A Study on
The Quality Attributes of Kerala
as a
Global Tourism Destination

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled ***A study on the Quality Attributes of Kerala as a Global Tourism Destination*** *is a record of bonafide research carried out by* ***Mr. Manoj Edward*** *under my supervision and guidance in the School of Management Studies, Faculty of Social Science, Cochin University of Science and Technology, and is worthy of consideration for the award of the Ph.D. Degree of Cochin University of Science and Technology.*

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Dr. C. A. Francis
Supervising Guide

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

WTO	World Tourism Organisation
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOK	Government of Kerala
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
TQM	Total Quality Management
CII	Confederation of Indian Industries
GOI	Government of India
TCS	TATA Consultancy Services
KFC	Kerala Financial Corporation
TFCI	Travel Financial Corporation of India
KSIDC	Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation
KITTS	Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies
IHMCT	Institute of Hotel Management and Catering Technology
PWD	Public Works Department
PATA	Pacific Asia travel Association
WTM	World Travel Mart
KTM	Kerala Travel Mart
MICE	Meetings Events Conventions Exhibitions
KTDC	Kerala Tourism Development Corporation
DTPC	District Tourism Promotion Council
ITR	International Tourist Role Scale
FIT	Fully Independent Traveler
GIT	Group inclusive Tours
NA	Not Applicable
KMO	Kaiser Meyer Olkin (measure)

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Tourism Phenomenon

Tourism is an activity that probably attracts little conscious thought beyond recollecting the enjoyment of the last holiday, and deciding where to go for the next time. This seemingly simple process is yet impacted by the behavior and tourism development efforts of national governments, tourism businesses and society at large. Tourism industry, while being one of the largest, in the world, is also one of the fastest growing industries. This trend is also expected to continue in the future as increasing number of countries' seek tourism development for earning more foreign exchange, creating more employment and accelerating the growth in their economies.

Tourism in the present form, which is predominantly seeking leisure, is a product of twentieth century. Prior to this, people used to travel in large numbers for religious or health reasons. Since the 1950s, there has been a rapid increase in the demand, especially in the western societies, for people to travel internationally and visit a variety of different destinations. This growing demand for tourism is the result of changing economic and social conditions in many generating countries across the world and the expanding variety of the physical and cultural characteristics of the receiving destinations that await tourists in other countries.

During the last three decades economies throughout the world have undergone extensive social and economic transformation. One of the most significant and conspicuous of these changes is the increased rate of spending on services. Growth in the tourism industry parallels this general trend in the growth in the service sector in the economy. In response to this trend, many developed and developing countries are actively promoting tourism as a way to stimulate their economies, and in the process, many have been successful in attracting large number of international tourists. Recognising the importance of tourism in creating economic and non economic benefits, countries and destinations within them are competing with each other in selling their tourism potential to people all over the world.

World Tourism Organisation (WTO, 1998) has recognised the potential of tourism sector for the purpose of poverty alleviation by increased job creation in the developing countries. With relatively higher employment potential per unit capital invested, travel and tourism industry holds great promise for many developing countries to create additional jobs at lower costs. Studies indicate that investments needed to create employment in the tourism industry are less than in manufacturing and agriculture. For instance, capital-labour ratio per rupee million investment at 1995-96 prices in this sector is 89 jobs against 44 jobs in agriculture and 12.6 jobs in the manufacturing sector (Sundaram, 2000).

The importance of travel and tourism industry goes beyond purely economic considerations; it also brings in many non-economic benefits. These benefits include social, political and educational exchanges. From the social and cultural point of view, tourism industry produces an interaction between the culture of the visitors and those of the host population, thereby encouraging civic involvement and helping to create pride within the community. Tourism money also helps support the community infrastructure and services such as recreation facilities that an area may not otherwise have been able to afford. It also helps encourage the conservation and protection of an area's historical, cultural and natural resources (Archer and Cooper, 1994).

1.2 Tourism Industry: Global Scenario

At its core, tourism is primarily about human activity, which involves travel from an originating area to a destination for pleasure or business purposes. This seemingly simple phenomenon embraces cultural, economic and social exchanges in the process. And as the international boundaries continue to shrink, tourism is increasingly becoming an integral component of lifestyle and a global industry with producers and consumers spread throughout the world (Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

The size and economic significance of travel and tourism have attracted the attention of government and travel organisations worldwide. According to the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC, 2003), travel and tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world in terms of gross output and value added, capital investment, employment, and tax contributions. In 2003, the industry's gross output was estimated to be in excess of US$4.5 billion of economic activity (total demand), more than 10 percent of the total gross national product spending. The travel and tourism industry is one of the world's largest employers, with nearly 195 million jobs, or 7.6 percent of all employees. This industry is world's leading industrial contributor, producing 10.2 percent of world gross domestic product, and accounting for capital investment in excess of US$685 billion in new facilities and equipment. In addition, it contributes more than US$650 billion in direct, indirect, and personal taxes each year. According to World Tourism Organisation (WTO, 2003), the number of international tourist arrivals in

2002 stood at 715.6 million and the international tourism receipts in the same year stood at US$478.0 billion.

The WTTC (2003) predicted that during the next decade, world travel and tourism is expected to achieve annualised real growth of:

- 4.6 percent in total travel and tourism demand to US$8.939 billion in 2013;
- 3.6 percent for the industry directly to US$2.279 billion and to US$6.461 billion travel economy overall in 2013;
- 2.2 percent in travel and tourism employment to 83,893,600 jobs directly in the industry, and 2.4 percent to 247,205,000 jobs in the travel and tourism economy overall in 2012;
- 7.1 percent in visitor exports, rising to US$1.308 billion in 2013; and
- 4.3 percent in terms of capital investment, increasing to US$1.308 billion in 2013.

This growth trend promises a new source of revenue for many countries, which, if utilised effectively, can lead to renewed economic prosperity.

1.3 Tourism Industry: The Driving Forces

There are many factors that influence the growth of tourism industry. This includes many kinds of economic, technological and political changes, which make tourism accessible to a wider proportion of world population. The phenomena of modern tourism, is a product of technological and scientific advancements coupled with industrialisation and urbanisation, experienced in many developed and developing countries.

Remarkable progress achieved in the field of transport and information technology contributed extensively to the development of the modern tourism by considerably minimising time and distance gap. For instance, the technological advancements, such as development of jet engine have made international travel easier. Media and information technology developments have made more information and images available about potential tourism destinations. Increasing access to computer has made it possible to book airline seats and holidays directly from home via computer terminal.

The incredible progress in the field of industries and other productive activities resulting in higher real income and longer leisure time with increasing provisions for cheaper and varied tourism facilities have also contributed to the growth in tourism industry (Singh, 1982). The leisure boom had also its roots in the original concept of 'paid holidays' which encouraged people to take vacation. Increase in the discretionary income and democratisation of leisure witnessed in many developed countries, are also important factors that motivated people to travel far and wide. This same trend is now catching up in many developing countries. For instance, the rapid economic growth with rising levels of disposable income and greater political freedom will encourage travel in many developing countries. Further, the increasing desire seen in people to escape from mundane environment due to increasing monotony in the work life, overcrowding and pollution in the cities, will also encourage the travel and tourism activity.

Another major change occurred at the end of the twentieth century, as a consequence of unplanned growth of tourism in many countries, is the rising environmental concern. This is reflected in the emergence of tourism products, such as eco-tourism, and the growing environmental commitment seen in the tourism industry.

WTO has outlined the main influence behind the significant progress of tourism industry as shown in the Figure 1.1. This depicts a range of influences shaping the tourism industry; some of the changes coming within the tourism industry, and some as exogenous forces, like changing demographic and social change influencing the tourism demand.

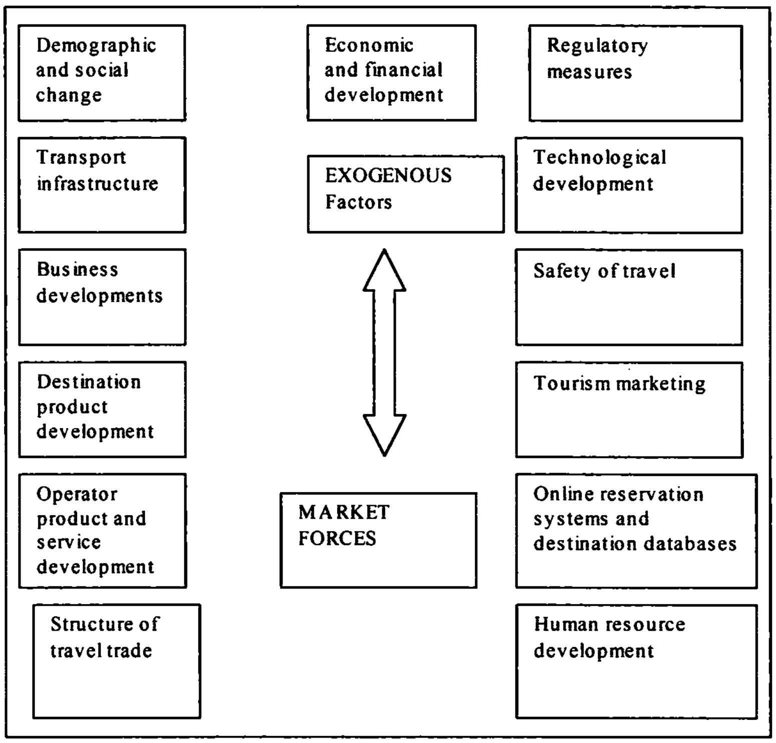

Figure 1.1 Factors Shaping the Development of Tourism
(Source: World Tourism Organization, Global Tourism Forecasts to the Year 2000 and Beyond. (Madrid: WTO, 1995), p 11.)

1.4 Changing Nature of Demand

Customers becoming more quality conscious, demanding better performance from products and services, is a trend seen across industries. This is mainly because of the rising power of customer, offered with a wide variety of choices, and the growing levels of sophistications as a more discerning customer. This trend of rising power of customers is particularly relevant in tourism, because, nowadays tourists are much better informed about traveling, and are increasingly getting more experienced as travelers. This often makes them less dependent on the proficiency of service provider. Consequently, forced by more critical consumers and increased consumer pressure, the service providers' attention for quality from the customer perspective will increase (Fache, 2000), and this, in turn, leads to a growing importance of customer oriented quality in the tourism industry.

Another key trend in the tourism industry is the fragmentation of the tourist market, and because of this, the approach in tourism marketing is shifting away from mass marketing. Poon (1993) observes the changing taste of tourists' which he calls as the emergence of "new tourists". These tourists display characteristics of being more environmentally aware, independent, and flexible and quality conscious than tourists who form the bulk of the mass market, and most of them show high degree of involvement at the destinations they visit. When tourists interact more intimately with service providers, quality in tourism becomes an important factor in their overall tourism experience. Faced with a varied and exacting demand from the market, it becomes imperative for the tourism industry to enhance and modify its products to meet the requirements of emerging market segments.

Halls and Wheeler (1992) noted a trend arising due to socio-demographic changes and a higher spending power, inducing a change in the tourist values. Pearce (1995) also concurs with this growing trend in the tourism, which seem to suggest that travelers will be especially concerned with not just being there, but with participation, learning and experiencing the places they visit. Therefore, this emergence of new segments of tourists and the change in the nature of demand will increase the tendency of tourists to participate more in the production and consumption of tourism services. Consequently, this makes tourism industry to focus more on quality, new product development and productivity as means of increasing market share.

Growing intensity of competition in travel and tourism industry, with the rising wave of globalisation, is another challenge faced by the tourism industry. Faced with the threat of competition taking away the market share, the firms will increasingly seek quality as a weapon to insulate from competition. In tourism, the quality of service an organisation is able to offer can manifest as an enjoyable experience to the tourists and can become one of the greatest differentiator from the competition. This is because, faced with an increased level of choice, prompted by alternative competitive market offerings, and with a limited variation perceived by tourists between these offers, the competing tourism firms may look alike and yet can contrast widely in terms of customer experience of the service quality (Kandanpully, 1995).

1.5 Importance of Quality in Tourism

The growing attention for quality from the customer perspective is an important development in the tourism industry. World Tourism

Organisation (WTO) also endorses this issue, and includes this as major thrust area in its 'Tourism Vision 2020', which is a strategic thinking on priorities needed for countries seeking tourism development. The major emphases are on the following:

- Increased, more focused and aggressive marketing
- Constant striving for competitive edge through product differentiation, quality and price.
- Growing recognition of the need for sustainable tourism development to ensure long-term prosperity.
- Less state control and more state-private sector partnership.

Quality in tourism may also relate to the facilitation of high level of involvement tourists seek from their holiday experience. From a tourism management perspective, it is important that managers of tourism services understand the involvement of tourists in various activities in the trip. It is this involvement and interactions which tourists value highly that directly impact on their overall perception of their tourism experience. And it is this area within the tourism industry this study covers, with a particular reference to Kerala, one of the important tourism destinations in India.

1.6 The Research Problem

The growing importance of quality, as demanded by the customers, and the growing intensity of competition will impact the tourism development efforts initiated at a destination level. Similar to the strategic marketing efforts taken by firms in the tourism industry, destinations too will have to adopt such practices in response to challenges faced from the environment in which they operate. Quality improvement of tourism product and services offered at a destination, whether at the regional, country or state level, as emphasised by WTO, will become a strategic focus in enhancing the competitiveness of the destinations.

At the destination level, improvement of service quality and the goal of achieving tourist satisfaction tend to become a necessary condition in attaining a successful and competitive position in the international tourism market. In response to this, many destinations, whether at the national/regional or state level, include quality improvement objective in their tourism development plans, aims to shift the primary focus from a volume growth to a selective development, which is also targeted to improve the quality of tourist's holiday experience.

One trend projected in the tourism industry is the increasing share of international tourism into Asian region, which is a phenomenon already experienced by many South East Asian countries in late eighties and nineties (CII, 2003). India as a leading destination in this region is certainly poised to exploit this trend, which it missed in eighties and nineties. Within India, one State that performed remarkably well in tourism is Kerala. During the 90s, the State achieved growth in tourism higher than the national average.

Tourism industry is one of the few industries in which Kerala has a lot of potential to develop. Its importance has grown considerably over the years. According to WTTC (2002), Kerala is one of the fastest growing destinations in the world, attracted 2.32 lakhs international tourists in the year 2002, and is expected to grow at a rate of 11.6percent per annum over the coming decade. Kerala, with its wide range of attractions and 'gods own country' theme, is trying to project as quality destination, which can offer tourists a unique experience.

The impressive achievement of Kerala in the tourism sector is largely due to the ambitious destination development and marketing activities undertaken by the government in partnership with the private sector. But despite the growth and the relative importance of tourism to the State economy, there are only few researches carried out on tourists' perception and satisfaction with Kerala as a tourist destination. One study on tourism in the State focused mainly on understanding of administrative mechanisms involved in the tourism development to draw implications for management priorities (Sudheer, 1991). Another study was on the Potential of eco tourism in the State (Vijayakumar, 1997).

The studies conducted by the tourism department pertains to basic statistics related to tourism in Kerala, which is inadequate and does not lend itself to development of sound management and marketing strategies for tourism in the State needed as part of proper destination planning and development.

There is a growing awareness at the governmental level for the improvement of quality in tourism as reflected in the tourism policy of Government of Kerala (GOK, 2000b). For this task, among others, it is necessary to have more information about the market. Attaining the quality objective depends largely on carrying out systematic and comprehensive research into trends in the tourism industry and tourist perception of destination facilities, services, attractions and what other destinations have to offer. This study is a step in this direction to provide better information for understanding tourists and thereby can be an input for the destination development strategy.

Kerala can further improve its position as a leading tourist destination in India, especially when there is an overall predicted trend of international tourism shifting more to south Asian region. At the same time, Kerala will also face intense competition, as other destinations also compete for the leisure customer. With limited resources, the need for focused marketing efforts will increase.

Despite the rise in opportunities to increase the share of international tourist market, many destinations, like India in general and Kerala in particular, will face more competition from well established and powerful destinations. In such case, the competition for Kerala is not only from the other states in India, but also nearby countries like Srilanka and Maldives, which are more established destinations with a considerable lead. In this scenario, competitiveness of the destination Kerala will have to be increased to meet growing competition. And one of the key factors contributing to the competitiveness of the destination is the quality of the total tourism product offered at the destination level.

As destinations compete to increase their share of foreign tourists, it becomes strategically more vital to understand tourists on various aspects. Understanding tourists, their perception of destination are all essential inputs in the destination marketing efforts. This is the area which this study focuses, and also aims to provide a better understanding of international tourists, in terms of their motivations, characteristics and perceptions of the destination. This in turn will provide guidelines on the ways in which elements in the tourists' holiday environment can be identified and managed to increase tourist satisfaction and repeat business.

Quality improvement initiatives should start from the demand oriented thinking, and this must start with the conceptualisation of the tourism product itself. The view adopted in this study is that, the assessment of a destination, as tourist is concerned, is a holistic assessment of the holiday, which includes a series of service encounters with service providers, local citizens and other tourists. This aspect of tourists' evaluation process of destination point to the need for assessing tourists perceived quality from a destination level.

The demand-oriented perspective at the destination level planning also becomes significant as it specifies the direction of growth planned for the destination. This issue becomes relevant for Kerala in particular as the tourism industry currently is going through a growth phase in the destination life cycle, and during which a supply oriented view tend to dominate (Butler, 1980). There are cases of destinations experiencing a sudden decline from the peak of growth, due to failure in setting the right direction for tourism industry to grow. Setting the right course for the tourism industry involves a shift from supply-dominated thinking, which also necessitates collecting tourists perception and expectation data to provide valuable insights on the demand side information.

There are various gaps in the quality management efforts at the destination level. One of the important gaps is the tourists' perception gap. It is related to not knowing the kind of perception and image tourists have towards a complex entity like a destination, and consequently failing to attain the customer perceived quality and satisfaction by the destination. This lack of attempt to understand tourists' requirement and improve tourism product and quality of tourism experience may be even overlooked in a growth phase in the tourism industry, where the emphasis tend to be on increasing international tourist arrivals and revenue.

Another related problem in destination promotion is the chasing of volume growth rather than the value growth, which can also occur in a growth phase of the market. Even though, for the Kerala, the intention is to go for quality tourism, and in the process attracting high spending tourists, as stated in the tourism policy, there can be a considerable gap while implementing this policy in practice. Therefore, in such situations, tourist perception gap accentuates, and the problem of limited emphasis on understanding the tourists' behavior and their requirements may arise.

To close the tourists' perception gap, destination marketing efforts need to be informed by studies providing information on the specific details on the market and trends shaping the tourism industry. In this regard, an important step involves knowing the international tourism market in Kerala, in terms of needs, benefits sought, and the tourists' image and perceptions associated with various aspects of destination. These are the areas this study will try to answer. Understanding the international tourist market to Kerala, in terms of their destination image perception, and segmenting international tourists market based on the useful benefit segments derived, will therefore, form the primary focus of the study.

