitations centres, souvenir shops etc. It offers on surpassing scale and quality almost all tourist packages and products such as accommodation, food, transport, shopping, entertainments, information and conducted tours. The Corporation offers a range of services including package tours, ayurvedic rejuvenation packages and customized tours. However, the role of KTDC is mostly confined to the Southern part of Kerala.

4.3.1. Accommodation Units

As mentioned above, KTDC runs high end star hotels, budget hotels and economy hotels known as Yathri Nivases and motels in different parts of the State. All star hotels of the Corporation have MICE facilities that make it possible to combine business with pleasure. Details of various high end accommodation units of KTDC are given in Table IV.2.
Table IV.2
DETAILS OF ACCOMMODATION UNITS OF KTDC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name and Destination</th>
<th>Nature of the Unit</th>
<th>Major Highlights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mascot Hotel, Thiruvananthapuram</td>
<td>Business Hotel</td>
<td>64 rooms, board rooms, coffee shop, restaurant, banquet and conference halls, bar, swimming pool, ayurvedic centre, health club, travel assistance, car hire, laundry, doctor on call etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hotel Samudra, Kovalam</td>
<td>Beach Resort</td>
<td>62 deluxe rooms, 2 suites with sea facing balconies, restaurant, coffee shop, beer parlour, ayurvedic centre, swimming pool, pool side bar, in-house movies, handicrafts emporium, travel assistance etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Waterscapes, Kumarakom</td>
<td>Backwater Resort</td>
<td>40 water front cottages, swimming pool, restaurant, beer parlour, ayurvedic centres, conference hall, boating, backwater tours, sight seeing trips, amphitheatre etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bolgatty Palace, Kochi</td>
<td>Deluxe Island Heritage Resort</td>
<td>4 palace suites, 16 suites, 6 independent cottages, swimming pool, conference hall, golf course, horse riding, boating and backwater tours, ayurvedic centres, restaurant, beer parlour, Kathakali performance etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Tea County, Munnar</td>
<td>Hill Resort</td>
<td>43 rooms, health club, conference hall, board room, ayurvedic body toning massage parlour, restaurant with dancing floor, indoor games, para-gliding and trekking arrangements etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aranya Nivas, Thekkady</td>
<td>Wild Life Resort</td>
<td>30 rooms, suites, swimming pool, restaurant, beer parlour, handicrafts emporium, inhouse movies etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lake Palace, Thekkady</td>
<td>Deluxe Wild Life Heritage</td>
<td>6 palatial deluxe rooms, in-house movies, restaurant, car hire, laundry, doctor on call etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (2006), Thiruvananthapuram.
The financial performance of KTDC for the year 2005-06 is given in Appendix V.

4.3.2. Helicopter Tourism

This is also known as heli-tourism. It involves flying tourists in a helicopter to the tourist spots of the State. The heli-tourism product is a new initiative to enable tourists to travel from one destination to another with the double benefit of cutting down on travel time while enjoying a bird’s eye-view of the unique beauty of the State. Recently KTDC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Deccan Aviation to commence helicopter services linking major tourist destinations in Kerala.

The Corporation has launched a seven nights/eight days package connecting Kovalam, Kumarakom, Thekkady, Munnar, Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram to begin the service. The KTDC's premium properties viz. Hotel Samudra, Kovalam, Waterscapes and Houseboat, Kumarakom, Lake Palace, Thekkady, Tea County, Munnar, and Bolgatty Palace, Kochi figure in the package. The package costs Rs. 5 lakhs, which includes helicopter charges, local transport, food and accommodation for five persons. The 30-minute “bird’s eye-view” package that covers beach, backwater, and hill station for five people costs Rs. 35000.

4.3.3. Conducted Tours

Conducted tours are aimed at sightseeing on a scheduled basis. Unlike conducted tours in important tourism destination in other states, the tours conducted by KTDC are running on heavy losses. According to tourists, the tours of KTDC are not attractive to them. They are of the opinion that the Corporation does not take interest to popularize the tour programmes. A number of tour programmes which had been operated by KTDC were cancelled for the reason that they were not found to be commercially viable. As in the case of accommodation units of KTDC which are highly concentrated in the southern parts of Kerala, it does not operate any conducted tour in any part of Malabar.

