Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Housing is a basic need of man. In importance, it is third after food and clothing. The importance of housing was universally accepted from the dawn of history. Even the Neolithic man who lived between 10,000 and 2000 B.C. built durable habitation like pit dwellings, lake dwellings and beehive huts. However, its functions increased manifold over the years. Primitive men sought some kind of protection against wild animals and natural calamities. Housing protection is also sought against enemies as well. When the institutions of private property came to be recognized housing received a big boom in the investment sector.

With the development of knowledge and the advancement of civilization, people became particular about sanitation, environment, privacy, location of house, etc. He becomes more conscious of better facilities, which make his life easy and very comfortable. With the invention of electricity and other facilities the development of housing became more important. Then man began to bring electricity, toilet, bath, washbasin etc. within the walls of his house. Houses become useful in various ways. A house is the place where one can take rest, sleep and cook food. A house can also be used partly as a shop, work place, or a place for business for any type of activities. In developed countries the top most executives bring their work home in their own briefcases and get it done in the home at night. A significant percentage of recreational activities is being brought into the house with the advent of television, radio, computer, recorded music etc. As per the available information man spends a good part of his lifetime in his house. This clearly indicates the fact that a house is a part and parcel of a man’s life.¹

House making is one of the world’s oldest as well as richest cultures. India is known for its architectural varieties. White-marble TajMahal, the famously ornate temples in the south, Buddhist temples, the colonial architecture of Delhi and Calcutta, the forts of Rajasthan are examples. India’s geographical variety is unsurprisingly enormous, given its size. While the north is made up of the foothills to the Himalayas, the south has jungles, deserts, beaches, and the vast Deccan
Plateau in the south is physically monotonous, a relatively unvarying landscape stretching out over hundreds of kilometers.\(^2\)

India is the second most populous country after China. India is emerging as an important business location, particularly in the services sector. Its favourable demographics and strong economic growth make the country an attractive place for property investors.

Historically, the real estate sector in India was unorganized and characterized by various factors that impeded organized dealing, such as the absence of a centralized title registry providing title guarantee, lack of uniformity in local laws and their application, non–availability of bank financing, high interest rates and transfer taxes, and the lack of transparency in transaction values. In recent years however, the real estate sector in India has exhibited a trend towards greater organization and transparency.

Increase in the number of organized builders and transparency have contributed to the development of reliable indicators of value and the organized investment in the real estate sector by domestic and international financial institutions. This has also resulted in the greater availability of financing for real estate developers. Regulatory changes permitting foreign investment are expected to further increase investment in the Indian real estate sector. The nature of demand is also changing, with heightened consumer expectation that are influenced by higher disposal incomes, increased globalization and the introduction of new real estate products and services.

These trends have benefited from the substantial growth in the Indian economy, which has stimulated demand for land and developed real estate industry across the country. Demand for residential, commercial and retail real estate is rising throughout India, accompanied by increased demand for hotel accommodation and improved infrastructure.

Now a days housing sector in Kerala is the fastest moving real estate segment. Kerala housing sector has registered tremendous growth on the basis of rising income, growing urbanization, migration of the population towards urban region in search of employment. Kerala housing sector is now shifting towards the
upper class and upper middle class people, it is also concentrating on medium and luxury housing. This shift from economy to luxury housing will boost the growth in the housing sector. The luxury housing segment offers lots of growth opportunities for Indian and foreign players.

A big luxurious home is the ultimate status symbol in a space starved state like Kerala. Adequate housing is so much an integral part of the needs of every society at large is hardly questioned. In earlier days the concept of living as far as an average Keralite was only an accommodation within the joint family structure already existing. Now the family concept has been transformed to nuclear family and their desire for separate living necessitated the construction of individual house. Earlier, Keralites took pride in living in independent houses, but factors such as security made them look at alternatives. A gated villa lets the consumers live in an individual house, at the same time provide them with the amenities and benefits of apartment living.