1.7 The Study Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the perception of tourists on the specified attributes of Kerala as a tourist destination.

2. To analyse the latent destination image dimensions generated from the tourists perception.
3. To measure the level of impact of destination image dimensions on the tourists' overall holiday satisfaction.
4. To study the tourists preference for various benefits and activities they seek in their trip to Kerala
5. To segment the international tourists based on the benefits and activities sought and determine the various socio-demographic and visitation characteristics of these segments.
6. To compare the overall impression with the destination and trip satisfaction for different tourists groups categorised by country of origin and various socio demographic characteristics.
7. To understand the nationality, trip and demographic profile of tourists who are staying more, taking repeat visits and spending more in Kerala.
8. To analyse the destination attractiveness using Importance - Performance matrix.

The first three objectives are related to understanding tourists' perception, which would assist in discerning how tourism products and services are perceived in the market place. This also gives an idea about the strengths and weakness of the destination. Understanding tourists' perception will also aid in the positioning of the destination in an established market place and for properly repositioning current tourism products and service mix, if needed, in the minds of travelers. This will then form part of targeting countries and regions for focused promotions in various generating markets.

The objectives fourth to seventh relates to the need for properly directing and matching the travel related products and service provisions and promotional activities towards traveler characteristics, with an aim to understand the salient criteria which determine the choice of a destination for the pleasure travel.

The eighth objective relates to knowing how international travelers perceive a destination, and will inform the process of how a destination needs to be positioned by the destination travel and tourism marketers. This supports a strategic approach to destination marketing and development efforts for the Kerala. This information can be an input to the destination planning process in terms of the relative strengths and weakness of the destination, which are vital inputs to strategic marketing efforts for a destination.

1.8 Methodology

1.8.1 Scope of the Study

The study is focused on the international tourists' visiting Kerala. Only those coming with a leisure purpose are selected. This excludes tourists coming for business or spiritual purpose.

1.8.2 Primary and Secondary Data Collected

The core data for the study is the primary data collected from the international tourists through a questionnaire. Primary data in the form of opinion and views of travel agents, tour operators, hoteliers, tour guides and destination management officials about the various aspects pertaining to the tourism development in the state was also collected at the beginning stage of the study. These data also forms a major input to the third chapter on tourism development in Kerala.

For the secondary data, extensive literature review was done on different types of research carried out both internationally and nationally in the area of tourist behavior, destination quality management and tourism marketing. On line journal data bases like EBSCO, Emerald and Proquest were used for this purpose. Information collected from tourism guidebooks, trade promotional literature and consultancy reports covering the tourism industry was also part of this effort. In addition to this, data from reports and statistics from WTO, WTTC, Government and tourism department reports and planning review materials were also collected.

1.8.3 Sampling

Tourists trip satisfaction, overall impression and quality perception towards the destination attractions, and service provided are the data needed for this study for assessing the demand side view of destination quality. These data are at best assessed when tourists have completed their holiday. Recognising this need, the departure lounge in two major airports in Kerala were identified as the suitable place to meet tourists and collect the data. Moreover, at the airport, tourists generally have some time to spare and can recollect vividly about their holiday experience in Kerala. With suitable sample control measures, the quality of sample selected through the convenience sampling method was enhanced. Sample control measures taken include gathering data uniformly spread over a 3 month period, falling in the peak season, and by limiting the number of respondents met in a family or group, for each flight and for each day.

It was decided to collect a sample of around 400 international tourists. The decisions regarding the sample size and the convenience sampling method adopted reflects the similar choices made in other published studies of similar nature carried out at various international tourism destinations. While collecting data, adequacy of the sample size was also ensured by checking the expected frequency of sample representation in the various cells of contingency tables set up for categorising tourists based on demographic and trip related variables.

1.8.4 Research Process

The research followed a two-stage methodology, comprising qualitative and quantitative stage. The qualitative stage involved a series of one to one interviews with tourism department officials and experts from the tourism industry. Travel agents, tour operators, hoteliers, tour guides and destination management officials were also interviewed in order to know more about their view points on different aspects of tourism marketing and quality issues in the tourism industry in Kerala. A free response survey with tourists were also carried out to know their awareness of quality issues as well as those attributes that they consider essential in their evaluation of destination experience.

The qualitative research stage informed the subsequent stage of quantitative data collection, which used a multi item questionnaire. Content validity of the questionnaire was ensured by taking expert opinion from members in the tourism industry, academics and tourists. Incorporating the suggestions obtained at each stage, the questionnaire was revised accordingly.

The quantitative stage of the research used a structured questionnaire, which was made through several iterations. In short, the first stage in the iteration process involved a literature search, a number of unstructured interviews with tourists and tourism officials, and free response surveys soliciting tourists' compliments and complaints about the trip experience.

A pilot test was conducted in order to check and fine-tune the item list in the questionnaire. After few revisions made to the questionnaire, the required destination attributes were included. Items selected were destination specific, and being an exploratory study, the intent was also limited to develop a destination specific questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections (appendix-VI). The first section was structured to measure the level of tourist's perception of various destination components, including attractions, facilities and services. Simple rating scales anchored between excellent and poor was used for the purpose of evaluating tourist's perception with the destination. The choice of this scale is prompted by the need to make questionnaire reliable and easy to understand. The aim was to help respondents understand easily, aspects measured of a particular item. Verbal response alternatives, than the numerical ones were provided for each section, taking into account, the preference for the same by the respondents. Using a verbally anchored scale can also reduce extreme response bias.

The second section was structured for the purpose of measurement of respondents' satisfaction with their holiday, their likelihood to recommend the destination to others, and their overall destination rating for its impressiveness. The study adopted a single overall measure of tourist satisfaction, because of its ease of use and the empirical support for measuring satisfaction from various other studies. The third section was structured to measure the benefits and activities tourists' seek and the ratings of importance for various activities in tourism. For this purpose, an importance-scale was used with verbal response alternatives. The last section collected general information about the respondents and about their holiday in Kerala.

Analyses carried out include assessing the possible sources of difference in tourists' perception of destination and the pattern of relationship between variables, using t tests, Anova and Chi square. The destination perception factors and its impact on the holiday satisfaction were assessed using factor analysis and multiple regression model. The cluster analysis was used for benefit and activity segmentation of the international tourists market. Finally, for assessing the destination attractiveness importance - performance methodology was also used.

1.8.5 The Survey Process

The Survey was carried out at both Trivandrum and Cochin airports, which were identified as the two major transit points for international tourists leaving Kerala. Data were collected from tourists at the airport when they were about to leave. For the survey purpose, questionnaires were distributed to tourists. This was a good time and place to conduct the survey, as by this time, departing tourists have time to spare. The majority of tourists were favorable to answer the questions about their vacation, probably because, this was the time they were also reflecting upon their holiday.

405 tourists agreed to participate in the survey. Sample control measures include restricting the number of tourist surveyed to 15 -20/ per

day, and selecting the respondents at different times of the day i.e. about 5 or 6 per flight. If tourists come with the family, only one questionnaire was given. Not more than 3 or 4 questionnaires were given to tourists who came in a group. The survey was conducted over a 3 month period. Of the 405 questionnaires collected, 17 were discarded as not sufficiently complete for analysis. SPSS package was used to analyse the data.

1.8.6 Limitations of the Study

This research has many other international studies as its benchmark for its methodological choices. Despite the conscious comparisons and choices, the present study may fall short in terms of its external validity while generalising to the whole of international tourist population visiting the state of Kerala.

Limiting the data collection to the two major airports in the state has, by default, excluded international tourists, who travel to and fro Kerala through rail and road, and the Calicut airport. Still, the data collected can be considered as efficient representation of international tourists visiting Kerala, as approximately 40 percent of international tourists use air travel as their mode of transport and these two airports as their transit points.

Quality assessment at the destination level involves a multitude of products and services. In the case of tourist attractions, some of the recently emerged niche tourism products like eco tourism and health tourism were also not assessed separately. The unwieldiness obvious in an attempt to incorporate all aspects of the destination quality has restricted the study in its scope and the coverage of data elicitation, thereby making the study more illustrative than being exhaustive.

Chapter 2
Tourism Industry – Concepts and Models

2.1 Introduction

Understanding the nature of tourism industry and related conceptual frameworks is important to plan and manage tourism development at the destination level. Assessing quality in tourism also requires some background idea on the characteristics of the tourism product and the related marketing and development principles. As these are pertinent areas related to this study, this chapter aims to give a brief review of tourism industry, tourism product, tourism marketing, and quality management issues pertaining to the tourism industry.

Defining tourism has been found to be difficult because of the complex nature of the tourism product and the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the tourism phenomenon. This means, different stakeholders or groups with an interests in tourism are likely to have different aspirations of what they hope to achieve from it, and subsequently holds different perceptions of what it means to them. Holden (2000) notes that, attempts to define tourism are difficult because it is a highly complicated amalgam of various parts. These parts are a diverse range of factors, including the following: human feelings, emotions and desires; attractions built upon natural and developed resources; suppliers of transport, accommodation and other services; and government policy and regulatory frameworks. And it is a process that involves the participation of national, state and local governments, tourism business and local communities, all of whom will have their own interests in tourism development.

A convenient definition is the one proposed by World Tourism Organisation (WTO, 1991): 'tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes.' This definition challenges the commonly held perception that tourism is purely concerned with recreation and having fun. While recreation tourism is the most usual form of tourism, other types of tourism also exist. For instance, Davidson (1993) besides recognising leisure or recreation (in which he includes travel for holidays, sports, cultural events and visiting friends and relatives) as the main types of tourism, draws attention to the point that people also travel for business, study, education, religious and health purposes.

2.2 Tourism Definition

Tourism is primarily about human activity which involves travel from an originating area to a destination for pleasure or business purposes. The concept embraces cultural, economic and social exchange processes. According to Pearce (1995), tourism is a multifaceted activity and geographically complex one as different service are sought and supplied at different stages from the origin to the destination. Moreover, in any country or region there is likely to be a number of origins and destinations, with most places having both generating (origin) and receiving destinations.

One definition useful for understanding the marketing process in tourism is given by Mills and Morrison (1992): ' tourism is the term given to the activity that occurs when tourists travel. This encompasses every thing from the planning of the trip, the travel to the place, the stay itself, the return, and the reminiscences about it afterwards. It also includes the activities the traveler undertakes as part of trip, the purchases made and the interactions that occur between host and guest'. In sum, it is all of the activities and the impacts that occur when a visitor travels. This definition recognises the importance of pre and post trip activities as well as what takes place at the destination, and has the implication for understanding the total consumption process tourists go through, rather than simply concentrating on the travel journey and destination.

Definitions vary according to discipline, perspective or purpose. Many analyses of tourism refer to a number of defining principles that have been summarised by Burhart and Medik (1989) who offer a comprehensive, yet simple set of principles defining tourism:

- Tourism is an amalgam of phenomena and relationships.
- It has two elements, the journey to the destination (dynamic element) and stay (static element).
- It is an activity that takes place away from the normal place of residence and work and is therefore different to those enjoyed by the residents in the areas. Movement is short term and is intended to be of temporary in nature
- Visits to destinations takes place for a number of reasons, but excludes taking up permanent residence or employment, which is remunerated.

For analysing tourism, some of the major approaches adopted are institutional, economic, sociological, geographical, and systems approach. There are also a number of models which seek to explain tourism phenomenon within a conceptual framework. The following section will review briefly a few approaches. In this context, there is perhaps a case for refinement of generic and explanatory models of tourism to reflect the complexity of the social cultural and economic forces interacting on tourism development and how tourism managers can attempt to shape these forces in order to stimulate long-term sustainable offerings and markets.

2.3 The Tourism System

Among the varieties of technical descriptions, the systems approach is cited as the most appropriate approach for understanding both the scope of tourism and the interactions between the various components which make up the total tourism system. Laws (1991) argues that it is appropriate to analyse tourism as a system (a set of interrelated parts which forms a cohesive whole), rather than as an industry or market. Tourism as viewed as system, not only incorporates business and tourists but also societies and environments.

A systems view of tourism also introduces the discussion of linkages between consumers, suppliers and destination (Mills and Morrison, 1992). One of the main subsystems is the supply sector (subsystem) which concentrates on the parameters of each supply activities. The five key sectors are accommodation and catering, transport, visitor attractions, travel distributions and selling and marketing organisations. This framework suggests that tourism suppliers form the key linkage of the tourism sector between the consumer and the destination. The linkages between the supply sectors also provide a degree of overlap (Lumsdon, 1997). For example, tour operators own travel agencies, transport providers own accommodations and major groups own entertainment facilities, restaurants and accommodations. A comprehensive view of tourism supply sectors is depicted in Figure 2.1.

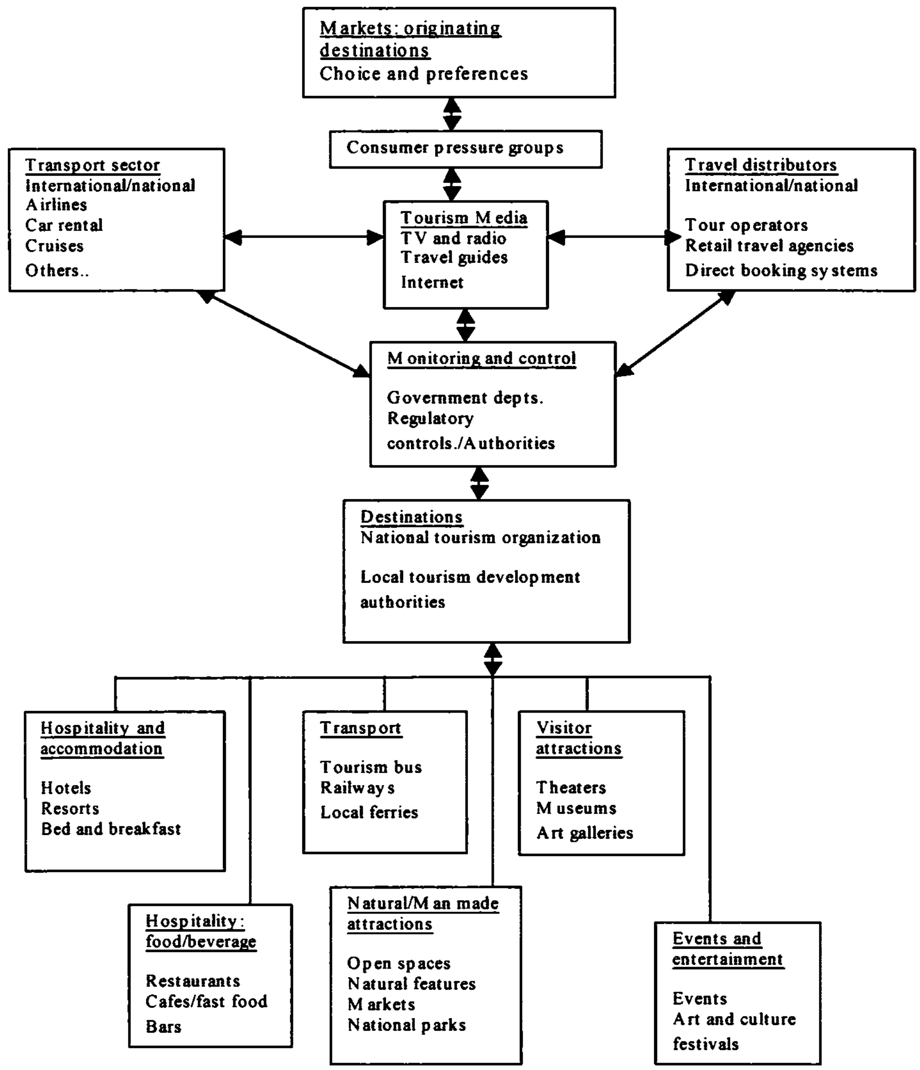

Figure 2.1 Tourism Supply Sectors. ***Source:*** **Lumsdon (1997).**

Gunn (1994) adds that every part of the tourism is related to every other part and that no manager or owners involved in the tourism sector has complete control over the process. It is, therefore, important that managers involved in any part of the system understand its complexity and adopts a holistic view of their business operations. This also means actions that are taken by businesses will have consequences for the other part of the system.

Mills and Morrison (1992) developed a tourism model which draw attention to the four integrated parts of the tourism system and are described as follows:

Market- this section of the model emphasis the need to understand consumer behavior which occurs within social and cultural constraints which obviously leads to purchase of travel in wide variety of forms.

Travel- this part refers to travel segments, the flow of visitors, their characteristics and the existing trends and forecasts for the future; these factors shape travel demand to different destinations.

Destinations- this refers to the mix of facilities and attractions desired by different segments of visitors, as well as, policy formulation and marketing planning to address the needs of different segments.

Marketing- this involves destination marketing to existing and potential visitors through a variety of intermediaries, and following the market plan using marketing management tools.

According to Laws (1991), viewing tourism as a system avoids one-dimensional thinking and facilitates multi disciplinary perspectives. Tourism system with a heightened environmental perspective is shown in Figure 2.2. This shows the important inputs to the tourism system as natural and human resources, the use of which are encouraged by both the consumers' demand in the market system for the tourism, and the governmental policies aimed at increasing entrepreneurial activity and investments in the sector. Various sub systems are also recognisable in the system; incorporated in these sub systems are business that have been developed to cater primarily for the tourists such as tour operators, hotel companies and airlines and locally owned tourism enterprises.

Destination, another important sub system in this model, provides the natural and cultural attraction for attracting tourists. The outputs of the system, which suggest that tourism will bring economic cultural and environmental changes, and these changes can be either positive or negative.