4.4. TOURIST RESORTS (KERALA) LIMITED

TRKL is a subsidiary of the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation. It has been declared by the Government as the nodal agency for promoting private sector investment in the tourism sector in the State. The Company has established two joint sector companies - Taj Kerala Hotels and Resorts Limited (TKRL) and Oberoi Kerala Hotels and Resorts Limited (OKHRL) in association with Taj and Oberoi groups of hotels. Under the Taj Kerala Hotels and Resorts, the company has the following properties:
1. Taj Residency, Marine Drive, Ernakulam
2. Taj Garden Retreat, Kumarakom
3. Taj Garden Retreat, Varkala
4. Taj Garden Retreat, Thekkady

The company has so far invested an amount of Rs. 3694 lakhs as State share and equity of Taj Group was Rs. 1100 lakhs. The total investment in the joint sector by the Company is Rs. 16720 lakhs as on 31-03-2006.

4.4.1. Land Bank Project

Availability of adequate land at the required stations is found to be exceedingly difficult, particularly to the private sector entrepreneurs in Kerala. This is because of small areas of land are held by various persons resulting in difficulties in the negotiated purchase of land of a reasonable extent suitable for tourism projects especially by the private entrepreneurs. Realising this, the TRKL decided to identify the areas where development of tourism projects are desirable and to acquire land for integrated development of the area. As per this project, after acquisition of land the same would be handed over to prospective entrepreneurs on outright sale or lease or transfer to joint venture for judicious development of tourism projects in those areas. Land Bank project has been approved by Government of Kerala under which large extent of land would be acquired at prospective tourism destinations for resort development in the private or joint sector.

Recently the State government has decided to merge Bekal Resorts Development Corporation (BRDC) and Tourist Resorts Kerala Ltd (TRKL) with the objective of capitalizing the high level of synergy between the two organisations. Both companies work in the area of resort development. BRDC has built up an excellent resource base and has a number of skilled personnel on its staff, while TRKL has entered into partnerships with the Taj and Oberoi hotel groups. It is expected that the merged entity would make it possible for Kerala Tourism to leverage the joint expertise of the two companies.

4.5. BEKAL RESORTS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

With the intention of transforming Bekal fort into international tourism destination, the Government formed Bekal Tourism Development Corporation (BRDC) in 1995. The Corporation was formed with the Chief Secretary to Government of Kerala as Chairman, senior Government officials as Directors and Managing Director to develop Bekal as an international standard ‘Beach Tourist Destination’. BRDC focuses on planned, environment-friendly and ecologically viable methods of development. The company concentrates on setting up of a
comprehensive tourism infrastructure, at the same time ensuring that the development is beneficial to the local community.\textsuperscript{12} Besides identifying the potential resort sites, BRDC’s persuasive role includes strengthening the existing infrastructure i.e. roads, power supply, sanitation, lighting, water supply etc. inviting investors and promoters, devising strategies for marketing Bekal as a planned tourism destination as well as coordinating developments at all stages. BRDC will also be responsible for the speedy implementation of the project.

It is in Chemmanad, Udma, Pallikkara and Ajanur Panchayats that the Bekal tourism project is implemented. At present the corporation is engaged in arranging basic facilities for the project.

The Bekal Project is planned, orchestrated and coordinated by BRDC observing specific parameters on the carrying capacity of the region, sustainable limits, architectural guidelines, environmental safeguards and coastal regulations. The Corporation also tries to ensure that Bekal retains its natural vegetation and pristine charm, thus keeping in line with its policy of conserving nature and promoting tourism.

4.5.1. Objectives

In a larger perspective, besides promoting the Bekal Project, BRDC acts as the premier resource as well as development agency for tourism in Malabar. The following are the main objectives of BRDC:

- To organise scientific studies and surveys for the balanced and planned development of the destination,
- To facilitate tourism development of the area by setting up necessary infrastructure facilities like water and power supply, road, sanitation and solid waste disposal,
- To develop and improve existing as well as new tourist attractions in and around the area, and
- To impart technical and other guidance to all concerned, for tourism and related development in Bekal as well as Malabar.

