CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry in Kerala plays a significant role in the economic development of the state. It has now emerged as Kerala’s core competency sector. Kerala enjoys its own unique geographical features that have made the state one of the most sought after tourist destinations in the country. The WTTC has rated Kerala as the fastest growing tourism destination in the world. Travel and tourism in Kerala has recorded a remarkable growth in the past few years.

Tourism has much significance for Kerala in the context of unemployment situation in the state. Creation of gainful job avenues for the unemployed is a crucial area of priority for the Government. Increased investment in travel and tourism, it is hoped, will provide a turnaround to the economy of Kerala, which has been showing the signs of stagnated growth for last couple of decades due to the slow pace of industrialisation coupled with the problems in the farming sector.

For a tiny state like Kerala, which faces severe financial stringency, tourism is considered to be a major source of revenue. Statistics reveal that the revenue generated from tourism is increasing year after year. In spite of this fact, it could not be said that the successive governments which came to power from time to time did pay sufficient attention to the promotion of tourism in the state. But a positive change in attitude is discernible on the part of the government nowadays which is definitely a welcome sign. Everyone now understands that certain positive steps are to be taken to solve the lapses in the tourism development in the state. It cannot be disputed that, of late, the government has been following a proactive investment-friendly policy and has come up with a host of incentives and subsidies to promote and popularize tourism in the state. With its impressive list of scenic beauty and a rich heritage and culture, Kerala provides an ideal environment for the investment in diverse areas of tourism.

Among the various agencies of tourism development in Kerala, the Department of Tourism plays a very crucial and significant role. It functions as a catalyst, coordinator and facilitator. Although the Department continues to handle
the hospitality function of the Government of Kerala, increased focus is now being
given to promotion, planning and development of tourism.

Malabar, the northern part of Kerala, is gifted with the best of scenic beauty.
The region offers unique and diverse tourism products that form the perfect setting
for all types of tourists. But, quite surprisingly, Malabar has not been able to attract
tourists, particularly foreign tourists in large numbers. The market share of Malabar
in the total foreign tourist arrivals to Kerala never exceeded more than 6 percent.
However, the region occupies a competitive position in domestic tourism as it
attracts a sizeable number of domestic tourists compared to that of the other
districts outside Malabar region.

As stated already, developing tourism is a viable alternative to strengthen
the economy of Malabar and to get over the stagnated growth in the region mainly
because of the crisis-ridden industrial and farm sectors. The reason for the
backwardness of tourism in Malabar may be attributed to the fact that compared to
the rest of places in Kerala, the region is far behind in providing the various
infrastructure facilities, amenities and support services to the visiting tourists. During
the last few years, though many luxurious resorts and heritage hotels have come up
in the region, Malabar is still backward in providing accommodation facilities to the
tourists in classified hotels in both private as well public sector. Malabar possesses
only about one-fourth of the total rooms and of the total bed capacity available in
rooms of various accommodation units in the state.

Similarly, though Malabar is endowed with about 52 percent of the total
geographical area and is also blessed with more than half of the total inhabitants of
the state, the region displays a dismal picture of poor infrastructure in terms of the
presence of sufficient number of well maintained roads, compared to that of the
southern and central parts of the state.

Authorities has to take note of the fact that some of the tourists respondents
met by the researcher during the survey made very plain speaking about the highly
unhygienic bus stations in the Malabar region lacking in minimum facilities and
amenities causing lots of discomforts to them. Tourists hold similar opinion about
certain railway stations in the region as well. In some stations, nobody knows where
to wait and which counters to approach. The attitude of the staff in some railway
stations, they remarked, is not at all tourism friendly. Tourists have to wait for hours
together in some railway stations to get a reply or to get their doubts clarified.
According to them, all tourism service providing offices/establishments should be equipped on par with their counterparts in advanced countries.

The major findings of the study are given in the following pages.

8.2. FINDINGS

- The share of tourism in the total State Plan in Kerala has increased from 0.30 percent of the total outlay in the Third Five Year Plan to 0.87 percent of the total outlay in the Ninth Five Year Plan.
- The State plan outlay on tourism promotion and development in Kerala has increased from Rs. 12.80 lakhs in the Second Five Year Plan to Rs. 14000 lakhs in Ninth Five Year Plan showing a substantial increase of 1093.75 times over this period.
- The State Plan outlay on tourism has increased to Rs.81.57 crores in 2005-06 from 17.30 crores in 1995-96 showing a considerable increase of 371.50 percent over the period.
- It is seen that the Central allocation for tourism in the State has increased from Rs. 2.10 crores in 1995-96 to Rs. 48.09 crores in 2005-06 showing a substantial increase of about 23 times over a period of 11 years.
- It has been found that in the year 2000, the total revenue generated from tourism (direct and indirect) in Kerala amounting to Rs. 4000 crores has increased to Rs. 9126 crores in 2006 showing a substantial increase of 128.15 percent over this period.
- The foreign exchange earnings from tourism in Kerala to the tune of Rs.1988.40 crores in 2006 has showed a substantial increase of 912.89 percent compared to that of Rs.196.31 crores in 1996.
- It is seen that earnings from domestic tourism in Kerala has increased to Rs. 4281.42 crores in 2005 from Rs. 2222.36 crores in 2000 showing a considerable increase of 92.65 percent over the period.
- It is found that the total number of tourist (foreign and domestic) arrivals to Kerala was 67,00,258 during 2006, showing an increase of 22.98 percent compared to that of 2001.
- It is seen that the foreign tourist arrivals to Kerala has been increased to 4,28,534 in 2006 from 69,309 in 1991 showing a remarkable increase of more than 6 times over this period.
• The domestic arrivals to the State increased to 62,71,724 in 2006 from 9,48,991 in 1991 showing an increase of around 7 times over this period.

• It is seen that three countries, viz. UK, France and USA remained top in respect of foreign arrivals to Kerala during the period from 2002 to 2006.

• It is seen that the months of December and January marked the highest foreign tourist traffic to the State.

• It is found that the lean month of foreign tourist arrivals in Kerala is usually June.

• It is found that per day expenditure of a foreign tourist in Kerala was Rs. 2800 in 2005, which showed an increase of 7.69 percent, compared to that of the previous year.

• It is noted that the average duration of stay of a foreign tourist in Kerala in 2005 was 16 days, which shows an increase of 13.47 percent compared to that of 2004.

• It is seen that comparing the district wise arrival of foreign tourists to Kerala in 2006, the maximum number of tourists arrived was in Thiruvananthapuram district (151578) constituting 35.37 percent of the total, followed by Ernakulam (131767) accounting for 30.75 percent and Idukki (44583) accounting for 10.40 percent, and the least number arrived during the corresponding period was in Pathanamthitta with only 346 tourists, which constitutes only 0.08 percent.

• It is found that on comparing the district wise arrival of domestic tourists in 2006, it is seen that Thrissur district (22.29 %) stands first with 1398014 tourists, followed by Ernakulam (17.23%) with 1080591 tourists and Pathanamthitta (0.91%) witnessed the minimum number of domestic tourist arrivals with 57032 tourists.

• It is estimated that travel and tourism in Kerala is expected to grow 11.4 percent per annum in real terms between 2004 and 2013.

• According to tourism authorities, the financial stringency being faced by the State exchequer and the consequent ban on payment of plan funds are causing great delay in the execution of all the projects carried out by different tourism promotion and development agencies in the State.

• It is observed that one important constraint to the private investment in tourism sector in Kerala is the high tax rates applicable to different tourism
service providing units. The building tax rate, luxury tax rates for hotels, entertainment tax rates for amusement parks and recreation centres are very high in Kerala compared to the other states.

- Though the Government Guest Houses in the State run by the hospitality wing of the Department of Tourism are supposed to be meant for providing accommodation to government servants as well as visiting tourists to the destination, it is found that in most cases accommodation in these government accommodation units are not accessible to tourists as they remain overbooked for most of the time for government officials, ministers, MLAs etc.

- It is noted that despite various awareness programmes launched by the Department of Tourism during the past several years, there still exists ignorance on the positive as well as negative impact of tourism among the host population.

- It is observed that some projects which are designated under the banner of ecotourism in Kerala involve huge investment, which is against the very concept of ecotourism.

- It is found that the Department has not been able to carry out an authentic study relating to the impact of tourism on the ecology and environment so far.

- It is noted that some of the major nodes along the backwaters in Kerala including those in Malabar lack proper solid and liquid waste disposal system. This affects the quality of ecology and environment of backwaters.

- It is observed that many unscrupulous traders and business men trying to make easy money by deceiving tourists have set up shops in the vicinity of backwater destinations particularly Alappuzha and Kottayam and other leading beach destinations and hill stations in the State.

- Wild life tourism, an important component of ecotourism, can be successful only with the help of the Forest Department. It is found that there are a number of forest lodges and inspection bungalows which are remaining idle in most part of the year which could otherwise be utilized for providing accommodation facilities to visiting tourists.
• It is noted that a number of unlicensed tour guides with the sole objective of deceiving unwary tourists, are active at railway stations and bus stations, which are located close to the leading tourism destinations in the State.

• On interacting with some tourism police personnel, it is understood that they find it difficult to deal with the problems facing leading tourism spots including the backwater and beach destinations in Kerala due to shortage of staff strength and inadequate facilities.

• On comparing the region wise analysis of foreign tourists in Kerala dividing into Malabar and the rest of Kerala, it is seen that Malabar performs very poor in 2006 also as in previous years with 29392 foreign tourists representing only 6.86 percent of the total tourists arrived in the State.

• On comparing the region wise analysis of domestic tourists in the State, it is found that Malabar leads the remaining part of the State with 51.88 percent of the total domestic tourists to Kerala in 2006.

• On comparing the foreign tourist arrivals among the districts in Malabar in 2006, it is found that Kozhikode district leads others in the region with 11154 tourists constituting 37.95 percent followed by Malappuram with 7109 tourists constituting 24.18 percent. Similarly, Palakkad witnesses the minimum number of arrivals with 809 foreign tourists accounting for only 2.75 percent.

• On comparing the district wise domestic tourist arrivals among the districts in Malabar in 2006, it is noted that Thrissur district is far ahead with 1398014 tourists (42.97 percent) not only among other districts in the region but also among all the districts in the entire Kerala, followed by Kozhikode with 550694 tourists (16.92 percent). However, it is also found that Kasaragod district occupied the least position with 123352 domestic tourists which constitutes only 3.79 percent.

• It is estimated that it is from the United Kingdom that the maximum number of foreign tourists visited Malabar region constituting about 15 percent, followed by USA with 10 percent and France with 6 percent.

• Comparing the foreign tourist arrivals to different districts in Malabar on a country wise basis, it is seen that it is from UK that the maximum number of tourists arrived to almost all districts in the region.

• It is observed that the poor performance of Malabar in the backwater tourism may be attributed to the lack of infrastructure along the backwater stretch.
- It is observed that Malabar with its virgin, underutilized and unexplored beaches such as Muzhappilangad (Kannur), Kappad (Kozhikode), Bekal (Kasaragod) offer so much potential to develop adventurous sports, aero sports, surfing, kayaking, skiing, parasailing etc.
- It is noted that the hill stations of Malabar offer abundant potential for developing adventurous sports such as trekking, rock climbing etc.
- It is noted that Malabar, though it remains yet to be unexplored in tourism sector, is endowed with a number of issues like paucity of pure water during summer, sewage, drainage, solid and liquid waste disposal problems in most of the destinations.
- A substantial majority of both foreign (52.50 percent) and domestic tourists (71.50 percent) preferred to make their travel more enjoyable by accompaniment of either family members or friends or sometimes of both of them in their travel schedule.
- It is noted that 47.50 percent of the foreign tourists who have visited Malabar falls in the middle income group followed by 37 percent in the low income group.
- It is found that 46.5 percent of the domestic tourists fall in the middle income category followed by 28.5 percent in the low income group.
- It has been found that only 15.5 foreign and 25 percent domestic tourists fall in the high income group, i.e. more than Rs. 25000 and more than $ 5000 respectively.
- It is noted that a substantial majority of both domestic and foreign tourists visiting Malabar is from either low income or middle income groups. That is, most of the tourists visiting Malabar belong to budget category.
- It is seen that Europe stands first constituting 67 percent of the total international tourist arrivals to Malabar region, followed by North America with 13 percent and Asia with 11.50 percent occupying the second and third positions respectively.
- It has been found that there are least numbers of foreign tourists from continents of the South America (1 percent) and Africa (0.50 percent) to the region.
• It is seen that tourist arrivals to Malabar from the first 7 countries constitute 64.50 percent of the sample foreign respondents during the period under study.