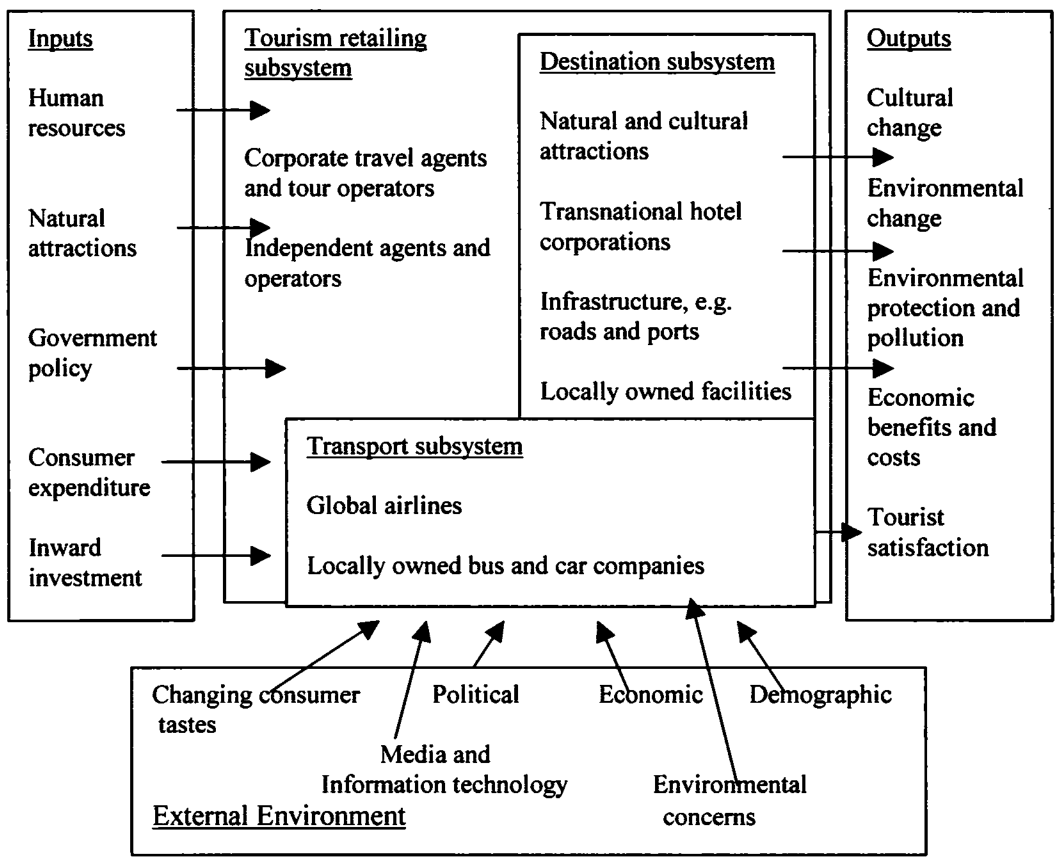

Figure 2.2 The Tourism System. ***Source*****: Holden, 2000**

Another output of the tourism system, which is essential for ensuring the profits of the enterprises, based upon tourism and helping to secure the economic benefits desired by the government is tourist satisfaction. Finally the tourism system is subjected to a range of influence exerted by the changes in the society.

A similar tourism model developed by Matheison and Wall (1982) shows at its core, three elements, which are:

1. Dynamic element- which refers to demand and forms of tourism,

2. Static element- which relates to characteristics of tourists to those of destinations

3. Consequential element- which highlights economical, physical and social impact, and impact control in tourism.

All these models show tourism system as subjected to a range of influences external to the system. So understanding the tourism system involves considering both the micro and the macro factors arising from the environment. The microenvironment includes those factors which prevail in the immediate environment of a firm on which the firm has certain degree of influence, such as its relationship with other suppliers or with distributors. For example, tour operators form close relationship with hotel and airlines to provide complete tour packages. The macro environment relates to a much broader set of forces which affect all tourism business to some degree; they are cultural, political, economic, social and technological in nature.

These models briefly reviewed highlight the interdependence of various elements in the tourism system, which has implications for the destination planning and marketing efforts taken at a destination level.

2.4 Services Marketing Process in Tourism

The following section discusses certain defining characteristics of tourism marketing. It considers how general marketing principles are linked and adapted to the marketing approaches seen in the tourism industry, especially in the context of evolving nature of the tourism environment and the increasing complexity of interactions between suppliers in the tourism industry. For example, changing nature of the demand, characterised by a more volatile, fragmented and sophisticated market will make it imperative on the part of destination marketers to make changes in the way they market their offerings (Poon, 1993).

As tourism industry is usually classified as the part of the service sector of the economy, the marketing principles applied in tourism will be based on the general service marketing principles. During the past two decades there has been a growing body of literature dedicated to marketing of services. The basic difference between goods and services are that goods are produced whereas services are performances mostly. On this basis, the five underlined characteristics, which makes the marketing of services different from the marketing of industrial or fast moving goods are intangibility, perishablity, heterogeneity, inseparability, and the lack of ownership. These generic characteristics of services have certain implications in the marketing of services. Apart from discerning common patterns in marketing responses across wide spectrum of tourism supply elements, there are also attempts to highlight marketing challenges as it applies to marketing the total tourism product at a destination level.

2.4.1 Intangibility

It is an important characteristic of the service products, in the sense that most services cannot easily be measured, touched or evaluated at the point of sale before performance and because of this, customers tend to evaluate services differently.

Referring to the conceptual continuum between the goods and services as proposed by Gronooos (1982), tourism is more intangible dominant, and in the case of tourism, intangible benefits dominate with respect to virtually all of the tourism offerings. Even though a tourism offering will include tangibles such as food, beverages or souvenirs, it is essentially about offering intangible benefits, such as relaxation, education, entertainment or feeling superior (Ego enhancement). As tourism offerings are mainly intangible, tourism marketers tend to 'tangibilise' the tourism offerings in brochures and videos, and can emphasise pictorial references and souvenirs to reinforce image of holiday experience to over come lack of ownership (Witt and Moutinho, 1994).

As noted by Seaton and Bennett (1996), the extent to which the concept of intangibility dominates all parts of the tourism system, including pre consumption stage, involves selling of a dream prior to the visit, pictorial references, word of mouth recommendations which features intangible benefits, and the stay itself are mainly about consuming intangible benefits such as relaxation and pleasant experiences. And this leads to post consumption experiences which again are intangible in the form of happy memories and may be held years after consumption.

Intangibility is dominant in many of the travel and tourism products, and this feature has particular implications for the promotion and distribution of services in the tourism industry, which demands suitable marketing response from the mangers in the tourism industry.

2.4.2 Inseparability

This means that the act of production and consumption is simultaneous. The service provision and consumption occur at the same time and both the provider and consumer interact in the process of delivery. In such case with high level of consumer involvement, standardisation of service is difficult. In many consumption situations in tourism, the performance of service requires active participation of the producer and the consumer together, and often, customer sees staff in charge of customer service as an inseparable aspect of service product itself (Bateson, 1991).

In response to this characteristic of the tourism product, marketers need to devise delivery systems which can manage interactions. And for this, they can invest in campaigns to educate staff and consumers as to how to get the best from the interaction. For example, training in hotels emphasises how staff can manage the interaction with customers.

2.4. 3 Perishability

Perishability refers to the service production characteristics of fixed time and space. Services cannot be saved, stored, resold or returned, and it might be argued that consumers feel the effect of perishability as it cannot be returned. Also, if the service capacity or products are not sold on a particular day, the potential revenue they represent is lost and cannot be recovered .For example, Hotels with a fixed number of rooms, and transport service providers with a fixed number of seats face problems of matching available demand to perishable supply. Marketing response in such situations emphasises managing demand and capacity mix to an appropriate level. Perishablity is also linked in the case of travel and tourism services with seasonality (Middleton, 1994).

2.4.4 Seasonality

It is a characteristic of most leisure tourism markets that demand fluctuate greatly between seasons of the year. As a result many tourism businesses dealing with holiday markets fluctuate from peaks of 90 to 100 percentage capacity utilisation to troughs of 30 percent or less in a year (Middleton, 1994). Seasonal closure of leisure tourism businesses is some times due to this. A major preoccupation of marketing managers then is to generate as much as demand in the lean season as market conditions permit.

No possibility of creating and holding stocks follows from the characteristics inseparability and perishability i.e., it is not possible for a service provider to create a stock of products to meet daily fluctuations in demand. Perishability and the impossibility of stock holding means different types of inventory systems for services are needed, which can capture details of each years production capacity in a computerised inventory, and then market that capacity through contracts at specific prices at specified times. A technique like yield management is used for managing inventory in such cases.

2.4. 5 Heterogeneity

This refers to the vagaries of human interaction between and among service contact employees and customers. Due to the close contact between staff and consumers, it becomes difficult for service marketers to standardise service provision, and performance varies regardless of process designed to minimise this factor (Palmer, 1994). This means, every service performance is unique to each customer, and from the provider's point of view, specific efforts are needed for designing the specification and quality control measures of service performance. This simultaneous nature of provision and consumption of the service offerings in the tourism brings the importance of service encounter elements in service delivery.

Service encounters in tourism can be viewed as a performance in which tourists participate with staff in playing their roles. The high degree of interaction is an important element in tourism consumption, an area which requires far more managerial attention than in marketing of goods. To handle this challenge, managers of tourism organisations can design some of the service delivery processes with an aim to minimise differences in service encounters and provisions between different outlets or between different shifts, as in a hotel. Provision of uniforms and designing similar physical surroundings are some of the attempts of standardisation.

2.4.6 Lack of Ownership

This relates to the fact that consumer does not take title to goods as in goods marketing. In tourism, this means the ownership confines mainly to memories and feelings tourists bring back from a holiday. In response to this, marketers can emphasise pictorial reference and souvenirs to reinforce image of a holiday experience (Seaton and Bennett, 1996).

Another important feature of tourism consumption is the length of the tourism consumption process which has important implication on the tourism service management task; it is a challenge to provide continuity and consistency of service throughout a person stay. This is because, unlike tangible goods, the degree of control associated with service providers in tourism is limited. At a destination level, maintaining service quality will be further difficult, because of the varied nature of service provisions tourists have to encounter.

2.5 Destination Marketing

At the destination level, the marketing effort is further complicated by certain aspects which represent the challenges faced by the destination marketers. This refers to the various marketing dimensions within which the total tourism industry operates. According to Gilmore (2003), service marketing dimensions for the tourism sector reflect the range and the multidimensional nature of tourism service products, managing the tourism product, importance of effective and consistent service delivery and the communication message and region's image. These dimensions are illustrated in Table 2.1.

2.5.1 Range and Multidimensional Nature of Tourism Service Products

The scope and range of the tourism services products are vast. They can range from very tangible products such as geographical areas, unique sites, and man-made facilities to more intangible specific attractions, destination facilities and amenities, accessibility, images and price. All aspects of tourism service product must be recognised, explicitly provided in relevant places and in adequate numbers. Deficiencies need to be identified so that they can be met both in terms of the infrastructure and tangible elements and intangible aspects of service. The overall development of the tourism product needs to focus on meeting market deficiencies and delivering tangibles and intangibles. Given the scope and range of tourism service products, there is a considerable managerial role implied in coordinating this service delivery.

Table 2.1 Service Dimensions for Tourism Marketing ***Source*****: Gilmore, 2000**

Range and nature of services	**Managing the tourism product**	**Effective and consistent service delivery**	**Communication message and regions image**
Geographical area Unique sites Manmade facilities Destination facilities Accessibility Images Price range	Differentiation and positioning destination image Developing/marketing tourism brand Looking for new markets	Physical infrastructure facilities and service People involved in the service delivery	Public and press messages Branding Image building

This aspect also highlights interdependence of tourism products. Most visitors' combine in their travel purchase decisions with not one service or product, but several. A tourist chooses attractions at a destination together with products of accommodation, transport and other facilities, such as catering. Tourist accommodation suppliers at a destination are therefore partly influenced by the marketing decisions of tour operators and travel agents, transport providers interests and public tourism organisations which together or separately promote the destination and its activities and facilities. This also reflects the potential for combining the capacity of different travel and tourism products at a destination, and the potential synergy to be achieved in integrating marketing decisions, if different suppliers can find ways to combine their respective efforts through joint marketing programmes.

2.5.2 Managing the Tourism Product

Marketing the tourism product at the destination involves differentiating and positioning a destination with strong destination image, developing and marketing a tourism brand and looking for new or niche markets. To achieve this, companies involved in the tourism sector need to come together to integrate their market focus and offerings. For this, a strongly integrated tourism service needs to evolve and strengthen overtime before an appropriate brand can be developed based on the overall market positioning of the tourism service product.

A fully extended product experience for a tourist will include a long and often sequential path. First, a potential tourist will choose a location from a wide variety of locations in a specific region. Each location will offer a wide range of services and different prices ranges. Promotion and communication activity will be most successful if there is a joint investment in marketing by all parties involved delivering tourism product.

2.5.3 Effective and Consistent Service Delivery

Tourism is widely recognised as being people's business. The full range of features and characteristics that make up tourism experience is extremely wide and will vary from customer to customer. Each experience will be different due to characteristic of heterogeneity element inherent in the varied set of service encounters which tourists experience at the destination level.

Destination marketing needs to focus on the both technical and functional aspects inherent in the tourism product. At the fundamental level, the technical aspects of a service product need to be satisfied before functional or psychological aspects of service delivery can be delivered. In a tourism context this translates into the need for physical infrastructure, facilities and security before attracting visitors to an area. For improving functional quality, the focus needs to be more on the intangible aspect of service delivery, and this highlights the importance of staff training for this sector. As part of encouraging internal marketing, there must be also initiatives at improving service providers' competence in delivering a wide choice and range of services in a flexible way. From the destination marketing point of view, this step gains particular significance because a destination inherently need to deliver a wide range of service products that satisfy the needs of different groups within the mass market in term of price ranges and product variability

2.5.4 Communicating the Message and the Regions image

An integral component of destination marketing effort is communicating to the general public and the press within a region or internationally, and this is a challenge facing many destinations. What is written about a country, whether the country appears positively or negatively in the press, news releases or general word of mouth, can have an influence on the country's image as a tourist attraction. A universal brand name is often used to send a range of messages to the market and public. A successful brand name can be very useful to a competitive market place as this will help differentiate a region from many local or national competitors.

In addition to the unique characteristics and the complex nature of a destination product, destination planning and marketing efforts are further constrained by the specific context in which tourism industry operates. According to Witt and Moutinho, (1994), tourism sector has some specific characteristics that impact upon any marketing activity taken at the destination level, and these are illustrated in Table 2.2.

2.5.5 Involvement of Public and Private Companies

Tourism is managed by a number of private and public organisations. Usually within a geographical region, there is a national tourism organisation. This organisation's role is to guide the development of the sector through planning, marketing, supporting and directing various endeavors and activities. Apart from the key role played by the private sector in the successful development of the tourism industry, the public sector in the form of national and regional tourism organisations has a key role to play in terms of effective intervention for the long term interest of the tourism industry, and also to ensure that the associated benefits of the tourism are maximised for the benefit of the economy, society and environment (Witt and Moutinho, 1994). But in practice, many public sector organisations may fail to achieve this goal with a collaborative effort, as many of them tend to be inefficient and ineffective in managing the task which require a high level of management expertise.

The tourism product is compiled from a combination of both private and public sectors. Public and private companies have different ways of working and different priorities in how they do business. Private sector is responsible for operating to narrow commercial criteria, while the public sector has the responsibility for infrastructure and planning policies that affects tourism. This issue creates many planning and coordination problems in destination development efforts. In this situation, destination marketing, which needs collaborative marketing efforts through public private sector partnerships also suffers from a lack of strong and focused effort.

Table 2.2 Destination Marketing-Context Characteristics
***Source:* adapted from Witt and Moutinho, 1994**

Characteristics	Impacts upon	Leads to
Involvement of public and private companies Many companies are small- medium sized enterprises Variety of service providers Fragmentation of industry and infrastructure	Planning and co-ordination, Different levels of management efficiency and effectiveness Development potential Markets for different services, type of message to be communicated to the market All marketing planning and activity	Lack of overall coherent directions Lack of involvement in wider industry networks and planning Potential for mismatch between advertising message and market Inefficiencies, duplication of marketing activities, market confusion

2.5.6 Involvement of Small and Medium Enterprises

The private companies involved in tourism are often providers of very specific services such as food, accommodation or leisure activities. Many of these companies are small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and by their very nature they have limitation of resources in terms of finance and expertise. SMEs in this sector are constrained by the limitation of resources, financial to human, and this impacts on their marketing activities and specialist expertise (Morgan, 1994). For example, limitations include lack of staff to carry out marketing duties, limited promotional budgets and limited marketing knowledge.

SMEs in this sector often suffer from an overall lack of competitiveness and may have limited offerings for the tourists. Indeed, many SMEs in the tourist industry have a lack of involvement in local or regional tourism structure and contribute very little to the destination marketing efforts (Witt and Moutinho, 1994).

2.5.7 Variety of Service Products

Within any region there will be wide variety of offerings. It is more effective to offer a service product package that can be 'sold' as a whole offering, including a desirable area with different options for visitors, where they can choose to experience any combination of attractions including areas of natural beauty, unique features and any other specific facilities. So the challenge is, with such a variety of services and various combinations in which tourists consumes, how can the destination be promoted and sold as an integrated and complete offering. Integrating the marketing communication process is also a problem due to the varied requirements of different tourism products and service providers (Middleton, 1994).

2.5.8 Fragmentation

The involvement of both public and private companies and the diverse nature of private companies, most of them SMEs, contribute to the fragmentation of the industry. Fragmentation makes it difficult for a national tourism organisation in any region to brand or market a destination because of the geographical and socio-cultural diversities (Witt and Moutinho, 1994).

Equally, the nature of some of the organisations involved in the tourism sector contributes to the fragmentation. Public and private companies have different agendas and each will have different ways of operating and doing businesses. Also, the large and small companies involved in the tourism industry will do business in different ways

2.6 Tourism Product

When tourism consumption involves mainly intangible core offerings, there are various conceptual frameworks developed for explaining what constitutes a tourism product. Palmer's (1994) definition of service product as a bundle of intangible core benefits and secondary service facilities which constitutes a mix of tangibles and intangibles, including branding, processes, accessibility, quality, packaging and features reflect mostly the nature of tourism product. Some components of tourism are clearly tangible items such as souvenirs, food and beverages, but most are intangibles.

Jefferson and Lickorish (1991) describe tourism product as collection of physical and service features together with symbolic associations which can fulfill the wants and needs of the buyer. It is the ingredient 'symbolic associations' which highlights the degree of intangibility of a service offering in tourism .The concept of inseparability also has a important bearing on feature attributed to the tourism product. The high degree of contact in tourism also means that tourism service offerings are performed by the service provider and enjoyed by the customer simultaneously.

There are many attempts to understand the nature of tourism product within the framework of services marketing. For example, Figure 2.3 shows the adaptation of Kotler's product levels by Lumsdon (1996), which suggest that there are four levels of product in the hospitality sector:

The Core product. This inner zone is described as the core benefits, which are clearly distinguishable from product features.

The Facilitating product. This is a combination of goods and services which enable the visitor to buy the core product, for example, telephone and booking systems.

The Supporting product. This adds value to the core product by allowing tourism suppliers to differentiate from their competitors. They are not essential like facilitating products, for example, complimentary in-flight news papers and drinks.

The Augmented product. This includes accessibility, atmosphere, customer interaction with the service organisation, customer participation, and customers' interaction with each other.

