Chapter 6

Summary of Findings,

Conclusions, Recommendations,

Limitations & Future Research
6.0 **Introduction**

This is the final chapter of the thesis which entails the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, limitations and future research on the study.

The findings of the study are summarized into two parts since the study was conducted to check the perspectives of travellers as well as the travel agents.

6.1 **Findings based on Traveller responses**

Findings from the travellers who use the information systems are summarized as below-

1. The travellers who access the travel reservation tools such as travel portals have made it clear that the current level of utilization of the information systems are not lesser than their requirements keeping in mind the growth that is expected to take place in the field

2. As per the travellers, usage of the information systems are high and they are highly efficient in the current scenario. This is due to the acceptance of technology by today’s customers.

3. According to the travellers the new mediums are not entering the fray without checking adoption levels of the existing systems as they get all required services from the providers.

4. Travellers who make booking are well aware of the technological changes happening around and thus have opined that the current technology available never remained underutilized even while we talking about next generation technologies.

5. When information systems introduce new technologies travellers have opined that their convenience and requirements are not checked.

6. For the travellers, when newer technologies are implemented, it is for the sake of introducing advanced technology and not based on current or future utilization as a lot of frills are being added to the current product offerings.
7. Travellers are of the opinion that, regardless of the various technological advancements happening in the travel industry, information system has their own importance and role to play as they have been meeting their "current" expectations from time to time.

8. As per the travellers the glory of traditional medium for travel industry information dissemination has not been affected with the introduction of newer mediums.

9. With mobile commerce catching up and various reservation techniques available over hand held devices, the travel information systems have changed in tune with the times by implementing latest technology.

10. Today’s customer expects not just one information to be drawn, but bundling of all travel products and services to be available at the lowest cost

11. 52% of the travellers had opined that they trust the information received from the information systems and consider them to be correct and cheapest which means that the current information systems have gained a level of confidence in the minds of the user.

12. 55.1% of the travellers were of the opinion that there are no changes required in the current booking process as they are comfortable with the existing method

13. Travellers who make their reservation requirements directly over the online systems are confident enough that they always get clear and crisp information as required. 58% of the travellers have opined that they usually get their information as required

13. Travel reservations made over mobile and hand held devices make the life simpler for the travellers. 55.6% of the travellers have opined that these mediums would enhance their booking experience

14. Predictive search query has been listed as one of the important aspects of booking experience by the travellers. 64.9% of the travellers opined that predictive search would help them fulfil the travel requirements easily.
15. Easiness of making travel reservations over social media using hand held devices would make the travel shopping experience a better one. 56.8% of the travellers were in favour of the options available over social media for travel reservations.

16. 56.6% of the travellers rated their usage of various facilities available online as average which means that the customers may not require a lot of facilities, but the ones they require needs to meet their requirements on an end to end basis.

17. With regards to the utilisation of functionalities and features, 64.2% of the travellers mentioned that they utilise all functions and features currently available for making travel reservations in order to achieve higher efficiency.

18. Whenever new products or technology is introduced, 67.1% of the travellers were ready to adopt it while making travel reservations. They embraced latest products much faster than the rest.

19. While trying to assess the gaps that exists in what is available against what is required, 53% of the travellers were of the opinion that the reservation systems implement latest technology with a customer first attitude.

20. 59.2% of travellers were of the opinion that newer services introduced by information systems by way of latest technology has slightly complicated the reservation process.

21. Majority of travellers have rated the easiness and friendliness of cancellation process as average. 57.5% of travellers were of the opinion that the cancellation procedures stands at an average while considering the easiness.

22. The major challenges listed by travellers were the transparency in fares, service charges and refunds on cancellations and the security of online payments via credit cards.

23. 58.7% of the travellers felt that the reservation systems often bring latest technology which caters to the requirement of customers like them.

24. 64.4% of the travellers were somewhat satisfied with the ease of use provided by the online travel reservation systems.
25. Travellers feel that the traditional information systems used by the travel agents are more powerful and useful than those available over internet or mobile phones. 58.9% of the travellers were in agreement that the traditional systems have a cutting edge over the other systems.

26. 51.8% of the travellers were confident that the information received from the traditional information systems were dependable since they were accurate information at the same time they get the cheapest fares and hotel rates etc.

27. Majority of the travellers wanted the freedom of breaking away from the conventional methods of reservations and wanted a convenient method of booking.

28. 59.7% travellers opined that they wanted the convenience of making travel reservations at ease, like when they are travelling or while they relax etc.

29. 66.8% of the travellers agreed that the latest technologies introduced in travel reservations have brought convenience to their usage pattern where they can get the travel information at their finger tips.

30. 50.8% travellers have agreed to the fact that the introduction of latest technology has simplified the process of travel reservations and to operate these systems, only basic operating knowledge of computers is needed.

