Chapter 7

FINDINGS SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

Findings

- It is true that this study does not give a rosy picture of tourism in Alappuzha. Its inadequacies and imponderables far outweigh its attraction. However, there is a steady rise in the number of foreign and indigenous tourists visiting this place from 2006 to 2011. This shows how enchanting Alappuzha is for the tourists and it has immense tourism potential in the years to come.

- Forty two per cent of the tourists are found to be far from satisfied with the existing infrastructural facilities such as: roads, rails, water transportation, air-services, telecommunication, hotels and resorts provided here. The existing telecommunication facilities such as: Internet, On-line ticket booking facilities, Tourists information systems, Tourism organizers’ supportive systems are found to be quite inadequate for the requirement of the visiting tourists.

- The basic facilities provided at the railway station are abysmal. The number of trains passing through Alappuzha is quite inadequate for the smooth flow of tourists. Lack of basic amenities there such as: accommodation, cloak rooms, luxury waiting rooms, parking arrangements, less number of ticket counters act as a deterrent to the tourists. The agonizing delay of trains, felt by the travelers is another major stumbling block.

- While a rare breed of adventurous tourist may find traveling by India's trains exciting, the majority of the tourists might find using
India's railways highly inconvenient due to overcrowding, inordinate and poor infrastructural facilities at the railway stations especially at Alappuzha railway station.

- The helpless tourists turn to the road transport for their travel. Here also the difficulties are one too many. There is a dearth of buses from the station to the town which is five kilometers away. The absence of private buses from the railway station to the town after 9 pm make another problem for the tourists who are coming very late in the evening to Alappuzha by train. Thus, the tourists are forced to hire taxi services and auto rickshaws and the tourists are made to pay through their nose.

- Alappuzha has a network of approach roads and link roads. These roads are not properly maintained. Hasty construction work by unscrupulous contractors does more harm to the roads than good. Road traveling is often a harrowing experience for the tourists.

- After surmounting all these difficulties, the tourists come to this land of lakes, canals and lagoons. For them, a cruise along the backwaters might be a dream comes true. Here also they become disillusioned. Not even a single canal is travel-worthy. Stagnant waters, littered with plastics and other waste materials make their trips very disgusting.

- The Vada canal and Commercial canal, which are the main transportation routes of tourists, are found to be very unhygienic owing to the heavy dumping of human, animal and other wastes. Besides huge deposit of silt from the frequent gush of sea water makes these canals dirty. Slaughter houses on the river banks deposit animal waste into the rivers. All these make water transportation very cumbersome.
• Communication difficulties are another major problem confronted by the tourists coming to Alappuzha. Since the tourists can not follow the local language- Malayalam, they have to depend on English. But the large population of Alappuzha, which include shop keepers, taxi or auto drivers can not understand English well, which again makes the situation worse. The tourists do not face such problems in Kochi, Trivandrum or in any other states where the visiting tourists are escorted by trained and jovial tour guides officially assigned.

• Inadequate number of trained and authorized guides is another stumbling block. In the study, it is found that many unauthorized guides are there in the town who canvass the tourists, succeed in winning their trust and take them to the tourist spots. These people not only charge a very high amount as fee from the tourists but also there are instances in which these unauthorized guides even misbehaved with the tourists.

• Insecurity of tourists in house boats is turning out to be another problem faced by the back water tourism in the district. Sporadic instance of such unfortunate happenings are reported in the print and other media.

• The poor and unhygienic condition of the Beach at Alappuzha is another deterrent. The Alappuzha Beach has been a major attraction for the visiting tourists since time immemorial due to its blissful uniqueness. The infrastructural facilities including the park created in the past remain as it is in spite of the phenomenal increase in the number of tourists visiting Alappuzha. It is also found that the to and fro transportation facilities to the Beach is also poor and inadequate.
In the study, it is found that the drugs and narcotics mafia are very actively working in Alappuzha Beach and the surrounding areas and they are trying to sell drugs to tourists visiting the Beach. This is likely to adversely affect tourism promotion in Alappuzha.