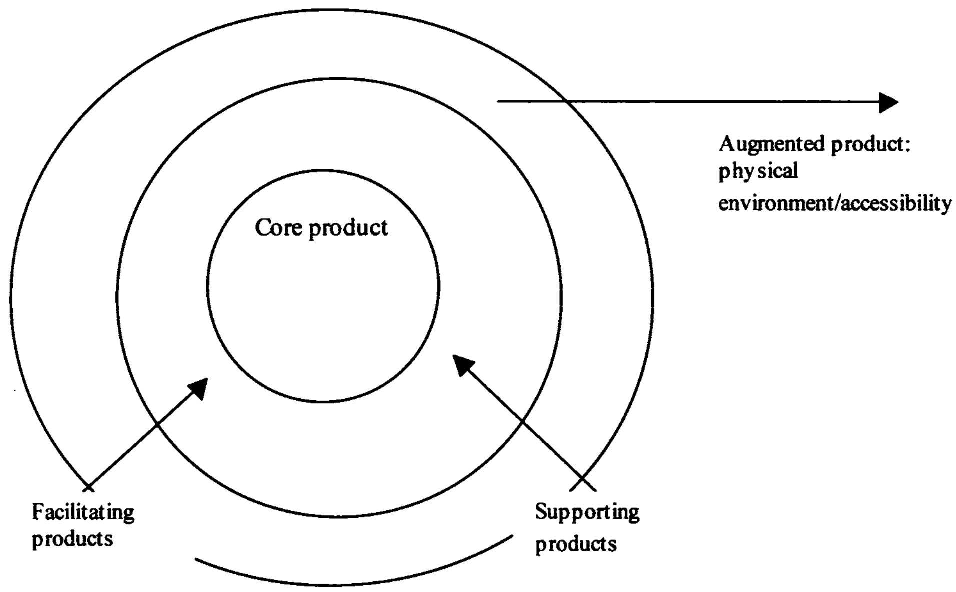

Figure 2. 3 Kotler's Model Adapted to Tourism Product. *Source*: Lumsdon, 2000

This model emphasises the importance of translating the core product (core benefits) into a tangible product (appealing, effective displays and accessible staff) and supported by good augmented product (functional quality). Another distinction in this model is regarding levels of service offered as part of the overall augmented product and how the service element is actually delivered.

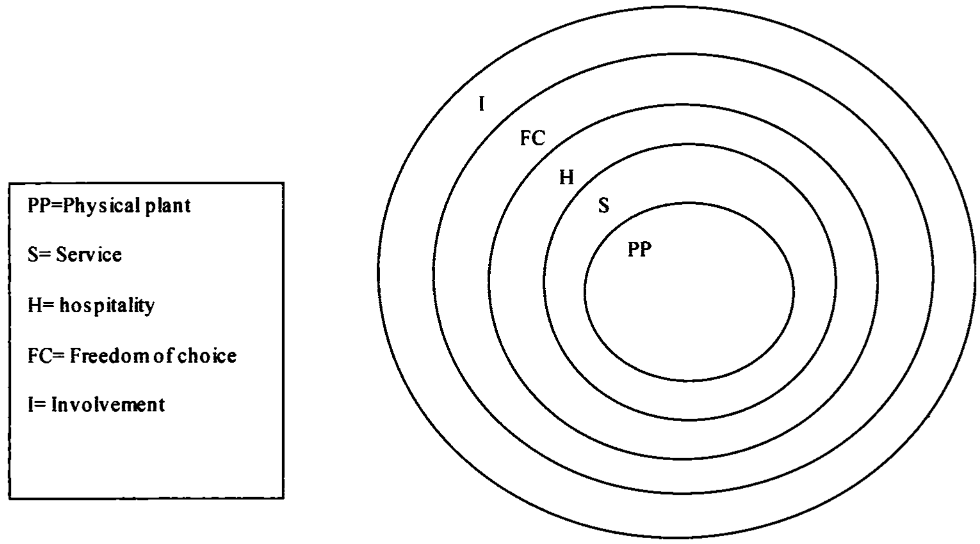

Figure 2.4 Generic Tourism Product. ***Source*****: Smith,1994**

Smith (1994) had designed an alternate model, as shown in Figure 2.4, laying stress on the term generic tourism product, which is the facilitation of travel and activity of individuals away from their usual residence. The model comprises elements of the product and the process by which the total elements are assembled. It also includes the role of human experiences or what is described as the service encounter. The six elements are:

1. The physical plant- such as site or natural resource, weather and infrastructure, and the design standards applied to the built environment.

2. Service- this refers to the tasks required to meet the needs of the tourists, which are mainly technical elements of the service provisions.

3. Hospitality- this refers to the ways in which service is provided i.e. the something extra that makes the visitor feels good. It is distinct from the technical competence of service provision.
4. Freedom of choice- this refers to the notion that the visitors have some degree of choice in order for the experience to be satisfactory. It is the trigger to relaxation and some degree of spontaneity.
5. Involvement- this relates to the simultaneous performance and consumption, and it reflects participation and some degree of engagement.

In tourism, as products and process become highly inseparable, the perspectives for understanding tourism product must be different from usual production oriented approach, emphasising outputs and phases. Instead, there is a need to highlight consumer benefits and outcomes at the core, and the service interactions central to the process, rather than being represented at the periphery, as in the Kotler's model (Seaton and Bennett, 1996). To reiterate, the atmosphere, customer performance and interaction at the service encounter are integral to the core of tourism offerings.

Seaton and Bennett (1996) provides a modified framework and set out to illustrate this point; as it places the service offering within the tourism as the central component, rather than one viewed as periphery and brings out the composite nature of tourism offerings. Seaton and Bennett, further, comments that tourism offerings are diverse, ranging form accommodation providers to destinations, and this diversity is matched by an even greater diversity of component features specific to each tourism products, and at the core is the service which is primarily intangible, sensual and psychological benefits. These aspects of tourism product will become an important managerial consideration for designing specific tourism products for particular markets, with quality and tourist satisfaction as objectives.

2.7 Tourist attractions

There are conceptualisations describing the tourist attractions, of which, two models will be briefly reviewed; Gunn's concentric model and Canter's place model as applied to a tourist destination.

According to Gunn (1985), tourist attractions can be analysed by a concentric ring model (see Figure 2.5). This model presents tourist attraction as having a nucleus which is the core attraction. Successful attraction should have a belt which provides a context in which the nucleus or core attraction can be appreciated. Further, Gunn argues that an outer ring labeled zone of closure is a necessary part of a well-planned tourist attraction. All visitor services facilities should be in the zone of closure. Gunn does not discuss whether information services should only be in the zone of closure or whether they are permissible in the belt or close to the nucleus.

Gunn's model implicitly argues that any tourist attraction missing one of these zones will be incomplete, possibly hard to manage, and likely to attract visitor criticism. That is, attractions where the core is poorly defined or where there is limited context to experience the attraction or where visitor services are poorly developed will be unsatisfactory.

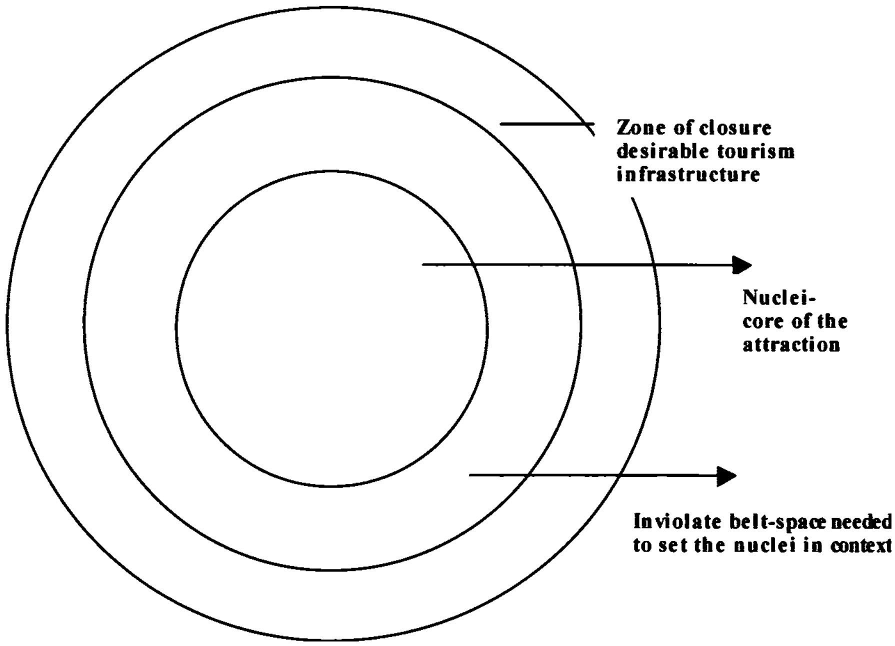

Figure 2.5 Gunn's Model of Tourist Attraction. ***Source*****: Gunn, 1985**

A second approach which helps collate the range of ideas about tourist attractions can be developed from Canter's work on psychology of place (Pearce, 1998). Canter summarised considerable body of literature in psychology, geography, planning, and design field to present a concise Venn diagram of the components necessary to gain a 'sense of place'. This model as applied to a tourist attraction is developed by Pearce (1991), is shown in Figure 2.6.

The three elements presented in above figure - the physical attributes of setting, the activities that one performs in a setting and the conceptions people bring to the setting - are all required if one is to understand fully and experience the unique sense of a specific location.

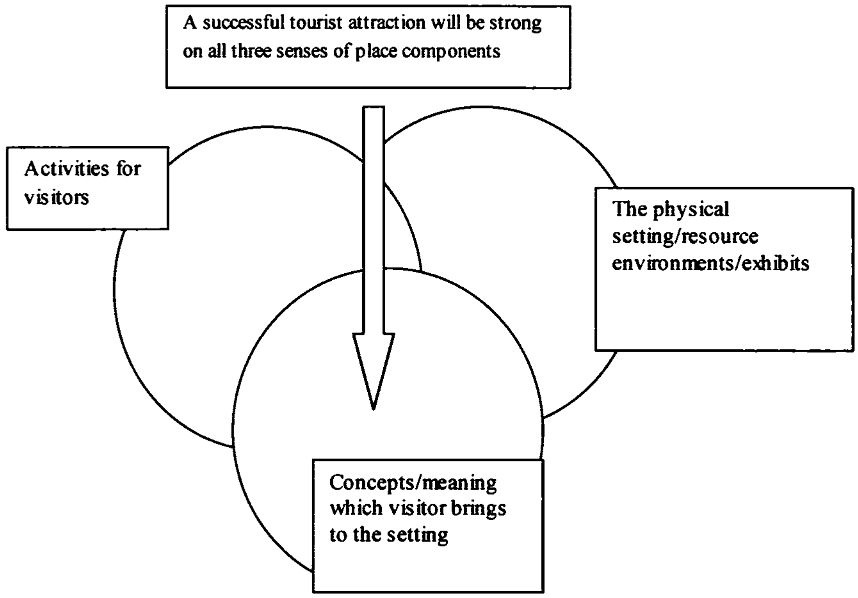

Figure 2.6 Canters Place Model Applied to Tourist Attraction. ***Source*: Pearce, 1991.**

In extending the general place model to tourist attractions, the same three elements are required. Based on this model, a good tourist attraction is one in which the public has clear conceptions of what the place is about, and is one where the activities in the setting are understood, accessible and excite public imagination. Furthermore, the physical elements which comprise the setting should be distinctive and aesthetically pleasing.

2.8 Quality in Tourism

Tourism products are far more complex and consists of many complementary components provided by suppliers from various public, private and voluntary sectors.Each tourism product is heterogeneous and the consumption of the tourism product is spread over time and distance. The quality formation of a tourism product starts from the point when tourists buy expectations at the tourism generating area (TGA: a region where tourist demand originates) and which should meet with the reality during the transit and consumption of the tourism product at the tourism destination area (TDA).

Quality in tourism is complex phenomenon and has many dimensions as shown in Figure 2.7. Quality improvement in tourism therefore involves improvement along these dimensions, and as the nature of these dimensions indicates, they require improvement efforts at various levels and phases, involving various participants from the industry, community and government.

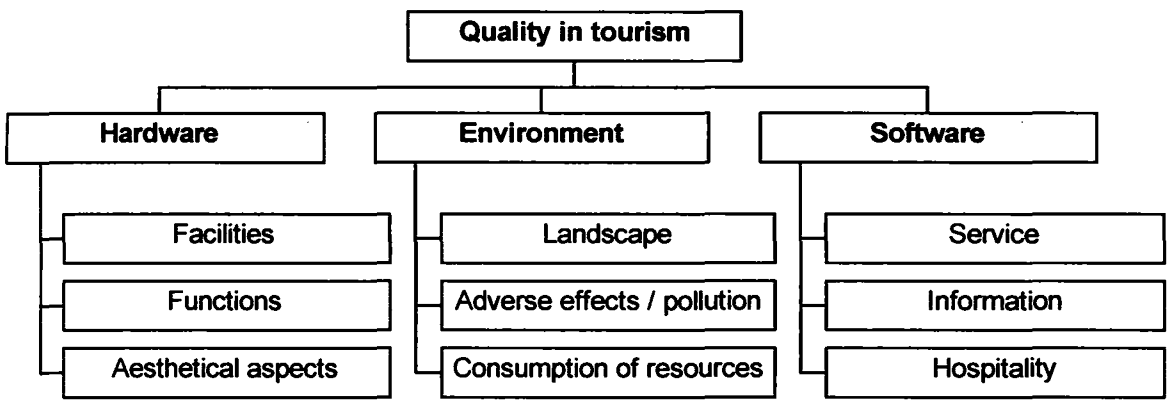

Figure 2.7 Destination Quality Dimensions. ***Source*** **:Ritchie, B.J.R. and Crouch, G.I. (2000)**

Quality improvement will be an important goal of all destination management efforts, which will involve assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of the product, facilities, services, and programs that altogether provide memorable destination experiences for visitors (Ritchie and Crouch, 2000). So, one of the important destination management activities will be the periodic monitoring of visitor satisfaction and the regular resource stewardship involving an effective maintenance of those resources that are particularly vulnerable to damage caused by tourism.

Augustine and Ho (1995) suggest that there are 3 main strategic opportunities to improve quality for the firms in the tourism industry. These are:

1) Improving the specification and provisions of service quality in the product.

2) Understanding the needs of the tourists more fully and tailoring provisions accordingly.

3) Pursuing destination brand loyalty and visitor retention by achieving a better match between specific quality of service and the perceived needs of tourists segments.

These three strategic thrusts are not mutually exclusive and will likely form an approach for quality development in tourism.

2.8.1 Destination value chain

One way to understand quality from the tourist point of view is through conceptualising a destination value chain. Tourists typically consume a whole range of services which together make up the "holiday or vacation experience". Tourists tend to base their judgment on the quality of and satisfaction with a vacation experience on all components of a tourism system. And as Weiremair (2000) notes, tourism value chain captures these components underlying both the production and consumption of holiday or vacation experiences. Figure 2.8 depicts a tourism value chain for a destination, comprising six different sets of service categories which are typically employed in the tourism analysis.

Since all relevant services contributing to the holiday or vacation experience take place in the context of a tourist destination, researchers accept tourist destination as the relevant unit for comparison and benchmarking analysis (Weiremair, 2000). This means, the destination value chain constitutes the total tourist value associated with the holiday experience at the destination.

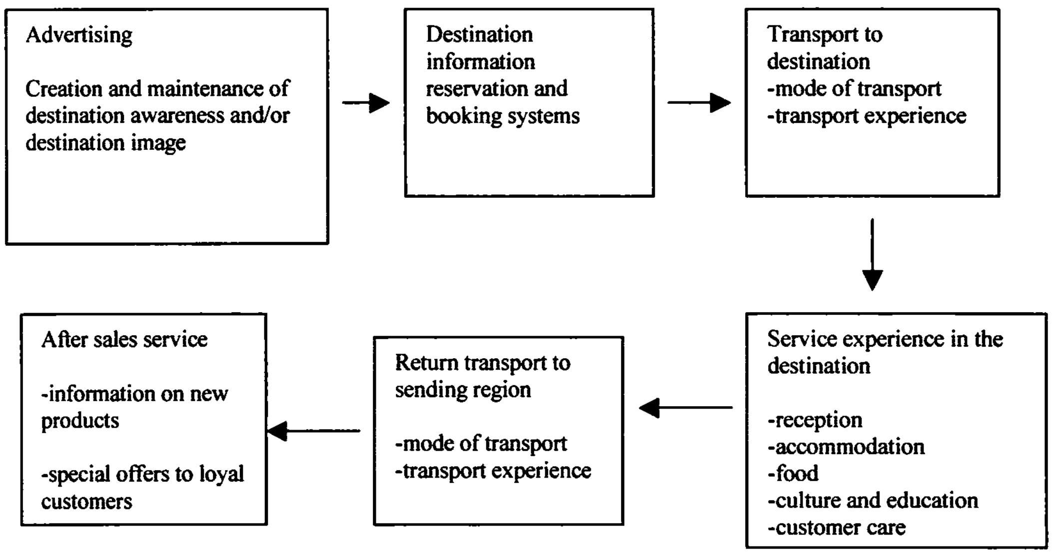

Figure 2. 8 The Tourism Value Chain. ***Source*** **: Weiremair, 2000**

It is irrelevant whether tourism services comprising the value chain produced by a multitude of different enterprises or whether they are produced and sold by a single firm, such as tour operator. The important aspect to consider is the holistic act of tourist consumption. This means that tourists' judges the total holiday experience, even though tourists experience a multitude of individual service encounters, and can also evaluate their inherent qualities. All the service encounters consists of a set of quality dimensions, which can be considered as determinants of service quality. The ten dimensions of service quality as developed by Parasuraman et al (1985) is applied to the tourism sector are given in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3 Dimensions of Service Quality in Tourism. ***Source*****: Lumsdon, 2000**

Determinant	Core features	Examples
Reliability	• Consistency of performance and dependability • Getting it right the first time • Keeping promises	• Airlines ensuring that the baggage arrives on the same flight as passengers at the same destination • Waiters bringing the ordered dishes to the right table • Providing a taxi transfer from the airport to the accommodation as promised in the brochure
Responsiveness	• Willingness and the readiness of the employees to provide service • Timeliness of service	• Responding to the customer enquiry immediately • Transport operations - keeping to timetable
Competence	• Existence of required skills and knowledge especially in contact personnel	• Tourist information staff knowing exactly where places are located and how best to arrive there
Access	• Ease of contact	• Tourist information centres being located near major flows of visitors and open seven days a week.
Courtesy	• Respect and consideration, friendliness	• Visitor attraction staff helping families to enjoy their day without being over familiar
Communication	• Informing customers in language they can understand; explanation of service offered	• Coach driver assuring passengers that the party will reach on time
Credibility	• Trustworthiness, believability and honesty	• Travel agent offering advice about long haul travel
Security	• Freedom from danger, risk or doubt	• A hotel providing safes for expensive items
Understanding the customer	• Making the effort to understand customers needs	• Hotel reception staff making guests feel welcome
Tangibles	• Physical evidence-facilities and appearance/	• Entrance to park being designed to encourage exploration

These quality dimension forms the part of the six major service categories that make up the tourist value chain of a destination, depicted above. This can also contribute to the destination attractiveness, thereby also effecting tourists' judgments regarding quality and satisfaction levels with the vacation experience Weiremair (2000).