31. Travellers have listed down challenges that they face in the order of priority as below:-

   I. Transparency in fares, service charges and refunds
   II. Online payments via credit cards
   III. Fare changes between availability, selection and booking
   IV. Fare changes between availability, selection and booking
   V. Lack of confidence, no face to fall back on, when there is a problem
6.2 Findings based on Travel Agent’s responses

1) The Travel Agents who uses information systems on a daily basis for their work have opined that the information systems are highly effective and helps in enhancing their efficiency. The travel agents are completely aware of the effectiveness of the current information systems. It is assumed that this opinion is out of their interest since they work day in and day out.

2) There is no significance in usage levels since travel agents were not in favour of the claim that there has been no usage levels being checked in the current scenario.

3) Current workflow and offerings from information systems are working as per expectation and hence there are no corrective measures required at this point.

4) There is no technology underutilization on the information systems at this juncture while talking about next generation technology.

5) Travel agents opined that there is a medium level of gap that exists in the current channels of distribution. A significant difference between travel agents who use Online Travel Agency system (OTA) as against the Global Distribution Systems and those who use different medium is also another important point to be noted.

6) As per the travel agents, when newer technologies are implemented, it is only for the sake of introducing advanced technology, but not based on current utilization level or with reference to the future utilization levels.

7) The analysis revealed that the significance of information systems in travel industry is still promising and has a good future to take the travel.

8) Travel agents have opined that traditional medium fragmentation has not affected the importance of information systems even when multiple changes are happening in the travel industry is what the travel agents had opined.

9) While the market is not stagnant, so does the customer. It is customer preferences that influence travel information systems and travel agents respond accordingly.

10) From a customer perspective, they require bundling of products under one wrapper and information systems are expected to be a one stop shop for all travel requirements.
11) The travel agents were of the opinion that in a fast changing global competitive environment, the global distribution systems offer high degree of flexibility. 66.9% of them opined that the GDS helps in easily choosing products that they want to offer to their customers.

12) Majority of travel agents (55.1%) felt that making bookings on full service carriers available on GDS is more advantageous over those low cost carriers available over individual websites which shows the ease of use of the global distribution systems.

13) 55.1% of travel agents felt that the inventory distribution by airlines over various medium has resulted in higher sales volumes.

14) Predictive search query suggestions available in various websites have been rated as one of the helpful options for reservations. 71.2% of the travel agents felt that predictive search query are helpful for them to cater to the travel requirements of their customers.

15) 57.6% travel agents were of the view that the technology provided by information systems can enhance resource optimisation and save a lot of cost of the travel industry.

16) Majority of travel agents (55.1%) felt that the services of GDS were extremely helpful for them. 53.4% of the travel agents were very much aware of the options and facilities currently available in the existing medium of bookings.

17) Travel agents opined that the emergence of technology has fuelled the competition amongst the airlines. 75.4% of the travel agents were of the opinion that this competition has lead to various airlines introducing new tools to improve efficiency of users.

18) 60.2% travel agents were of the opinion that the current reservation systems cater to all requirements of the travel agency users which would help them gear up for the changes in future.

19) The technological advancements currently happening could have been a little more faster as per majority of travel agents (63.6%) where they felt that a faster pace would have brought betterment in the way they work currently.
20) 74.6% of the travel agents were of the opinion that the global distribution systems are their preferred medium of booking over any other options.

21) Majority of travel agents (66.9%) opined the current distribution channels are very cost effective in terms of getting the lowest rates for the customers while increasing the revenue for themselves.

21) Travel agents have made it clear that the information systems in travel industry have a vital role to play in their reservation processes. About 61% of the travel agents were of the opinion that it is a critical part of their reservation process.

22) 50% of the travel agents shared the view that the traditional medium for travel information dissemination, the GDS, still has the same importance it had earlier.

23) As per 57.6% of travel agents, the traditional medium has its own class which cannot be replaced by newer mediums and 61.9% of the travel agents opined that the traditional systems had several strengths over GNE’s (global new entrants) like farelogix and others.

24) 78% agree that the advancements in the travel systems are based on user preferences.

6.3 Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of the study, following important conclusions are made:

1) The traditional information systems in the travel industry play a vital role and has been favoured by both Travellers and the Travel agents. They have a greater role to lead the industry to new heights.

2) Being established players in the field, the traditional information systems are looked at with a greater expectation by users and hence they need to live up to the expectation of the users.

3) New mediums of information dissemination should learn from customer requirements and live up to their expectations which in short means that there has to be a lot of ground work required for the new entrants to understand the customer trends before they take off.
4) It is imperative that the existing players as well as the new entrants check the customer tastes before they impose new technological upgrades. They need to understand, how well these new developments be accepted by the customers. In a way, they need to take the customers into confidence before they adopt new technologies and educating the customers on the advantages and efficiency levels of new technology.

