9.1 Findings

Upon analysis of the primary data, a number of valid findings are arrived at. These findings are given as under:

1. Majority of the respondents started their business in between 1970-90.
2. Majority of the respondents are interested in urban area for their business.
3. Majority of the respondents opine that health tourism facility is highly accessible.
4. Majority of the health tourism providers are not satisfied with the concentrated targeting strategies.
5. Identifying the target audience and identifying the selling points have limited influence in health tourism marketing process.
6. Majority of the respondents are satisfied with the present market positioning strategies.
7. There is significant seasonality in health tourist visits to the State. While the months of November, December, January, February and March receive the maximum number of tourists, the month of June receives the least number of tourists.
8. Majority of the health tourism providers are not satisfied with the existing health tourism market segmentation strategy.

9. Majority of the health tourism providers are not satisfied with the existing market size.

10. Majority of the providers are satisfied with the present market growth of health tourism market.

11. Market growth rate is determined by the demand and supply of the health tourism products available in the market.

12. Market profitability is based on two key factors. First, the target market must have plenty of disposable income. Second, the market must be known to the users, to go and get the service.

13. Majority of the respondents are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the cost structure of the industry.

14. Distribution channels are highly effective in health tourism marketing. Majority of the providers are satisfied with the channels of distribution process.

15. Market segmentation facilitates satisfactory resource utilization in health tourism marketing.


17. Market segmentation in health tourism facilitates competitive advantage in existing market.

18. Majority of the health tourism providers agree with the geographical segmentation process.

19. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that their business being easily accessible by the customers.

20. 60% of the providers opine that business caters for groups that travel with similar access dimensions.
21. Majority of the health tourism providers have no separate agency for conducting marketing research for identifying the growth and development of health tourism products.

22. Majority of the providers have future plan to increase the level of accessibility.

23. Majority of the health tourism providers are aware of the accessibility standard for health tourism products.

24. 27.2% of the providers use government publications for conducting marketing research. Reliability of such publication is more as compared with others, 36% use commercial data for market research, internal source, periodicals and books used by 18.4% of the providers.

25. Global marketing strategies are essential for the marketing of health tourism products.

26. Majority of the providers have the same products from the past 5 years.

27. Majority of the turnover of health tourism products from foreign market.

28. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that their service is less expensive as compared with the competitors.

29. 36% of the respondents using commercial data and 27.2% of the respondents using government publications for conducting market research, 18.4% of providers using internal source and periodicals and journals for their market research programme.

30. Market segmentation never facilitates effective resource utilization in health tourism marketing.

31. Market segmentation in health tourism never allows effective targeting of new customers.

32. Market segmentation never facilitates competitive advantage in existing market.

33. Quality variations influence marketing process of health tourism products.
34. Ranking process of the items according to the importance. Out of the 125 respondents, 45 of them ranked new product development as the first, product life cycle in second, marketing mix and its components in third, quality and its variable in forth and market testing in the fifth position.

35. The price of the product should not fluctuate very often only nominal variations affect the pricing policy.

36. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that the pricing policy has limited influence to attract new customers in health tourism marketing.

37. Flexible pricing policy is essential for the marketing of health tourism products in highly competitive Kerala market.

38. Good record keeping and reporting are essential for the marketing of health tourism products in Kerala.

39. Pricing of the health tourism product depends up on the pricing policy of the competitors.

40. Seasonal demand highly influences the price of health tourism products in Kerala.

41. There is a specific basis for the pricing of health tourism products.

42. Flexible pricing policies of health tourism products influence seasonal demand.

43. Arrival of the customer is highly influenced by the site or location in which the health tourism products provided.

44. Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the amount spent for sales promotion is not enough for the marketing of health tourism products.

45. Majority of health tourism providers are of the opinion that, the promotional activities undertaken by the organisations are effective.

46. Majority of the health tourism providers are of the opinion that promotional activities play a vital role in health tourism marketing.
47. Majority of the providers admit that those promotional activities are essential for the marketing of health tourism products in Kerala.