Weiremair (2000) also links the role of culture in the quality perception in tourism, stating that, tourists' expectations on specific levels of service quality in tourism can be partly formed based on the culture of the region or country of their origin. This means, tourists country and culture can predispose them to interpret quality in a particular way. International tourism involves typically a cross cultural exchange, in such case the service encounter in tourism invariably involves feelings of anxiety and uncertainty about service outcomes as tourists feel they have no or little control, and this complicates the perceived value as depicted in the destination value chain.

2.8.2 Quality Improvement Systems at the Global Level

Dynamic growth in the travel and transport sector, since the 1960s, has forced both tourism and hospitality managers to improve the quality of their offerings (Poon, 1993). The increasing importance of quality in tourism is mainly due to the increased level of competition, enhanced technological sophistication, demographic change and greater demand for tourism related services. And the current emphasis on the service quality is expected to continue in the future. This pursuit of quality in tourism will require development of more effective ways of specifying, and measuring service quality. Accurate assessment of tourist's perception will become more crucial to the success of tourism initiatives at a firm as well as destination level. In addition to quality improvement efforts at the firm level, there are also initiatives to develop quality systems at the global, regional, country and state level.

At the global level, World Tourism Organisation (WTO) is taking various initiatives in this regard. Over the years, WTO emphasised that the future of the tourism industry depends on the ability to instill a culture of quality in tourism services. In order to support this idea, the WTO has adopted the Tourism Bill of Rights and Tourism Code (WTO, 1985b), undertook a study on state sponsored measures to ensure quality of tourism services (WTO, 1985a), published a manual on Quality Control of Tourism Products and Services (WTO, 1988), adopted Recommended Measures for Tourism Safety (WTO, 1991b) and published policy guidelines on health-oriented information (WTO, 1993).

The recognition of quality in tourism ultimately led to the creation of a quality support committee in 1995 (WTO, 1995). The committee was assigned the task of developing a basic framework necessary for providing quality in tourism services, and among others, the issue of safety and security received the greatest concern in the committee's recommendations. It is apparent that the major purpose of all these steps undertaken by the WTO is to build quality awareness in the tourism sector, protect the customer and encourage states to set up measures aimed at prevention, assistance and international co-operation in order to improve quality in tourism.

Following the WTO initiatives aimed at building tourism quality awareness, in most countries, government departments responsible for tourism demonstrate a growing interest in the development of quality tourism. A majority of countries and states within them give priority to quality goals and objectives in their tourism policies. Augustyn and Ho

(1995) comments on the various tourism policy instruments used to achieve these goals, depending on the political and economic systems of the country, the degree of tourism development and the importance of tourism in the national economy. The most common instruments include:

- Legislative measures (e.g. establishment of quality and safety standards for various sectors of the tourism industry, environmental regulations, consumer protection);

- Financial measures (e.g. investment incentives for creation of new tourism areas, support of education);

- Operational measures (e.g. planning, co-ordination, horizontal co-operation, national tourism information systems)

2.8.3 Regional/National/ Tourism Quality System

In order to increase the competitiveness of a country/region in the global tourism market, national/regional tourism quality systems have been created in several countries/regions. National tourism quality systems have been developed by the government departments responsible for tourism in these countries in co-operation with the national and regional tourism organisations as well as the private sector. At the core, these systems are guided by a quality management process, that aims to converts the inputs (physical, financial, human resources and information) into satisfactory outputs (quality tourism products).

The national/regional tourism quality systems are open systems, as they interact with an external environment. The major components of the external environment for national systems include quality improvement initiatives of international organisations as well as measures of other government departments that influence the overall quality of tourism. Consequently, the quality initiatives of the national and state tourism organisations are affected by the kind of support they get from other government departments.

At the specific destination or region level the challenge is how can quality be designed into the tourism product, which is peculiar in many respects as discussed before. Another challenge facing destinations, state and national governments in implementing quality systems in the tourism industry relates to creating quality awareness among public and private tourism organisations which provides tourism products and services.

Due to the integrated nature of tourism product at the destination level, the quality response will require involvement of public and private companies. Public and private companies have different ways of working and different priorities in how they do business. Because of this and the number of different private and private companies involved, quality improvement efforts at this level suffers from a lack of strong and focused effort.

For improving service quality in tourism industry, many services provided by a range of providers, such as promotion, accessibility and mobility, welcome and customer service, reservation and booking, and recovery and complaints handling, need to be managed in an integrated manner. As mentioned before, the diverse nature of private companies, many of them small medium enterprises (SMEs), contributes to the fragmentation in the industry. Because of this, providing tourists a seamless experience with a high level of quality in both the functional and technical aspects of the process will be very difficult to achieve. Nevertheless, there are various successful initiatives to develop quality systems in the tourism industry at regional, national and state level. This includes, design and implementation of various programmes and activities such as grading and classification schemes, benchmarking studies, and the design and implementation of integrated quality management systems.

2.8.4 Certification and Grading Systems

This is one of the most widely used options for assessing and improving quality provision in tourism industry. There is in fact a proliferation of quality grading schemes in the travel and tourism industry around the world, which makes it also difficult to establish equivalence between the grading systems of two different countries.

Externally initiated approaches to classification/grading schemes and awards can be used to measure the performance of small hospitality businesses and to raise their standards. In principle, grading schemes establish universal benchmark norms against which the individual small businesses are assessed. They also provide consumers with valuable information about hotels and other businesses.

Often grading is based on assessing tangible elements of the service mix. The grading may also include restaurant facilities or intangible elements of service. Stephens (1997) identifies some of the critical performance areas in which classification and grading schemes lay down standards to be achieved:

- Welcome, friendliness and attitude.
- Customer care and attention.
- Atmosphere and environment.

- Appearance of staff.
- Professional level of staff.
- Presentation of food and drink.
- Quality of food and drink.
- Hygiene and sanitation.
- Safety and security.
- Level of service.
- Speed and efficiency of service.
- Quality of facilities.
- Variety of facilities.
- Tourist information.
- Decoration.
- Furnishings/furniture.
- Heating and lighting.
- Accessories in bedrooms.
- Availability of breakfast, dinner and room services.
- Statutory obligations, e.g. the price display orders

Grading schemes can be set up for any aspect of service delivery or business performance. For example, Scottish tourist Board (STB) has launched a novel environmental grading scheme for accommodation establishments by assessing performance in areas such as energy efficiency, recycling and waste management. Following its introduction into hotels and guesthouses, this new scheme will be extended to visitor attractions (Stephens, 1997). This eco-grading scheme pays particular attention to the importance of the physical environment to the tourism industry and eco-benchmarks businesses against desirable standards.

2.8.5 Integrated Quality Management Systems

Quality management at the regional or specific destination level calls for more of an integrated quality management system and therefore deserves a comprehensive approach and a definitive integration amongst its key stakeholders' (residents, visitors and trade) and in depth knowledge of their needs and expectations. A quality framework is required, including policies that help improve the quality of service production and delivery. Within the tourism field, this implies that the implicit and explicit visitor experiences need to be matched with destination features and private sector and public sector practices (Manente & Furlan, 1998)

Notable among the efforts are European Union (EU) initiated project launched in 1997 called integrated management in destinations. This project aims to develop several measurable quality standards with respect to different components of coastal, rural, and urban destinations and implement them among the member countries of the European Economic Area (Go and Govers, 2000). The project includes the assessment of both demand- and supply-side indicators such as the activities of tourism professionals, tourists, local residents, and natural, cultural and economic environmental resources.

The main aspect of the programme is the Quality Award Criteria Framework that was developed with the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) as the model which is a non prescriptive framework. The Quality Award is used to assess an organisation's progress towards achieving sustainable excellence in all aspects of performance, such as customer satisfaction, people (employee) satisfaction, impact on society, and leadership quality.

A study by Go and Govers (2000) compared the implementation of this integrated quality management system at various destinations in Europe and reports a range of measures adopted by destinations. This include: grading and accreditation schemes, joint public-private investment partnership in infrastructure, programmes for improving community participation and local ownership in the tourism development, schemes encouraging private sector investment in human resource, comprehensive surveys on visitors, trade and locals, and periodic impact assessment studies for minimising the adverse impacts due to tourism development.

2.8.6 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is another method used for improving quality at the destination level. Benchmarking is defined as a process of measuring the performance of a company - in terms of the products and services offered and the processes employed - against its best competitors. It is important to determine how the best competitors achieve their performance levels in order to introduce changes to the practices of the company (Camp, 1989). Benchmarking helps to focus resources on the performance targets with various areas of improvement as compared to the company's best competitors.

In tourism, the use of benchmarking is more common in quality improvement efforts in the hotel industry .At the destination level also benchmarking is applied. Kozak and Rimmington (1999) have argued that there exists a considerable potential for improving service quality in tourism by means of benchmarking, not only within the small- and medium-sized tourism sector, but also across tourist destinations. They suggest that consumers (i.e., tourists), too, may benefit from a clearer indication of the services to be offered so that their expectations can be matched more closely with performance that in turn, will increase their satisfaction with the destination.

Destination can use benchmarking surveys based on tourist satisfaction for gaining competitive advantage (Kozak, 2002). Tourist satisfaction is regarded as a customer-driven measure of destination performance, with the customer remaining the main source of information for identifying those standards that must be established to close potential performance gaps. The latter can in the main be identified through quantitative benchmarking endeavors at the level of the destination. For example, using benchmarking, destinations can measure the extent and quality of the small business component of their offering and plan strategically to develop it effectively.

2.9 Quality Improvements in Tourism Enterprises

Increasing competition in the tourism market impels individual tourism enterprises to focus on quality improvement as a source of competitive advantage. At the firm level, the majority of big tourism enterprises have developed modern quality systems based on the concept of TQM. But small tourism enterprises typically lack adequate inputs and ability to manage effectively internal and external relationships in order to develop comprehensive quality systems.

Due to limited resource, many tourism firms that are mostly small and medium enterprises rarely adopt quality improvement methods. For majority of them, some periodic up gradation of facilities, and use of comment cards for quality assessments are some of the efforts taken for quality improvement. Aided by the support of various organisations, they can also engage in quality improvement efforts. Benchmarking is one methodology, and there are some firms which adopt technique like Critical incident technique and blueprinting for improving their quality system.

Critical incidence technique (CIT) developed by Flanagan in 1954, is a technique of classification method consisting of a set of procedures for collecting observations of human behavior and categorizing them in such a way as to make them useful. Methodology of critical incident analysis involves, isolating positive and negative elements leading to travel satisfactions and dissatisfactions of visitors. However, the CIT does not consist of a single rigid set of rules governing data collection, but is a flexible set of principles which should be modified and adapted to reflect the specific situation being investigated.

Service Blue printing is another technique developed by Shostack (1981), which tourism firms can use to design new services or to assess the current service more thoroughly. A service blueprint records and maps the events and processes which the customer experiences. A service blueprint is a diagram which shows all the elements that go to make up the service being studied. Its purpose is to enable the service to be analysed as objectively as possible. Apart from showing the main functions which together comprise the service, and their interconnectedness, a blueprint can also incorporate performance standards for each stage of the process.

At the firm level, tourism service involves multiple service encounters of different types. And each has the potential to enhance or reduce quality perception of the tourists. Setting service standard specification at each stage of holiday consumption process, wherever feasible is an important task firms can take, and benchmarking is a useful tool for this purpose. Also, another step involves studying the service with blueprinting technique and setting standards in all dimension of service quality. And for many firms, this involves upgrading company oriented internal standards to customer-oriented standards.

The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1991) is regarded as an important tool for identifying quality improvement areas within individual service organisations in relation to enhancing customer satisfaction. The model measures tangible and intangible elements of the service and investigates gaps in the customer-supplier chain to highlight target areas where quality may be improved. These gaps include the gap between:

- customers' expectations and management's perceptions of customers' expectations;
- management's perceptions of customers' expectations and service quality specifications;
- service quality specifications and service delivery;
- service delivery and external communications to customers;
- customers' expected and perceived services.

Despite the fact that their quality management processes are in most cases advanced, comprehensive and consistent, they also face difficulties with achieving total satisfaction of tourists. These problems result from inadequate inputs and inability to secure quality relationships with the environment in which the systems operate in tourism. Augustyn(1995) identifies two gaps which explains broadly the quality problems occurring in the tourism system: quality perception gap and quality control gap.

2.9.1 Quality Perception Gap

The tourism quality perception gap relates to the discrepancy between the views of the tourists and those of the tourism organisations in respect to the quality of the tourism product. While tourists perceive quality as satisfaction with the complete tourism experience from the time they leave home to the time they return, the popular tourism organisation's approach to quality in tourism limits tourists' satisfaction to those components of the tourism product that are provided by the organisation (Handszuh, 1995). For example, a tour operating company offers a quality package composed of a seat in an aeroplane, a hotel room and meals in a restaurant, and is interested only in the quality of those components, as well as the quality of their own services. It should, however, be noted that other factors, such as the quality of destination facilities, infrastructure, public transport, hospitality behaviour also influence tourist satisfaction, particularly, as the major part of the total tourism product is consumed at the destination.

The quality of information provided is one important dimension of quality in tourism. Tourists are now more empowered with information. With the Internet, tourists have access to a wide variety of information on travel, and hence, instead of mere facts tourists may be seeking expert opinion. Service providers need to equip the staff with competency in handling information requirements of such nature. For example, in travel agency operation, apart from the routine activities such as booking and issuing travel documents, they may be asked to advice on destination choice and quality of the facilities provided, and this increases the potential for customisation.

In order to enhance customer satisfaction, an individual tourism organisation should adopt the same understanding of quality as its customers. Consequently, the information needed for identification of quality improvement areas should relate to all components of the total tourism product and not only to those offered by the tourism company. A majority of the companies do not have, however, sufficient resources to develop and monitor complex information systems. Since the information about customer expectations constitutes an important part of the inputs to a quality system.

2.9.2 The Tourism Quality Control Gap

This relates to the discrepancy between the need for quality control at every stage of the total tourism product delivery and the feasibility of the individual tourism company in exerting actual control over this process. The existence of this gap accounts for an inability of individual tourism companies to offer the total quality tourism product that the customer expects at the beginning of the tourist purchase - consumption process. The tourism quality control gap is also responsible for the increasing number of tourists dissatisfied with their total tourism experience.

The problem becomes even more complicated in view of the fact that tourists consume other elements of the total tourism product during their overall tourism experience, mainly at the destination area. With the large number of destinations that tour operators deal with and offer to the customers, an individual tour operating company is not in a position to control the quality of all the elements of the total tourism product offered by the providers operating at the host area, especially those elements which are offered by the public sector (e.g. infrastructure, security, police, urban transport, education). Moreover, the human aspect of the product is of utmost importance for total tourist satisfaction, and this can be confronted only at the time of tourism product consumption.

Based on systems theory as well as the analysis of the reasons for current quality problems in tourism, Mill and Morrison (1992) identifies three conditions for tourism quality enhancement:

First, a tourism quality system has to be in a position for securing adequate inputs in terms of physical, human and financial resources as well as appropriate information about the customers' needs. The tourism quality perception gap has to be closed through the adoption of the view of quality that is represented by the tourists, i.e. satisfaction with the complete tourism experience from the time they leave home to the time they return. This way of perceiving quality has to be adopted by all subsystems and members of the quality system.

Second, the quality management process that converts the inputs into outputs (total quality tourism products) should be based on the principles of TQM.

Third, in order to ensure quality of the total tourism product, relationships with the external environment have to be managed effectively. In particular, the number of suppliers should be reduced to the necessary minimum, i.e. to such a level that enables provision of all components of the total tourism product on the one hand and closure of the tourism quality control gap on the other hand.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted certain perspectives on the tourism phenomenon, the specific characteristics of the tourism industry and the usefulness of viewing tourism industry as a system. It has examined the interdependence of various elements in the tourism system and its implication for the destination planning and marketing efforts. The interdependence reflects the relevance of viewing tourism as a network of relationships, and as an extended destination value chain, having the potential to create both positive and negative outcomes.

In describing tourism as an open system, it has brought out the highly susceptible nature of tourism system in relation to the external environmental changes. In many cases, external events can have immediate impact on the tourism system. For example, the immediate impact of factors like Tsunami and Sars virus attack on many tourism destinations indicate the vulnerability of the tourism system. What further distinguishes the tourism system is the degree of response inherent in it to make the necessary changes. In the tourism system, at the destination level in particular, often the proper responses are delayed due to many constraints; The difficulty in securing proper public-private sector partnership, and the high level of fragmentation with a range of service providers, many of them small and medium companies, inhibit the total tourism system to respond in a timely manner. The impact of these differences on the marketing process and the quality management process have been also identified in this review.

Chapter 3
Tourism development in India and Kerala

3.1 Introduction

Tourism industry in Kerala witnessed considerable growth during nineties, and this growth is expected to continue into the future. This growth occurred in the backdrop of the opening up of the Indian economy and the general global trend of increasing tourism activity seen across the countries in the Asian region. However, it is also the concerted efforts from the government and industry that made Kerala one of the best performing tourism states in India. This chapter provides a brief review of the tourism scenario in India since 1990s, and then outlines the issues pertinent to the tourism development in Kerala in the area of tourism planning, marketing and product development. Finally, the chapter concludes with future perspectives of growth in the tourism industry in Kerala.

3.2 Growth of Tourism in India

Tourism is one of the important industries contributing to the growth of the Indian economy. In India too, growth of tourism, is a significant part of the global expression of the new service economy. The forecast for Travel & Tourism Demand is estimated to grow 4.5 percent per annum between 2005 and 2014 (WTTC, 2004). A notable feature of international tourism growth has been the gradual shift in the preference for destinations, form Europe and North America to South Asia (CII, 2003). India as the main south Asian tourist destination, with the diversity of natural beauty coupled with its range of tourism products can certainly expect to exploit this trend to its favour.

Given the outstanding wealth of natural resources and rich cultural heritage, India is blessed with tourism destinations and products catering to the tastes and preference of tourists of all ages and economic backgrounds. Despite this, India has failed to realize tourism growth matching to its potential. While China and India used to attract the same number of foreign tourists way back in 1978, today while more than 27 million international tourists visits the former annually, India manages only around one fifth of the above. Tourist arrival in India is 2.75 million a year. It is nothing compared to what other, even much smaller countries with fewer attractions, get. For example, a tiny nation like Singapore gets nearly 7 million visitors. Another problem is the presence of low spending tourists: an average tourist's out of room expenditure is barely $40 a day in India, whereas for Singapore it is $250 (CII, 2003).