In spite of all these disenchantments, the study revealed that Alappuzha is still the most attractive tourists’ spot in Kerala. The boat races conducted during the monsoon season have a significant influence on the development of tourism. These aquatic festivals promote a sense of unity, fraternity and sportsman spirit among the people of Alappuzha as well as among the visiting tourists.

In the study, it is found that among the boat races in Alappuzha, Nehru Trophy Boat Race is the most enchanting and colorful water sport. Alappuzha is known as the world over city for the boat race which is a splendid attraction and a yardstick for the development of tourism in Alappuzha district. An increase of 13 per cent of tourists every year is an adequate proof of this.

Although boat race is an ever attracting event for tourists to Alappuzha, it has not been governed by a suitable set of rules and regulations which seem to be a deficiency for the smooth conduct of this enchanting water sport to attract tourists.

In Nehru Trophy Boat Race, in Punnamada Lake, now women from foreign countries are also participating.

The visiting tourists are compelled to hire private transportation facilities such as: Auto Rickshaws, Taxis, Private Motor Boats etc to the venue of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race due to the unavailability of frequent public bus services during the boat race day. This is found to be very expensive.
• The facilities provided by the government at the venue of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race are also not encouraging and thus the visiting tourists are not satisfied with the present facilities. The uncomfortable seating arrangements in the galleries and the poor basic facilities such as latrines, toilets etc in the permanent water stadium (Rose Corner) situated at the centre of the Punnamada Lake hinder the smooth flow of domestic tourists and foreigners to Alappuzha to witness the boat race.

• The State Government is the mainstay of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race but they are not taking any initiatives to form an appropriate Management Committee with their own nominees for its smooth running.

• The interviewed Boat Club Captains complained about the poor support that they receive from the government in the areas such as: bonus for the participating boats, benefits for the oarsmen and cash prize for the winners.

• The Boat Clubs participating in the competition can not meet their expenses for the practice with the bonus given by the Boat Race Committee and they are reluctant to participate in the competition mainly due to the insufficient amount provided to the winners.

• It is found that about 5000 foreigners are coming to Alappuzha to watch different boat races every year and an increase of 40 per cent has been recorded recently. This shows its significance and inevitability for tourism promotion in Alappuzha.

• It was noticed that Nehru Trophy Boat Race is not effectively advertised through Internet, International Channels, Visuals and other relevant media which attract foreign tourists extensively.
The aquatic festivals have a major impact on the development of cultural tourism in Alappuzha as the spectators all over the country are able to witness our traditional folk arts like Kathakali, Autum Thullal, Nadodi dance, Mohiniyattom, Vanjippattu etc. at this auspicious occasion.

The boat race organizers are now popularizing the historic song Vanjippattu to attract tourists and trying to create the cultural image of Kerala in the minds of the tourists.

Many cultural events like Kathakali, Mohiniyattom, folk songs and dances are also arranged in connection with the boat races. These events play a big role in promoting tourism in Alappuzha.

The economic impact of tourism is also great. Services like travel, accommodation, restaurants, house boats etc fetch a handsome amount of foreign money. It is found that the income fetched out of tourism in Alappuzha is exponentially increasing every year. The total amount earned in this regard during the financial year 2010 was Rs. 20127.08, which is 24.83 percentage more than the previous years’ income.

In the study, it is found that nearly 40 per cent of the international travelers to Alappuzha are now considered as cultural tourists, who visit destinations based on the cultural heritage of a place in respect of their ethnic and spiritual relevance.

Alappuzha is a region of the world’s greatest bio-diversity with a variety of unique natural locales and pieces of scenery therefore the district is perfect for the development of eco-tourism with minimal damage on its environment and the flora and fauna.
• The investment by the government need to be improved to introduce state of the art in water transport boats to increase its speed to save time in the boat journey by the tourists.

• Detailed studies and analysis of the cost of water transport show that certain water transport routes such as Kainakary, Chennamkary, Pulincunnnoo, Champakulam etc in Alappuzha are economically more viable as the land Alappuzha is a tourism potential area in Kerala. This points to the feasibility of promoting water transportation connecting the various strategic water logged areas in Alappuzha.