• It is seen that UK remains top of all tourist generating countries for the region and accounts for 20 percent of the total traffic and Germany and France occupy the second and third positions respectively with 12 percent and 11.50 percent of the total traffic to the region.

• It has been noted that domestic arrivals from the first 4 states constitute 61.50 percent of the total domestic traffic to the region.

• It is noted that Karnataka occupies the first rank with respect to domestic arrivals constituting 23.50 percent, followed by Tamil Nadu (17.50 percent) and Maharashtra (13 percent) holding the second and third positions respectively.

• While 47.50 percent foreign tourists travelled alone, it is only 28.50 percent domestic tourists who travelled with no accompaniment.

• Majority of male (55.46 percent) as well as female (71.60 percent) tourists preferred to travel either with their family members or relatives or with both of them.

• A great majority (62.96 percent) of young tourists in the class of 16-24 years of age travelled with friends followed by one-sixth (16.67 percent) of them with their family members.

• The old-age group tourists falling in the age group of 55 or above years preferred to travel with family (46.15 percent) or with friends (26.92 percent).

• It is noted that a substantial majority of both foreign (85.5 percent) and domestic tourists (81 percent) travelled independently, i.e., without seeking the service of tour operators.

• A great majority of male tourists (83.19 percent) and female tourists (83.33 percent) travelled independently.

• It is found that those tourists who fall in the age group of 25-34 years stand first in travelling independently (91.79 percent) and the remaining (8.21 percent) preferred to travel on the basis of package tour.

• It is seen that 30.77 percent of those who fall in the age group of 55 or above years preferred to go on package tour.
- It has been found that on an aggregate only 10.25 percent tourists stayed for more than 15 days in Malabar.
- It is noted that only 17.50 percent foreign tourists stayed for more than 15 days in Malabar.
- It is seen that majority (60 percent) of the domestic tourist stayed only for 1 to 3 days and 29.50 percent stayed from 4 to 6 days in the region.
- It is seen that male tourists (12.61 percent) outnumbered female tourists in respect of staying for more than 15 days in Malabar.
- It is found that compared to the rest of Kerala, the days of stay of tourists were very less in Malabar. Only 14.75 percent tourists stayed 10 or more days in the region.
- It is seen that on an aggregate 39.25 percent tourists did not prefer to travel to the rest of places in Kerala.
- It is found that 79 percent foreign tourists and 42.50 percent domestic tourists preferred to travel to both Malabar and rest of places in Kerala.
- It has been found that 39.08 percent male tourists and 39.51 female tourists did not prefer to travel to rest of places in Kerala.
- It is noted that only a very small percentage (8.02) of female tourists stayed in rest of places in Kerala for more than 15 days.
- It is found that about one half (49.51 percent) of tourists falling in the age group of 35-44 years did not include tourist places in non-Malabar area in their travel itinerary.
- As far as 61.75 percent tourists are concerned, their visit to Malabar area was for the first time.
- About three-fourth of the foreign tourists and about one-half of the domestic tourists did not visit Malabar earlier.
- About 6 percent foreign tourists and 10 percent domestic tourists have visited Malabar three and above times earlier.
- It is seen that 55.46 percent male tourists and 70.99 percent female tourists did not visit Malabar earlier.
- It is seen that majority (61.75 percent) of tourists falling in different age groups did not visit Malabar previously.
- It is seen that 11.54 percent of those within the age group of 55 and above years of age visited Malabar three and above time previously.
- It is found that on an aggregate 58 percent tourists did not visit rest of Kerala previously.
- About two-third foreign tourists and half of domestic tourists did not visit the rest of places in Kerala previously at all.
- It is seen that 55.88 percent male tourists and 61.11 percent female tourists have not visited the places in rest of Kerala previously.
- About four-fifth (74.07 percent) of those tourists who fall in the age group of 16-24 years of age did not visit the rest of Kerala previously.
- Only 19.23 percent of those age-old visitors (55 or above) visited the rest of Kerala three times or above.
- It is seen that there is not even a single respondent who has visited the rest of Kerala three or more times in the age group of 16-24.
- It is noted that on an aggregate about two-third (62.75 percent) visitors opted Malabar as a primary choice of destination in travel itinerary.
- It is found that 52.50 percent foreign tourists and 73 percent domestic tourists opted to visit Malabar first and the remaining opted to visit Malabar subsequently.
- 65.13 percent male respondents and 59.26 female respondents preferred to visit Malabar first and the remaining opted to visit Malabar only after visiting places in non-Malabar area.
- It has been found that almost two-third respondents falling in various age groups (except those with 55 or above years of age) opted to visit Malabar first in their travel itinerary.
- It is noted that only 53.85 percent of old age visitors opted to visit Malabar first.
- It has been found that only 11 percent foreign tourists preferred to visit only spots of interests and leave the places ignoring nearby centres and 16 percent domestic tourists to travel along the travel circuits and see places.
- It is noted that there were least preferences among both male and female tourists (14.29 percent and 20.37 percent respectively) to visit only spots of interests and leave the places ignoring nearby centres.
- It has been found that there were least preferences (16.75 percent) among the different age groups of both domestic as well as foreign tourists to visit only of spots of interests and left the places ignoring nearby centres.
• It is seen that in the age group of 45-54 years, only 27.71 percent of them were interested to travel along the travel circuits and see places.

• It is seen that on an aggregate four-fifth (80.25 percent) tourists arranged their journey by themselves, i.e., without seeking the help of either tour operators or any other agencies.

• It is found that only 5 percent foreign tourists and 11.50 percent domestic tourists sought the services of tour operators. So, it can be inferred that the role of tour operators is highly negligible in Malabar region.

• As far as a substantial majority of both male tourists (80.67 percent) and female tourists (79.63 percent) are concerned, the tour was self-arranged.

• Only 8.02 percent female tourists and 8.40 percent male tourists travelled by making use of the services of tour operators.

• The age group 25-34 years stands the first position (87.31 percent) in making self-arranged tour in the region.

• It has been found that on an aggregate only 58.25 percent tourists expressed their views on transport facilities in the region as excellent or good.

• 56 percent foreign tourists rated transport facilities in the region as excellent (4 percent) and good (52 percent) and the corresponding percentages in the case of domestic tourists were in the order of 3.50 percent and 57.1 percent.

• 60.50 male tourists are of the opinion that transport facilities in Malabar were either excellent (3.78 percent) or good (56.72 percent) and the respective percentage in the case of female category were 3.70 and 51.23 totalling 54.93 percent.

• 61.54 percent of those who are 55 or above years of age opined transport facilities in Malabar as good. On other hand, only 52.24 percent of those who are between 16-24 years of age expressed their views on it as excellent (2.24 percent) or good (50 percent).

• It is seen that on an aggregate 69.50 percent tourists expressed their views on accommodation facilities in Malabar as excellent (6.75 percent) or good (62.75 percent).

• 77.50 percent foreign tourists expressed their views on accommodation facilities in Malabar as either excellent (9 percent) or good (68.50 percent).
• It is seen that 61.50 percent domestic tourists is of the view that accommodation facilities in the region were as either excellent (4.50 percent) or good (57 percent).
• It is seen that 84.61 percent tourists belonging to 55 or above years of age expressed their views on accommodation facilities in the region as either excellent (19.23 percent) or good (65.38 percent), whereas those in the age group between 35-44 years expressed them as moderate (33.01 percent) or poor (3.88 percent).
• It is seen that on an aggregate 7 percent and 54 percent tourists viewed on restaurant services in Malabar as excellent or good respectively.
• According to 73.50 percent foreign tourists, restaurant services in the region were either excellent (12 percent) or good (61.50 percent) and 50.50 percent domestic tourists opined on them as 2 percent and 47.50 percent respectively.
• It is found that 67.90 percent female tourists viewed the restaurant services provided in Malabar as excellent (7.41 percent) or good (60.49 percent) whereas only 57.14 percent tourists expressed their views on them as good (50.42 percent) or excellent (6.72 percent).
• It is seen that 73.08 percent of old age visitors falling in the age group of 55 or above years opined the restaurant services in Malabar as either excellent (11.54 percent) or good (61.54 percent), whereas only 53.71 percent of young tourists in the age group of 16-24 years expressed them as excellent (5.56 percent) or good (48.15 percent).
• It is seen that on an aggregate 65.81 percent tourists expressed their satisfaction on internet and telecommunication services provided in Malabar as excellent (15.03 percent) or good (50.78 percent).
• 69.43 percent of the domestic tourists viewed the internet and telecommunication services provided in Malabar as excellent (20.73 percent) or good (48.70 percent), whereas only 65.81 percent foreign tourists opined on them as excellent (15.03 percent) or good (50.78 percent).
• According to 4.55 percent female tourists and 3.02 percent male tourists, the internet and telecommunication services in Malabar were poor.
• It is seen that according to 70 percent of those in the age group of 16-24 years, the internet and telecommunication services provided in Malabar were
either excellent (20 percent) or good (50 percent) whereas 59 percent and 36.36 percent of those who are 55 or above years of age viewed them moderate or poor respectively.

• It has been found that only 34.85 percent of the foreign tourists expressed their views on bar facilities in Malabar as excellent (3.03 percent) or good (31.82 percent), but 44.65 percent domestic tourists expressed their opinion viewing them as excellent (5.36 percent) or good (39.29 percent).

• It is noted that 73.63 percent male tourists in Malabar expressed their satisfaction on bar facilities in the region by saying either as good (33.52 percent) or moderate (40.11 percent), whereas only 70.97 percent female respondents viewed them on such facilities as good (40.32 percent) or moderate (30.65 percent).

• It has been found that a substantial majority (93.34 percent) of tourists who are above 55 years of age opined that the bar facilities in Malabar as good or moderate (46.67 percent each).

• About one-third (33.34 percent) of the younger respondents has expressed their views on bar facilities in Malabar rating it either as poor (29.17 percent) or very poor (4.17 percent).

• It is found that only one-half (50.50 percent) of the foreign tourists preferred to stay in private hotels whereas in the case of domestic tourists such percentage is 64.50.

• It is noted that 25 percent of the foreign tourists made use of paying guest houses whereas only 8.50 percent domestic tourists used this facility in Malabar.

• It is seen that homestay facilities in Malabar were equally popular irrespective of the gender of tourists as 16.81 percent male tourists and 16.67 percent female tourists stayed/preferred to stay as paying guests in local houses situated at tourism locations in the region.

• It is found that only about one-half (46.99 percent) of those who fall in the age group between 45-54 years used or preferred to stay in private hotels as accommodation units whereas about two-third (65.38 percent) of those who are 55 or above years of age used such facility in the region.
• It is noted that the preference for paying guest houses or homestay facilities was more (20.37 percent) in the case of young tourists who fall in the age group between 16-24 years of age.

