PREFACE

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world. It has to play a dominant role in the economies of most of the developing countries including India. A number of tourist destinations provide a large variety of tourism products. Economic diversification and technological improvement has created a very conducive environment for tourism development. Tourism acts as a driving force for employment generation, poverty alleviation and social harmony.

The Government of India has taken concerted steps in the promotion and development of tourism industry at national, regional and local levels such as identification of travel circuits, liberalized charter policy, provision of various financial and non-financial incentives, publicize the traditions, fair and festivals, conducting surveys, setting tourism committees, developing human resources, introduction of innovative marketing strategies, strengthening tourism product, development of infrastructure and superstructure, and so forth.

Tourism is a constantly growing industry and it has considerable potential in Kerala. A balanced climate, green vegetation, natural tourist spots, fully literate population etc. can be considered as Kerala’s strength in tourism. Kerala, the southern State of India, has been referred to as a paradise for tourists by the media worldwide. A gradual growth in both foreign and domestic tourist arrivals has happened in the last decade. This is mainly due to the diversification and enrichment of existing tourism products and the addition of more innovative tourism products.

Tourism in Kerala is really a round the year phenomenon. Public sector is the flagship of tourism industry in Kerala. Though a number of public sector agencies are involved in the development of tourism in the State, the DoT,
Government of Kerala and KTDC are the two agencies which play a great role in this promising sector of Kerala.

Unlike any other industry, tourism is considered to be the most sensitive service industry where meeting of different cultures take place. Tourism is very much a people based industry where one group of people (host) serves other group (guest). Therefore, significance of people factor is to be well acknowledged while designing and developing the marketing mix. People element in tourism applies to interaction and relationships between visitors or tourists, employees of tourism organisations and at the destination level, the host community. The interactions and relationships between these key ‘people’ groups will impact significantly on the level of product satisfaction experienced by the visitor, the satisfaction of the employee and the degree to which tourism is either accepted or rejected in the host destination. As the people element constitutes an important dimension in the management of tourism services in their role both as performers of services and as customers, the present study concentrates on the front line service people and tourists receiving their services. The approach of the public sector tourism agencies in developing the performance of service people and tourists and the perceived performance of both these people groups in the context of tourism industry in Kerala are the focus of the study.

The objectives of the study cover the extent of practice of select measures by the public sector tourism agencies in developing the performance of their service people and the tourists involved in the tourism delivery. The objectives of study also cover the actual performance of both service people and tourists involved in tourism delivery. The perceptions of service people and tourists are taken for analyzing the objectives. The primary data have been collected from 375 tourists and 80 service people by administering two sets of pre-tested structured interview schedules. The secondary data collected from various published and un-published sources mainly from 2001 to 2011 have been used for the study. For data analysis, descriptive statistical tools like
Percentage, Annual Growth Rate, Arithmetic Mean, Geometric Mean, and inferential tools such as Chi-square test, Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis H test, and Binomial Test have been used.

The report of the study is organized in six chapters. Chapter one gives an introduction which contains the review of literature, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the objectives of the study, hypotheses, variables used for the study, methodology, period of the study and limitations of the study. Chapter two provides a theoretical frame by linking various related concepts on the study. The Chapter three discusses the tourism development in India and Kerala and also the initiatives of public sector in developing tourism in the country. Chapter four presents the opinion of service people in public sector agencies regarding the extent of practice of select measures in developing their service performance. This chapter also bestows the views of both service people and tourists on the extent of adoption of select measures by the tourism agencies in developing the performance of tourists visiting Kerala. Chapter five portrays the perception of service people and tourists with regard to the level of their actual performance in tourism delivery. Chapter six being the last chapter contains a summary of findings, suggestions and conclusion of the study.

It is hoped that the findings of the study would be beneficial to the public sector authorities, policy makers, and the potential tourists for delivering sustainable tourism in Kerala.

Murali. E