• Houseboats are big in size, which means that they can only travel in larger rivers and canals. It is seen that there are regular waterways routes which are narrow in Alappuzha. Because of these narrow waterways the tourists will miss out from the smaller and more intimate backwater areas with abundant natural beauty and blissful charm.

• House boat as a facilitator of tourism in Alappuzha makes 20 percent of the increase in the arrival of tourists into the district every year.

• The major barriers to tourism and hospitality industry in Alappuzha include the lack of state of the art infrastructure, uncompetitive rates, indifferent or poor tour packages, difficulty in getting access to information on travel and tourist destinations in Alappuzha, untrained service providers, and above all, the lack of spic and span environment.

• The attitude and the mind set of the public of Alappuzha have adequately changed towards both canalization and modernization of
the district for promoting the tourism. This is evinced in the responses elicited by them as part of the research study.

- There has been a remarkable growth in the last three years in foreign tourist arrivals to Kerala especially in Alappuzha due to the various efforts made, including promoting India through the ‘Incredible India’ campaign in overseas markets. It has increased by about 65 per cent from a level of 3.38 million in 2005 to 8.92 million in 2011, while the foreign exchange earnings have grown by about 96 percent during the same period.

- The study revealed that absence of 5-star hotels and poor facilities in the existing resorts and hotels make the affluent tourists reluctant to visit Alappuzha. This fact is deduced from the personal interview the researcher had with some of the visiting tourists.

- The high initial investment and the tax and duties charged by the government limit the number of private players in the industry which hinders the development of the tourism in Alappuzha.

- Modernization of the city and canalization are the two main projects in Alappuzha to be implemented quickly for the promotion of tourism.

- Environmental condition throughout Alappuzha is dreadfully bad since there are no curbs on emissions and careless enforcement to prevent polluters. This is likely to retard tourism development in Alappuzha.

- In Alappuzha, newly identified disease rat fever and diseases such as malaria, swollen legs, respiratory infections etc are common, especially among sensitive individuals or those with allergies. This will adversely affect tourism development.
• Rampant air pollution in Alappuzha has begun to show its effects like watery eyes, coughing etc on prominent tourist destinations such as Kuttanadu, Punnamada, Pathiramanal etc in Alappuzha district. This is also likely to adversely affect tourism development in the district.

• With the improper sewage treatment and no curbs on water polluters, potable water for drinking and cooking is difficult to receive for the natives and for the tourists. This is yet another stumbling block to tourism in Alappuzha.

• Outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera and dysentery are common especially in rural villages of Alappuzha and it acts as a hindrance for the arrival of tourists.

• In Alappuzha, Kayalpuram, Anchangadi, Champakulam Kallorkadu church, Mannarasala Sree Nagaraja Temple etc are the popular travel destinations for Indians and foreigners but it is obscure to both indigenous and foreign tourists due to the inadequate publicity through visuals and other media.

• Kuttanadu, the most enchanting place of Alappuzha for tourists, the majority of the canals are not widened and deepened. Widened and Deepened canals are able to reserve maximum quantity of water and thus it is possible to protect the land from the frequent floods and its repercussions. Such natural calamities are seldom happening in Alappuzha.

• Majority of tourists and the natives of Alappuzha interviewed stated that the widened and deepened canals are capable for the frequent water transportation and it will prevent the epidemics in the district
due to the smooth flow of water through the widened and deepened canals.

- The prevention of epidemics and communicable diseases in the district will pave the way for the expansion of tourism in Alappuzha as the diseases are the major hindrances for the arrival of tourists.

- In the analysis, it is found that the canalization in Alappuzha would encourage the inland navigation, backwater tourism, farm tourism and above all, the agricultural development in the district and the overall prosperity of the district.

- Fresh water fishes can be grown in the paddy fields during flood periods and when fields are left uncultivated. This also will have the potential to boost tourism promotion.

- Another big problem standing in the way of tourism promotion is the changing policies of successive governments. Kerala has a reputation for a change of governments at regular intervals. The ministers in charge do not show enough far-sightedness. Sometimes they introduce changes for the sake of changes without any regards for their harmful effect. So in a sense, the government’s attitude has hampered the growth of tourism in Alappuzha.