• It is found that majority of foreign tourists (85 percent) viewed the taste and variety of food stuff served in hotels in Malabar as either excellent (24 percent) or good (61 percent), whereas only 55 percent domestic tourists considered the same as excellent (2 percent) or good (53 percent).

• It is noted that more female tourists (60.49 percent) considered the taste and variety of food stuff served in Malabar as good as against 54.62 percent male tourists.

• It is noted that 74.63 percent of those who are between 25-34 years of age considered the taste and variety of food stuff served in hotels in Malabar either as excellent (12.69 percent) or good (61.94 percent) as against 65.39 percent of those in the age group falling above 55 years considering them either as excellent (30.77 percent) or good (34.62 percent).

• It is found that only 42 percent of the domestic tourists viewed waiter services in hotels in Malabar as excellent (3 percent) or good (39 percent), whereas a great majority of foreign tourists (81 percent) expressed their opinion in regard to this as excellent (17.50 percent) or good (63.50 percent).

• It is seen that more male tourists considered the waiter services in hotels in Malabar as excellent (10.08 percent) or good (54.62 percent) as compared to 56.79 percent female tourists considering them as excellent (10.49 percent) or good (46.30 percent).

• About 73 percent of those who are 55 or above years of age thought the waiter services in hotels in Malabar as either excellent (19.23 percent) or good (53.85 percent) as against 56.63 percent of those who fall in the age group between 45-54 years who considered them as excellent (9.64 percent) or good (46.99 percent).

• It is seen that regarding cleanliness and hygiene in hotels in the region, foreign tourists were more satisfied viewing them excellent (6.50 percent) or good (53.50 percent) as against only 42 percent of domestic tourists who rated them as excellent (3.50 percent) or good (38.50 percent).

• It is seen that 55.23 percent of those who are between 25-34 years of age viewed on cleanliness and hygiene in hotels in Malabar as either excellent
(4.48 percent) or good (50.75 percent), whereas only 38.46 percent of those who are above 55 years or more rated them as either excellent (15.38 percent) or good (23.08 percent).

- It is seen that according to 18.50 percent foreign tourists and 22 percent domestic tourists, charges in hotels in Malabar were costly.
- It is found that, 72.22 percent female tourists and 67.23 male tourists considered the hotel charges in Malabar moderate.
- It is seen that only 14.81 percent of those younger respondents falling between 16-24 years of age and 24.27 percent of those who fall between 35-44 years of age opined the hotels charges as costly.
- It is seen that more than four-fifth (86.50 percent) of the foreign tourists opined the enjoyment of travel experience in Malabar as excellent (20 percent) or good (66.50 percent). At the same time, only 71 percent of the domestic tourists expressed their views on them as excellent (10 percent) or good (61 percent).
- It is seen that about two-third (66.81 percent) male respondents and 59.26 percent female respondents rated their enjoyment of travel experience in Malabar as good.
- It is seen that more than four-fifth (82.09 percent) of younger tourists viewed their enjoyment of travel experience in Malabar compared to the places in rest of Kerala as either excellent (15.67 percent) or good (66.42 percent).
- On an aggregate 23.75 percent tourists strongly favoured the necessity of opening up of a new international airport in northern part of Malabar.
- It is seen that compared to that of foreign tourists, more number of domestic tourists (80 percent) have supported the necessity of opening up of an international airport in North Malabar.
- It is seen that male respondents (37.82 percent) dominate the female respondents (31.48 percent) with regard to not favouring the necessity of opening up of a new international airport in northern part of Malabar.
- It is seen that according to 26.92 percent of those tourists who are 55 or above years of age opined that a new international airport should be set up in north Malabar, whereas 46.15 percent of them viewed as not necessary.
• It has been found that both domestic tourists (86.50 percent) and foreign tourists (88.50 percent) expressed their opinion on the attitude of host population as excellent or good.

• It is noted that both male respondents (85.72 percent) and female respondents (90.12 percent) opined on the attitude of host population in Malabar as excellent or good.

• It is seen that a great majority (87.50 percent) of respondents irrespective of their age groups viewed the attitude of host population in Malabar either excellent (22.25 percent) or good (65.25 percent).

• On an aggregate, more than four-fifth (80.25 percent) of the informants considered the tourism potentiality of Malabar region either excellent (23.25 percent) or good (57 percent).

• It is noted that 54.50 percent foreign tourists felt the tourism potentialities of the region as good as against those of 59.50 percent domestic tourists.

• It is noted that both male and female respondents have more or less the same opinion regarding the tourism potentialities of Malabar as 82.1 percent female tourists rated them excellent or good against 78.99 percent male respondents.

• A substantial majority (80.25 percent) of respondents falling in different age groups considered the tourism potentialities of the region very high (23.25 percent) or high (57 percent).

• It is found that on an aggregate, more than four-fifth (84.25 percent) tourists was prepared to recommend Malabar as a tourist destination to their friends and relatives when they returned home.

• It is noted that a minuscule minority of both male (13.87 percent) and female (13.58 percent) tourists remained undecided as to whether Malabar should be recommended as an emerging destination.

• It is seen that a substantial majority (80.77 percent) of respondents irrespective of their different age groups expressed their readiness to suggest Malabar as a potential tourism destination to their friends and relatives when they returned home.

• It is seen that on an aggregate more than four-fifth (80.50 percent) tourists expressed their willingness to visit Malabar again when they get an opportunity.
• It is reported that on an aggregate, 30.25 percent male and female tourists was undecided as to whether Malabar should be visited again provided they get an opportunity.

• It is seen that a substantial majority (88.46 percent) of those who fall between 55 or above years of age was prepared to visit Malabar again when they get an opportunity in future.

• It is found that on an aggregate, the mean expenditure incurred on hotel services by the tourists in Malabar was 39.25 percent and the corresponding standard deviation was 11.70 percent.

• It is seen that the mean expenditure in respect of hotel services incurred by female tourists (39.94 percent) was more than that of male respondents (38.78 percent).

• It is found that the percentages of unfulfilled demand in the case of foreign tourists in terms of various facilities in Malabar such as transportation, accommodation, restaurant, shopping, internet and bar facilities were in the order of 44, 22.50, 26.50, 43.02, 37.82, and 65.15.

• It is seen that there exists a fairly wide gap between the effective demand and effective supply particularly in the case of bar facilities in the region availed by both foreign and domestic tourists.

• In the case of domestic tourists, it is found that there exists a moderately wide gap between the effective demand and effective supply in the case of restaurant and shopping facilities.

• Between the effective demand and effective supply of various facilities in Malabar, there exists an overall gap of 60.66 percent in the case of bar facilities followed by shopping (43.17 percent), Transportation (41.75 percent), Restaurant services (38.50 percent), Internet and telecommunication (34.20 percent) and accommodation facilities (30.50 percent).

• It is found that both foreign and domestic tourists find much difficulty in getting reservation of berths in trains in Malabar.

• It is seen that foreign tourists find it difficult to get chartered flights to the destinations in the region.
It is found that the conditions of toilets and bath rooms, conditions of rooms and linen and restaurant services were some other problem areas experienced by tourists in the case of accommodation in Malabar.

It is found that on an aggregate, the proportion of sample official female respondents working in various tourism related offices in Malabar is much lower (only 20 percent) than that of the male officials.

It is indicated that there is no much difference between the proportion of the male and female respondents working both at the higher level (80.95 percent and 19.05 percent) and at the lower level (79.31 percent and 20.69 percent) respectively.

It is seen that the maximum number of tourist official sample respondents (36 percent) fall in the age group of 30-40 years followed by 30 percent in the age group of 40-50.

It is seen that on an aggregate, 60 percent of the official respondents in Malabar are graduates and only 16 percent are post graduates.

It has been found that majority (61.90 percent and 58.62 percent respectively) of the higher level officials and middle and lower officials working in various offices concerned with tourism in the region are graduates.

On interaction with the tourist officials it became clear that only a minuscule minority of them has tourism related degree or diploma.

It is seen that majority (72 percent) of the official sample respondents in the region has acquired only less than 10 years experience and only 10 percent of them has been put in the service for the last 20 years or more.

It is seen that a substantial majority (93.10 percent) of the middle and lower level category officials in Malabar were new comers in their jobs.

It is found that one-third and more than one-sixth (6.90 percent) respectively of the higher level and the middle and lower level staff have been put in service between 10 and 20 years.

There is not even a single middle and lower official worked for more than 20 years in tourism related offices in Malabar.

It is noted that most of the tourism related offices in the Malabar region came into existence only from 10 to 15 years back.
• It is noted that 56 percent officials were selected by means of direct mode followed by more than one-fifth (22 percent) of them by means of other selection modes.

• It is found that 16 percent of the officials were promoted to their existing posts and only 6 percent were being transferred from other departments of the government.

• It is noted that in DTPCs which are being considered as the nodal agencies and responsible for tourism development in the district, all the officials including the member secretary are appointed on contract basis.

• It is found that on an aggregate, merit-cum-seniority (46 percent) is the basis of promotion to higher positions in various tourism related offices in Malabar, followed by the seniority alone (36 percent) and merit alone (16 percent).

• In the case of middle and lower level officials, it is seen that it is the seniority alone (41.38 percent) which forms the criteria for being promoted, followed by the criteria of merit-cum-seniority.

• 56 percent of the officials sample informants did not get any training before they were being appointed to the present positions.

• It is also seen that only 47.62 percent higher level officials and only 41.38 middle and lower level officials have had the opportunity of getting training for their present jobs.

• The study revealed that, in general only about one-third (32 percent) of the tourist personnel working in various official capacities was fortunate enough to get training for the present job held by them after they were being appointed.

• It is noted that more than four-fifth (82.76 percent) of those working in the middle and lower official levels did not have any training facilities for their present jobs.

• It has been found that more than one-half (52.38 percent) of those falling in the higher officials category was having the opportunity of undergoing training after they were being appointed to their present jobs.

• It has been found that according to about two-third (64 percent) tourist official sample respondents in the region, the level of motivation in the job was medium.
• According to 38 percent higher level officials and 27.59 percent middle and lower level officials, they are highly motivated in their jobs.

• It is noted that about three-fourth (71.43 percent) higher level officials and more than one-half (51.72 percent) middle and lower level officials take participatory role in formulating schemes, plans and programmes in tourism related activities in their respective departments.

• It is found that 44.83 percent middle and lower level officials in Malabar do not have any role in tourism plans and programmes in their departments.

• It is seen that according to a great majority (90.48 percent) of the higher level tourist officials in the region, the present job environment is favourable for promoting tourism.

• It is noted that more than three-fourth (78 percent) of the tourist officials is of the opinion that Malabar is yet to be advanced in tourism promotion in the State.

• According to 27.59 percent of the medium and lower level officials and only 14.29 percent of the higher level officials, Malabar is not backward in tourism development in Kerala.

• It is noted that on an aggregate, a substantial majority of the officials considers the tourism potentiality of the region as very high (38 percent) or high (48 percent).

• Most of the higher level officials (57.14 percent) consider the region's potentiality of tourism very high.

• The study revealed that a great majority of the officials (weighted score = 199) consider the lack of proper tourism infrastructure as the main obstacle that stands in the way of development of tourism in the region, followed by the neglect of Malabar by the Government (weighted score = 166).

• It is found that unenouraging attitude of the host population is the least significant factor hindering the tourism growth in the region (weighted score = 99).

• It is seen that the organisation structure of the Department of Tourism which was framed about 10 years back, does not represent a clear picture of what exists today.
• It is observed that lack of clarity in the organisation structure of the Department of Tourism creates confusion and vagueness in the minds of the officials in their attempt to understand the department’s current structure.