Against a backdrop of recent strong growth of urban population has lead to increasing problem of housing in Kerala. Majority of the houses in Kerala are constructed by the people themselves with their own resources. Till recently Keralites considered Villas and Apartments as a symbol of luxury for the upper class people. But now it has been totally changed. Buyers for Villas and Apartments are increasing day by day. To own a villa or apartment is the only option for living in town or nearby. As far as employed husband and wife are concerned their family life is concentrated in the city. As such education of their children, shopping, and other entertainment facilities are related with the city. Further to this conveyance facility, hospital and security problems are also motivating them to reside in cities. Even the high income group can’t imagine purchase of plot and construction of a house in city since it is unaffordable. Scarcity of adequate land and unaffordable price are the main issues behind this. In this situation the importance of Villas and Apartment comes up.

Consumer behavior is one of the topics that marketer uses to better understanding of consumer on how their behavior react when comes to buying decisions. Perception is how one view under the influence of past experience,
personal opinion. In today’s globalizing economy competition is getting more and more fierce. That means it becomes more difficult for products and services such as Villas and Apartments to differentiate themselves from other services than ever before. Since product difference are closed at an increasing speed and many builders try to win the battle for customers by price reduction and service tend to become commodities. On the other hand, customer behavior becomes more hybrids. On one hand, customers are increasingly price sensitive. On the other hand they enjoy branded and luxury Villas and Apartments. In this situation the development of a strong relationship between customers and builders could likely prove to be a significant opportunity for competitive advantage. This relationship is no longer based on features like price and quality alone. Today it is more the perceived experience a customer makes in his various interactions with a company that can make or break the relationship. The important point here is the involvement of feelings, emotion and perception. In today’s competitive marketplace, these perceptions are becoming much more important than gaining sustainable competitive advantage.

In order to develop appropriate marketing strategies, builders need to know factors influencing the buying of Villas and Apartments. This study will provide further insights about the buying behavior and how these can be used to devise marketing strategies of builders. Consumer behaviour can be defined as “those activities directly involved in obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and service, including the decision processes that precede and follow these actions”. Moreover, Schiffman and Kanuk mentioned that consumer behaviour is “the behaviour that consumers display in searching for purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of product, service and idea which they expect will satisfy their needs”. Therefore, knowing the factors which influence the buying behaviour could increase the sales volume.

The consumer behaviour is an important factor to indicate the decision making process in buying a house. Moreover, the buying behaviour is influenced by both internal and external factors. The internal factors comprised of motivation, perception, consumer resources, knowledge, attitudes, personality, values and lifestyle. Cultural background, social class, personal influence, reference group and
situation also influence the decision-process behaviour. Reference group could be assembled into three components that is family, friends and colleagues. Kotler cited that buyer decision process passing through five stages that is: (1) need recognition, (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) purchase decision and (5) post purchase behaviour.

This process starts with the buyer recognizing a need which can be inspired by internal or external stimuli. In this case the need for buying a house.

The next stage is searching housing information from several sources. Kotler mentioned four groups of information sources, such as personal, commercial, public and experiential sources. The developer from the brochure, advertisement or the salespeople could supply the commercial and public information. On the other hand, information from personal sources such as friends and family could be more convincing than the formal information from the developer. This study purposes to evaluate the consideration factors in buying a house which was done after the information searching. The head of the family or others which could be influenced by other parties might do the purchase decision. Finally, the consumer satisfaction could be checked as the post purchase behavior.

To develop an appropriate marketing plan, Builders need to know the factors influencing buying decisions with regard to Villas and Apartments. In this backdrop, a study was conducted to understand the buyers’ expectations about Villas and Apartments, factors influencing buying behavior and their level of satisfaction. Factors such as dwelling unit features, dwelling unit support services, neighborhood facilities, preferred facilities in Villas and Apartments, factors related to purchase decision etc. were included in the study. The findings of the study would help builders in Kerala to get a better insight about buyers’ expectations and fine-tune their projects accordingly. This will have an impact on formulation of marketing strategies by builders in Kerala.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Density of population in Kerala is comparatively high. Availability of residential plots is limited. So Real Estate and Construction sector in Kerala is showing high growth in recent times. Contrary to the traditional view, average
Keralite is showing interest in buying Villas and Apartments. There is stiff competition in this sector. Builders are using different styles of promotional strategies for increasing their sales. There is a need for builders to have a better understanding of their target market.