- Besides, the public water transport system in and around Alappuzha is in a very poor and dilapidated condition. Not all tourists to Alappuzha are rich enough to afford house boats and private boat services. Improved water transport facilities will not only promote our tourism but also it will be a great boon to the ordinary farmers around Alappuzha because they are the only means of transport for them. This will certainly encourage the farmers to turn more vigorously to agriculture which is their only means of living.
Most of the tourists especially from foreign countries come here with a sense of curiosity. They are attracted to our monuments such as: Karumadikuttan, light house, Punnapra – Wayalar etc. Our heritage properties like home stays, house boats, Ayurveda centres, pilgrim centres etc. are always inviting factors.

Another unique feature of Alappuzha is the possibilities of biodiversity with its large varieties of unique landscape and pieces of scenery. The district is a perfect place for the development of eco-tourism.
• **Suggestions**

We have now come to the most vital part of the study viz, making some well-considered suggestions on the rapidly growing tourism industry in Alappuzha.

• The government should realize the very bright potential of Alappuzha for tourism and should take the lead in bringing as many tourism related projects as possible to Alappuzha for the rapid promotion of tourism.

• The unstinted cooperation of the central and state government tourism proprietors and the people of Alappuzha must be ensured for the promotion of tourism in the district. The assistance of the financial bodies of the government should also be guaranteed.

• In order to monitor the activities aimed at promoting tourism, a Committee consisting of the representatives from the central and state governments, Alappuzha tourists proprietors and associations in equal number should be formed.

• Alappuzha district should be divided into different segments on the basis of its tourism potential and suitable projects and appropriate programs are to be carried out in each segment.

• Segments with greater potential should be identified and special projects designed and carried out there.

• A common package exclusively for Alappuzha should be devised and brought into effect. This package should aim at the complete development of each segment into which it would be divided. This task should be completed with the selfless support and whole hearted co-operation of the general public of Alappuzha under the direct supervision of the government.
A special policy should be formulated exclusively for tourism promotion in Alappuzha. It should be completely free from political interference.

A Tourism Development Committee should come into existence at Alappuzha. It should have strong proportional representation from the state government, the private agencies and the people of Alappuzha. There should be a central council to monitor and to evaluate the activities of this committee periodically.

**Suggestions for cleaning-up the surroundings of Alappuzha:**

- Cleaning up of the surroundings of Alappuzha must be given first priority as a hygienic environment is crucial for attracting tourists; especially the foreign tourists.

- The transportation through the canals is a very enchanting experience for the foreign and indigenous tourists visiting Alappuzha. Therefore, it is suggested that the frequency of boating through the canals must be increased and the existing unhygienic condition of the canals is to be done away with. Adequate steps also are to be taken to remove the vast deposit of silt in these canals so as to facilitate boating through the canals. The frequency of boating also needs to be increased to boost tourism in Alappuzha.

- The depth of the rivers, canals and lakes should be increased in order to make the water pure and to ensure free flow of water and to facilitate navigation which is cardinal for tourism promotion.

- The sand unearthed by deepening the rivers can be used to fill the pot holes elsewhere. This could help to reduce the menace of mosquitoes and the resultant spread of epidemics.
Special licenses should be issued to the slaughterhouses and then should be shifted from riverbanks to safer places as a huge quantity of animal wastes from the carcasses are dumped into the river.

Waste bins must be placed in various strategic places of the district to deposit the garbage from houseboats as the inland vessel rule affects the backwater tourism.

A major factor hindering the arrival of tourists is the poor hygienic state of the district. It needs to improve its public services and foster basic hygiene to attract the foreign tourists by modernizing its sewage systems and thus it is possible to stop the spread of contagious diseases, to create more public comfort stations and to implement regular garbage disposal measures.

Field center of National Institute of Communicable Diseases like that in Delhi should be started in Alappuzha to prevent and to research about the epidemics. This will remove the existing apprehensions of tourists who intend to visit Alappuzha.

In Alappuzha, for flourishing tourism, it needs to act to improve the quality of its air and water by modernizing the industries there so that the tourists can breathe pure air and drink pure water.