• An important pitfall of the present organisation structure of the Department is that the positions of Additional Directors – General and Hospitality – are put together above most other officers and staff, which does not seem to actually exist now.

• It is found that an important instance of lack of clarity in the Department’s structure is that of the position of the Director, Ecotourism. Though he is placed directly below the Tourism Director in the structure, he has been reporting directly to the Tourism Secretary only for the past several years.

• It is also seen that the position of the Director, the top most officer of the Department, emerges as the most crucial one and he plays the double role, viz., one in Tourism Development and the other in Governance in Kerala.

• Section D under Additional Director (Hospitality) deals with all hospitality related matters, but it concentrates also on administration—personal-financial related aspects. With a chunk of profile of activities, the positioning of Section D (Hospitality) brings out a confusing picture indicating the possibilities of some illogical structuring existing in the Department.

• It is noted that almost all the Deputy Directors placed in various guest houses in the State have not any significant work directly related to tourism development and promotion, even though they are supposed to be the top most Tourism Department Officers in their districts.

• It is found that the Finance Officer and the Section G or J in the Department of Tourism is entrusted with taking care of only the non-plan expenses of the Department. Neither the Finance Officer nor the Finance and Accounts Section does anything directly and actively related to the financial management of tourism projects and activities undertaken by the Department such as estimation, forecasting, monitoring, variance analysis and so on.

• An important objective of establishing Tourism Information Centres is for the proper dissemination of information to visiting tourists and to give necessary guidance to them for pursuing their tourism itinerary in the State. But it has been observed that some of these information centres do not stick to an
organised and professional way of presenting information other than brochures of many varieties piled up and/or scattered chaotically within.

- It is observed that in some districts, the Tourism Information Centres are functioning for the name sake only. For example, in some places, the officers of information centres of both DTPC and the Department of Tourism are located adjacent to one another, that is without considering either the minimum geographical distance between two offices or the importance of the place of its location.

- It is found that the Research Officer in the Department of Tourism does not have any direct mechanism and organizational infrastructure under him to collect the relevant and adequate tourist data. For instance, the tourist statistics published by the Department of Tourism every year lacks data relating to accommodation sector in the State.

- It is observed that the existing structure of the Department of Tourism has been made in that period when the main function of the department was hospitality and up keeping of residential bungalows. But now the major functions of the department have been shifted to tourism promotion and development.

- It is found that the staff strength of the Department has not shown any increase during the last 10 years and this is causing great difficulty in timely execution of plans and programmes.

- As majority of the appointments in the Department of Tourism were to look after the hospitality business and as tourism is a thoroughly professional subject, it has been found that lack of qualified personnel in the Department is affecting the its professionalization.

- Though DTPCs are being considered as important nodal agencies of tourism promotion and development at the district level and form part of the State Department of Tourism, it is noted that they do not figure in the formal organizational structuring of the Department of Tourism.

- It is observed that lack of cooperation and coordination exists among the officers of the Department of Tourism at the district level and the DTPC officials in respect of several tourism planning and development related issues. The major reason may be attributed that the later do not find a place in the formal organizational structuring of the Department of Tourism.
• It is noted that the member secretary of DTPC is appointed on deputation from any department of the State Government and usually for a period of three years. In this sense, other than the District Collector, the member secretary is the only Government Official in DTPC.
• It is noted that the member secretary of DTPC is not an officer of the Tourism Department.
• In most of the districts of Malabar, the DTPC Secretaries are appointed on contract basis. Similarly, all the subordinate staff coming under him is appointed or reappointed on contract basis for a period of every three years.
• The interaction with a few staff members of DTPCs revealed that there exist numerous issues and concerns on selection, qualification, tenure, remuneration and so on with regard to their services that have not been properly addressed.

8.3. RECOMMENDATIONS
After briefing the findings of the study in the preceding paragraphs, now it is attempted to make suitable recommendations of the study:

8.3.1. Tourism as the Economic and Employment Priority
• Preparations may be made to conduct scientific studies on impact of tourism on income and employment on a regular basis.
• Initiatives may be taken to include tourism as a subject in school and college curriculum so as to create awareness among the youths.
• In order to solve the problem of language barrier, which poses an important obstacle to visiting tourists in the State and also to equip younger generation to work in tourism related fields and creating a tourism culture among them, spoken courses in important foreign languages such as English, Dutch, French, German, and Arabic etc. may be introduced in colleges in Kerala with the back up of language laboratories.
• The collection of statistics may be strengthened on tourist arrivals, tourist profile, expenditure patterns etc.
• Mechanism may be developed to protect the tourism industry from the adverse effects of multilateral agreements like GATT, WTO Agreements etc.
• The tourism authorities may work out a scheme with the cooperation of local bodies and Kudumbasree units to ensure that the benefits of tourism sector reach the local people.
The Government may change the rules relating to acquisition of land for tourism projects in the State. The displaced inhabitants may be rehabilitated near the site. At least one member of each family that hands over land for the development of tourism may be given a job in the project.

8.3.2. Creation and Development of Tourism Infrastructure

The Government and the tourism authorities should realize that without developing tourism infrastructure, amenities and support services, no development can be taken place in tourism sector in Kerala. The following are a few suggestions on these lines:

- The Government may ensure that the basic facilities like motorable roads, clean drinking water, uninterrupted electricity and power supply, efficient waste disposal systems, good transport facilities and signage systems are in proper place at least in important tourist destinations in the State.

- As the private investment plays a significant role in the tourism sector in Kerala, special campaign may be launched to make Kerala a tourism investment-friendly state keeping in view of attracting foreign and NRI investments in the tourism sector.

- For building up tourism infrastructure and the essential basic amenities in Kerala and for creating awareness on the benefits of tourism in terms of economic, physical and social development, the Government may solicit the cooperation and support of the strong Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Non-Governmental Organisatons (NGOs).

- Encouragement and incentives may be given to small businesses to serve tourists through internet access centres, free telecommunication services, tourist information centres, local transportation agencies and hygienic food joints.

- Various departments connected with tourism activities in the State may plan and coordinate the functions so that there is no overlap and contradiction between development activities.

- Air travel connections may be developed from all major tourism destinations to all the international airports in the State.

- The process of sanctioning tourism projects may be simplified. For this purpose, separate cell may be established in financial institutions like KSIDC
and KFC for tourism with representatives from Tourism Department for fast clearance of tourism projects.

- In order to maintain a balance in tourism infrastructure development among various line departments, a certain percentage, say 10 or 15 percent of the outlay of the related departments may be earmarked for tourism in which priority to be decided by the Department of Tourism.

- Basic facilities and amenities such as rest rooms and pay and use toilets may be constructed and maintained well at all the leading tourism destinations in the State.

- Arrangements may be made to introduce the facility of booking tickets and making payment for them in KSRTC and private buses in Kerala on the lines of AWATAR (Anywhere Anytime Advance Reservation) Scheme launched in Karnataka by the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation.

- Land may be made available at concession rates or on long-term lease at the leading tourism destinations.

- The political parties in Kerala may be encouraged to arrive at a consensus on exempting vehicles carrying tourists from hartals. Stickers may be given to be put up for the easy recognition of vehicles used by tourists on such days.

- For the purpose of enabling easy transits to tourists in Kerala, all the major roads along the backwaters with the road networks may be interlinked.

- A chain of forest lodges may be developed across various sanctuaries of Kerala by converting unused or underutilized inspection bungalows, inspection quarters and other buildings of the Forest Department paving the way for finding a solution to the acute shortage of rooms particularly during tourism peak season.

- Statistical data pertaining to accommodation facilities in both classified and unclassified hotels in the entire State of Kerala, total availability of rooms in these hotels, occupancy during peak and off seasons may be made available so as to facilitate the interest groups and the potential tourists to plan their travel itinerary.

**8.3.3. Focus on Ecotourism and Backwaters**

- Kerala Tourism in general and tourism in Malabar in particular are mainly nature based. Hence, for the long sustenance, the development of tourism
may be controlled/regulated based on special guidelines formulated for identified Special Tourism Zones (STZs).

- A Master Plan may be prepared for the sustainable use of backwaters of Kerala for tourism purposes.

- A Backwater Tourism Development Authority may be formulated with representatives from all stakeholders exclusively to coordinate the infrastructure development activities for the sustainable use of backwaters for tourism purposes.

- A clear cut strategy may be evolved to coordinate all departments and private sector that are having ecotourism resources and provide synergy for the development of the same.

- Steps may be initiated to develop Zero Waste Zones in and around the leading tourist destinations in the State.

- Now the house boats in Kerala have become unique and most innovative tourism products. Hence, proper incentives may be given to encourage quality up gradation of the house boats.

- The Department of Tourism may take adequate steps to classify the houseboats on the basis of the facilities available in each of them for the better interest of tourists.

- The Department of Tourism has to be vigilant and should initiate stringent action against the practice of increasing tariffs according to the whims and fancies of the houseboat operators.

- The tourism authorities with the cooperation of the Water Resources Department may initiate actions to impose fines or seize such houseboats which do not comply with the stipulations or violating the norms framed by the Department of Tourism.

- The three tier panchayat may be entrusted with the responsibility of the maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene in tourism spots in Kerala. Steps may be initiated to maintain cleanliness in all eco-tourism destinations in the State.

- The concept of rural tourism may be developed and publicized.

- Eco and wild life safari activities in sanctuaries in the State may be developed and promoted.

- All wild life tourism schemes may be clubbed with eco-tourism products.
Necessary infrastructure may be developed all along the backwaters such as boat terminals, jetties, wayside amenities, fuel pumping stations, sewage pumping stations etc.

8.3.4. Quality Services and Quality Human Resources in Tourism

Ensuring quality in all tourism-service rendering units is an important prerequisite for the success of tourism industry. Similarly, human resource development is also an important sector to be developed for effective promotion and development of tourism in the State. The following suggestions are made in this respect:

- Care may be taken to allow only approved tourism units by the Department of Tourism to function as a tourism unit in the State.
- It may be ensured that only approved tourism units find place in the publicity materials published by the Department of Tourism from time to time.
- Care may be taken to ensure that only professionally qualified staff possessing tourism degrees/diplomas are appointed in all tourism related offices/tourism services rendering units.
- Steps may be taken to open a tourism institute of international standard in Kerala to train quality managerial manpower to manage the tourism industry in the State.
- Action may be initiated to set up food crafts institutes in important tourism locations in the State.
- Continuous training programmes may be conducted to train the various categories of people such as taxi drivers, cooks, waiters, guides, information assistants etc. engaged in the tourism industry.

8.3.5. Creating Awareness and Tourism Consciousness among the Public

One of the important components in the development of tourism is the local people. The host population, which is tourist-friendly, can be expected to send the right message of tourism. The following suggestions are made on these lines:

- Government may initiate programmes for creating awareness and tourism consciousness among the people in general and among the taxi drivers, police men, bus conductors, porters, customs and emigration officers, and others with whom tourists interact and for making Kerala society a tourist friendly society.
• Government may also initiate programmes about tourism, culture, art and heritage of the State and to inculcate among the host population positive attitude towards visiting tourists.

• Special preferences may be given to proposals aimed at linking traditional industries and agriculture with tourism.

• The Department should involve the local people in tourism related endeavours as it would help create a sense of belongingness and provide them with a source of livelihood.

8.3.6. Developing and Promoting Souvenir, Handicrafts, Artifacts and Shopping Industry

• Increased focus may be given to develop and promote souvenir, handicrafts, artifacts and shopping industry.

• In order to promote souvenir tourism and for its rejuvenation, steps may be taken to popularize souvenirs in the international market and to unveil an online Kerala Souvenir Shop.

• Care may be taken to identify new items and products in handicrafts, handloom and souvenir industry sector.