Consumer behavior is an area of study which gives insight to marketers regarding how consumers behave, while making buying decisions. In today’s globalized economy, competition is getting intensified. Due to this, it becomes more difficult for products and services such as Villas and Apartments to differentiate themselves from other services than ever before. Builders do not differ significantly in terms of architectural style, design, and basic amenities being offered. On one hand, customers prefer to buy Villas and Apartments. On the other hand, they are becoming more price sensitive. In this situation the development of a strong relationship between customers and builders could likely to provide a significant opportunity for competitive advantage. This relationship is no longer based on features like price and quality alone. But it is more influenced by the perceived experience a customer makes in his various interactions with a company that can make or break the relationship.

This study was an attempt to identify Preferences of buyers of Villas and Apartments, their expectations about Villas and Apartments, their expectations about service from builders and influence of internal and external factors on decision making. This study considered features such as pricing, Investment, Vasthu concepts, Construction related risk factors, Advertisement and sales promotion etc. An attempt is also made to identify the important factors influencing buying behavior and satisfaction level of buyers of Villas and Apartments in Kerala. Hence the problem of the study can be stated as “What are the expectations of buyers about Villas and Apartments in Kerala, What are the factors that influence their buying behaviour and to what extent they are satisfied with respect to their purchase of Villas and Apartments?”

1.3. Scope of study

Kerala is a state with higher level of population density which resulted in the problem of not having adequate accommodation for many people. Due to high price,
insufficiency of land, high cost of land registration, and high price of building materials, people are now less interested to construct house on their own. That’s why they turn to real estate companies who are providing Villas or Apartments. As a result, real estate business has thrived over the years.

The study of consumer buying behavior involves trying to understand complex human beings and the reasons they act the way they do in the market place. It recognizes that consumer decisions take place inside a person who has a distinctive personality and attitudes. Builders should embrace the study of consumer behavior to better understand the reasons behind market choices. The incorporation of buying behavior concepts into decision making process of Villas and Apartments will improve the understanding of individual decision-making process. This understanding will lead to better explanations and predictions in markets and, as a result, greater success in the market place.

This study covers various aspects related to buying of Villas and Apartments in Kerala. External and Internal factors affecting the buying of Villas and Apartments, Buyers expectation about Villas and Apartments, Buyers expectation from builders, Other factors such as pricing, investment, Vasthu, construction related risk factors, Buyer objectives, Buying decision and level of satisfaction were included in this study. This study was done by collecting data from the consumers of Villas and Apartments, in Kerala. For the purpose of the study, the three regions of Kerala – North, Central and South were considered.

1.4. **Significance of the Study**

Now a days, the practice of buying Villas and Apartments in Kerala is on the rise. National and International builders are competing each other, with appealing projects with the backing of advanced technologies and world class architectural style. From the data available from various sources regarding the number of completed Villas and Apartments in earlier years, it can be seen that there is growth in the number of projects completed over the years. This is testimonial to the fact that there is an increase in demand for Villas and Apartments in Kerala and there exists a great potential for this sector. But not many systematic studies to understand the factors influencing the buying of Villas and Apartments as well as the consumer
satisfaction were done in the context of Kerala. Hence there exists a gap in the body of knowledge regarding these aspects related to the buying of Villas and Apartments. This study is an attempt to fill the above mentioned gap. This study aims at knowing the expectations of buyers of Villas and Apartments, factors that influence the buying behavior and to assess their level of satisfaction.

The findings of this study have certain implications. One is that a new set of knowledge is being produced with regard to the various dimensions of buying Villas and Apartments in Kerala. Another is that the findings can be used by Researchers to set directions for further studies on this topic. Yet another implication is for the industry. The inferences made in this study will help the builders to have better insights about the perceptions of consumers, factors that would influence their buying process and behaviour, the level of consumer satisfaction etc. The builders can consider this information while planning and designing new projects in the future period of time. Moreover they can use this for devising appropriate marketing strategies to entice buyers. Hence the study is significant in ways more than one.