In houseboat trips, it should make sure that the cooking utensils do not have any contact with the local waterways and the cooking staff in the houseboats should have a bin to deposit garbage to avoid the water pollution and communicable diseases.

It is suggested that there is a seasonal stagnation in the backwaters of Alappuzha due to the heavy accumulation of African weed which is a stumbling block for the smooth water transportation for the visiting tourists. Therefore, the Tourism Department must take
urgent practical measures to remove the accumulation of African weed and makes water transportation smooth.

**Suggestions for improving transportation facilities:**

- State water transport owned boats are to be introduced. These must be based on the state-of-the-art with all modern comforts to enjoy the travel.

- Special luxury bus services to Alappuzha and other tourist centers should be started by Kerala State Road Transport Corporation as in Sabarimala.

- As Chettikulangara temple is a tourists’ destination in Alappuzha the national highway should be extended to the temple junction.

- Street lights should be fixed on both sides of the National Highway and in all the level crosses of the district.

- The traffic rules must be made mandatory for all and the rules must be changed in such a way that the travelers do not face any difficulties on their way such as: inordinate delay in reaching their destinations, accidents due to the carelessness of drivers etc. Many tourists are denied the opportunities for enjoyment due to the traveling difficulties.

- The town needs to enforce its traffic laws, reduce railway overcrowding by scheduling more trains to Alappuzha as it is a tourism potential area in Kerala, reduce the frequent delay in the train arrivals, improve the infrastructural facilities at the station etc so that visiting tourists will have smaller and easier time traveling from place to place.
• The railways with the help of the central government should increase the number of trains to Alappuzha to facilitate the tourists’ movement to the city by train.

• Alappuzha Railway Station should be upgraded and brought into the status of a model Railway Station.

• The doubling of railway track from Ernakulam to Kayamkulam should be completed since this railway line is passing through Alappuzha.

• The number of Kerala State Road Transport Corporation buses to and from the Railway Station should be increased to facilitate the travel needs of the visiting tourists.

• The central Government in cooperation with the State Government should appoint a Development Committee to study the deplorable state of the Railway Station and to bring improvements with regard to its basic amenities.

• Accommodation facilities at concessional rates should be introduced for I class passengers. Necessary rules for levying accommodation charges should be framed.

• Conveyance charges for Alpppuzha and other tourist destinations should be fixed. It should be proportionate to the distance in kilometers.

• The roads of Alappuzha should be widened and modernized to make them travel friendly.

• Canals and lakes of Alappuzha, eagerly looked forward to by the foreigners should be made suitable for travel with boat jetties and landing places.
• The canal running parallel to Alappuzha – Chandanacherry road should be beautified and made travel worthy. It can be used as sightseeing trip for the tourists. Adequate luxury boats are to be deployed to facilitate travelling through these canals.

• The water transport department should be persuaded to increase boat services to favorite tourists’ spots. For tourists a journey by boat is more attractive because it affords more time for sight seeing with greater comfort.

• The boats used for water transport should be modernized for getting more attention from the tourists.

• Jobs like deepening the rivers can be entrusted with the private agencies whereby the unemployed youth of Alapuzha could get employment at least temporarily.

• Provision must be made available for Helicopter services from Nedumbassery Air-port to Alappuzha for the moneyed elite foreign and indigenous tourists who desire to visit Alappuzha.

Suggestions for aquatic festivals in Alappuzha:

• Boat races which are a special attraction of Alappuzha should get 100 per cent sponsorships from the Central and State Governments. Similarly corporate giants such as: Pepsi Cola, Tata, Reliance etc. should be influenced to undertake ambush marketing strategies at the venue of the boat races. This will generate additional revenue for the smooth conduct of the boat races.

• In order to make the boat races more attractive and competitive the bonus amount for the boats should be raised. Boat races attract a huge crowd of tourists.
• To ensure the participation of women tourists from abroad, special boat races can be organized exclusively for them.

• Special rules should be framed for the boat races for the disciplined conduct of the event.