• In order to ensure local involvement and community participation in tourism, encouragement may be given to use local crafts for making souvenirs.

• Shopping festivals may be organised for handicrafts and souvenirs with Kerala tastes.

• Steps may be initiated to seek the participation and involvement of such agencies as Kerala Handicrafts Development Corporation (KHDC), Khadi Board, Kudumbasree, DTPCs, NGOs in developing souvenir and handicrafts as important tourism products.

• Encouragement and incentives may be given to use traditional architecture and local materials for tourism related properties.

8.3.7. Conserving and Preserving the Cultural Heritage of the State

• As some of the major tourism destinations particularly in southern part of the State are becoming saturated, carrying capacities studies may be taken up for all such destinations.

• Host community may be involved in the planning, awareness building and benefits sharing from the tourism projects.
• Watchers should be appointed at tourist locations to ensure that the facilities are properly maintained and the tourists do not flout the rules.
• Steps may be initiated to make environmental impact assessment for all the major projects as a pre-requisite for sanction.

8.3.8. Conservation of Ecology and Preserving the Pristine Environment

The strength of Kerala Tourism is its excellent natural resources in the form of beaches, backwaters, hill stations and wild life sanctuaries. No tourist will be willing to be put up in dirty, mosquito-infested places. Most tourists, particularly foreign tourists from Europe, USA and Latin American countries visiting Kerala seem to be disgusted at the unclean and untidy surroundings in the State. It is observed that such a situation is created mainly by the usage and careless handling of plastic carry bags and bottles. Unregulated use of plastic carry bags, bottles, paper and other wastes and dumping these into drains are the main reasons for clogging of drains and subsequent water logging in the major tourism destinations especially by the side of beaches, backwaters, lakes and hill stations in Kerala. There is not even a single waste bin in almost all the tourism hot spots in the entire Kerala. A ‘clean Kerala drive’ along with an awareness campaign to instill civic responsibilities among the people would go a long way in beautifying Kerala. The problems faced in managing solid wastes can be solved to a large extent by regulating the use of plastic materials. The following suggestions are made in this connection:
• The Government may enforce a ban on plastic materials below 30 microns in the whole of Kerala.
• Plastic carry bags may be totally banned, at least at the leading tourism spots.
• Squads comprising corporation/municipality/panchayat, police, revenue, sales tax and health department and tourism officials may be formed to monitor enforcement of the ban.
• In order to free tourism destinations from plastic pollution, awareness programmes may be conducted to promote carry bags made of cloth and paper with the cooperation of public and voluntary organizations and involving the media. Kudumbasree units may be given incentives and subsidies to produce such products.
• Pamphlets may be distributed under the auspicious of Tourism Department through Kudumbasree units or through members of tourism clubs in colleges
and other educational institutions in all houses and business establishments to propagate the message of limiting the use of plastic.

- Members of college tourism clubs may be given training on how to manage the wastes generated on campuses so that awareness against careless handling of solid wastes may be created among them and they can be asked to undertake the task of propagating the importance of waste management among their colleagues and family members.

- Tourism authorities may ensure that proper waste bins are kept at all the tourism locations. Separate bins may be kept at various points for degradable, non-degradable and plastic wastes.

- Biogas septic tanks and soft pits may be made compulsory for all slaughter houses which pose major concern for the ecology and environment causing major threat for tourism industry.

- Centralized waste collection and segregation facility may be arranged at important tourist locations. Segregation and collection may be done at the source of generation of waste itself.

- Each tourism destination may be made self-sustainable in waste management in a time bound manner and as far as possible bio-waste management technique may be introduced.

- The host population at tourist locations may be encouraged to establish biogas plant and vermi-compost units in their houses.

- Strict action may be taken against people who throw waste and plastic on the beaches.

- Polluting lakes, ponds and canals and setting the outlets of latrines open into such water sources may be made a criminal offence.

- Care may be taken not to sanction tourism projects that create environment and ecological problems. Tourism development should be taken up by ensuring conservation of nature.

- Care may be taken to ensure that every brochure on Kerala tourism may be included the Do’s and Don’ts for tourists.

8.3.9. Ensuring Safety and Security of Tourists

- Sufficient number of tourist police personnel (men and women) may be deployed at major tourism destinations in the State.
• Training for tourism police force may be modernized. Swimming, driving and other adventurous activities and knowledge of IT may be made an integral part of the training programme.

• Steps may be taken to appoint adequate number of lifeguards at beaches in the State.

• The patrolling system by the tourism police may be made more efficient in a situation where complaints of misbehaviour towards women tourists and harassment from local youths and drug peddling are rampant after sunset in certain parts of Kerala.

• A data base of criminals associated with the tourism activities may be created.

• A complaint and suggestion cell may be opened at the Directorate of Tourism to handle the complaints from the tourists from different parts of Kerala.

• Begging may be banned across the State (at least within and outside the leading tourism destination limits) since such activity in public places is a menace and disgrace to tourists in particular and the society in general and often beggars indulge in criminal and other anti-social activities.

• The Government may ask the local authorities to register the beggars who come under their area and issue a card restricting their area of operations.

• Innovative insurance schemes may be launched for the security of tourists visiting Kerala.

8.3.10. Cheating and Exploitation of Tourists

The following are some suggestions to protect the tourists from cheating and exploitation by unscrupulous traders and taxi drivers:

• A ‘tourist aid cell’ may be set up at major railway stations and bus terminals so as to protect the tourists from being cheated.

• Such a cell may be asked to display a chart of the exact vehicle fares to important hotels and spots of tourist interests.

• The cell may provide the tourists with tariff at different hotels.

• The cell may display the list of authorized tourist guides working at the concerned destinations and may provide the assistance of such guides to the tourists in case they wish for such services.
• The tourist aid cell should have their own mechanism to impart the glory of culture and heritage of the state; its art forms, folklore and therapeutic value of health tourism to the tourists.

8.3.11. Tourism Legislations and Tax Structures

As tourism is a multi-sector activity and it is affected by many other sectors in the economy, the State has to play a lead role in enacting tourism friendly legislations. Therefore, the Government of Kerala may bring about tourism-friendly legislations in all these sectors. The existing legislations like Kerala Land Utilisation Order, Rent Control Act, Labour Act, Building Tax Act, Excise Law etc., may be rationalized paving the way for rapid tourism growth in the State. Tourism associated units such as hotels, recreation units, amusement parks etc. are instrumental to the development of the area in terms of income and employment generation. So the incentives which were offered to tourism units and withdrawn later by the Government may be restored at least at par with those offered for industrial units.

The following suggestions are made in this connection:

• Separate legislations may be enacted for the approval of tourism service providing units such as accommodation units, restaurants, tour operations, tourist transport operations, Ayurveda centres, recreation centres, house boats, cultural centres, tourism sports, amusement parks, home stay and farm stay as a symbol of quality.

• Building tax exemption and electricity concession may be given to approved/classified accommodation units.

• Compounding facility may be given for luxury tax for all categories of hotels.

• Proper arrangements may be made to introduce an equal tariff by airlines and hotels for foreign and domestic tourists.

• Tax on tourist vehicles may be rationalized. The special tax structure on tourist transport may be made 50 percent of the existing rates on eight months season and 30 percent for off-season.

• Entertainment tax on theme parks may be brought down to 50 percent.

• For promoting MICE tourism in the State, convention centres tax may be reduced from the present 42 percent to 15 percent.

• Sales turnover tax on liquor may be taken off fully since it is already paid at the point of sale and the user may be exempted from such charge.
• The beer and wine license may be de-linked from hard liquor as was done in states like Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.
• The excise and sales tax rates applicable on alcohol may be lowered at par with the other tourism states like Goa and Rajasthan.
• The Government may make necessary arrangements to regulate the tourism courses conducted by the private institutions.

8.3.12. Promotion and Marketing

• The Department of Tourism may launch new tourism products, target new markets and continue its innovative marketing to retain its position as the forerunner of tourism in the country.
• According to experts in tourism industry, the traditional markets are becoming saturated. Therefore, new markets such as South East Asia, China, Russia, West Asia, the United States, Australia etc. may be tapped along with traditional markets keeping in mind the adversities faced by the global travel and tourism industry.
• As intensive research activities on agriculture and related sectors are going on in USA and various European countries, efforts may be made to attract such researchers to visit the plantations and paddy fields in Kerala.
• The booming IT may be efficiently and effectively used extensively for promotion and marketing of tourism in the State.
• An independent performance audit of the publicity and marketing programmes of Kerala tourism may be carried out by a professional agency.
• As Kerala is now perceived to be a highly attractive and promising tourism destination in the country, the Department of Tourism may adopt a selective approach to its publicity efforts.
• Arrangements may be made to persuade the Government of India to revive the scheme of Leave Travel Concession so as to boost domestic tourism in the State.
• The tourists who visit the State with a fixed holiday plan may be compensated if they cannot visit all destinations according to their itinerary not because of their own reasons.

8.3.13. Wellness Centres and Health Tourism

According to the unofficial estimates of the Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala, about 30 percent of the tourists who visit Kerala is for the
Ayurvedic treatment. But in spite of the Government’s efforts to popularize all segments of Ayurveda, most foreigners are familiar only with ‘Panchakarma’ which is more massage oriented. On interacting with some foreign tourists, it is understood that most of them are ignorant about curative therapies in Ayurveda. So there is the need to give them a fair idea about the other segments of Ayurveda too. Attempts should be made to focus on the curative possibilities of lifestyle diseases through Ayurveda. Information may be given about treatment for anxiety, depression, lifestyle diseases, degenerative diseases, neurological disorders and different types of arthritis. The following suggestions are made pertaining to wellness centres and health tourism in the State:

- The Government may make it mandatory to allow only approved Ayurveda centres by the Department of Tourism and Health Department to function as tourist centres in the name of tourism.
- Though tourism helps to promote Ayurveda, it is observed that it does much harm to this ancient system of medicine in the absence of stringent rules. So the authorities may initiate necessary steps to prevent the mushrooming of illegal massage parlours.
- Adequate measures may be taken to safeguard Ayurveda from attempts by some Ayurveda practitioners both qualified and traditional to equate this ancient system with massage centres.
- In order to avoid tourism sex racket, Ayurvedic massage centres in important tourism destinations may be kept under permanent scanning.
- Doctors may be held responsible if an Ayurvedic centre without a license is involved in illegal practices.
- A Committee may be constituted with members from Department of Tourism, all the stake holders in tourism industry and the Directorate of Indian System of Medicine to review the implications in using Ayurveda as a tourism product.
- While promoting Ayurveda tourism, the value of naturopathy, herbal medicines and tribal medicines may be given due importance.
- The Health Department rather than the Tourism Department may be asked to take up the awareness programme on medical tourism.

8.3.14. Strengthening the Institutional Mechanism

One of the major hurdles facing the Department of Tourism in Kerala is the lack of professionalization of management. Unless the Department is
professionalized, it will be difficult for it to sustain tough competition existing in this field between different states in the country and major tourist destinations. The following suggestions are put forward in this direction:

- In order to ensure a balanced regional development in tourism, the State of Kerala may be divided into three zones viz., Malabar, Central Travancore and Southern zones which will help for the effective, efficient, easier planning and implementation and monitoring of tourism projects in the State.

- The Government of Kerala may take urgent steps to bifurcate the two important functions being presently performed by the Department of Tourism viz., the hospitality and up keeping of residential bungalows on the one hand and tourism promotion and development on the other, and the Department may be made to concentrate only on tourism planning with definite activities and time bound programmes.

- The structure of such a bifurcated Department of Tourism may be reorganized by including more professionals as the development of infrastructure and promotional activities are special area and can be effectively dealt with only by professional hands.