1.5. Objectives of the study

1. To study the Buyers expectations about buying of Villas and Apartments.

2. To study the factors that influence the buying behaviour with respect to Villas and Apartments

3. To assess the level of satisfaction of Buyers with respect to Villas and Apartments.

4. To suggest measures to devise marketing strategies for the builders of Villas and Apartments.

1.6. Variables used for the study

Major variables used for the study are Buyers expectation about Villas and Apartments, Buyers expectation from builder, Pricing and Investment factors, External factors, Internal factors, Buyer Objectives, Construction related risk and Satisfaction level. From the literature review, many sub-variables were identified, which are given below.
a. ** Buyers expectation about Villas and Apartments** includes Dwelling unit features, Dwelling unit support services, Social environment and Neighborhood facilities

i. **Dwelling unit features**: It includes Square ft. area of building, Over all Vasthu aspects, UDS (Undivided share), Number of floors, Arrangement of rooms, Availability of space allotted for each room, Size and location of rooms, Availability of storage room, Size of windows, Space for children to study, The privacy within the house and Space for prayer room.

ii. **Dwelling Unit Support Services**: The sub variables included in this component are Cleanliness of drain, Garbage collection, Total environment Cleanliness, Prayer hall, Multi – purpose hall, Home insurance, Perimeter road, Pedestrian walkways, Banking/ATM facility, Play area, Car/ Motorcycle parking, Space for drivers and servants in the buildings, Wifi, Gymnasium, Swimming pool, Library, Common party area, Common visitors room, Periodical medical check-up/ Immunisation programme within the premises, Landscaping, Local shops, Food stalls, Installation of solar energy panel, Rain water harvesting and Installation of CC TV

iii. **Social Environment**: The sub variables included in this component are Air quality, Noise level, Fire and Safety measures, Round the clock security, Alarm system and Location away from Industrial area.

iv. **Neighbourhood Facilities**: The sub variables included in this component are Location near to schools/Colleges, Location near to town centre, Location near to police station, Location near to Hospital, Location near to Market, Location near to place of worship and Location near to public transportation services.

b. **Buyers expectation from builder** includes Documentation, Builders reputation, Management procedure and Builders sales promotional activities.
i. **Documentation**: - The sub variables includes Construction is based on a specific building plan, Layout permission is obtained from concerned authorities, Certification for basic infrastructure facility is obtained, No objection certificate from local bodies are obtained and Consent from Revenue Authorities are collected before the commencement of work.

ii. **Builders reputation**: - The sub variables includes in this components are Meeting project timelines, Program and project management skills, Communicating project status, After sales support, Understanding customer needs, Availability of resources, Global presence, Reliability & Integrity and Commitment to quality.

iii. **Management procedure**: - The sub variables includes Establishment & maintenance of Garbage collection system, Handling of Residents’ complaints, Furnishing provided by the management on request, Management response to construction defect (Detected after purchase)

iv. **Builders sales promotional activities**: - The sub variables includes in this components are Sales person Characteristics, Brand Perception, Brand Strength, Brand Loyalty, Package offered by builder, Promotional Schemes, Advertisement/Brochure settings, Advertisement Presenter, Company identification mark and Company Web sites.

c. **Investment** concepts include making safer long term investments, Income from rent, Anticipated income after retirement and Reduction in taxable income.

d. **Pricing** factor includes expectation about future economic conditions, Mortgage interest rate in comparison with competitor, Current and expected real disposable income and house price, Long term payment, Longer delivery period, EMI, Schedule of payment and Company ensuring financing source.

e. **External factors** include Demographic environment, Socio–cultural environment, Economic environment, Political environment, Legal environment, Technological environment, Reference group family and situational pressure.
f. **Internal factors** include Involvement, Feelings, Experience, Knowledge, perception, Motivation, personality, Attitude, Values, Taste and Preference, Learning and Time pressure.

g. **Perception of risk factor** include Timely handover of Villa or Apartment, quality of fittings and raw materials, Proper Apartment allotment according to the scheduled chart, Breach of contractual agreement by the developer, Getting approval for utilities from appropriate authorities (Water, gas, electricity, city corporation), Deviation from the traditional life style, Incurring periodical additional expenditure for the maintenance, Financial risk, Lack of sufficient time for the construction of house, Urgency arising out of transfer, shifting of residence and Psychological risk (Mental pressure, availability of raw materials, trade union issues, labour issues etc.).