• The people of Alappuzha should develop a decent and sensible attitude towards tourists. Host communities play a major role while running a major sporting event like Nehru Trophy Boat Race or any such large scale events in Alappuzha. To this effect periodic sensitization of the masses should be done by some responsible state agency.

• Nehru pavilion situated at the finishing point of the boat race should be modernized with sufficient facilities to attract the tourists and it should be included in the scheme of “Alappuzha Tourism Master Plan”.

• The bypass from the starting point to finishing point of the Nehru trophy boat race should be widened for the smooth flow of tourists during the time of boat races.

• The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation department should schedule more services to the venue of the boat races in Alappuzha at least in the day of events.

• For boat clubs participating in the competitions, the existing bonus amount should be increased to an optimum amount at least for clearing their trial expenses.

• For the smooth conduct of Nehru Trophy Boat Race, it is suggested that the Finance and its proper management are to be given priority. The State Government should see that adequate funds are provided for these major aquatic festivals. Human Resource Management is another factor which must be addressed by the Government with the help of local bodies.
Suggestions for improving the house boat facilities:

- House boat is the contribution of Alappuzha in a big way to the world tourism industry. Loans should be made available at low rates of interest by financial organizations for their (house boat) construction and maintenance.

- In Alappuzha, houseboats must have boat stations to receive the tourists and stations for anchoring these at night.

- In Alappuzha town, there should have sufficient number of pre-paid counters for booking the houseboats.

- The house boat operators should consider introducing the “Country boat”, small size house boats as an alternative of big size house boats. In the Country boat, the tourists can travel even through the narrow canals and backwaters to see the pieces of scenery in Alappuzha.

- For reducing the total expenses, the tourists can try to stay at the nice waterside resorts, the wonderful Palm Grove ecofriendly huts within the district and take a variety of shorter trips in country boats.

- House boats are influencing the tourism of Alappuzha so that the tour operators should be focused on the same in such a manner that it will match with the demands and expectations of the arriving tourists.

Suggestions for hospitality management:

- Specially trained individuals must be the tour guides. Special training program should be arranged for them periodically and it should be carefully monitored. Besides, it must be carried out with the help of eminent resource persons in the field of tourism.
• Duly qualified and experienced jovial tourists guides are to be deployed in important and sensitive tourist destinations to extend guidance and assistance to the visiting foreign tourists as it is found that there is a dearth of such tourist’s guides in the important and strategic destinations.

• Only authorized tour guides should be allowed to assist the tourists. The tourists should also ask for the evidence of authorization before accompanying them. Adequate provision must be ensured to enlighten the visiting tourists regarding the above aspects.

• The people should be given orientations and training on rules of hospitality while receiving tourists. Right now the people of Alappuzha lack the required etiquette to attract and impress the tourists.

**Suggestion for communication facilities:**

• The telecommunication facilities such as: Internet, Online ticket booking facilities, tourists information system, Tourism organizers’ supportive systems are to be improved for the quick delivery of information to the visiting tourists and for the tourism operators in Alappuzha.

**Suggestions for Beach tourism:**

• In Alappuzha Beach, the inland container port should be realized instead of 1000-ft long pier.

• Kerala State Road Transport Corporation and other transportation authorities should provide special bus services to the Beach for the tourists.

• Alappuzha national highway, bye pass and other approach roads to the Beach, Railway Station etc. should be expanded.
• In Alappuzha Beach, the tourists should be protected by the local police as the drugs and narcotics mafia are very actively working in the Beach posing threats to them.

• Considerable improvements in the Beach and the facilities for easy access to the lighthouse, near the Beach, are to be made in Alappuzha. It is also desirable to create a vast expanse of lawns and sustainable flowering plants.

**Suggestion for health care facilities in Alappuzha:**

• The central government should give support to the second phase development of Homeco, a manufacturing institute of Homeo medicine. Foreigners have a special liking for home Medicine since it is a less harmful method of Medical treatment next to Ayurveda.

• The hospital facilities in Alappuzha need many improvements. Alappuzha Medical College hospital must be included in the list of “center of Excellence” so as to cater to the health care needs of the visiting tourists. Provision also must be ensured for enabling the visiting tourists to have an easy access to these health care entities.