3.3 Contribution of Tourism to the Indian Economy

Contribution of tourism to the Indian economy is $US2.2 Billion and foreign exchange earnings from tourism during 2003-04 were $US3,533 million. The detail estimates and forecasts for the tourism sector in India in personal travel and tourism component for 2004 is estimated at US$ 19.5 billion, and this constitutes about 50.2 percent of the total Indian travel and tourism demand. By 2014, this is projected to reach US$ 46.5 billion. Another component is business travel, which is estimated at US$ 2.4 billion in the year 2004, and by the year 2014 is projected to reach US$ 5.0 billion (WTTC, 2004). India's share of global international tourism at 2.64 million foreign tourists arrivals through its borders in the year 2000 is relatively small in volume (about 0.38 percent) but almost twice as high in terms of US$ receipts (about 0.69 percent). On the other hand, India's share of global domestic tourism is much higher (around 4.6 percent of estimated global domestic tourism). The estimated travel and tourism economy employment for India is estimated at 24,456,600 jobs in 2004, 5.6 percent of the total employment, or 1 in every 17.8 jobs (WTTC, 2004). By 2014, this is predicted to go up to 27,790,000 jobs or 5.7 percent of total employment. This converts to about 4.9 percent of the GDP in 2004 rising up to 5.2 percent by 2014.

Besides being an important foreign exchange earner, tourism industry also provides employment to millions of people in India, both directly and indirectly, through its linkage with other sectors of the economy. It is estimated that total direct employment in the tourism sector is around 20 million (Ministry of Tourism and Culture, 2003). Tourism is also among India's important export industries. Even with comparatively low levels of international tourist traffic, tourism has already emerged as an important segment of the Indian economy. Tourism also contributed to the economy indirectly through its linkages with other sectors like horticulture, agriculture, poultry, handicrafts and construction.

In the early 1990s, India's tourism witnessed growth rates well above average world figures, but was not able to maintain the growth throughout the nineties (Chaudhary, 1996). Despite the economic liberalisation, tourist growth rates have slowed and international arrivals have not kept pace with global rates of increase, in the later part of nineties. This may be attributed to the relatively low priority and 'lack of urgency' afforded to tourism development by the Government of India (Raguraman, 1998). However, the growth of Indian tourism since 2000 has been impressive; this is despite a downturn in international tourists arrivals due to September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in East Asia, and the Iraq war.

In the year 2004-05, tourism has emerged as one of the major sectors for growth of Indian economy, the foreign exchange earnings increased from Rs. 16,429 crore to Rs 21,828 crore up to December 2004. Similarly, in 2003, tourism industry registered a growth rate of 17.3 percent in foreign tourist arrivals, which has been the highest in last 10 years. Foreign exchange earnings grew at an even higher rate 30.2 percent. Even the disastrous tsunami didn't affect India's tourism industry much, as tourist arrivals in India rose 23.5 percent in December 2004 (*Source: Economywatch.com*).

The flow of overseas visitors to India is extremely elastic and events around the globe and in the subcontinent have an immediate impact on foreign traffic. However, domestic tourism has displayed greater buoyancy and resilience. In the last 10 years, visits by the domestic tourists have grown by more than 100 million. From a figure of 63 million in 1990 it stood at 234 million in the year 2001. This phenomenal explosion of domestic tourism is an inevitable by-product of the prosperity that India has achieved. Domestic tourism is still on the rise as the new Indian middle classes look to spend their disposable income on tourism and leisure (*Source: Economywatch.com*).

There could be several reasons for the buoyancy in the Indian tourism industry. First, the upward trend observed in the growth rate of Indian economy has raised middle class incomes, prompting more people to spend money on vacations abroad or at home. Also, India is booming in the information technology industry and has become globally a major IT hub. Aggressive advertising campaign like "Incredible India" by the government has also had contribution in changing India's image from that of a land of snake charmers, and sparking new interest among overseas travelers (Shailaja, 2004).

3.4 Tourism Development Initiatives

The Government of India first recognised tourism as an important economic sector in1982, and the first tourism policy was announced. As a result of the economic liberalisation and reforms of the 1990s, tourism was singled out as a priority sector for economic investment and a new tourism policy was developed, which is reflected in the national action plan for tourism set up in 1992, with the specific aims of improving the basic tourism infrastructure, developing more selective marketing strategies and, more importantly, increasing foreign tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings (GOI, 1992). The next major policy change was the national policy on tourism, declared in the year 2002, with the following as its salient features:

- Position tourism as a major engine of economic growth;
- Harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism for employment generation, economic development and providing impetus to rural tourism;
- Focus on domestic tourism as a major driver of tourism growth;
- Position India as a global brand to take advantage of the burgeoning global travel and trade and the vast untapped potential of India as a destination
- Acknowledge the critical role of private sector with government working as a pro-active facilitator and catalyst;
- Create and develop integrated tourism circuits based on India's unique civilisation, heritage and culture in partnership with States, private sector and other agencies;

- Ensure that the tourist to India gets physically invigorated, mentally rejuvenated, culturally enriched, spiritually elevate and " feel India from within".

In conjunction with the new tourism policy of 2002, Indian government also adopted a multi-pronged approach for promotion of tourism, which includes new mechanism for speedy implementation of tourism projects, development of integrated tourism circuits and rural destinations, special capacity building in the unorganised hospitality sector and new marketing strategy.

Government also took several other initiatives to promote Indian tourism industry and increased the plan allocation for tourism i.e. from Rs 325 crore in 2003-04 to Rs. 500 crore in 2004-05. Road shows in key source markets of Europe, Incredible India campaign on prominent TV channels and in magazines across the world were among the few steps taken to advertise Indian tourism. In addition a task force was set up to promote India as prominent health tourism destination. As part of this, the mainstays of Indian tourism like cultural and heritage tourism, beach and coastal tourism and nature-based tourism are getting expanded. This includes aggressive promotion of Yoga, adventure tourism, eco-tourism and Indian cuisine through the incredible India campaign (Shailaja, 2004).

In order to attract more visitors, India needs to open further its skies to increase air capacity, and upgrade its airports, roads and other infrastructure to global standards. At the same time, tourism development needs to be pursued with the focus on sustainability. This involves, checking the indiscriminate growth of tourism, and controlling the associated problems of pollution, environmental and ecological hazard and cultural degradation.

3.5 Tourism Development in Kerala

Tourism is an important industry for Kerala state. Its importance is growing over the years for the state. In the year 2000, travel and tourism is a $100 million industry and forms 6.29 percent of state GDP and created a direct employment for 0.7 million (GOK, 2001). Kerala tourism has witnessed dramatic tourism growth during 90s. Arrivals of international tourists have increased from 42 thousand in 1985 to 210 thousand in 2000,i.e. a growth of 27 percent per annum, and for the domestic tourists it went up from 0.33 million in 1985 to over 5 million in 2000 i.e. a growth of 94 percent per annum. Table 3.1 shows arrival details up to 2003.

Table 3.1 International & Domestic Tourists Arrivals

Year	International tourists	Domestic tourists
1997	182427	4953401
1998	189941	4481714
1999	202173	4888287
2000	209933	5013221
2001	208830	5239692
2002	232564	5568256
2003	294621	5871228

(Source: Dept of tourism, GOK, Tourists Statistics, 2004.)

Kerala is becoming a tourism driven economy, as tourism industries potential for socio economic development of Kerala in terms of improving significantly state's revenues, foreign exchange and job creation is clearly recognised. In the context of poor prospects of manufacturing sector and the severe threat faced by agricultural and traditional sectors, tourism industry is considered as one of the important alternative for the economic development of the state. Tourism is also counted as an important alternative to address unemployment which is a major problem facing state, estimated to be over 4million (TCS report, 2000). More importantly, it also results in the widespread distribution of benefits across the state as compared to other sectors, which tend to bring economic and social benefit to a particular region. This is more so in Kerala where tourism assets are dispersed throughout the state.

Further reasons making tourism industry attractive for the state includes its strong linkages with other sector in the state. A study conducted to assess the economic impact of tourism in the state shows that output multiplier due to expenditure of tourists in Kerala is 2.07. And this study also finds that if the induced effects are also taken the figure can be as high as 8.83. The employment multiplier, direct and indirect for Kerala has been worked out at 4.62 and 9.0 (TCS report, 2000).

Moderate climate, rich art, colorful festivals, diverse natural and cultural attractions with a physical quality of life comparable to developed nations are all causing tourism industry to flourish in Kerala. Nowhere in India can a tourist experience such a geographical diversity within the smallest area possible. Beaches, backwaters, wildlife sanctuaries, evergreen forests and diverse flora and fauna make Kerala quite distinct from the other states of India. It is this distinct quality of destination which the state highlighted as part of promoting the destination vigorously in various international and domestic markets with the 'gods own country' theme.

The state also won many acclaims which highlights the success Kerala achieved in the area of tourism. Some of the major achievements and accolades are given in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Achievements of/Acclaims for Kerala

World travel and tourism has selected Kerala as a partner state
National geographic after 2 years of research has chosen Kerala as one of the 50 must see destinations of the life time
'One of the 100 great trips for the 21srt century, by Travel and leisure
'One of the ten hot spots for the millennium by emirates in flight magazine
One of the best breakfast in the world by Travel and Leisure
One of the ten love nets in India by cosmopolitan
One of the six destinations of the millennium by Khaleej Times
Best performing state award for 1999, 2000 and 2001 from Government of India.

(Source: Dept of tourism, GOK, Tourists Statistics, 2003)

Along with this growth has seen a corresponding increase in the investment levels in the industry. Total capital investment in the tourism sector has grown to 8.1 billion in 2000 and for 2003 it is expected to reach 18 billion of which state allocation forms a marginal 2.5 percent, and this indicate clearly the dominant role of private sector in the industry (GOK, 2002). What is also remarkable is that Kerala is now one of leading state in India for tourism in terms of rate of growth. Throughout 90s Kerala's share of international tourists coming to India has increased from 5.54 percent in 1994 to 9.85 percent in 2002.Tourism receipts from international tourists also grew considerably, as shown in Table 3.3, from 116.11 crore in 1994 to 987.37 crore in 2002 (GOK, Tourist statistics, 1998,1999,2000,2002).

Table 3.3 International Tourism Receipts

Year	Earnings in Rs (Crores)	Percent Variation over previous year
1994	116.11	9.83
1995	158.76	36.73
1996	196.38	23.70
1997	273.2	39.12
1998	302.08	10.57
1999	416.07	37.74
2000	525.3	26.25
2001	535	1.85
2002	705.67	31.90
2003	983.37	39.35

(Source: Dept of tourism, GOK, Tourists Statistics, 2004)

Another interesting fact is that the growth in international tourist arrivals for Kerala was 11.2 percent in 2001-02. This is truly impressive considering the overall drop in arrivals for whole of India which was primarily due to September 11 episode, Afghan war and tensions in India-Pak border and this impressive growth is expected to continue according to WTTC, which estimates tourism demand in Kerala to grow by 11.6 percent per annum in the coming decade. This growth which is rated more than the overall growth rate for India will be driven by rise in arrivals from both international and domestic tourists. Earnings from tourism is also projected to grow at a record level of more than 23.5 percent which is very high than earnings growth projected for India and world average which is 14.3 percent and 6.5 percent (WTTC, 2002).

3.5.1 Major Generating Markets

Major generating markets are UK, Maldives, Germany, USA and France. Table 3.4 shows the market performance of top 10 countries. It is clear from this table that tourist arrival from the first ten countries constitutes 76.38 percent of the total foreign tourist arrival to Kerala in 2002. It is to be noted that UK with an estimated arrival figure of 45252 contributes 19.46 percent of the total arrivals, followed by US with 32397 forming 13.93 percent of the total international tourist arrivals

Table 3.4 Tourists Arrivals Country Wise

Country	No of tourists in 2002	Percentage of total
UK	45252	19.46
USA	32397	13.93
France	24634	10.59
Maldives	18265	7.85
Germany	17971	7.73
Srilanka	13183	5.67
Switzerland	7385	3.18
Italy	7287	3.13
Netherlands	5658	2.43
Australia	5604	2.41
Total	177636	76.38
Others	54928	23.62

(Source: Dept of tourism, GOK, Tourists Statistics, 2003)

3.5.2 Month Wise Arrival Details

Table 3.5 shows the month wise comparison of foreign tourist arrivals in 2002. It is seen that in 2002, the highest inflow was during December, and the lowest is in June. The typical tourist season starts from August and then gradually increase up to the month of December, and sometimes the peak of the season may be extended up to January or February. For the domestic tourism, the variation is less from month to month as compared to international tourism.

Table 3.5 International Tourist Arrivals Month Wise

Month	2002	2001
January	29440	31625
February	29105	30862
March	19246	21957
April	18028	17868
May	10794	10653
June	6610	6571
July	8581	7747
August	14226	13611
September	17808	12391
October	20744	11913
November	26190	19310
December	31792	24322
Total	232564	208830

(Source: Dept of tourism, GOK, Tourists Statistics, 2003)

3.5.3 Tourism Development Initiatives

Kerala is one of the earliest states to announce industry status for tourism in 1986 and announce various incentives and subsidies to attract investment. These early efforts were aimed at creating the investment friendly atmosphere for tourism in the state needed for the industry to grow. This increased the investment opportunities for potential investors. Main lending institutions like KFC, TFCI and KSIDC played important role in funding the tourism projects. State also adopted many proactive measures to stimulate investment in tourism industry like a system for fast track clearance of tourism projects, subsidies, technical guidance, marketing assistance and support in availing loans. (GOI, 1998).

Government's efforts to promote investment in the field of tourism by offering many incentives was also responded well by an excellent level of local entrepreneurship, which is also one factor which favored the growth of tourism in the state. Tourism industry is an exception to the problem of lack of entrepreneurship commonly attributed to the industrial backwardness of the state. The excellent tourism products of Kerala are also the result of daring, ambitious and innovative efforts by local entrepreneurs. In hotels, resorts, tour operations, houseboats, ayurveda centers, home stays etc, a large number of small entrepreneurs are entering and making the mark.

Spreading the tourism development across the state is also aided by the decentralisation efforts taken by the state; the aim of which is to improve the quality of investment by allocating resources based on the priorities fixed by the local people. The people's planning campaign has succeeded in providing a methodology for participatory planning for local level development. And a related successful experiment in decentralisation of tourism is the formation of district tourism promotion councils. This body, which is formed to promote tourism at the local level, has representatives from the tourism industry, people representatives, and tourism experts in addition to officials. Most of the councils have been working actively in developing local attractions and spreading awareness on tourism.

3.6 Tourism Policy and Planning Context

The shift in emphasis of tourism department towards a more proactive role in tourism development, marketing and promotion of the destination started since late eighties. It is in 1995 the State came out with the first formal tourism policy .It spells out the major direction for growth in the industry. Priority areas identified were infrastructure development, human resource development for tourism, marketing and product development (GOK, 1995).

3.6.1 The Highlights of Tourism Policy 1995

In the area of infrastructure development the first tourism policy recognises the vital role to be played by the private sector, and also stressed on the need for state to become more of a facilitator. The policy highlights the steps to taken to create an investor friendly climate in the state, in particular, the role of tourism department to act as bridge between the investors and other institutions, by aiding in the procurement of land, electricity, communication and other infrastructure facilities. The policy also envisages a greater role for the department to play is in the information provision area: supporting investors with required information pertaining to investment opportunities is one aspect of it. For a more focused approach to tourism infrastructure development, the plan also identifies the need to develop special tourism areas, in addition to the development of tourism circuits recognised by the Government of India.

In the area of tourism products development, the policy states the importance of improving the local tourism products to meet the international market needs. Promoting special festivals designed for the purpose of tourism is part of this effort. At the same time, the policy was for a concerted and deliberate effort to preserve the individuality of handicraft traditions, art forms, archeological and historical monuments. In the lines of heritage hotel scheme promoted by the central government, the state also plans to protect traditional structure and "Tharavadus" and convert them to accommodation properties for the tourism purpose.

In the area of market development the direction is on the lines of projecting Kerala as a quality destination attracting high spending tourists. Apart from focusing on the major tourists generating countries like Germany, UK, France and Italy, the plan also stress on the need for exploring new markets like US, Canada, South East Asia and Gulf countries. For effective marketing and making the presence felt in these markets, one of the major emphasis given was on state undertaking joint promotional activities with private sector for participating in the major international fairs. In this regard, participation and cooperation of tour operators, hoteliers and airlines were sought. A joint promotional strategy along with various southern states, in promoting South India as an important destination in the international market was another action area planned.

The policy also gives emphasis to the importance of developing the right type of human resources for the tourism industry. And to this end, it aims to improve the quality of the existing training institutions like KIITS and IIHMCT and encourage private sector to start training institutions for providing quality human resource for the growing needs of the industry. The plan also recognise the need for various other training programmes ,which are aimed to create public awareness and service orientation among locals and all those who interact with tourists .

In short, the tourism policy identified the key role played by private sector in areas like infrastructure development, product and market development, and human resource development; defines the role of state as a facilitator creating the suitable condition for investment in creating the basic infrastructure for tourism to grow.

The first tourism policy also highlighted the need for creating human resources of good quality to serve the growing needs of the industry along with the thrust areas of developing new tourism products with developing new destination regions. For the first time the manner of growth needed was also envisioned in the first tourism policy, i.e. promoting destination more as quality destination, attracting high spending tourists than going for mass tourism, chasing numbers (GOK, Tourism Policy, 1995).

This conscious strategy of taking the destination Kerala away from mass tourism to a destination with a boutique image attracting tourists of a specific taste required developing new tourism products and new destination regions. Diversifying to new products was also a part of strategy of differentiation especially when other nearby states and nearby regions like Srilanka and Maldives offer same kind of products of better value. So, in addition to beaches, Kerala as destination started developing and promoting varied tourist products like backwater with houseboat attractions and ayurveda rejuvenation holiday's attractions.

3.6.2 Tourism Policy-Vision 2020

Despite setting the direction for growth in the tourism industry, the first tourism policy was not comprehensive and lacked in providing a detailed action plan for the destination to grow. The new policy document titled "Vision 2020" was more comprehensive and stressed on the sustainability concerns along with the tourism growth. Among others, it reflected on the growing concern for environmental conservation, heritage and culture protection, lack of basic infrastructure surrounding major destinations, and the need for proper quality assurance systems and legislations to regulate and bring quality in tourism. And this aspect is reflected in the vision statement of 2002 tourism policy:

"To make Kerala, the God's Own Country, an up market high quality tourist destination through rational utilisation of resources with focus on integrated development of infrastructure sector conserving and preserving the heritage and environment and enhancing productivity, income, creating employment opportunities, alleviating poverty thereby making tourism the most important sector for the socio-economic development and environment protection of the State."