4.5.2. Bekal

Kasaragod, the northern district of Malabar, is a land of forts. Large number of forts, big and small, like Bekal, Chandragiri, Hosdurg, Kumbala etc. reveals the historical importance of this land. Bekal, situated on the seashore of Pallikara village, is an important place of tourist interest in the district. It lies 12 kilometers south of Kasaragod town.
The Bekal fort, which is of great historical and archaeological interest is the largest and best preserved of its kind in the district and the land on which it is situated, runs into the sea with fine bay towards the south. The Fort stands amidst the roaming but heartening music of the seas along with the eternal note of the unending waves, carrying the thrilling memories of a bygone era. The Fort appears to have been built up from the seas since almost three fourth of its exterior is drenched and the waves do the stroke the citadel. The Hanuman temple and the ancient Muslim mosque nearby hold testimony to the age-old religious harmony that prevailed in the area. The zigzag entrance and the trenches around the Fort show the defense strategy connected with the Fort.

This foremost souvenir of the ‘God’s Own Country’ remains undeterred over the ages as a silent witness to centuries of eventful yester years. The Bekal Fort has been a source of attraction for historians, tourists and nature lovers for centuries.

It was usual in older days for every royal palace to be protected by a fort. The Bekal fort might have, therefore, existed even from early days of the Chirakkal Rajas. History and legend are interwoven together in Bekal, particularly regarding its antiquity. Bekal served as an important military station of Tipu Sultan when he led the great military expedition to capture Malabar. The martyrdom of Tipu Sultan who died fighting against the British in 1799 saw the end of Mysorean control and subsequently the Fort came under the East India Company.

During the reign of the Company, Bekal became the headquarters of the newly organized Bekal Taluk of South Canara District in Bombay Presidency. South Canara became a part of the Madras Presidency in 1862 and the Kasaragod Taluk was set up in the place of the Bekal Taluk. Kasaragod became part of Kerala with the State reorganization in 1956. Presently the protection and preservation of Bekal Fort has been entrusted to the Archaeological Survey of India.

4.5.2.1. Bekal: Special Tourism Area

In 1992, the Government of India declared Bekal as a Special Tourism Area. Extremely scenic landscape, extensive beaches, numerous estuaries and backwaters and unspoilt environs qualified Bekal as a potential site for an international standard beach destination. Bekal is described as the most potential beach destination in India as the country has a very few comparable locations that offer the diversity of attractions to be found in Bekal. Yet, unlike most other existing resort destinations which are close to a major urban centre, and thus
already overdeveloped, the Bekal area is still virgin and pristine. The basic thrust
of Bekal Project is sustainable tourism and is considered in terms of the socio-
economic and environmental sustainability.

4.5.2.2. **Bekal Project: India’s First Planned Beach Destination**

In an effort to develop potential beach locations in the country, a survey
was conducted by the Government of India in 1990. The survey identified Bekal
as potential locale for the development of beach resort destination. In 1992, the
Government of India declared Bekal as “Special Tourism Area” for integrated
resort development. Thereafter, the Government of Kerala entrusted a
multidisciplinary team consisting of planners, landscape architects, urban and
transport specialists, structural consultants and tourism leisure industry experts
with the preparation of project blue print for the development of Bekal. The
Bekal Project envisages setting up of an integrated beach destination at Bekal
and also developing social infrastructure in the region. The BRDC conducted
systematic surveys of the region through Centre for Earth Science Studies (CESS)
and has already taken over 178 hectares of land, of which 24 hectares are set
apart for resort centres and 75 hectares for housing sites. Programmes like
water supply, total sanitation, waste incineration, road construction and
installation of street lights are being implemented in the project area.

4.5.2.3. **Techno-economic feasibility studies on the region**

The following broad issues were examined during the studies, in order to
sustain the destination:

- **Environmental issues**: An appraisal of the environment, natural forces and
  ecology of the region and assessment of the impact of tourism on these.
- **Infrastructure**: Reconnaissance, inventory preparation and assessment of the
  existing infrastructure.
- **Socio-cultural issues**: Appraisal of cultural background and lifestyle, economic
  status, possibility of local participation, their relocation implications, measure
  to sustain socio-economic development.
- **Market potential and cost benefit**: Assessment of market potential of the
  region, possible economic benefits to the region, development costs, fund
  sourcing and preparation of viable investment plan.

4.5.2.4. **Development Strategy**

While formulating the development strategy for BRDC, it is observed that
the planners were very particular to consider the following:

- Minimize loss of existing agricultural land and to strengthen the resource
base for traditional sectors like fishing and agriculture.

- Provide employment to the locals.
- Protect the bio-diversity of the area, and safeguard the interests of Fishermen and farmers.
- Keep a check on the commercialization of cultural values and art forms.