48. Majority of the providers support that advertising budget for health tourism is comparatively low.

49. Majority of the respondents agree that when cost of advertising inverses that will affect the pricing policy of the product.

50. Social networking plays a crucial role in promoting health tourism products in Kerala.

51. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that branding is essential for the promotion of health tourism in Kerala.

52. Majority of the respondents agree that traditional Medias are essential for the promotion of health tourism products.

53. Majority of the health tourism providers are of the opinion that there is direct and online marketing technique for the promotion of health tourism products.

54. Majority of the respondents use online advertising method for the promotion of health tourism products.

55. Majority of the providers agree that online marketing is essential for the promotion of health tourism products.

56. Majority of the respondents agree that advertising is the powerful tool for health tourism marketing process.

57. Majority of the respondents use fixed amount method for the preparation of advertising budget.

58. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that the amount spent for the promotion is effective for the marketing of health tourism products.

59. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that, promotional activities are highly effective.

60. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that promotional activities can play a crucial role for health tourism.
61. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that promotional activities are highly effective for health tourism industries.

62. Majority of the providers support that the requirement of promotional activities only during the tourism season.

63. Majority of the providers receive only average support from the part of government for the promotion of health tourism products.

64. Majority of the providers believe that providing false information about the service is the major problem in health tourism marketing.

65. Physical evidence of the health tourism providers affects the customer satisfaction.

66. Physical evidence can be used to charge a premium price for a service and establish a positive experience.

67. Online booking is essential for the marketing of health tourism products.

68. 56.8% of the providers agree that price quotation for the procedures and accommodation is essential for health tourism process.

69. Providing a service, people are important rather than selling a product majority of the providers agree this concept.

70. 32.8% of the providers have the opinion that promotional measures play a limited role in increasing demand. Quality of the service is one of the major variables for increasing demand.

71. Majority of the providers agree that demand for health tourism product is more during fall season.

72. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that the demand for health tourism product is more from foreign market.

73. Majority of the providers agree that, the demand and supply of health tourism products are well balanced.

74. Majority of the providers agree that, when the demand for health tourism product exceeds the capacity, they rent or share their facilities.
75. Demand levels of health tourism products vary according to the season and tourist arrivals.

76. Reservation system is essential for managing the demand and capacity of health tourism products.

77. The cordial relation between the company and client is essential for the marketing of health tourism products.

78. Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that training is necessary as and when it is required.

79. Majority of the providers agree that staff cost influence the profitability of the organisation.

80. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that recruiting specialist staff is time consuming and expensive.

81. Majority of the providers disagree that strategies and tactics are not at all essential for recruiting and safeguarding relationship in health tourism marketing.

82. Majority of the providers disagree and identify that, there is no gap between customers expectation of service and their perception of service quality actually delivered.

83. Majority of the providers strongly believe that there is no distinction between the expectation and perception of service.

84. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that, there is no gap between customer expectation and quality specification set for service delivery.

85. Majority of the respondents accept that there is no gap between the specification set for service delivery and actual quality of service delivery.

86. Majority of the respondents agree that there is an effective feedback and communication system.

87. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that customer satisfaction and service quality are pre requisites for brand loyalty.
88. Majority of the providers disagree that marketing mix elements and demand pattern have limited influence in health tourism marketing.

89. Majority of the providers agree that customer’s perception of occupied time is greater than unoccupied time.

90. Majority of the providers support that there is efficient compliant handling department to solve problems.

91. Majority of the providers are of the opinion that pricing policy of the firm is the major factor for getting income. Pricing of the product is based on total cost and profit.

92. Majority of the providers started health tourism business in large scale.

93. Majority of the providers consider their business as health tourism specialist and they are accessible tourism provider.

94. Majority of the health tourism providers are of the opinion that quality of service is highly improved.

95. In occupation wise classification of health tourism user’s majority of them are from semi government sector.

96. 20% of health tourism users have an income of less than 1,00,000, 30.7% in between 1,00,000 to 2,00,000, 26.7% in between 2,00,000 to 5,00,000 and 22.7% income of over above 5,00,000.