The new policy aims to make tourism Kerala's core competency sector and gives special emphasis on enhancing the productivity and employment potential of the sector. Apart from reiterating the role of the Government as a catalyst and facilitator for the growth of tourism industry, it has also identified specific objectives for the State and department for developing tourism. The important objectives include the following:

1) *To rationalise tourism related legislations and policies of the Government so that it is tourism friendly and promotes tourism growth.*

   This gains significance because, tourism is a multi-sectoral activity and it is affected by legislations and plans many other sectors in the economy. In such situation, the state has to play a lead role in enacting tourism friendly legislations. In this context, some of the existing legislations like land use Order, Rent control act, Labor Acts, Building Tax Act, Excise Law etc. may have to be reviewed in order to facilitate growth of tourism.

2) *To develop and improve roads, drinking water supply, electricity and power supply, sewage and sanitation systems, signage and transport systems near selected tourist centers.*

The plan recognises the lack of basic infrastructure as one of the weakness of the destination. And some of the priority areas identified includes, providing facilities like motorable roads, clean drinking water, uninterrupted electricity and power supply, efficient waste disposal systems, good transport facilities and signage systems in proper place at least in important tourist areas. To this end the Government plans to have a mechanism for coordination with other departments like PWD, Water Authority, Irrigation, Transport, Forest etc.

3) *To promote sustainable and eco-friendly tourism in the State based on the carrying capacity of the destinations.*

In order to sustain the strength of Kerala Tourism, which is its excellent natural resources in the form of beaches, backwaters, hill stations and wildlife sanctuaries, there is a need for looking into the sustainable development of these attractions. For this Kerala Tourism has to focus on the conservation of ecology and preserving the pristine environment to reduce the negative impact of tourism and intend to promote development of tourism based on the carrying capacities of the destinations. Development of the tourist destinations will be controlled and regulated based on the guidelines formulated through Area Development Plans.

3.7 Tourism Product Development

As part of tourism strategy to develop an image of up market high quality destination for Kerala , the new tourism plan emphasise developing at least a new product or new destination every year. And the result is clearly visible. Improved and uniquely designed houseboats are one such. Traditional Ketuvallams are converted into houseboats with modern facilities. Even there are some new jumbo houseboats which can accommodate a big group of tourists in different backwater circuits. This is in addition to more than 200 houseboats with one or 2 bed rooms offering tourist unique experience of backwater attractions.

Product development efforts are also geared towards increasing the appeal for ayurveda rejuvenation holidays and heritage attractions in the international and domestic markets, and expanding variety in accommodation provision with boutique resorts and heritage hotels (converted from traditional Nalukettus and Tharavadus) etc are some of the landmarks in successful product development efforts in the tourism industry. It is this aspect of destination that National geographic reported regarding the resort architecture as one of the best in the country blending culture and ethos of the land (Economic Times, June 2002).

The last 5 years saw launch of many new products. Some of the new products are Thekady Tiger Trail introduced in 1998-99 in collaboration with forest department involves 25-30km of trek through the wild life sanctuary, traditional art forms like Kathakali , Kodiyattom and Theyyiam as part of a unique tourism package called ' a day with masters" for tourists interested in experiencing these art forms spending time with great masters in the art forms. In addition to leisure, Kerala is also targeting as a MICE (meetings and conventions) destination attracting business travelers. Apart from the main tourism products, many new products are also developed in the area of village tourism, heritage tourism, ecotourism and medical tourism.

One of the stagnating sectors in the state is plantation. Tourism packages are also developed around these plantations in which tourists can spend part of their trip. Adding another dimension to the Kerala's backwaters and health tourism is 'avian' tourism to attract bird watchers all over the world. The first avian tour package was launched in September 2003, coinciding with the tourist season in Kerala.

Another emerging tourism form is eco tourism, linking tourism development and environment. This project has come up in Thenmala, in the Western Ghats, where activities such as trekking through rain forest ands staying in tree top huts are organised. It is probably the first planned eco tourism destination in the country, implemented with the support of forest departmentt and the local community. A demand side assessment of eco-tourists was conducted by Thampi (2003), who found different types of eco-tourists within the general eco-tourists market (domestic and international tourists) to Kerala, and assessed their preferences for various eco tourism related experiences and activities, including trekking, viewing wild flowers and plants, environmental education etc.

Along with new product development, there are also efforts to develop new destination and regions as envisioned in the tourism policy. Malabar region is getting attention for tourism development and many new tourism projects are coming up in Malabar. This is considering the vast potential for tourism development in Malabar region. Another region were tourism development efforts are focused is, Bekal in Kasargod district, where an international standard beach destination is getting developed with the Bekal resorts development corporation.

3.7.1 Accommodation Scenario

Availability of quality infrastructure was recognised as an important gap in the tourism development. Gradually tourism development activities are getting oriented towards building quality infrastructure facilities like tourist accommodations, transportation facilities, proper sewage and water supply system. In the accommodation front Kerala has 5583 classified rooms, the maximum number of rooms being in the 3 star categories. The major expansion in accommodation properties is also taking place in 3 star categories. This is shown in the Table 3.6, which depicts the growth in accommodation facilities of classified hotels from 1999 to 2002.

Table 3.6 Number of Classified Hotels

Category of Hotels	1999	2002
5 star deluxe	1	2
5 star	4	5
4 star	9	10
3 star	24	60
2 star	35	41
1 star	24	21
Heritage	7	9
Total	**104**	**148**

(Source: Dept of tourism, GOK, Tourists Statistics, 2003)

3.8 Tourism Promotion and Marketing

One area state performed well is promotion and marketing of the destination Kerala and the efforts aimed at branding of destination was very effective. It undertook much focused promotional efforts around the theme 'gods own country' and thereby tried to create a boutique image in the various generating markets.

As part of aggressive promotion of Kerala as a world-class tourism destination, the state participated in international trade meets. some of the major events attended include, ITB 2003, WTM 2003, PATA 2003 and Arabian travel mart 2003.to increase domestic tourism, which is major component of tourism industry in the state, Kerala also conducted several road shows at hitherto unexplored markets like Jaipur, Goa, Nagpur, Chandigarh, Agra.

Launching Kerala Travel mart (KTM) in 2000 was also a step in the direction to promote destination aggressively both in the international and domestic markets. KTM is now India's premier international travel mart which gets overwhelming response from the trade. KTM 2002 saw the participation of trade from new markets like USA, Denmark, Greece, Ireland and Sweden. This innovative event is also a part of the drive to attract and position Kerala as a meetings, incentives and conventions and events destination (MICE). In this direction, Kerala tourism also organised national boat show, India's first international boat show, organised in association with Govt of India and national institute of water sports, Goa.

Kerala has evolved into a brand in its own. Kerala is listed among the top 100 brands of the country, by the globally renowned super brands ltd.

The state was selected from among 700 brands in the country that were evaluated to identify India's strongest brands. A great deal of this is due to proactive marketing and promotional measures taken during the last 10 years. The promotional impact created for the destination has been very high, especially, considering the limited budget with which promotion was undertaken during this period. In certain years, more than 10 crores were allocated exclusively for destination promotion efforts, which though low in international standards, is very high, compared to promotional efforts of many other states in India (GOK, 2002a). With these efforts, destination Kerala has started getting noticed in the global tourisms map. This is also reflected with the release of Kerala exclusive guidebook from widely referred travel guide called lonely planet.

Wide acclaim from reputed travel magazines like National geographic, CondiNast traveler and high profile endorsement of destination by celebrities like Paul McCartney, Paul Kennedy etc, helped greatly to create a favorable image for destination in many of the generating markets. Online marketing with Kerala Tourism website, considered as one of the best ten Indian sites by the reputed PC world India, is another achievement in promoting the destination.

3.9 Human Resource Development

Human resource development is a critical input to a successful tourism system. This aspect is also envisaged from the first tourism policy onwards in the state (GOK, Tourism policy, 1995). In this direction there are many steps undertaken. The 2 key institutions in the forefront of training personnel for tourism industry are KITTS ands IHMCT. In addition, last 5 years saw a number of private institutions been set up for providing the human resources to the growing needs of the industry. These institutions, apart from offering standard courses in the areas of travel and tourism, also offers short term job oriented course like certificate course in air fair ticketing, and travel agency management, masseur certificate course, certificate course in front office management etc.

These institutions also offers training programmes for staff of KTDC and department of tourism officials for developing basic skills as part of improving quality of services offered to the industry and tourists. For ex, KTDC started conducting training programmes for their managers and staff who comes in contact with the guests. Trainings are given on areas including spoken English, training in basic etiquettes skills like wishing and making their guest happy and comfortable.

Public awareness campaigns organised by tourist clubs at various schools and colleges through DTPC are another initiative to equip the host population receptive to tourism. In additions to this, there are also training programmes conducted for cab drivers, customs immigration officers, with whom tourists comes into contact. As guides and interpreters are also an integral part of tourists' experience, there are also strict certification schemes for becoming authorised guides.

3 .10 Growth Problems/Impact of Tourism Growth

Despite impressive growth during the last decade, its potential to grow in the years to come has also bought in many problems that can hamper the growth in the industry. There is a concern about problems due to uncontrolled growth of tourism. This concern is more clearly articulated in the latest tourism policy (GOK, 2000b) in which the tourism policy emphasises various aspects related to environmentally friendly-sustainable tourism to be promoted in the state.

Uncontrolled growth in tourism can also adversely affect the culture fabric of the host community. No doubt, tourism has played a major role in reviving the culture in the state. Some of the traditional art forms with the patronage of tourists and tourism agencies are getting revived. Annual events in the State like tourism week celebration and tourism festivals can also sustain many cultural forms. Many traditional buildings which were neglected or discarded, with the interest shown by the tourism industry are being discovered and put to use. Handicrafts industry and the artisan skills are also preserved due to tourism. Still, the negative impact due to tourism growth on the culture and traditional art forms are also concerns increasingly raised.

Some of the art forms developed and preserved by the people of Kerala are getting grossly commercialised. For example, Kathakali, which requires 14 to 16 years of rigorous training and a whole night to perform the play, is commercialised to the extent that many young people just learn its basics only to perform 15 to 30 minutes before the tourists.

Another area, which traditionally well patronised in the state was ayurveda; the Indian system of medicine. Oil massage using ayurvedic herbs have become extremely popular among foreign tourists in Kerala today. Along with that, complaints of misuse of the name of ayurveda for nefarious activities have also come up in the state. By educating the tourists to respect the local customs and culture and by enforcing strict regulations government can minimise some of the negative impacts of tourism development on culture and art forms.

Already many popular destinations have started to experience the strains of uncontrolled development. Kovalam is an example. Its potential to be developed into one of the best beach resorts in this region witnessed sharp decline in tourists' arrival. One of the main reasons for this was the haphazard manner in which facilities came up in that place. Similar experience can come to Kumarakom also where the main attractions like Vembanad and wet land ecosystems are threatened due to uncontrolled rise of tourism facilities in and around (Economic Times, June 2002).

This also can potentially limit the appeal of the place adversely affecting the industry in the years to come. The new tourism policy put forth strict legislations aimed at preserving and protection of natural attractions from the threat and abuse due to uncontrolled tourism growth in these regions. The measures include laying out guidelines for development activities for each region based on a master plan made for each important tourism regions in the state; construction of resorts, hotels and other tourism facilities will be properly regulated and monitored with strict building rules are part of this effort (GOK, 2000b).

Besides environmental impact concerns, other problems too like lack of adequate basic infrastructure in and around various destinations, poor quality of connecting roads, and irregular supply of water and electricity supply continue to limit the potential growth of tourism in the state. Further, higher level of taxes and access problems to state continue to cripple the tourism growth in the state. And these are the areas now the state has to focus its attention as part of tourism development. But lack of funds poses severe challenge for the industry. As noted by WTTC, the government funding or allocation is very poor considering the immense potential that tourism can bring to the socio economic development to the state. Just 1 percent of total government expenditure goes to tourism development which is very low, and State has to at least increase the share of budget to 3 to 4 percent in the next 5 years to realise the true potential of growth tourism can provide to the State (WTTC, 2002). There is obviously a strong case for the State to increase spending in this sector considering the employment potential of travel and tourism sector which can generate 20 lakhs jobs by 2012 if the growth is pursued in the right manner (WTTC, 2002).

3.11 Conclusion

In the years to come tourism development needs to be more controlled than what is pursued in the last decade. The need to replace mass tourism with sustainable tourism will gain relevance in the case of Kerala due to it peculiar conditions including high density of population, the fragile nature and the socio cultural fabric of the state.

Tourism growth with minimum environmental impact and reducing the socio- cultural consequences of the growth will occupy government's agenda. This means conducting carrying capacity assessments for important tourism regions in the state and pursuing growth accordingly. In addition, various tourism projects will have to clear though strict environmental impact assessments. Ensuring quality of tourism products and services will also become priority area for the destination, especially when state is trying to project an up market image for the destination attracting discernible and high spending visitors.

Chapter 4
Literature Review

4.1 Introduction

Understanding tourists, their perception, choice and satisfaction levels, which the study focuses, are relatively well developed areas in the tourism literature. This chapter aims to review some of the variables related to these areas, which are used in this study. The first section provides the review of the concept of destination image and the related empirical studies. The second section provides the review on the construct of customer satisfaction in the travel and tourism context. Finally, the third section reviews the concept of market segmentation in tourism and the related empirical studies.

4.2 Destination Image

One of the important concepts used in understanding tourists' behavior in the tourism marketing is the destination image tourists have towards destination. Understanding the image development process and the nature of image offers tourism and destination marketers to position their destination effectively in target market segments. Tourist perceptions are important to successful destination marketing because they influence the choice of a destination, and majority of tourists have experiences with other destinations, and their perceptions are influenced by comparisons among facilities, attractions, and service standards (Ahmed, 1991).

Tourists' perception of destination and the various perceptual dimensions which form a major focus of exploration in this study can be considered as a representation of a more detailed image tourists have towards the destination after the visit. Also, tourists can have image of a destination even without visiting a destination. This means, there are levels of images possible depending upon the tourists experience with the destination. Image and the tourist perception of destination is a well developed concept, and this review traces some of the important theoretical and empirical studies carried out in this area.

The image concept has been of great interest not only to researchers and academicians but also to industry practitioners and destination marketers. This increased interest can be attributed to increasing international tourism coupled with intense competition among tourist destinations. Developing a competitive position among tourism destinations is usually accomplished by creating and transmitting a favorable image to potential tourists in target markets (Gartner 1989). At the local and international levels, tourism destinations often compete on nothing more than the images held in the minds of potential travelers. Therefore, marketers of tourist destinations spend a great amount of money, time, and effort to create a favorable image to help entice prospective travelers to visit their destinations.

4.2.1 Destination Image and Positioning

Destination image is tied to the positioning of the destination. Positioning is the process of establishing a distinctive place for a destination in the minds of the travelers in the targeted markets (Crompton, Fakeye, and Lue 1992). The development of a positioning strategy includes (1) identifying a target market segment's images of a destination, (2) comparing these images with those of competitors, and (3) selecting destination attributes that meet the needs and wants of travelers and differentiate a destination from its competitors (Ahmed 1991). This means, nature of the image indicates the differentiation potential of the destination. This is very important from the destination positioning point of view, because if a destination is not differentiated from similar destinations, then the likelihood of being considered and chosen in the travel decision process is reduced (Mayo and Jarvis 1981).

Relative images tourists have towards destinations will form one of the basis for identifying destinations' strengths and weaknesses, competitive advantages and distinctive competencies for each destination relative to other destinations. One particular dimension in many destination image studies is to identify image strengths and weaknesses of tourism destinations relative to other destinations, which can be based on perceived destination attributes or the perceived similarities between destinations with reference to particular destination attributes (Gartner 1989; Crompton, Fakeye, and Lue 1992; Baloglu and Brinberg 1997). These studies refer to the fact that, potential travelers' images of the destination relative to its competitors provide useful insights into development of a positioning strategy. According to these studies, this information also enables the destination to see if perceptions (demand side) are compatible with the destination's resources and market offerings (supply side). If any discrepancy exists, destination marketers and planners should either alter image perceptions and positioning or improve and develop tourism products and services.

4.2.2 Levels of Image

Gunn (1985) suggests that destination images fall on a continuum beginning with the organic image followed by the induced image and ending in the complex image. The stage of an individual's image depends on his or her experience with the destination. According to Gunn, the organic image arises from a long history of non-tourism specific information, such as history and geography books, newspaper reports, magazine articles, and television reports that were not intended as tourism-specific. Thus, individuals who have never visited a destination nor have sought out any tourism-specific information will likely have some kind of information stored in their memory. At this point there might be an incomplete image, to which the traveler adds other bits and pieces. This is referred to as organic image, which is often beyond the control of the destination marketers to influence.

The induced image is derived from a conscious effort of tourism promotion directed by tourism organisations with their destination's marketing efforts. It depends upon colorful brochures distributed at visitor information centers, information available in travel agencies, travel articles in magazines, TV advertisements, and many other activities a tourism organisation might choose to promote the destination. The next higher level of image is the complex image, which is the result of an actual visitation and incorporates the experience at the destination. Because of the direct experience with the destination, the image tends to be more complex and differentiated. (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991).

4.2.3 The Image Components

The image construct has both cognitive and affective structure. Perceptual or cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs and knowledge about an object (evaluation of attributes of the object), whereas affective evaluation refers to feelings about the object (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997). Research in environmental psychology has also determined that environments and places have perceptual/cognitive and affective images (Russel, Ward, and Pratt 1981).

Gartner (1993) also argues that destination images are developed by hierarchically interrelated cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component is conceptualised as the sum of beliefs and the individual's evaluations of destination attributes. The affective component refers to the value the individuals place on destinations, based on travel benefits (motives) they seek. Since affective images are concerned with how individuals feel about various places, people with different motives may feel about or value a destination similarly if they perceive that the destination provides the benefits they seek. For example, individuals seeking different motivational experience (knowledge, adventure, prestige, etc.) may feel excited about a destination and they may evaluate it as an exciting place if they perceive that the benefits they seek are present in the destination (Walmsley and Jenkins 1993).

Affective images also play a significant role in person-environment interactions and spatial behavior models which are relevant in tourism product consumption. Russel and Snodgrass (1987) examined and conceptualised emotional disposition, mood, and affective appraisal of environments by using a person-environment interaction framework consisting of four stages: (1) before entering environment (or anticipation), (2) travel to the environment, (3) activities in the environment, and (4) after effects. According to Russel and Snodgrass (1987), people develop affective appraisals or an affective quality of a place before entering the environment, in the environment, and after leaving the environment.