5) Since the customers have no doubt about the efficiency levels, they expect information systems to live up to their expectation since existing information systems have been given the status of a trusted tool by the users.

6) Geographical factors do not have any influence in customer opinions as, customers who access information systems are well aware of happenings in the market place and what they can expect for it.

7) Education has not majorly influenced the opinion of the responses of the travellers who make their own reservations online since the level of understanding on what is expected is more or less the same. For travel agents, education has no relevance as they are working in a specialised environment which requires specialised trainings and it is inevitable for them. This factor plays a role in their opinions as well

8) Age plays a vital role in influencing the responses as the new generation has better acceptance of technology while the older generation were not too open. From the travel agency perspective this was not a major factor, but still the older generation is not open to accepting technological changes. Age group of 21-30 and 31-40 were more open to accepting changes while age group of 41-50 had lesser acceptance.

6.4 Recommendations

1) It is advisable that the information systems do a market survey before implementation or adoption of latest technology to ensure that customers are completely aware of the advantages that they would get rather than coming up with products and later try to convince the customers

2) Any new entrant into the fray has to do a proper market study and ensure that the investment that they make is worthwhile. It is to be noted that information systems
are really complex in nature, combining all providers under the same roof and providing a bundle pack to the customer.

3) New entrants and existing information systems should ensure that there is no content fragmentation while they enter into the fray. The basic idea of having a information system in the industry is to offer all services under the same roof so that the sale becomes easier and the customer gets all products under the same wrapper.

4) Preferred mode of reservation for the travel agents have been rated as the Global Distribution System. This translates into the expectations of travel agents from such a medium of travel reservation and this in other words mean that the global distribution systems have to be more innovative to reciprocate to the level of confidence that the Travel Agents have conferred on them.

5) Predictive search query options are being listed as one of the trends that users are looking at. This is an opportunity for the information systems to introduce new logics to help customers, be it travel agent or the traveller, get the desired results without much hassle.

6) In an era where social media plays an important role, reservation plug ins for social media is imperative and the information systems should utilise this opportunity. Travel destinations are chosen by customers, based on various opinions and experiences shared by family and friends over social media. This ignites a discussion which leads to finalisation of travel reservation. It would be highly effective if information systems offer bookings solutions in the social media itself.

7) It is imperative that the information systems do a usage check at regular intervals to ensure that the customers actually utilise the facilities introduced. This would helps them fix gaps, if any, in terms of what has been offered and what is actually required by the customer.

8) Information systems has to have localised approach when introducing products and services, as customers in every region has different requirements based on their local market. In such scenario, a generalised approach would not help neither the travellers/travel agents nor the information systems themselves.
9) Handheld devices are set to change the way travel reservations. Information systems should provide easy booking tools to travellers to ensure that the opportunity is captivated by them. Since the number of smart phone users is ever increasing, it would be an opportunity for the information systems to encash.

10) Various vendors in the travel industry should ensure that fragmentation does not happen in the industry where a group of vendors form a separate standard for communication and form a different method of communication. This would lead to the death knell of travel industry as fragmented content is not what the customer is expecting in today’s world. Customers require ease of bookings and tracking of records where as fragmentation would go against such requirements.

### 6.5 Limitations of the study

Current study was primarily based on the Air, Car and Hotel industry that has a structured method of inventory distribution and has an established inventory distribution system. There are other vendors in the industry who are not included in the study – they are the local car vendors, hotels that are not available on the information systems, independent cruises and railways (example Indian railway) which doesn’t have a common platform for distribution. When there is no common platform for distribution, it becomes impossible to gather information for a research of this sort. A research would start based on the secondary information collected which gives an insight into the problem and then the researcher gathers primary data to establish problems and solutions. But in the case of vendors mentioned, there is either rigidity due to structure, for example Indian railways – despite the fact that they have a distribution network, there is no published data available on their performance. It becomes difficult for the researcher to include such vendors in the study.

Since the study was conducted in the state of Kerala, the factors existing in the Travel industry in Kerala, is expected to influence the responses of the respondents and had this research been conducted at a National level, the response would have been different. Similarly if a similar research is conducted on a global basis, the outcome would have been totally different.
6.6 Future Research

This study was conducted based on the organized Travel vendors in the industry like the Airlines, Hotels, Cars etc who distributes their inventory through the established information systems in the travel industry. Due to this common platform they use, they have a well established structure in reporting and management information systems which helps research. Currently, such data is not available for the scheduled Bus operators, the Indian railway, the established Taxi operators etc in India. Future research would have scope as these vendors either get on to a common platform for their inventory distribution or they publish data on their inventory distribution and utilization etc. A future research on this subject would have scope as and when these data is made available. There is a possibility of conducting similar research on a global basis which would bring out a global customer perspective on the effectiveness of the systems.