97. 68% of the respondents represent male and 32% are female in the case of health tourism users.

98. Majority of the customer’s age group is in between 40-60.

99. Majority of the consumers are satisfied with the health tourism products available in the market.

100. Overall customer service in health tourism marketing is good.

101. By conducting the paired sample ‘t’ test there is no significant difference between the customer service and customer support.
102. Customer service and supports are positively correlated.

103. Majority of the health tourism providers are satisfied with the product offering from the market.

104. Satisfaction of health tourism products depends up on the quality, behaviour and approach of the provider who provides such service.

105. Majority of the consumers are satisfied with the health tourism provider’s behaviour and treatment.

106. Correlation between satisfaction of health tourism products and satisfaction of health tourism providers are negatively correlated.

107. Majority of the users are satisfied with the cost and benefit of the health tourism products.

108. 50.7% of the users are of the opinion that they are satisfied with the existing service and recommend to his friends.

109. Majority of the health tourism users use the present service again.

110. Selection of health tourism products depend up on the requirements of such service.

111. Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that satisfaction of their health tourism service is more than they expected.

112. Majority of the health tourism users agree that the customer service is beyond their expectation.

113. Satisfaction of customer service depends up on the quality and the level of service offered to the health tourism users.

114. Majority of the health tourism users opine that the quality, standard and criteria are essential for the marketing process.

115. General marketing standard of the health tourism products depend up on the sound, fair and quality of the products to meet the requirements of the end users.
116. Majority of the consumers agree that the product available is above average quality.

117. Majority of the health tourism users are of the opinion that the treatment is good.

118. Perceptions of the credibility and helpfulness of various treatments can affect the success of different treatment options in health tourism marketing.

119. Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the rate of friendliness from the provider is good.

120. Health tourism providers are effective for providing information towards general public.

121. Majority of the health tourism users agree that the talent of the professionals such as doctors, office staff etc. are up to the expected level.

122. Majority of the health tourism users are average satisfaction towards health tourism service.

123. Organizational efficiency is a measure of the relationship between organizational inputs (arrival of customers) and outputs (services provided) and in simple terms the more output can achieve with a given amount of inputs or resources, the more efficient organization.

124. Majority of the respondents are not the regular users of health tourism product.

125. Sales promotion techniques are essential for the promotion of health tourism products.

126. Customer sales promotion techniques are essential for the marketing of health tourism products.

127. Majority of the health tourism users change their consumption process from different providers.

128. Shift in consumption of health tourism product depends up on the quality, approaches of the providers and price of the product available in the market.
129. Majority of health tourism users using health tourism products yearly.

130. Consumption and use of health tourism products vary according to the requirements of the users.

131. Majority of the respondents are satisfied with the present promotional media.

132. Majority of the respondents are fairly satisfied with the effectiveness of advertisement.

133. Promotional aspects are highly effective in health tourism marketing.

134. Majority of the respondents are satisfied with consumer oriented pricing policy.

135. Pricing policy is the main way to improve profitability in service marketing.

136. Majority of the respondents are usually satisfied with the health tourism products.

137. Customer satisfaction is a critical concept in health tourism marketing and consumer research. Customers are satisfied with a service, they are continued to use it and tell others about their favourable experiences.

138. Majority of the respondents are satisfied with the behaviour of the health tourism providers.

139. Consumer behaviour in health tourism marketing is influenced by thinking, feeling, Psychology and environment.

140. Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that team spirit is high order in health tourism marketing.

141. Team building and team spirit is highly effective in Kerala’s health tourism marketing.

142. Majority of the respondents use health tourism products over a long period of time.

143. Majority of the respondents select price and quality as an important variable for health tourism marketing.
144. Price of health tourism products should be based on the quality of products available in the market.