**General suggestions for tourism development in Alappuzha:**

• The people of Alappuzha should be made aware of the development possibilities and employment opportunities which will open up in the city when tourism develops.

• The tourism potentialities of Alappuzha should be fully utilized by the government and private agencies as well as by the people of Alappuzha.

• An indoor stadium must be constructed in the 30 cent of land given by YMCA, Mullackal with the support of the government. Here
periodic games and other recreational and cultural events must be organized on a regular basis for entertaining tourists.

- Alappuzha needs to market and advertise to the world its highlights such as: Kuttanadu, Karumadikuttan (the statue of lord Buddha), Punnamada boat race lake, Alappuzha Beach, paddy fields etc. and its unique features like house boat trips, boat races, pilgrim centres etc and the unique and enchanting natural beauty of the said centres.

- A commission should be formed consisting of eminent agricultural scientists and tourism experts in Alappuzha to study those problems relating to backwater tourism and for suggesting solutions. This will pave the way for providing a safe and hygienic environment and the state-of-the-art infrastructural facilities which are of utmost importance in promoting tourism in Alappuzha.

- A district-level expert committee should prepare a study about the possibility of widening and deepening the canals in Kuttanad, the most enchanting place in Alappuzha to facilitate smooth water transport for the development of backwater tourism.

- The canalization in Alappuzha will encourage inland navigation, backwater tourism, farm tourism and above all, the agricultural development in the district. The controlling of unexpected floods in the farming areas of Kuttanadu will be a great boon for the farmers. They can cultivate their farm land twice a year. Besides, the deepening of the canals will make water transport easier and smoother for the tourists.

- The fresh water fish ponds should be constructed in the uncultivated fields as the fish ponds in Alappuzha are another tourists’ attracting factor.
• In the field of agriculture, the regeneration strategy should be introduced with newly developed seeds and technologies for the improvement in the cultivation of rice. Vast paddy fields with canals bordering them are special tourists’ attracting centres in the district.

• It must be made sure that the developing tourism in Alappuzha does not spoil the environment in any way, or affect the daily life of the general public and visiting tourists. The local people should not be allowed to misuse the traditional resources of the district in the name of tourism.

• The investment by the government need to be improved to introduce the state-of-the-art technology and the state-of-the-art technology must be used to increase the speed of the public boats in these areas.

• In Alappuzha, there is a need for effective environmental education on the overall consequences of indiscriminate road building and closing, filling and restricting waterways with road bridges, culverts in the roads etc. and to check the serious abusing of the environment.

• The water transport is more attractive and economically viable as the road transport pays road tax but for the water transport there is no water tax.

• In Alappuzha, there is a growing need to recognize culture and foster heritage tourism as a specialized sector of tourism to develop this product for improving tourist transfer because nearly 40 per cent of international travelers are now considered as cultural tourists, who visit destinations based on the cultural heritage of a place in terms of ethnic and spiritual factors.
• The government should reduce the Luxury Tax and its stringent rules to encourage more private players to enter into the tourism industry in Alappuzha.

• Selection of rural sites for rural tourism projects should be based on their core-competency and not merely on the basis of projects received from officials.

• Additional accommodation facilities are to be created through guest houses, paying guest accommodations and home stays for the tourists.

• Evolve legislation for effective enforcement of existing laws with the active participation of all stakeholders, approval of licensing processes for planning, setting, designing and construction of tourism facilities in and around the district.

• Special shops or restaurants should be opened for the tourists on days of unexpected holidays such as hartals and special protection should be given to them by the government.

• Ministry of tourism should undertake surveys on specific aspects of domestic and foreign tourists on a continuing basis, while large scale multi-subject surveys may be undertaken once in five years for identifying the new trends in tourism and suitable follow-up measures are to be taken to provide impeccable facilities for the full satisfaction of the visiting tourists.

• Maximum importance should be given for local community based programs for promoting local tourism. Therefore, appropriate ways and means to motivate and activate them is to be designed and implemented.

• New strategies should be adopted in order to attract tourists from all over the world. Modern modes of advertisement like internets,
Alappuzha tourism website, website updating etc must be given priority for promoting tourism.