4.5.2.5. Basic Infrastructure

The basic infrastructure of the land includes power, water supply, communication, road networks, street lighting, public amenities and tourist attraction facilities.

Some of the works completed include:

- Development of 19 Panchayat roads has been completed and 5 more roads are progressing.
- Extension of HT line upto resort site is complete for 2 sites.
- Commissioned various techno-economic feasibility studies.
- Action taken to put up a level cross at Chettukund.
- A 7 mld water supply scheme estimated to cost Rs. 12 crores is under implementation on turnkey basis.
- A pilot scheme for solid waste disposal scheme in association with Panchayat is nearing completion.

4.5.2.6. Tourism Amenities/Facilities

To offer varied experience to tourists within a short distance and time, attractive tourist spots have been developed nearby. Such facilities include:

- Thanal Vishrama Kendram (tourist facility near Bekal Fort)
- Beautification of the surrounding areas of the Bekal Fort
- Seaside pathway along the Bekal Fort
- Erection of display and signboards in Kasaragod district
- Public beach at Pallikkara near Bekal Fort
- Aqua Park and Chandragiri Boat Club
- House boating cruise in Tejaswini backwaters in Valiyaparamba
- Backwater Tourism - Houseboat
- Children's parks at Bekal Fort and Thanal Vishrama Kendram
- Trekking and adventure tourism

4.5.2.7. Future activities planned

- Heritage tourism projects for conservation and development of 8 forts around Bekal
- Development of Valiyaparamba as a Backwater destination of Malabar
- Development of Bekal Fort Beach
- Setting up of Eco lodges and other tourism products
- International standard water sports centre
- Theme Parks
- Augmenting facilities for tourists visiting Bekal

4.6. THE DISTRICT TOURISM PROMOTION COUNCILS (DTPCs)

Out of the several measures taken by the State government to promote and develop tourism, setting up of District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPCs) in all districts in the State was an important milestone. The main objectives behind the formation of these DTPCs were to have a decentralised approach to tourism and thereby mobilising local initiative and resources for tourism development. Other objectives of this agency include dissemination of tourist information, creation of a favourable image for the tourist product and providing basic tourist facilities within the districts. Rather than running parallel to the state Tourism Department or the State Tourism Development Corporation they are aimed at coordinating the activities that are required for the development of less known tourist centres in the district. The setting up of these councils has led to enhanced focus on tourism in all districts in the State.

4.6.1. Objects

In every district, DTPC is established for the purpose of achieving the following objectives:

- To undertake activities for the promotion of domestic and international tourism in and from the district.
- To develop and create infrastructure needed for the promotion of tourism in the district.
- To plan, develop, acquire, take over and construct suitable buildings and other facilities for the tourist.
- To undertake conducted tours to the tourist destinations within the district.
- To organise and undertake tours outside the district and anywhere in the world.
- To produce the required literature, publicity and information materials and other audio-visual aids in propagating tourism.

4.6.1.2. Structure of DTPC

The DTPCs are registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 with District Collector as Chairman and selected people representatives and officials as
members. As the head of the entire administrative machinery at the District level, there are many advantages of the District Collector being the Chairperson of DTPC. However, there is a limitation that, Collector being in such a position, often finds less or little time amidst his busy schedules, to do some justice to the needs of DTPC.

**Figure IV.1**

**STRUCTURE OF DTPC**

*Diagram showing the structure of DTPC with District Collector as Chairperson, Executive Committee, Member Secretary, Governing Body, and Staff members.*

Staff members such as Information Assistant, Receptionist cum Typist, Head Clerk etc. appointed on contract basis by each DTPC. In addition, there are staff members-operators-technicians on daily wages associated to specific projects of DTPC.

4.6.1.3. Membership

The membership of the Council is restricted to the following three types of members:

1. Institutional Membership
2. Patron Membership
3. Individual Memberships.

4.6.1.4. Governing Body

The Governing Body of a typical DTPC consists of the following members:

District Collector-Chairman (Ex-Officio)
District Panchayat President.
District officers of various Department of the Government (not exceeding 10).
Two Block Panchayat Presidents nominated by the Government.
All M.L.A.s and M.P.s
Five Grama Panchayat Presidents nominated by the Government.
Five persons eminent in the field of tourism nominated by the Government.
Director, Department of Tourism or his representative.