145. Majority of the respondents opine that the quality of health tourism product is quite high.

146. Brand of health tourism products are limited influence in marketing process.

147. Traditional health tourism products are more demanding in Kerala market.

148. Moderate correlation between friendliness of providers and efficiency of the organization.

149. There exist a positive relationship between the customer support and satisfaction of health tourism products.

150. There is no gap between the expectation and perception regarding the facilities of the health tourism provider.

151. There is a gap between the physical facilities of health tourism providers. This may be due to the difference in the nature of the product and types of providers.

152. There is a gap between the expectation and perception at the neatness of the employees of the health tourism provider.

153. There is no gap between the expectation and perception in the materials associated with health tourism providers’ visually appealing.

154. There is no gap between the expectation and perception of the promises to get service delivery at a certain time.

155. When customer has a problem, the health tourism provider shows a sincere interest in solving it. There is no gap in this sector.

156. There is no gap between the expectation and perception in the efficiency of the health tourism provider’s service.

157. Health tourism providers have efficient time management system.
158. There is no gap between the expectation and perception of record keeping system. This means that health tourism providers have error free record keeping and reporting system.

159. There is a gap between the performance and expectation of the service delivery of the tourism providers.

160. There is a gap between the expectation and perception of the promptness of the service delivery. This may be due to the ineffective time management system of the health tourism provider.

161. There is no gap between the expectation and perception among the willingness of the promised service.

162. There is a gap between the expectation and perception in the respond of the request from the customers.

163. There is no gap between the expectation and perception for confidence of providing the service.

164. Customers of health tourism service are satisfied with the safety and security in their service.

165. Employees of health tourism providers are consistently courteous with customer

166. There is an effective feedback system with health tourism providers.

167. Excellent health tourism providers give customers individual attention while providing service.

168. Health tourism providers have operating hours convenient to their customers.

169. Health tourism providers have customer oriented service.

170. Health tourism providers understand the specific needs of their customers and provides products based on the requirement of the customers.

171. Highest gap scores for reliability and responsiveness; this is the real cause for concern and provides a definite starting point for service improvement.
9.2 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings, the recommendations are given below;

1. To attract and retain customers, health tourism providers need to understand the value of marketing. Many smaller health tourism providers in Kerala do not realize the importance of marketing. Hence every effort should be made by the providers to market properly their products.

2. Building a brand is a crucial part of building health tourism business. Questions should consider building the foundation of both business and brand include,
   - What are the needs of target customers?
   - How do competitors meet the needs of target customers?
   - How can help target customers understand?
   - Why product or service is better than, or different from, the competitors?

3. Preparation of a detailed health tourism business plan.

4. Preparation of customer focused marketing plan in health tourism, it helps to focus resources and plan for business growth.

5. Instead of worrying about the future, health tourism providers can actually have a sense of control over their business and livelihood.

6. Health tourism marketing planning helps the day-to-day running of business. By developing a plan, that set targets and milestones which help to allocate resources and budget, motivate team, manage performance of staff members and marketing efforts.

7. There are many factors outside of immediate control that can impact the effectiveness of health tourism marketing process. It includes the weather, interest rates, government regulations etc. Customers should make aware of such strategies.
8. Improving marketing effectiveness can be achieved by employing a superior health tourism marketing strategy.

9. Examine continuously whether health tourism industry is growing, maturing or declining.

10. Show how to attract more customers while keeping one already have. Determine the factors of customer preference towards health tourism service such as environmental impact, product quality or convenience.

11. While marketing of health tourism product, indicate the goals for quality of service, level of service, customer satisfaction, and flexibility to support consumer demands and requests.

12. Focus on the weaknesses of competitors by offering better quality at a competitive price.


14. Indicate how reinvest profit margin in specific areas of the health tourism marketing plans future activities, as well as countering operating and start up costs already have.

15. Compare prospects for health tourism product’s future sales with either past performance, or a general industry performance report.