- Arts and cultural centers should be started in Alappuzha with the project submitted by Jawahar Balabhavan to attract tourists. These centres should organize cultural programs on a continuous basis to attract more foreign tourists.

- The possibilities of Green energy should be utilized for protecting the environment of Alappuzha as the natural beauty of Alappuzha is a parameter to attract tourists.

- An appropriate brand image for Alappuzha is to be scientifically created and the unique attractions of these tourists’ hot-spot need to be positioned to ensure an enviable position in the world map of tourism and to create an unfailing brand equity for Alappuzha.

- At present Alappuzha does not have any facilities for interesting water sports for attracting foreign tourists. Therefore, it is very much desirable to introduce such facilities for enhancing the tourism potential of Alappuzha.
Conclusion

Tourism is a burgeoning industry in Alappuzha. The high tourism potential of Alappuzha is a proven fact. However, there are a number of stumbling blocks that retard the pace of tourism prevails. The existing infrastructural facilities are inadequate and not in conformity with the state-of-the-art. The prevailing environmental hygiene is untenable and not attractive for the foreigners. Therefore, a spic and span environment must be ensured in Alappuzha for boosting tourism.

From this study it has become clear that a combined effort of all the agencies connected with tourism is required for its promotion in Alappuzha; viz the Government apparatus, the Private Players, the General Public and the Visiting Tourists. The Government should sanction adequate sum to implement their well-orchestrated schemes such as: Swagat, Soochna, Suvidha, Suraksha, Sahyyog, Sanrachna etc. An effective mechanism, a management strategy must be evolved to direct the implementation of these schemes. Decentralization of power especially at the local level and continuous monitoring from above should be introduced. So far most of the schemes declared by the successive governments for tourism promotion in Alappuzha remain as mere political rhetoric and nothing concrete is crystallized to become a reality in this regard.

Strategically and geographically, Alappuzha is situated in the most convenient place in Kerala. That there is only two hours distance between the sea and the mountains is not a small thing. The only thing that dissuades the visitor from this town is its untidy appearance and the blatant unhygienic environment that prevails in Alappuzha. The poor condition of the roads comes only second. The people of Kerala are famous for their personal cleanliness. But they are notorious for their indifference to the cleanliness of their surroundings.
But this attitude of the people must change. An intensive awareness campaign under the stewardship of the Government should be started. Our Government is very good at creating dream projects but very poor at their implementation. Many efforts on this count very often do not reach their final destination. The management skill can be tapped in this regard. Proper management of the affairs is lacking in all fields. The local bodies who are directly involved with the implementation of this scheme can do a lot here. But they look the other way. Attempts by Private Players end up in smoke because of the indifference of the bureaucracy. If this study serves as an eye-opener for all, its purpose can be deemed as achieved.

The people of Alappuzha must understand that they stand to gain by the promotion of tourism industry here. Hence they should extend whole hearted co-operation to the Government projects. Just think of the numerous business and employment opportunities. Imagine the benefits of cultural interaction, contact with the people outside, their language, religion, culture etc. In return we give them our assets such as: Boat Races, House Boats, Home Stays, Culinary Arts, Cultural Events, Ayurveda therapy in a massive scale and pilgrimage opportunities etc. Then only our slogan ‘God’s Own Country’ becomes meaningful.

The Private players in the field should ensure that the visiting tourists get their money’s worth. Exacting exorbitant charges and giving poor services in return can not go on forever. These are many things involved in tourism other than profit motive. Such practices will pave the way for the decline of tourism industry in Alappuzha.

The visiting tourists can show a little more tolerance in their approach to the people. They should be ready to accept our culture as it is. Our people are mostly very reserved and generally do not want to mingle with foreigners. Ours may not be a rich country like theirs. The roads here
may not be well-maintained. They should understand that the rough climate is the actual villain, neither our people nor our government.

Developing a strong image for India tourism requires a carefully planned brand strategy based on the following:

i) A well-defined and unique brand personality.

ii) Selection of the correct positioning strategies.

iii) ‘Themed’ product development.

iv) Consistent and appropriate advertising and promotion.

v) Careful brand guard ship.