The members of DTPC are nominated by the Government of Kerala normally for a period of three years.

4.6.1.5. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Council consists of the following:

- District Collector –Chairman (Ex-officio).
- District Panchayat President.
- One M.P in the District nominated by the Government.
- One M.L.A.
- It also consists of four eminent persons in the field of tourism, nominated by the Government from the Governing Body.

The Member Secretary is the de facto operating officer of DTPC. He is responsible for all activities of the DTPC on tourism planning, projects, coordination and promotion and so on. He interacts with the Collector, Executive Committee and Governing Committee on one side and with Tourism Department (particularly the Assistant Planning Officer and the Planning Officer) on the other. The member secretary is appointed on deputation from any department of the State Government, and usually for a period of three years. In that sense, other than the Collector, the member secretary is the only Government Official in DTPC. However, it may be noted that the member secretary of DTPC is not an officer of the Tourism Department.

The sub staff comprises of positions such as information Assistant, Receptionist cum Typist, Head Clerk etc. They are appointed on contract by each DTPC. In addition to them, there are also staff members-operators-technicians on daily wages, who are associated with specific projects of the DTPC.

4.7. THENMALA ECO-TOURISM PROMOTION SOCIETY (TEPS)

Thenmala is a small village at the foothills of Western Ghats. This place is located about 72 kilometers from Thiruvananthapuram city. This village is home to India’s first planned eco-tourism destination. Thenmala Eco-Tourism Promotion Society (TEPS), a State Government organisation registered under the Travancore – Cochin Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies Act 1955, was formed to promote ecotourism activities at Thenmala and its surrounding areas with the co-operation of Forest, Irrigation and Tourism departments. The foundation stone of the project was laid in December, 1999 and the first phase of the project was commissioned in January, 2001.

In local parlance ‘Then’ means honey and ‘Mala’ means hillock and hence Thenmala means Honey Hills. The honey collected from Thenmala forest region is
of good quality and of high medicinal value because of the unique floristic composition of the forests. The nearby Shenduruni, which was declared as a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1982 is the most important eco-tourism resource. The objectives of this project are:

1. To develop Thenmala and its surroundings as a major tourism destination;
2. To promote eco-tourism on the basis of sound principles of ecological sustainability in the surrounding areas of Thenmala; and
3. To have a well planned tourism destination with emphasis on sustainable tourism development so as to become a model for other destination development programmes.

The Thenmala Project envisages three components, viz., eco friendly general tourism, eco tourism and pilgrimage tourism. Eco friendly general tourism area is divided into three zones, viz., the culture zone, the leisure zone and the adventure zone. This is intended to introduce the concept of eco tourism to the general tourists and create awareness among them. The amphitheatre and musical fountain are the main attractions at the culture zone. The leisure zone caters to the requirements of those who want to explore the intrinsic qualities of the zone. The theme of the leisure zone is ‘Man and Nature’. The sculpture garden endeavours to depict the relationship of man and his culture with nature in the serene backdrop of a green forest, i.e., unpolluted nature – synchronizing with the Thenmala Forest Range. The elevated walkway is the main attraction of the adventure zone. This wooden bridge over the treetops and through the canopy allows the visitor to have the feel of the wilderness.

The ecotourism segment has soft trekking and night camps for one to three days – conducted by National Adventure Foundation. Guided trekking tours and bird watching tours are also available. A day at the Palaruvi waterfalls is another ‘pure’ ecotourism experience.

The third component eco-pilgrimage tourism aimed at developing eco friendly circuit from Thenmala connecting the three Ayyappa shrines related to famous Sabarimala, i.e. Kulathupuzha, Aryankavu and Achankovil, which fall within the project area. No permanent construction is allowed in these areas.

4.8. KERALA INSTITUTE OF TOURISM AND TRAVEL STUDIES (KITTS)

Tourism today is the world’s largest industry, which is in need of professionals for the promotion and growth of global tourism. It is estimated that one out of every nine jobs in the world will be generated by the travel and tourism industry. Anticipating this demand in the industry, Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS) was established on the World Tourism Day in
1988 by the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala. Since then KITTS has been training over a hundred students every year through its quality programmes that made KITTS its reputation for excellence in the country. It has been set up with a mission to mould tourism and travel professionals of the future. The institute imparts quality education and training to its students and equips them with high skills and expertise in the industry. To achieve this mission, KITTS educate students, management and communication skills necessary to function in this dynamic and changing industry. KITTS monitors changes in the industry and introduces new programmes to go pace with such changes.