h. **Satisfaction level of housing condition** includes Satisfaction with Dwelling unit features, Satisfaction with services by developer, Satisfaction with neighbourhood facilities, Satisfaction with Housing Quality and Neighbourhood problems.
1.7. Research model

**External Factors**
- Economic environment
- Technological environment
- Political environment
- Legal environment
- Socio-cultural environment - Beliefs & Traditions
- Family
- Situational pressure - Proximity to Relatives and Work Place

**Internal Factors**
- Involvement
- Feelings
- Knowledge
- Perception
- Motivation
- Personality
- Attitude
- Values
- Taste & preference
- Learning
- Time pressure

**Buyer’s expectation about Villas & Apartment**
- Dwelling unit features
- Dwelling unit support services
- Social environment
- Neighborhood facilities

**Buyer’s expectation from builder**
- Documentation
- Builders Reputation
- Management Procedures
- Builder’s sales promotional activities

**Buyer’s Satisfactory**
- Satisfaction with dwelling unit features
- Satisfaction with Services by developer
- Satisfaction with Neighborhood facilities
- Satisfaction with Housing Quality
- Satisfaction with Neighbourhood problems

Figure 1.1 Research Model
Based on the observations made from review of literature a conceptual framework was constructed to show the relationship existing among various variables considered for the study. The major factors affecting buyer objectives are external factors, internal factors, Buyers expectation about Villas and Apartments, Buyers expectation from builders, other factors such as pricing & investment, Vasthu and construction related risk factors. Under External Factors Economic environment, Technological environment, Political environment, Legal environment, Socio-cultural environment – Beliefs & Traditions, Family and Situational pressure - Proximity to Relatives and Work Place were considered. Under Internal factors Involvement, Feelings, Knowledge, Perception, Motivation, Personality, Attitude, Values, Taste & preference, Learning and Time pressure were considered. Dwelling unit features, Dwelling unit support services, Social environment and Neighborhood facilities were the sub variables considered under Buyers expectation about Villas and Apartments. Documentation, Builders Reputation, Management Procedures and Builder’s sales promotional activities were the sub variables considered under Buyers expectation from builders. Along with these variables factors such as pricing & investment, Vasthu and construction related risk factors were also considered. Under buyers satisfaction the sub variables considered were Satisfaction with dwelling unit features, Satisfaction with Services by developer, Satisfaction with Neighborhood facilities, Satisfaction with Housing Quality and Satisfaction with Neighbourhood problems.

1.8. Hypotheses

**Hypotheses - Apartment**

1. There is no significant relation between Neighbourhood facilities and External Factors.
2. There is no significant relation between Social Environment and External Factors.
3. There is no significant relation between Dwelling Unit Support Services and External Factors.
4. There is no significant relation between Dwelling Unit Features and External Factors.
Chapter I

Introduction

5. There is no significant relation between Dwelling Unit Features and Internal Factors.
6. There is no significant relation between Dwelling Unit Support Services and Internal Factors.
7. There is no significant relation between Social Environment and Internal Factors.
8. There is no significant relation between Neighbourhood Facilities and Internal Factors.
9. There is no significant relation between Documentation and External Factors.
10. There is no significant relation between Builders Reputation and External Factors.
11. There is no significant relation between Management Procedures and External Factors.
12. There is no significant relation between Builders Sales Promotional Activities and External Factors.
13. There is no significant relation between Documentation and Internal Factors.
14. There is no significant relation between Builders Reputation and Internal Factors.
15. There is no significant relation between Management Procedures and Internal Factors.
16. There is no significant relation between Builders Sales promotional Activities and Internal Factors.
17. There is no significant relation between Buyer Objectives and Buyers expectation about Apartment.
18. There is no significant relation between Buyer Objectives and Buyers expectation From Builder.
19. There is no significant relation between Buyer Objectives and PIVR factors.
20. There is no significant relation between Buying decision and Buyer Objectives.
21. There is no significant relation between Buyer Satisfaction with Dwelling unit features and Buying decision.
22. There is no significant relation between Satisfaction with services by developer and Buying decision.
23. There is no significant relation between Satisfaction with Neighbourhood facilities and Buying decision.
24. There is no significant relation between Satisfaction with Housing Quality and Buying decision.
25. There is no significant relation between Satisfaction with Neighbourhood problems and Buying decision.
26. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Apartment and Age group of the respondents.
27. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Apartment and Gender of the respondents.
28. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Apartment and Educational Qualification of the respondents.
29. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Apartment and Employment status of the respondents.
30. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Apartment and Gross income of the respondents.
31. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Apartment and Family Status of the respondents.
32. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Age group of the respondents.
33. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Gender of the respondents.
34. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Educational Qualification of the respondents.
35. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Employment status of the respondents.
36. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Gross income of the respondents.
37. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Family Status of the respondents.
38. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Age group of the respondents.
39. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Gender of the respondents.
40. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Educational Qualification of the respondents.
41. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Employment status of the respondents.
42. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Gross income of the respondents.
43. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Family Status of the respondents.