- Steps may be initiated to ensure that such bifurcated functions have independent, separate and appropriate organizational arrangements to take care of tourism management and hospitality functions presently undertaken by the Kerala Tourism Department.

- Since the Government Guest Houses now being run directly by the Department of Tourism are beneficial neither to tourists nor for the promotion of tourism at large, they may be privatized or leased out to the private entrepreneurs. By this step, more entrepreneurship in tourism can be ensured.

- The existing staff of these guest houses may be deployed to some other government departments or they may be given option to adopt Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS).

- As a solution to the inconveniences that may be caused due to leasing out or privatization of Guest Houses, the government officials, ministers, MLAs etc., may be provided accommodation in private hotels by providing sufficient DA and other eligible allowances.
• Since the Department of Tourism and the related agencies lack professionalization of management, steps may be taken to outsource the tourism activities of critical area.

• The Government may constitute a Tourism Board at the apex of the Tourism Department to oversee all aspects related to tourism management in the State so as to enable it to play a strategic role as well as a managerial-operational role.

• Tourism planning and development activities of each of the above zones may be entrusted to a Managing Director who will have the primary and complete responsibility for managing all tourism projects in his respective zone.

• With the objective of reaching out geographically, each district in the State may be treated as a Nodal Centre for tourism development in Kerala. The Department of Tourism needs to have its own presence at the district level and thus throughout the State.

• In each district in Kerala, the Department of Tourism may be represented by a Manager taking care of tourism planning, development and promotion as well as tourism marketing in all the 14 districts. Each such officer may be assisted by 3 to 5 members.

• Each such manager may be made the Member Secretary of concerned DTPC so as to ensure tourism planning and development and all marketing related activities at the district level take place in a planned, coordinated and integrated manner with the strategies and plans of the Department of Tourism. Similarly, it may lead to the strengthening of DTPCs’ set up.

• The districts that come in a zone may collectively constitute the Zonal Tourism Development and Promotion Council for that Zone.

• The structure of DTPCs may be reorganized by including more professionals and strengthened to take up the increased responsibilities in the field of tourism and development.

• The role of DTPCs may be redefined in emphasizing regulation and quality control. New roles may be identified for them in information dissemination, quality control and micro-level regulations.

• DTPCs may not be given freedom to enter into commercial ventures where private sector can perform well.
• An independent evaluation of the working of DTPCs, which are supposed to be the important tourism development agency at district level, may be carried out.

8.4. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN MALABAR

As was already noted in the preceding chapters, tourism in Kerala is now concentrated in the Southern part of the State. Considering the fragile nature of ecology and environment, steps may be taken to disperse the activities to lesser known destinations like Malabar to avoid over crowding and exceeding carrying capacities.

8.4.1. Tourism Infrastructure

The development of tourism at a particular destination depends upon the development of tourism infrastructure. A tourist always thinks of safe, comfortable and convenient mode of transport. However, most of the roads particularly those leading to important tourism destinations in the region are narrow and badly maintained. With the influx of new vehicles and economic boom, the number of vehicles plying in these roads has multiplied in the recent past. It is also understood that the staff strength of the enforcement agency has not been increased to handle the corresponding increase in traffic. All these are adversely affecting the development of tourism in the region. It is in this background, the following sections cover the suggestions to enhance the quality of various kinds of tourism infrastructure facilities and also a host of other tourism related activities in Malabar region.

8.4.1.1. Transport

Road Transport

• New roads to emerging destinations in Malabar may be constructed and the existing roads may be renovated since good roads linking important destinations are indispensable for tourism development and growth.

• Increased focus may be given for the up gradation of the National Highway for accelerating tourism development in the region.

• An Express/Super Highway may be constructed across the State of Kerala linking all the leading tourism destinations from Thiruvananthapuram to Kasaragod for the speedy movement of tourists and passengers.

• Well-known bridges linking leading tourist places in Malabar may be reconstructed since most of them are very old and dilapidated condition.
• Care may be taken to the maintenance and renovation of the existing bridges connecting important tourism spots in the region.

• Speed limits for different roads that lead to tourism destinations have to be fixed and it is to be ensured that they are being strictly adhered to.

**Railway Transport**

• Steps may be taken to establish an exclusive corridor to operate high speed trains (HST) between Thiruvananthapuram and Mangalore to provide maximum safety to tourists visiting Malabar as well as the rest of the State.

• The railway line from Mangalore in the neighbouring state of Karnataka to Thiruvananthapuram may be made 4-track so as to get a facelift in tourism to Malabar as well as the rest of Kerala.

• Action may be initiated to introduce a heritage train between Thiruvananthapuram and Mangalore on the model of ‘Palace on Wheels’ on the Rajasthan corridor with the objective of treating a tourist like Maharaja and enabling him to experience the scenic beauty of Kerala and its royal heritage.

• Action may be taken to construct a railway line linking Thalassery and Mysore, which can be expected to play a vital role in tourism development in Malabar in particular and Kerala and neighbouring Karnataka in general. It will result the opening up of direct train services from Kannur to two important tourism destinations, viz. Hyderabad and Tirupathy and can be an alternative when the Konkan railway line becomes not operational during monsoon.

**Airport Transport**

• The Government and tourism authorities should give top priority in getting the proposed Kannur international airport sanctioned by the Central Government which is all set to accelerate the development of tourism in particular and the development of the entire North Malabar region in general.

• The tourists from Europe, America and Latin American countries can access Kozhikode airport via Gulf countries, but most of them are ignorant of the same. So the Government may give adequate publicity in this direction.

**8.4.1.2. Accommodation**

• The tourism authorities may ask the Central Government to amend the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) rules so as to increase the accommodation
The proposed Thalassery - Mysore Railway Line

Source: The Thalassery Mysore Railway Line Action Council
facilities for tourists in beach areas paving the way for setting up of new hotels in Malabar.

- Steps may be initiated to provide necessary financial and other support services, particularly to small accommodation and restaurant units in Malabar so as to facilitate their renovation and increased availability of accommodation facilities and quality services for the potential tourists.
- Awareness may be created among the local people regarding the efficacy of the home stay concept in the development of Malabar as a tourist destination.

**8.4.1.3. Other Infrastructure Facilities**

- Separate budget allocation may be earmarked for Malabar in the State annual budget to ensure the rapid development of tourism in the region.
- A Malabar Tourism Development Committee may be constituted and allocated funds for its functioning. Malabar may be given due recognition in tourism development activities.
- With the objective of creating awareness of tourism and making aware of the benefits of offering homestay among the residents in Malabar, Tourism Development Societies may be set up on the lines of Kumbalangi (the idyllic village one the suburbs of Kochi) in each district of Malabar.
- Interstate tourism circuits may be developed connecting all leading destinations in Malabar.

**8.4.2. Rural Tourism**

Time has come to link the local community with the tourism efforts so that the benefits of the big strides Kerala is making in the tourism sector trickled down to the common man. The aim of any rural tourism development activity should be to make the villages surrounding tourism centres self-sufficient through the revenue from tourism sector.

In Malabar, every village can boast of at least one or two tourism projects. The ever-increasing rate of growth of tourist inflow into conventional tourist destinations like Kovalam or Kumarakom can create social, environmental and carrying capacity problems, particularly during peak tourism season.

Malabar's age-old culture is evident in its rural life. The journey towards the path of rural tourism can be friendlier rather than alien and much misconception about tourism among the local inhabitants of rural Malabar can be wiped out with an eco-friendly approach. Besides, it will lead to the increased tourism flow to Malabar.
and thereby a balanced regional development of the State can be achieved. The focus on rural tourism in Malabar will get a chance to imbibe its culture. Rural tourism can be an effective medium for rural development, alleviating rural poverty and fighting rural employment in many places in the region like Wayanad, Palakkad and Kasaragod where the agriculture sector has been worse-affected due to cost escalation and the difficulty of finding better markets for farm produces.

Similarly, most of the tourism locations including beach and hill destinations in Malabar are being remained idle during off-seasons and this seasonality problem, as is observed, creates hassles to different stakeholders of the industry. At the same time, village tourism product is a non-seasonal one and it must be promoted as such.

Malabar has in its credit so many tourist attractions to suit any season. Even in acute rainy monsoon season called *edavapathy* during June to August, Malabar will be able to attract tourists to enjoy monsoon tourism, backwater tourism, Ayurveda tourism, medical tourism, cultural tourism consisting of classical arts, *yoga* retreat, martial arts like *Kalaripayattu*, film tourism etc. Ecotourism in Malabar can also be linked with rural tourism because the objective of the former is to throw open natural areas for tourist visit by conforming to strict rules and regulations for preserving the local, ecological conditions of the region. Similarly, it is necessary to highlight folk arts, rituals, shrines and pilgrim centres in Malabar region for extending tourism development activities to rural areas.

For preserving rural tourism in Malabar, action may be initiated on the following lines:

- A survey of the countryside of rural Malabar may be conducted to identify villages which have unique features for attracting tourists.
- Basic amenities and quality tourism support services such as better roads, electricity, drinking water, health and sanitation facilities, hygienic comfort stations, better accommodation facilities, banking and financial services, telecommunication and internet services may be documented and provided.
- Draft a Tourism Master Plan for each such selected village in consultation with the local Panchayat Raj institution and community organisation and development agencies. Utmost care may be taken to preserve the biodiversity and cultural tradition of the village while implementing plans and programmes.
• Suitable participation programmes may be formulated to take the local community into confidence and a feeling must be inculcated in them that the project is a part of a development activity which is meant to eradicate rural poverty and unemployment.

• In order to make the village tourism to be successful, a rural tourism development agency may be formed either as an autonomous body or as a separate wing of the Department of Tourism.

• Separate budget allocation may be made every year for rural development programme.

• Such funding/budget allocation by the Government may be supplemented by adequate private participation too as regards finance, man power and services strictly adhering to transparent guidelines, the required amenities and/or support services may be provided on BOM (build, operate and manage) basis or lease basis or on income sharing basis or under suitable arrangement with local agencies.

• Unique tourism packages may be designed with respect to each rural tourism project so as to attract domestic and international tourists.

• Each village tourism project may be adequately publicized by developing separate web sites on the Internet.

• The progress of rural tourism projects may be monitored and evaluated at regular intervals and the effective measures may be taken to make them highly receptive to discerning tourists.

• Increased focus may also be given on plantation and farm based tourism in Malabar region particularly badly affected agrarian sector in Wayanad by wide price fluctuations in agricultural commodities. Wayanad with its mixture of agricultural products and heritage sites such as Edakkal Caves provides potential to involve indigenous people in the tourism sector. Training people particularly tribes in local crafts such as bamboo or such other locally available materials in Wayanad or Palakkad and providing them administrative skills is one way of promoting tourism to benefit indigenous people.

8.4.3. Tourism Awareness, Promotion and Marketing

• Steps may be taken to market Malabar by creating a special brand on the lines of Kerala tourism as “Kerala – God’s Own Country”.
• With the object of getting exposition in their travel write-ups and thereby finding a place in the international tourism map, the world-renowned travel writers may be invited to Malabar.

• Increased publicity may be given to the concept of home stays as this would result in the creation of additional income to those who are badly affected by the failure of agricultural crops in the region.

• With the objective of creating awareness of tourism and making aware of the benefits of offering homestay among the residents in Malabar, Tourism Development Societies may be set up on the lines of Kumbalangi (the idyllic village one the suburbs of Kochi) in each district of Malabar.

• Arrangements may be made to conduct Malabar Travel Mart on a yearly basis instead of conducting once in two years. Mini Travel Mart may also be conducted in such destinations as Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram and Kasaragod.

• The three tier panchayat institutions may be asked to take the lead role in establishing sign boards indicating the important tourism destinations in Malabar.

• Steps may be taken to promote Thrissur Pooram as an international tourism product.

