6.4 CONCLUSION

“Customers today want the very most and the very best for the very least amount of money, and on the best terms” (Brian Tracy, 2010). In this new marketing scenario, everyone is going behind customer oriented business. Being a high volatile industry, the role of customers or tourists is very crucial in tourism industry. Health care services reflect several characteristics commonly associated with tourism services. They are intangible, both labour and skill intensive and high variability and high inseparable and perishable (Hurley, 2004). Tourism also exhibits all these features when tourism coupled with health care services. These characteristics should be doubled and much of the problems of health tourism should be studied from the perspective of loyalty to assess the effect of branding on the sales. Thus, health tourism business usually becomes highly volatile and sensitive due to the fundamental nature of tourism business. Hence, planners and marketing designers should promote the health tourism without losing its serenity. The present study concentrates on the holistic health care system of ayurveda in Kerala. As everybody agreed and proved the association of Ayurveda and Kerala is inseparable. The study tries to apply relationship marketing in health tourism services by studying the first three dimensions of CRM i.e., Customer Preference and Perception, Customer Satisfaction, and Customer Retention. The previous empirical studies as discussed in review on customer retention theories (Berry and Parasuraman, 1991 and Czepiel, 1990) have been substantiated in the current study.
The study reveals that the most favourable factors for Kerala as health tourism destination comprise of its authenticity and rich ayurvedic heritage with multifaceted attractions. The unique advantages of Kerala ought to be leveraged by the health resorts. Based on the study and extensive literature Gronroos, 1984, Mueller and Kaufmann, 2001,) the researcher suggests customer retention strategies to be adapted by the ayurvedic health resort to have a sustainable growth in health tourism. A customer retention model (Figure – 6.1) (PFBHS)-Prefer, Facilitate, Build, Hold and Sustain has been proposed for the selected ayurvedic resorts under the study in particular and other ayurvedic resorts in general to follow for capitalizing their unique selling propositions.

FIGURE – 6.1
PROPOSED MODEL ON CUSTOMER RETENTION TECHNIQUE

PREFERENCES AND IMAGE
By
Identifying the Preference and Priorities of Health Tourist and Leveraging the Destination Image

FACILITATE AND ACQUIRE
By
Lucid Pre-Trip Arrangements and Facilitating Easy Customer Acquisition

BUILD AND SATISFY
By
Improving the Service Quality Encouraging, Service Encounters and Enhancing Service Delivery

HOLD AND RETAIN
By
Exceptional Customer Service and Zero Defects leads to Customer Retention

SUSTAIN AND LOYAL
By
Envisaging Appropriate Customer Retention Techniques and Upgrading the Retained Customer to Loyal Customers
The PFBHS is the five phase strategy to be adopted by the ayurvedic resorts to create good CRM practice for ensuring sustainable relationship.

The phase one reveals the identification of preference and priorities of health tourists to identify the pre-purchase attitude on various health tourism services. The second phase is the travel planning stage where pre-trip arrangement, easy booking, and confirmation which finally leads to customer acquisition. The third stage is the crucial one which builds the positive post-purchase evaluation of health tourism services which results in satisfied customers. Since health and tourism is combined along with the highly volatile nature of the business, a positive post-consumption construct can acquire only by providing extra ordinary service quality and effective service delivery. The fourth phase is the extension of third phase. As customer satisfaction is a critical element of customer retention (Y. Anshoni and V. Langner, 2007), a satisfied customer tends to be retained by the resort. In other words only satisfied customers can be the repeat visitors for the resort. Thus, holding on to the satisfied customers by providing extra ordinary value added service and minimizing any ill-effects can retain the customers. The fifth stage or the final stage is to sustain and it is the loyalty phase. In this level, the retained customer should be provided with good customer retention tools like loyalty cards and family discounts. Thus, they become the ambassadors for the resort and promote the services about the resorts to their friends and relatives. Importantly, by involving effective positive customer participation, the image of health tourism centers as well as Kerala can be promoted.
To continue the relationship, the marketing managers should constantly assess the preference and satisfaction of health tourists. Thus, it becomes a continuous circular relationship in the emerging health tourism market of Kerala.