**Hypotheses - Villa**

44. There is no significant relation between Dwelling Unit Features and External Factors.
45. There is no significant relation between Dwelling Unit Support Services and External Factors.
46. There is no significant relation between Social Environment and External Factors.
47. There is no significant relation between Neighbourhood facilities and External Factors.
48. There is no significant relation between Dwelling Unit Features and Internal Factors.
49. There is no significant relation between Dwelling Unit Support Services and Internal Factors.
50. There is no significant relation between Social Environment and Internal Factors.
51. There is no significant relation between Neighbourhood Facilities and Internal Factors.
52. There is no significant relation between Documentation and External Factors.
53. There is no significant relation between Builders Reputation and External Factors.
54. There is no significant relation between Management Procedures and External Factors.

55. There is no significant relation between Builders Sales Promotional Activities and External Factors.

56. There is no significant relation between Documentation and Internal Factors.

57. There is no significant relation between Builders Reputation and Internal Factors.

58. There is no significant relation between Management Procedures and Internal Factors.

59. There is no significant relation between Builders Sales promotional Activities and Internal Factors.

60. There is no significant relation between Buyer Objectives and Buyers expectation about Villa.

61. There is no significant relation between Buyer Objectives and Buyers expectation From Builder.

62. There is no significant relation between Buyer Objectives and PIVR factors.

63. There is no significant relation between Buying decision and Buyer Objectives.

64. There is no significant relation between Buyer Satisfaction with Dwelling unit features and Buying decision.

65. There is no significant relation between Satisfaction with services by developer and Buying decision.

66. There is no significant relation between Satisfaction with Neighbourhood facilities and Buying decision.

67. There is no significant relation between Satisfaction with Housing Quality and Buying decision.

68. There is no significant relation between Satisfaction with Neighbourhood problems and Buying decision.

69. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Villa and Age group of the respondents.

70. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Villa and Gender of the respondents.
71. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Villa and Educational Qualification of the respondents.

72. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Villa and Employment status of the respondents.

73. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Villa and Gross income of the respondents.

74. There is no significant relationship between Buyer Expectation about Villa and Family Status of the respondents.

75. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Age group of the respondents.

76. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Gender of the respondents.

77. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Educational Qualification of the respondents.

78. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Employment status of the respondents.

79. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Gross income of the respondents.

80. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Expectation from Builder and Family Status of the respondents.

81. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Age group of the respondents.

82. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Gender of the respondents.

83. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Educational Qualification of the respondents.

84. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Employment status of the respondents.

85. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Gross income of the respondents.

86. There is no significant relationship between Buyers Satisfaction and Family Status of the respondents.
1.9. **Operational definitions**

- **Apartment**: Apartment' means a part of a building intended for any type of independent use including one or more rooms or enclosed spaces located on one or more floors or parts thereof in a building, intended to be used for residential purposes and with a direct exit to a public street, road or highway or to a common area, leading to such street, road or highway. This word is synonymous with residential flat (Kerala municipality building rules 1999).

- **Villa**: Villas are self-supporting estate at the heart of which is a large house, set around courtyards and gardens.

- **Consumer Behaviour**: The mental emotional and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing and using Villas/ Apartments so as to satisfy needs and desires.

- **Investment**: Purchase of Villa/Apartment is an investment with the idea that the asset will provide income in the future or appreciate and be sold at a higher price.