16. Identify industry wide problems in health tourism marketing and create strategies to challenge them.

17. In a newly emerging and growing health tourism market, differentiate product from existing competitors.

18. Acknowledge the problems in health treatment in which the company is entering.

19. Market analysis should be focused on key areas like industry wide health tourism marketing performance.

20. Recognize the position of local competitors in the market.

21. Relate health tourism business position to the position of others.
22. Identify the regulations, permits, insurance, liability, municipal zoning and taxation requirements that must follow in order to operate health tourism business.

23. Identify direct competition in health tourism marketing by naming their business, describing their facilities and operations, identifying their share of the consumer market, realizing support for their product and by reviewing the weaknesses of their approach.

24. Identify target market in health tourism, describing how company meets the needs of the consumer better than the competitor does.

25. Identify the segment of the health tourism market that benefit from product and area of expertise as well as approach to selling health tourism products.

26. Predict the sales potential that may be realized by tapping and holding onto target market and attracting others through different strategies and approaches.

27. Identify the strength of health tourism business such as cost effectiveness, service quality and customer loyalty.

28. Evaluate the performance of health tourism providers operations such as flexibility, innovativeness, response to external pressures, creativity and company stability.

29. Examine how proper timing, as well as other factors such as company's innovativeness, may improve business's chances of success.

30. Use tools such as customer surveys to emphasize the need for health tourism product quality.

31. Relate health tourism providers focus to a segment of the present market that is being overlooked.

32. Identify the external threats to business' success, such as existing and newly emerging competitors, performance of the overall economy, and dependency on other businesses such as suppliers, retailers and distributors for market access and support.
33. Identify new health tourism product, what it is, who will buy it, how much they will pay for it and how much it will cost for such service.

34. Alliance campaigns between two or more providers.

35. Pricing should be competitive as well as a reflection of the quality, costs and profit margin.

36. Measure the quality features of health tourism product, as well as the associated cost component for each item or level of service.

37. Show the predicted level of sales of health tourism products expect to realize with and without the strategies have outlined in the marketing plan.

38. Forecast the "breakeven point" for every 5 years in rupees.

39. The business plan is an overall blueprint for the anticipated activities for the organization over a coming time period, usually one-year (short term) or five-year (long-term). Prepare a detailed business plan for health tourism product marketing.

40. Apply famous ‘multi-attributes attitude model (MAM)’ in health tourism marketing. The MAM orientation to measuring attitudes is a simple but effective way to understand how people feel about products and services.

9.3 Directions for Future Research

The study provided a general picture of the marketing aspects of the health tourism products in Kerala. However, the study did not mention the relationship between health tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit a destination. Future research should investigate the relationship between health tourists’ satisfaction and intention to revisit a destination, because repeat visit to a health tourism destination is an important issue for tourism marketers and researchers. Future studies could be applied to other health tourism products and destinations using a similar research method so that a competitive analysis in different products and destinations can be explored.
9.4 Conclusion

India as an emerging nation needs to grow both from within and outside; in the sense, development of health tourism marketing needs to done both for the Indian Diaspora and at the same time opportunities need to be grasped and developed, so that foreign investment pours in. Kerala has got the opportunity to earn billions of rupees with health tourism and its products. Kerala has all the bases covered that have the qualified doctors and consultants, have already developed the trust of people the world over in the past decades and also have the exotic environment meant for health tourism. The transition from being a potential destination to a fully rewarding and sound health tourism destination which is equivalent to or better than any service offered world over. It has been worthwhile doing this thesis on marketing of health tourism in Kerala, since it is an upcoming tourism sector with lots of potential and also facing various difficulties. The main idea behind this thesis is to highlight all the important features and data and give at least a bird’s eye view over the marketing concept of tourism for health purpose. The methodology used in this thesis can be thought of as a process for reinforcing positive outcomes and solving problems through the investigation of reality in health tourism marketing. However health tourism dynamics vary from destination to destination and each community may need to adopt its own response to development, since a similar process can result in different outcomes. It is extremely difficult to make generalized and universally accepted proposals for the marketing of health tourism products. Marketing of health tourism is an important tool for the providers to maintain the quality of service on the basis of which they can market their products more effectively and efficiently.