• Sites of well known temples/places of worship in Malabar may be developed and given adequate publicity as religious sites for pilgrimage.

• Exclusive pilgrim circuits may be developed connecting all leading pilgrim tourist destinations in Malabar.

• Seminars and discussions with special focus on the tourism potentialities of Malabar may be conducted on a regular basis, say, for example, at least two seminars a year under the auspices of every DTPC on a rotational basis.

• Road shows may be held highlighting the potentiality of Malabar at important cities in North India so as to attract more domestic tourists to the region.

8.4.4. Tourism Information

• More information centres are to be opened in important tourism spots in Malabar. Tourism information offices may be set up at all major bus-railway stations and airports.
• Tourism brochures may also be prepared in important foreign languages other than English like German, Dutch, French, Arabic etc. so as to be helpful to those from non-English speaking countries.

• Over and above the existing tourism brochures, a comprehensive information system on all tourism attractions/destinations may be developed and made available at such centres. For this purpose, ‘Touch Screen’ computers may be arranged.

8.4.5. Local Involvement and Participation

• Encouragement may be given to ensure the maximum involvement and participation of the host population for the implementation and maintenance of tourism projects in Malabar.

• A panel of tourism experts in Malabar may be constituted with main objective of giving necessary guidelines connected with tourism activities to the local residents in important tourism locations.

• The village gram panchayat may be asked to identify the local tourism attractions/destinations/potentialities of the area with the help of local involvement and participation and to inform the same to the DTPCs.

8.4.6. Tourism Incentives and Investments in Malabar

• In order to exploit the unexplored tourism potentialities of Malabar and to attract private investment towards the region, steps may be initiated to set up Special Tourism Zone on the lines of Special Economic Zone. Priority may be given to ecotourism.

• Apart from the existing incentives and supports available to private entrepreneurs in tourism sector in the State, special incentives and packages may be made available to those who come forward to start tourism ventures in Malabar region. This is necessary to address the present backwardness of tourism in the region.

• The Government has already been providing 10 percent subsidy for investments in the tourism sector in the State. However, taking into consideration the backwardness of Malabar in tourism, its poor infrastructure facilities and to attract more tourists to the region, the subsidy may be raised to 20 percent for all investments made in the tourism sector in the region.
• Considering the present agricultural crisis being faced by the backward districts like Wayanad and Kasaragod as well as the tourism backwardness of the region as a whole, the tax exemption especially building tax may be given to all the districts in Malabar. (Presently, the backward districts in the State such as Kasaragod, Malappuram and Idukki continue such exemptions).

• Malabar has to its credit high potentiality of Gulf migrants. Proper guidelines may be issued to encourage the Non Resident Indians (NRIs) to invest in the tourism sector in the region. Joint efforts are to be made by the DTPCs and other stakeholder in this direction.

• The luxury and panchayat tax may be abolished in Malabar in view of the fact that the region is only on the path of introductory stage in tourism development.

• A five year tax holiday may be given for Malabar as an upcoming destination to encourage new investors and existing stakeholders.

8.4.7. Promotion of Beach Tourism

• Beach information centres may be opened at the leading beaches of Malabar, viz., Kappad, Muzhappilangad, Bekal etc.

• Majority of leading beaches in Malabar are remaining idle during day time mainly due to lack of adequate infrastructure facilities. Hence, steps may be initiated to arrange boating facilities, houseboat services, budget type accommodation units, restaurant services etc. at affordable costs to the discerning tourists to the region.

• Boats are to be arranged to bring the travellers from big ships to the beach shores.

• Aquariums, beach benches, chairs and umbrellas with aesthetic looks are to be provided in beaches in Malabar.

• Steps may be taken to start Dolphin Ocean Parks in leading beaches in the region such as Muzhappilangad, Kappad and Bekal as a part of starting innovative tourism products.

• Since Muzhappilangad beach, one of the best drive-in beaches in India, is not known to the majority of tourists visiting the State, adequate publicity may be given to promote this destination in international media and by creating a web site on this.
• Ropeway between Muzhappilangad beach and Dharmadam Island may be established.
• Appropriate action may be taken to avoid soil erosion in beaches, rivers and backwaters in Malabar.

8.4.8. Backwaters
• For the development of backwater tourism, the waterways from Kovalam to Kasaragod may be linked to enable operation of tourist boats including house boats.
• Backwater tourism activities to Malabar region may be dispersed by developing infrastructure at potential centres such as Chettuva, Kadalundi, Kozhikode, Parassinikkadavu, Neeleswaram and Valiyaparamba.
• Ecotourism activities may be created in backwaters of Malabar such as Wayanad, Kasaragod and Kannur districts.
• The tourism authorities have to be vigilant against dumping of pollutants by the side of the beaches and tourism backwaters of the region.

8.4.9. Promotion of Arts, Cultural and Heritage Tourism
• With the objective of achieving the increased tourists' days of stay in the region and thereby generating more income from tourism, cultural events may be introduced at the important tourist destinations in Malabar. Such events may be arranged either monthly or bi-weekly.
• Appropriate action may be taken by the Government and tourism authorities to revive Theyyam, the extinct art form of the region. Adequate facilities may be arranged for performing Theyyams on demand by the visiting tourists.
• Steps may be initiated to get included the Theyyam in the world tourism maps. This will pave the way for the cultural and economic growth of Malabar.
• Action may be initiated to publish an exclusive and comprehensive Theyyam calendar and to create a website for the same.
• Steps may be taken to set up a museum of Theyyam and other folk arts in a key destination in North Malabar.
• Arrangements may be made to list the unique social and cultural aspects of Malabar and present them in the international tourist map.
• Short term courses may be offered in performing arts of Malabar in Kannur and Calicut Universities and may be given wide publicity.
• **Kalarippayattu**, the unique martial art form and an important tourist attraction in Malabar may be made part of curriculum in both primary and high school classes in the State. This is necessary to save Kalarippayattu from its extinction.

• It is estimated that there are 725 *kavus* situated in Kannur and Kasaragod districts which are almost in extinct. The Department of Tourism may take over and renovate such *kavus* and arrangements may be made for performing *Theyyams* annually or at regular intervals.

• The activities of Kerala Folklore Academy may be extended to adivasi areas so as to highlight the arts and cultures of the subaltern classes before the society and the visiting tourists.

• Since Wayanad district is abundant with tourism resources and attractions, initiatives may be made to develop Adivasi community of Wayanad based on such resources and attractions in the district.

• For the purpose of propagating cultural tourism in Malabar, monthly or bi-weekly programmes may be arranged in the open theatre by the Folklore Academy.

• To promote cultural and heritage tourism and to preserve the rich heritage of tribal music dance and folk arts, the Government may constitute a Gothra Kalamandalam on the lines of Kerala Kalamandalam and its head quarters may be located in Wayanad.

• With the objective of promoting tourism in Malabar and also to give an exposure of the cultural tradition of the region to the new generation and create a driving force in different horizons, festivals may be organized at every district headquarters of Malabar on the lines of Malabar Shopping Festival which is being held at Kozhikode or Kannur Mahotsavam every year.

• Steps may be initiated for the protection and preservation of the Edakkal Cave situated in Ampukuthimala in Wayanad district.

• Steps may be initiated to highlight the sites of unique activities in Malabar like toddy tapping, uru making, beedi making, coir making, rubber tapping, many cultural activities in the region, sea animals, Guruvayoor, the oldest church, the oldest mosque, Pazhassi Raja Tomb , Site at Kozhikode where Vasco De Gama and Chinese Admirals landed etc.
8.4.10. Cuisine

- Steps may be taken to popularize Malabar cuisine among the foreign and domestic tourists. Keeping this object in view, food festival focusing Malabar food items may be arranged at the important locations at least during peak tourism season.
- Similar linkage may be established with Mahe by opening up of wine connoisseurs, conducting wine festival and wine and alcohol tasting festival on regular basis in a prominent location which shares Kerala-Mahe borders.
- With the linkage of Tourism Department in Mahe, a Culinary Arts College may by set up either in Kannur or Kozhikode with the focus on French-Malabar-Mappila cuisines so as to popularize these unique items among the younger generations and visiting tourists.

8.4.11. Adventure tourism

- Steps may be initiated to popularize adventurous tourism in hill stations of Wayanad, Ranipuram in Kasaragod, Nilambur in Malappuram and Paithalmala and Aralam in Kannur. There are facilities for trekking, rock climbing, fishing in fresh water springs in forest environs etc. in these hill stations.
- Ropeway may also be established in important hill stations in Wayanad and Paithalmala and Ranipuram.
- In order to attract more tourists, particularly foreign tourists to Malabar, wide publicity may be given towards innovative products like water sports, aero-sports etc.

8.5. MALABAR: THE TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY

To effectively compete in today’s challenging business environment, successful destinations must have a strategic marketing plan and competitive strategy. The main aim of the tourism marketing strategy in a region like Malabar should be to ensure maximum effectiveness of promotional activity in order to strengthen and enhance the region’s position as an international tourist destination. The speed with which tourism is developing around the world obliges management of tourist destinations to continuously fine-tune their market development strategies.

In the formulation of marketing strategy in tourism industry, the main emphasis is on making possible a fair blending of inputs and outputs. The inputs are tourism products, distribution, pricing and promotion, whereas the outputs are the
objectives such as the target return on investment, market share, brand image and leadership.

8.5.1. Promoting Malabar as a Tourist Destination

The authorities while formulating strategy for Malabar are required to select the best product, i.e., the well managed tourist resorts, hotels, transport and communication systems keeping in view the tastes and preferences of tourists. Similarly, the authorities may make suitable arrangements for tour operators and travel agents so that the quality of services reaches to the target markets in a proper manner and the pricing strategies are in tune with their status. As in the case of inputs, they have to manage the outputs where the tourist organizations are to be ensured that their investments in no way are to be unproductive or unprofitable and the brand image created is found helpful in establishing a leadership in the market. The tourism marketing strategy for the region will become effective in establishing leadership, provided the authority have successfully amalgamated the strategy related to product, promotion, distribution and pricing.

A starting point in promoting Malabar as a tourist destination could be to focus on identified groups who can be easily reached. The following are some such groups:

- **Non-resident Indians (NRIs):** Majority of NRIs in Kerala are from Malabar region employed particularly in Gulf and Western countries, who could be the starting point to build Malabar as an international destination.

- **International expatriates:** A large number of expatriates are now in India as a result of the liberalized economic trade. As the focus of the marketing plan, they offer substantial potential for dissemination of opportunities to a large overseas population.

- **Business travellers:** The ongoing IT revolution has resulted in a large number of business travellers who could be tapped for a direct audience as well as for their potential for positive word of mouth dissemination. For instance, as it is observed, a large number of IT professionals from Bangalore and Mysore of neighbouring Karnataka are nowadays visiting North Malabar particularly to Wayanad, Kozhikode and Kannur for their weekend relaxation. Further, the opening up of the proposed international airport in Kannur can be expected to fillip the tourism and IT sectors in Malabar in a big way.
• **Corporate:** Corporates today are increasingly looking at identifying healthy ‘get-aways’ for employees and also actively encouraging the concept of holidays. For example, there has been a steady flow of domestic tourists from several parts of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to the northern parts of Malabar, particularly Wayanad and Kannur in recent times. This segment could be tapped for creating a captive pool of tourists.

• **Travel and tour operators/International airlines/International hotel chains:** This is the single most important link in the tourism promotion plan. An elaborate network with the major travel and tour operators, airlines and hotels in the target segments and arrangements with them to direct tourist traffic into Malabar is essential.