- **Price**: The amount of money expected, required, or given in purchasing of Villa/ Apartment.

- **Vasthu**: Vasthu is an ancient Indian science of architecture and buildings which helps in making a congenial setting or a place to live and work in a most scientific way taking advantage of the benefits bestowed by nature, its elements and energy fields for enhanced wealth, health, prosperity and happiness. According to Vasthu, there are five basic elements in the whole world. They are the Earth; Water; Air; Fire, Heat & Light; and Sky Cosmic.

- **Construction related risk**: In this study Construction related risk is an uncertain event or condition that results from the network form of work, having an impact that contradicts expectations. Typical construction risk categorisations are Technical, Legal, Natural, Social, Political, Unforeseen extra work and Omissions of construction work.
• **Self-concept:** Self-concept is an organized set of perceptions of the self consisting of such elements as the perceptions of one’s characteristics and abilities; the perception of oneself in relation to others; and objectives, goals and ideas that are perceived as either positive or negative.

• **Lifestyle:** Lifestyle refers to the distinctive ways in which consumers live, how they spend their time and money, and what they consider important activities, interest and opinions.

• **Consumer decision making process:** Consumer decision making may be defined as a process of gathering and processing information, evaluating it and selecting the best possible option. It consisting Problem recognition, Information search, Evaluation of alternatives and Purchase decision, Post – purchase behaviour

• **Dwelling:** Dwelling means a building or a portion thereof which is designed or used wholly or principally for residential purposes.

• **Dwelling unit features:** Dwelling unit features refer to the building design and floor plan of internal spaces within the dwelling unit. Building design consists sq. ft. area of building, building structure, over all vasthu aspects, number of floors and quality of finishing. Interior layout consists the living, dining, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, and toilet of the Villas/ Apartment

• **Dwelling unit support services:** Dwelling unit support services are the external space or support space outside the dwelling unit but within the housing block. The variables included are corridors, staircase, balconies, electricity supply, water supply, sewerage, drainage, telecommunication, lifts and fire fighting system.

• **Social environment:** Housing satisfaction has both design physical and social components. Social environment which is likely to impact housing satisfaction include variables such as noise, crime, accidents, security and community relation

• **Neighbourhood facilities:** Neighbourhood facilities influence residential satisfaction in many ways, because they refer to the position of the housing
area with respect to work place and other facilities such as distances to town centre, school, police station, hospital, market, shopping centres, public library, religious building, and taxi stations.

- **Documentation:** Customer is entitled to satisfy himself with the following documents, while purchasing Villas or Apartments. They are Original Sale Deed executed by the Builder in favour of the Purchaser; Original Registration Receipts; Original Stamp Duty Receipts, if any; Original receipts issued by the builder in favour of the Purchaser of the Apartment or Villa; Certified copy of the approved plan; Certified copy of the Building commencement certificate; Title certificate issued by the Solicitor/Panel Advocate; NOC from the Builder; Confirmation of the lien from the Builder; Architect’s certificate regarding the stage of construction and Builder’s Demand Notice. If the original sale deed is not returned by the office of the Sub-Registrar, a certified copy of the same may be accepted (Duly certified by the Sub-Registrar as “True Copy”).

- **Builders reputation:** Activities performed by builder which attempt to maintain or create a certain frame of mind regarding themselves in the public eye. The following are the key points. Meeting project timelines; Program and project management skills; Communicating project status; Developing and planning project objectives; After engagement support; Understanding customer needs; Global presence; Reputation & Image; and Commitment to quality.

- **Builders sales promotional activities:** Sales promotion is any initiative undertaken by a builder to promote an increase in sales.

- **External Factors:** External factors refers to those factors which are external forces that influence the buying decision process of Villas and Apartments. It includes Demographic environment, Economic environment, Technological environment, Political environment, Legal environment, Socio-cultural environment, Reference group, Family and Situational pressure.
Chapter I  Introduction

- **Demographic environment**: Demography is the study of population characteristics that are used to describe consumers. The demographic features which are of greater importance in the selling process of Villa and Apartments include Age, Gender, Educational qualification, Occupation, Income etc.