KITTS is recognized by the Department of Tourism, Government of India and is also the south regional chapter of Indian Institute of Tourism and Travel Management, (IITTM), Gwallor. The institute is listed in the World Tourism Organisation’s (WTO) world directory of tourism education and training institutions and is a member of TAAI and IATO. KITTS is also a registered British Council attached centre of Cambridge International Examinations. It is also an accredited centre for training by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLa). Recently KITTS has been awarded the ISO 9001:2000 certification.

KITTS has been set up in a beautiful, lush green ten acre campus with a rich sprawling palace in Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram. The Institute has opened its chapters at Malayattoor (Ernakulam), Kozhikode and Thalassery (Kannur). Plans are underway for the Kerala Institute of Hospitality Management Studies (KIHMS) set up by KITTS to operate from the Malayattoor centre and to develop this Institute on an international level providing residential courses related to Hospitality.20 A Short term course (one year) for training masseurs is conducted at this institute. The Thalassery chapter of the KITTS aims to impart studies leading to Certificates in Tour Guiding as also Air Fares and Travel Agency Management. The institute also develops and implements continuous training programmes to the host community to be visitor friendly so as to create a positive mindset to the concept of tourism. KITTS is involved in awareness campaigns in schools and colleges in the State through training programmes for teacher coordinators and student coordinators of Tourism Clubs. The Academic council of KITTS which include individuals from various segments of hospitality industry and general education leads KITTS to achieve its mission.

4.9. CRITICAL ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR

Tourism is basically a private sector activity. The private sector too has a major role in the promotion of tourism in the State. To encourage more private
participation in the development of the industry, the State Government has declared various attractive incentives and subsidies to investors. As per G O (P) No. 224/86/GAD dated 11.07.1986, Amusement Parks, Recreation Centres and Exclusive Handicrafts Emporia approved by the Kerala State Department of Tourism are eligible for financial concessions/incentives.\(^{21}\)

The private sector in Kerala has been able to spread tourism to hitherto virgin areas in the State like Marari, Vythiri, Kalpetta, Mananthavady, Poovar etc. The boutique hotels and resorts of Kerala have also established as a destination for upscale tourists. By preserving and showcasing the unique natural and cultural attractions of Kerala, the tourism trade also contributed to the sustainability of the destination. Non resident Keralites have also identified tourism as a high growth sector area for investment.

The tour operators have also played a key role in the development of tourism in Kerala like Thomas Cook, SITA, TCI, UVI, etc. feature Kerala prominently in their national and international holiday brochures with popular itineraries to Kerala. A number of homebred Tour Operators like Kerala Travels, Great India Tour Company, Pioneer Travels etc. with exhaustive knowledge of the State have also established themselves as niche players in Kerala's tourism industry.

A Joint Task Force focusing on private – public partnership is now working in the State with major actors of the industry as members to act as advisors in the tourism development activities. Amusement Park in Veli, tourism infrastructures at Bekal, development of Pathiramanal, Akkulam, Vagamon etc. are some of the initiatives undertaken through private – public partnership. TRKL is the agency involved in promoting joint ventures in tourism sector.

4.10. CONCLUSION

The present chapter discussed the functioning and role of various agencies involved in tourism promotion and development in Kerala. From the discussion, it became clear that, of the different agencies, the Department of Tourism functions as a catalyst, coordinator and facilitator. Although the Department continues to handle the hospitality function of Government of Kerala, nowadays more focus is given to promotion, planning and development of tourism in the State. No tourism activity can be successful without the active involvement of the private sector in the present financial crisis being faced by the State and so the discussion also formed a brief explanation on the critical role of the private sector in tourism development in the State.
REFERENCES

1. Public Relations Department, Govt. of Kerala, C-DIT, Thiruvananthapuram, 16 March 2006 <http://www.kerala.gov.in/dept_tourism.org.htm>


13. Public Relations Department, Govt. of Kerala, C-DIT, Thiruvananthapuram, keralatourism.org 15 April 2006 <http://kasargod.nic.in/tourism/bekal.htm>


17. Eco-Tourism in Kerala, Department of Public Relations, Government of Kerala, 1999, p. 70.
Tourist map of Malabar