• **Linkage with neighbouring destinations:** In order to achieve a good start to Malabar tourism campaign, a linkage with neighbouring tourist destinations like Mahe, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu could prove to be very useful. Bangalore, Madikeri and Mysore in Karnataka and Ootty, Nilgiri, Mettupalayam, Salem and Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu have already been enjoying healthy tourist inflows. Arrangements with travel agents and tour operators catering to the tourist flow in these destinations can surely be expected to provide a boost to the tourism industry in Malabar.

8.5.2. The Marketing Strategy

In order to achieve the goal of positioning Malabar as an international tourist destination and to achieve the economic objectives, there is a need to evolve a long term marketing strategy for Malabar.

8.5.2.1. Components of a Long Term Strategy

• **Identify potential circuits:** The diverse and unique tourist offering from Malabar provides scope for creation of a moderately large number of circuits, viz., beach circuit, wild life circuit, mountain circuit, pilgrim tourism circuit, cultural tourism circuit and so on. However, promotion of too many circuits at the same time may lead to the confusion and hence diffusion of the positioning.

• **Establishing carrying capacities and revenue potential.**

• **Prioritize development plans:** A working group of the industry may be formed to evolve a prioritization of the circuits.
Develop a ‘Circuit Portfolio’ from the choices available: It can be generally assumed that the number of tourists visiting the same circuit repeatedly is going to be low. It is therefore, very essential to retain tourists who are already familiar with the area. This requires:

- Ensuring complete satisfaction for the tourist.
- Providing the satisfied tourist an option to return for a fresh circuit.
- Moreover, such tourists have the multiplier effect form positive word of mouth to direct traffic to the circuit.

Keep the portfolio contemporary: The portfolio of the circuits must be reviewed from time to time in keeping with the success rates, international trends, tourist feed back. The advantage of having a long list of potential circuits is the flexibility to alter the portfolio of circuits to keep it attractive and hence maintain a contemporary Malabar image.

Focused offering: Each segment of tourists can be offered a choice as per their needs and not a generic offering. Thus an offering for the European tourist can be different from the offering for the South East Asian tourist. For example, whereas Germans love beaches with a lot of sun, the French have more interest in witnessing art and culture. At the same, one of the important strengths of Malabar as a tourist destination is that it has in its credit diversified tourism attractions and resources. Malabar’s beaches are renowned for their calmness, tranquility, virginity and purity throughout the world. Theyyam and Kalarippayattu of Malabar are famous among the foreign tourists. A number of tourists are visiting Kannur and Kasaragod districts during summer to see Theyyams, the unique art from of North Malabar. The diversity in Malabar facilitates these options, and can significantly expand the potential target segment.

Customization: The diversity of offerings also facilitates a choice in the combination of destinations constituting a circuit, thus providing an option to fit to the needs of various segments.

8.5.3. Tourism Development Plan in Malabar: Action Agenda

The tourism industry in Malabar along with the support from the government and different stakeholders should set in motion a two step action plan:

8.5.3.1. Potential assessment:

A detailed study on the potentialities of the region may be conducted to assess:
• The carrying capacity of the circuits
• The nearest competitor of each of the circuits in Kerala and their offering
• The cost of those similar circuits
• The right target segment for the circuit
• The infrastructure available at the locations in the circuit that facilitates tourism.
• The connectivity of the location.

8.5.3.2. Portfolio development:

Similarly, a portfolio of circuits may be developed consisting of:
• Existing ‘ready to promote’ sites: those which require only facilitation
• New ‘ready to promote’ sites: newly identified sites and circuits that need promotional support
• New ‘suitable for immediate’ development sites: those which need to be taken up for concept planning and development
• New ‘suitable for future’ development sites: for bringing in newness to the concept.

The industry and the government should prioritize from amongst the circuits identified, in terms of carrying capacity, earning potential accessibility, available infrastructure etc.

8.5.4. Developing Malabar as a Tourist Circuit

Developing Malabar as a tourist circuit encompasses developing all important destinations in the region along the circuit route. The following is the range of activities that need to be undertaken, after the identification of the circuit:
• Identify the entry and exit points of the circuit, and review the connectivity to these points. The choice of the end points should be such as to facilitate easy access.
• Upgrade the civic infrastructure at all the destinations in the circuit. This should cover aspects such as streetlights, cleanliness, urban roads etc.
• Upgrade/establish facilities at the destinations. This would include aspects such as hotels, restaurants, local travel arrangements, banking facilities, facilities for cultural tourism etc. to spend idle time.
• Establish infrastructure facilities along the circuit. This would cover aspects such as roads, food, motels, public utilities, telecommunication facilities, internet and ATM facilities etc.
• Ensure safety and security, both along the circuit and at the destinations.
• Provide information and assistance to facilitate the tourist. This should cover information of travel and stay arrangement options, costs, information about the tourist location and circuit and any other such related issues. Setting up of tourist information centres at the main gateways could be a starting point towards realizing this objective.

8.5.5. Policy Initiatives

A healthy mixture of infrastructure development, marketing decisions and policy initiatives should be taken to achieve the goal of positioning Malabar as a contemporary tourist destination and also to achieve the socio-economic and revenue generation objectives. Much effort is to be put in to meet the requirements of the increased tourist inflow expected from the aggressive positioning of Malabar.

8.5.6. Long Term Sustainability of Circuits: Managing Trends

There will be a tendency for any circuit/destination to lose its contemporary value as more circuits emerge or competing offers come in, or the tourism trends change. New circuits or combinations or circuits need to be continuously evolved, new destinations added and supports attractions created in order to keep the tourism concept in Malabar in line with contemporary trends. The value of the destination and circuit will have to be monitored and efforts will have to be made to ensure continuous increase in this value.

8.5.7. Managing Seasonality: Moving Towards a Steady Region

Any tourism development plan in any area or destination will have to address the issue of seasonality. Certain circuits could have steady state flow of visitors, while others like hill stations or beaches, would have only seasonal flows. This will have an impact on their carrying capacity. The following are a few suggestions to address the problem of seasonality in Malabar:

• Differential pricing across different seasons: This system is already popular with a few leading tourism hotels. It can be very successfully extended to other cost elements such as travel, in order to even out the tourist flows.
• Build infrastructure at nodal points: Nodal points which serve as confluence for several circuits could be used to build up infrastructure, especially for travel and stay. This will balance the facilities across circuits.
• Make temporary arrangements with the support of local community for highly seasonal locations.
8.5.8. Infrastructure and Connectivity

As indicated earlier, one of the key problems facing the growth of tourism in Malabar is poor infrastructure facilities. The region runs short of accommodation facilities, particularly during the peak tourism season. For example, most of the accommodation units including home stays and tree houses in Wayanad become overbooked right from the beginning of the tourism season. Similarly, the major parts of entry into a greater part of Malabar have limited connectivity to international hubs. These two factors substantially limit the potential of Malabar to tap tourists. Connectivity issues can also be witnessed to neighbouring locations as Ooty, Nilgiri, Mysore, Bangalore, Mangalore etc. Consequently, the diversity of the tourist offering of Malabar remains off the map of several potential tourists to the region.

8.5.9. Malabar: Current Status

From a number of issues hindering the growth of tourism in Malabar noted above, they can be categorized into two, viz., (a) soft issues and (b) hard issues

8.5.9.1. Soft issues

- Lack of awareness on Malabar
- Lack of shared/common position
- Absence of focused promotion
- Limited realization of socio-economic benefits of tourism
- No/limited incentive for private sector participation in tourism development
- Absence of long term tourism policy exclusively for Malabar
- Limited appreciation of carrying capacity and ecological issues

8.5.9.2. Hard issues

- Lack of professionalized tour operators in the region
- Highly limited infrastructure facilities: hotel accommodation / airlines /airports/train services
- Poor circuit amenities and civic infrastructure
- Lack of circuit developments
- Poor hygiene conditions in important tourism destinations
- Poor maintenance of tourist locations
- High cost structure/taxation issues
- Shortage of funds earmarked for the development of Malabar
8.5.10. Malabar as a Tourist Destination – SWOT Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Strengths</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weaknesses</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity of offerings</td>
<td>Developments in general confined to the southern and central parts of the State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique tourism products</td>
<td>Problem of less developed infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abundance of nature based tourism</td>
<td>Lack of direct flight connection to most of the districts of Malabar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untouched Malabar and its tropical rain forests</td>
<td>Lack of railway line to a leading destination, viz., Wayanad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century old and rich traditions</td>
<td>Lack of accommodation facilities particularly during peak season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich tradition in Ayurveda, Kalaripayattu and Yoga</td>
<td>Lack of professional touch to various tourism related activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home to several important pilgrim centres</td>
<td>Lack of awareness of tourism among the host population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm hospitality of soft spoken people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical layout of seven important districts in Kerala</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No law and order problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Opportunities</strong></th>
<th><strong>Threats</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ever growing tourism sector at the State level</td>
<td>Competition from neighbouring bordering states such as Karnataka and Tamil Nadu as the leading destinations and from southern parts of the State itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of a strong Kerala brand as God’s Own Country</td>
<td>Relatively weak positioning in comparison with individual destinations at the State level, e.g., backwaters of the southern parts of the State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbouring Bangalore as the IT hub of south India - Scope for tremendous business travellers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope for being marketed Malabar as a strong ecotourism destination which is the rising segment of tourism globally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Presence of international airports at Kozhikode and neighbouring Mangalore, Karnataka
The proposed Kannur International Airport is expected to become a reality in the near future
Increased focus on Malabar initiated by the Government of Kerala in recent times

Excessive popularity of some virgin destinations in the region may cause traveller traffic beyond destinations’ carrying capacity with the result of spoiling them
Other destinations in Kerala particularly the southern and the central parts of the State (Kovalam beach/Kumarakom backwater stretch) which are popular globally and further tourism promotion plans are being increasingly centered around them

8.6. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
The present study on tourism in Kerala with special focus on Malabar based on the views and perceptions of the sample of tourists and tourism officials examined mainly the tourism potentialities of the region in terms of certain indicators. The study cannot be said to be an exhaustive one mainly because, there are still other aspects which are not covered in the study, but could be taken up by other researchers in future. To understand the present status of the region’s tourism in depth, specific studies on divergent aspects of tourism products have to be carried out. There are ample scope for conducting specific studies relating to Malabar itself such as the unique cultural tourism products of the region with special reference to Theyyam and Kalaripayattu, Beach Tourism, Ecotourism and the negative impacts of tourism particularly on the ecology and environment and so on. Specific studies of this kind may be conducted to get deeper insights into the tourism potentialities of Malabar.
8.7. CONCLUSION

Kerala tourism products’ destiny should be linked to keeping of the product attractive and also to ability of the marketers to market as a unique destination. The product has to be differentiated, that means, it must be different from other destinations and otherwise there is no reason why tourists should visit here.

There must also be a value proposition to the product. Actually, Kerala has been able to do it differently and has created a good positioning in the market and the efforts should be continued in future also. The positioning strategy of Kerala was highly successful and created much impact.

Kerala should envisage a tourism that is pro poor as opposed to what most countries, especially Third World nations, appear to have initiated. Such a policy would benefit indigenous people, apart from protecting the environment.

The heard melodies are sweet and those unheard are sweeter. The same can be equally true about the tourist spots and attractions across Malabar. The authorities and the entrepreneurs associated with the tourism industry in the region have to realize that the destination or product has a unique flavour and the sum total of the flavours would be able to create the differentiation. It might be on account of the continuous efforts of different stakeholders in tourism that many such places in Malabar which have been spotted are now going to find a place in the tourist map of Kerala. In order to realize the economic benefits in a concrete way, the mindset of the society has to be changed so as to create a better atmosphere paving the way for the development of this novel and humane industry for the betterment of Malabar in particular, and the entire State of Kerala and its people in general.