- **Economic Environment**: Economic environment consists of economic factors that affect purchasing power of Villas/ Apartments. Economic factors include Inflation, Unemployment, Interest rate, Savings patterns, Debt, Credit availability and income.

- **Technological Environment**: Technology is the knowledge of methods to perform certain tasks or solve problems pertaining to the construction and sale of Villas and Apartments.

- **Political environment**: Political environment includes governmental and special interest group that influence the purchase of Villas/Apartments. Social and religious organizations and media are part of political environment.

- **Legal Environment**: The term legal environment refers to laws that govern the setting up and functioning of Villas and Apartments. This include rules and regulations for the protection of consumer rights and norms for a fair trade practice.

- **Socio–Cultural Environment**: Socio-Cultural environment is the hierarchical division of the society in to relatively distinct and homogenous groups whose members have similar attitudes, values and life style.

- **Reference Group**: Reference group are groups that serve as frames of reference for individual in their purchase or consumption decisions.

- **Family**: Family means a group of individuals normally related in blood or connected by marriage living together as a single house-keeping unit.
• **Situational Pressure:** Situational pressure is a factor that results from circumstances, time and location which affect the consumer buying decision process.

• **Involvement:** Involvement is the act of participating in the purchase of Villa/Apartment.

• **Feelings:** An emotional state of customer when purchasing of Villa/Apartment.

• **Experience:** Practical contact with and observation of facts or events.

• **Knowledge:** Facts and information acquired through experience or education.

• **Perception:** It is a process by which individuals organise and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment.

• **Motivation:** Motivation is the desire within an individual that stimulates him or her to action.

• **Personality:** Personality can be defined as those inner psychological characteristics that both determine and reflect how a person responds to his or her environment.

• **Attitude:** An attitude is a learned predisposition to behave in a consistently favourable or unfavourable way with respect to a given object.

• **Values:** Ideas shared by the member of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable.

• **Taste:** Taste can be defined as the person’s ability to choose quality goods or goods suitable to him or her.

• **Preference:** Consumer preference refers to choose something better than previous goods.

• **Learning:** Consumer learning as the process by which individuals acquire the purchase and consumption knowledge and experience that they apply to future related behaviour.
Time pressure: Time pressure refers to the psychological stress resulting from having to get things done in less time than is required or desired.

1.10. Limitations of the study

This study was done by collecting data from the buyers of Villas and Apartments of certain select builders in Kerala. Hence the findings of this study are applicable to the buyers and builders considered for the study.

1.11. Presentation of Thesis

The whole study is presented in nine chapters

Chapter I: Introduction - The first chapter provides an overview of the research topic, statement of problem, scope of the study, significance of the study, objectives of the study, Variables used for the study, Research Model, hypotheses, operational definitions of concepts, limitation of the study, and scheme of presentation of the report.

Chapter II: Review of Literature - Second chapter attempts to review the available literature on different aspects of Apartments/Villas studies.

Chapter III: Real Estate Industry - An Overview - This chapter gives an overview of Real Estate Industry.

Chapter IV: Theoretical Framework - The fourth chapter explain the Conceptual/theoretical framework and Evolution theories used for the study.

Chapter V: Research Methodology - Methodological design adopted for the study such as Population, sampling, data collection tools and techniques, questionnaire, pilot study, Finalizing questionnaire, data collection and tools for analysis are included in fifth chapter.

Chapter VI: Data Analysis and interpretation - Sixth chapter contains four sections such as Part I, Part II and Part III and Part IV. Part I deals with Descriptive Frequency Analysis of respondents’ demographic characteristics. Part II deals with Factors Influencing Buying Decision and Buyer Preferences of Villas and Apartment Part III deals with Opinion of buyers of Apartment and Hypotheses
testing Part IV deals with Opinion of buyers of Villa and Hypotheses testing. The tools applied were Correlation, Regression and ANOVA.

Chapter VII: Findings - Main findings of the study are presented seventh chapter.

Chapter VIII: Future Scope and Conclusion - The future scope and conclusion based on study findings are covered in this chapter.

Chapter IX – Suggestions - The suggestions based on the study findings are given in this chapter.

Reference

1. Industrial and economic planning division of TPCO.