Knowledge about the place's objective attributes is represented by the perceptual/cognitive component, whereas the affective component is knowledge about its affective quality (Genereux, Ward, and Russel 1983). In addition to this, places also have an overall (global) image. This global image is usually formed as a result of both cognitive and affective evaluations of the place (Mazursky and Jacoby 1986; Stem and Krakover 1993). Gartner (1986) also indicated that people's perceptions of various attributes within a destination would interact to form a composite or overall image. This implies that evaluations of overall image and its components would be different and therefore, both need to be assessed as part of developing a more effective positioning strategy.

Woodside and Lysonski (1989) note that the affective components of an image for a destination is tied in the consumer's mind to affective associations, such as positive, neutral or negative feelings. In the marketing literature these emotional evaluations are referred to as attitudes toward products (Shimp, 1989). Since products are usually made up of various attributes, a consumer will likely develop multiple attitudes toward a given product. A given tourism destination might consists of natural attractions, such as mountains, cultural attractions, such as a unique architecture, and other features. While a traveler might find the natural facets appealing, he or she might have a negative attitude toward the cultural elements.

4.2.4 The Circumplex Model of Affect

Russel, Ward, and Pratt (1981) have developed a scale that measures the affective quality attributed to close and remote places or environments. Affective quality or image has been conceptualised as a two-dimensional bipolar space that can be defined by eight variables falling in a circumplex

(Figure 4.1): pleasant (arbitrarily set at 0 Degrees), exciting (45 Degrees), arousing (90 Degrees), distressing (135 Degrees), unpleasant (180 Degrees), gloomy (225 Degrees), sleepy (270 Degrees), and relaxing (315 Degrees).

The proposed geometrical representation in Figure 4.1 is a two-dimensional bipolar space in which eight terms are placed approximately 45 Degrees apart. As suggested, the bipolar affect terms can be shown as vectors originating from the center of the circle. Reliable verbal scales for these eight variables are developed and shown to support the proposed theoretical structure (Russel and Pratt 1980).

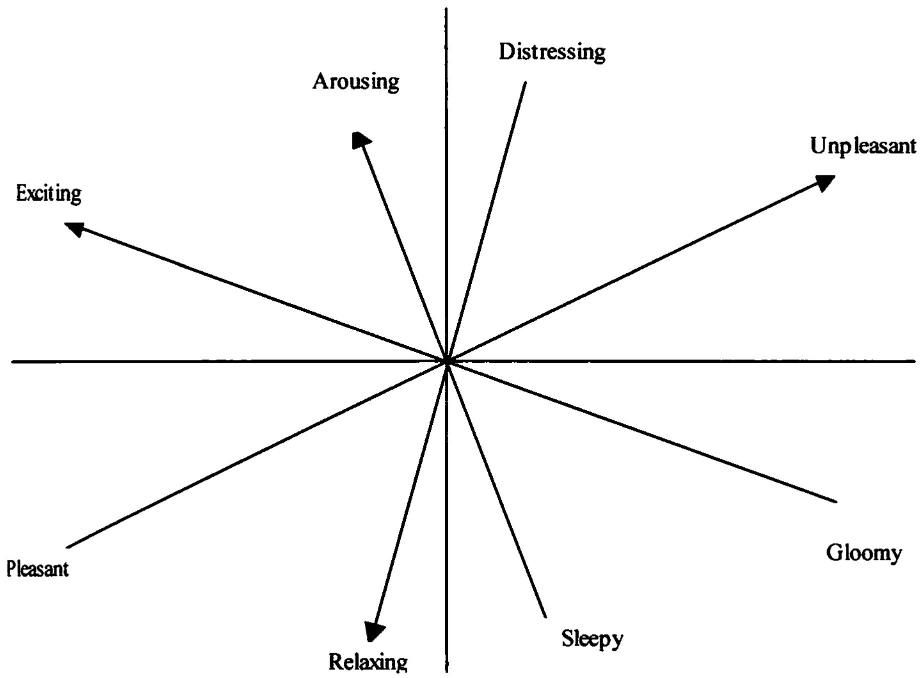

Figure 4.1 Circumplex Model *Source:* Russel & Pratt, 1980

Russel, Ward, and Pratt (1981) suggest that the affective quality of places (environmental perception) can alternatively be defined by two orthogonal bipolar dimensions of pleasant-unpleasant and arousing-sleepy or exciting-gloomy and relaxing-distressing. The authors demonstrated that although the eight unipolar scales represent four bipolar dimensions or scales, only two of the scales (pleasant-unpleasant and arousing-sleepy) are theoretically needed to adequately represent the affective space and images. For example, exciting is a combination of pleasant and arousing, relaxing is a combination of pleasant and sleepy, and so on. In other words, exciting-gloomy and relaxing-distressing scale helps to define the quadrants of the space rather than being separate dimensions.

Using this model Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) investigated the affective images of Mediterranean destinations. Results indicated that proposed affective space can be used by tourist destinations as a positioning tool, and the affective images of tourism destination countries varied across both positive (arousing, exciting, pleasant, and relaxing) and negative dimensions (sleepy, gloomy, unpleasant, and distressing). This study also found that tourism destination countries fall into different quadrants along with affective image dimensions. Egypt and Morocco fell between the arousing and exciting dimensions, which suggest that respondents perceive and feel that those destinations are arousing and exciting. Most of the European Mediterranean destinations, such as, Spain, Italy, France, and Greece, fell between the exciting and pleasant dimensions. Portugal, on the other hand, was perceived somewhere between the relaxing and sleepy dimensions. Turkey, Israel, and Algeria were perceived as unpleasant and distressing destinations.

4.2.5 Destination Image Formation

There are many factors which influence destination image formation process. Baloglu (1999) proposed a model as illustrated in Figure 4.2, which presents a general framework of destination image formation. In this model, image is mainly caused by two major forces: stimulus factors and personal factors. The former are those stem from the external stimulus, and physical object as well as previous experience. Personal factors, on the other hand are the characteristics (social and psychological) of the perceiver.

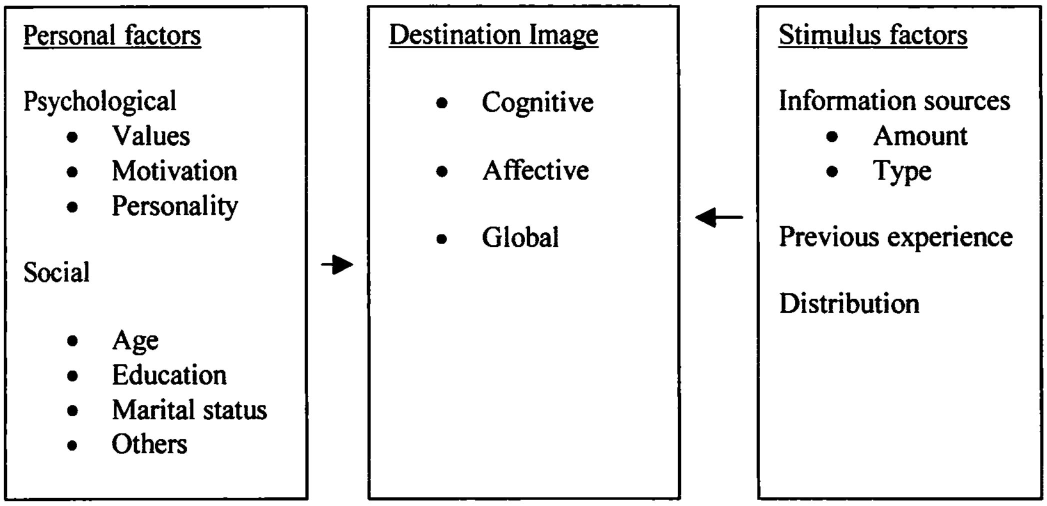

Figure 4.2. Framework of Destination Image Formation. ***Source:*** **Baloglu,1999**

Another observation from this model is that even in the absence of actual visitation or previous experience, there are three major determinants on destination image: travel motivations, socio-demographics, and various information sources. In this regard, the latter represents the stimulus variables, whereas motivations and socio- demographics stands for consumer characteristics, which also influence image formation.

4.2.6 Factors Influencing Image formation

Personal factors influence the various affective associations people develop of a tourism destination. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) describe personal interest, needs and motives, expectations, personality, social position, and standard demographic factors as influential on the image held by the traveler. For destination marketers, the objective demographic characteristics are the most functional. This is because promotional messages cannot be generated without reference to the type of tourist to whom the destination might appeal. This means, standard demographic characteristics allow destination marketers to match the profiles of their target markets with the profiles of media audiences.

A study by Baloglu, and Mccleary (1999) examined the image formation process through a path model, and linked age and education variables with stimulus factors like variety of destination information sources and socio psychological motivations to the overall image and the affective association developed towards a destination.

Woodside (1982) studied the influence of motivation on image formation, and suggested that effective positioning can be accomplished by matching benefits provided by a destination with benefits sought by a target market. They compared the visitors' image of Hawaii, Arizona, Florida, and California based on push and pull benefits sought by travelers. In this study the authors have taken travelers' level of familiarity into consideration and compared first-time and repeat visitors' image of these destinations.

The affect of country of origin on the image formation is also studied. Compton (1979), in their image assessment of Mexico, reported that the further away US respondents resided from Mexico, the more favorable were their images of Mexico as a vacation destination. Chen and Kerstetter (1999), in their investigation of international students' images of rural Pennsylvania, found that students' images differ depending on gender, household status, and home country. For instance, females and people living with children and/or relatives responded more favorably toward Pennsylvania's natural attractions. Also, people from Latin America, South-central Asia, and Southeast Asia expressed a more favorable perception of the natural attraction than people from East Asia.

Similarly, Alhemoud and Armstrong (1996) investigated the perceptions of Kuwait as a tourist destination by students and foreigners living there. They reported that foreigners were more impressed with cultural attractions, while the students favored the man made attractions. Neither group, however, was highly impressed with the overall set of tourist attractions on offer, as they did not specifically appeal or target to either of the market segments.

4.2.7 Destination Image and Travel Choice Process

Basic consumer behavior theory suggests that consumers make product choice decisions based on the images they form of different brands (MacInnis and Price, 1987). The consumer knows and identifies a certain brand by the image that exists in his or her mind. The same logic is stretched to by Gartner (1989), to state that destination image influences destination choice process. According to him, faced with a great variety of competing destinations, the traveler must eliminate some options owing to time and money constraints. Among the narrowed set, however, the traveler is likely to choose the destination with the most favorable image.

The image connotes the traveler's expectation of the destination and a positive image promises the traveler a rewarding life experience. Consequently, the images held by individuals in the marketplace are crucial to a destination's marketing success. While for one individual a given destination is appealing, for another the same destination is less appealing. The influence of image on other travel related choice processes were also studied. For example, Joseph chin et al (1998) studied the influence of Korean tourists' perceived image towards overseas destination on various travel choice behaviors like trip planning time, trip budget and length of the trip. They found that a perception of an inexpensive holiday tend to reduce the trip planning time and a perceived image of similar life styles and no language barriers had positive effects on the travel budget decisions.

Another study relating destination image formation process to tourists' behavior is carried out in the Northern Ireland by Lennon et al (2000), by testing a theoretical model shown in Figure 4.3, to explain the impact of various information sources (external information) and internal information generated by past travel experience on the perception towards the destination.

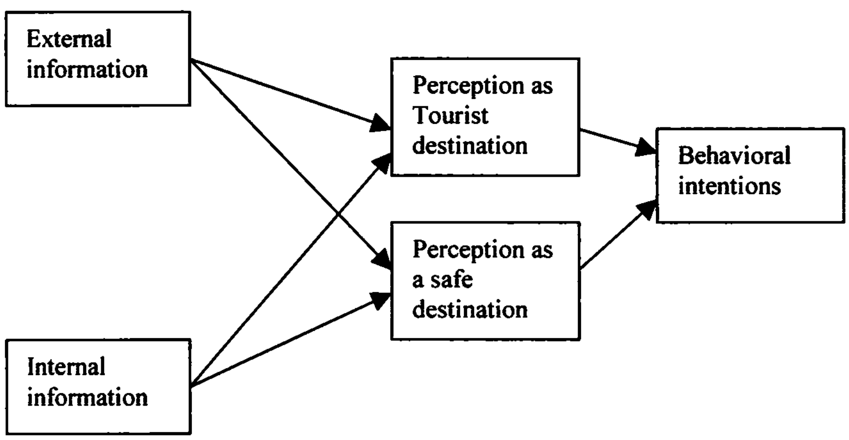

Figure 4.3 Perceptual Influences on Behavioral Intention. ***Source*****: Lennon ,2000**

Their study illustrated that various types of external and internal information were important in the development of customer perception, and these customer perceptions were shown to be an important influence in the development of behavioral intention.

4.2.8 Image Dimensions

The majority of tourism image studies focuses on deriving the image components for destinations based on assessing tourists' perception of destination on various attributes. Haahti (1986) proposed a cognitive structure model of positioning and examined the perceptions of 12 European summer holiday destinations relative to each other to determine the relative position of Finland. The study identified two underlying perceptual dimensions: "ease and economy" and "different experience." The major finding of the study was that the perceptions of countries differed along these dimensions.

Calantone et al. (1989) examined the images of eight Pacific Rim countries. Their analysis involved multiple origins, multiple destinations, and multiple attributes. The results indicated that tourist perceptions of a destination vary across image attributes as well as with vacationers' country of origin. Gartner (1989) investigated U.S. residents' images of selected destinations within the country, to determine the underlying attributes of how those destinations are differentiated. The results showed that the states have varying image strengths and weaknesses based on selected destination attributes.

Similarly, Javalgi, Thomas, and Rao (1992) studied U.S. pleasure travelers' perceptions for Central Europe, Southern Europe, Scandinavia, and the British Isles and found that four regions were differentiated on perceptual attributes. Perceptual differences were also found to vary with trip type, namely, touring and outdoor trips.

India's image as a tourist destination among foreign tourists was studied by Chaudary (2000), by determining their pre- and post-trip perceptions. Based on the expectation- satisfaction gaps of tourists, the study concludes that India's overall image, as perceived by tourists are less positive. This is because, though, India is rated highly for its rich art forms and cultural heritage, the overall low perceived image is associated due to cheating, begging, unhygienic conditions and lack of safety as experienced by the foreign tourists.

Apart from assessing image of destinations with tourists, there are also destination image assessments among travel intermediaries, as they have a vital role in influencing tourists' choice of destination. Baloglu and Mangaloglu (2000) studied tourism destination images of Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy as perceived by US-based tour operators and travel agents. By examining structured (cognitive and affective) and unstructured images of four competitive Mediterranean destinations, the study identified the strengths and weaknesses of these destinations as perceived by tour operators and travel agents. The findings also indicated that tour operators and travel agents promoting these destinations have differentiated images of the four destinations.

McLellan and Foushee (1983) investigated the images that tour operators from several foreign countries hold about the US. The tour operators surveyed were expected to reflect the images and opinions of their clients when planning a trip to the US. In this sense, the study acknowledged the influences between the tour operators and potential travelers. The authors found that the strength of perceived images as expressed by tour operators varied from country to country, calling for a marketing strategy, targeting both travelers and tour operators of each country.

4.3 Tourist Satisfaction

Related to tourist perception of destination is the concept of tourist satisfaction, an area, which this study assessed and compared with destination perceptual dimensions. In the following section, an attempt is made to review some of the related studies on satisfaction carried out in the tourism context. The review also tries to map the theoretical development of the satisfaction construct within the context of tourism industry.

A number of researchers have studied components of experiences which contribute to tourist satisfaction - a post consumption evaluative judgment-within different tourism and hospitality contexts. These include tourist satisfaction with destination services, recreational facilities, cultural tours, hotel services, restaurant services, host culture and so forth. Some argued that controllable and uncontrollable destination factors, such as the natural environment, the scenery, the culture, the climate and other general features might be among the prime determinants of satisfaction (Weber, 1997). Others emphasised that holiday satisfaction did not come only from beautiful sights but also from behavior one encounters, from the information one gets, and from the efficiency with which needs are served (Reisinger and Turner, 1997).

Reisinger and Turner's study (1997), further shows that tourist host interaction may become a significant element in holiday satisfaction, because hosts (or service providers) are the first contact point for tourists and remain in direct contact through an entire holiday. Authentic interpersonal relations between the host and the tourists may lead to psychologically comfort in satisfying the tourists' needs. Research also suggests that tourists' communication with local people and service providers may foster empathy and a feeling of safety (Reisinger and Waryzak, 1996), and this may affect tourist enjoyment of the host environment and their future destination selection decisions.

The provision of physically and psychologically comforting accommodation facilities is also suggested to be instrumental in generating quality holiday experience (Loudsbury and Hoopes, 1985). The service quality delivered in lodging and other tourist facilities, the responsiveness of the service personnel to tourists' requests and complaints, and the resolution of problems in a proper manner may contribute substantially to tourist satisfaction (Tribe and Snaith, 1998). There are studies that have pointed out that availability of quality restaurants and quality of services in these facilities as among the precondition for a satisfactory holiday experience (Chadee and Mattson, 1996). Efficiency of airport services may also play a part in tourist evaluations, as the airport service encounter is generally the initial and the last experience the tourists have with the destination (Loundsbury and Hoopes, 1985).

Pizam et al (1988) views the holiday as an experience made up of many tangible and intangible components, various positive and negative experiences may occur as a result of interactions with these components, and it is the cumulative effect that will ultimately determine the tourists overall evaluation of the destination experience. Managing tourist satisfaction in such contexts would be difficult without knowing what service areas matter most in tourist evaluations and this point to the imperative to understand critical destination components and understand the relative contribution of each component to overall satisfaction.

4.3.1 Satisfaction Construct

Customer satisfaction is a psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product and/or service (WTO, 1985). There are a variety of approaches to the explanation of customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction, the most widely used is the one proposed by Richard Oliver who had developed the expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980).

According to Oliver (1980), customers purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about anticipated performance. Once the product or service has been purchased and used, outcomes are compared against expectations. When outcome matches expectations, confirmation occurs. Disconfirmation occurs when there are differences between expectations and outcomes. Negative disconfirmation occurs when product/service performance is less than expected. Positive disconfirmation occurs when product/service performance is better than expected. Satisfaction is caused by confirmation or positive disconfirmation of consumer expectations, and dissatisfaction is caused by negative disconfirmation of consumer expectations.

Customer satisfaction can also be defined as satisfaction based on an outcome or a process. Vavra's (1997) outcome definition of customer satisfaction characterises satisfaction as the end-state resulting from the experience of consumption. This end state may be a cognitive state of reward, an emotional response to an experience or a comparison of rewards and costs to the anticipated consequences. Vavra also puts forth a definition of customer satisfaction based as a process, emphasising the perceptual, evaluative and psychological processes contributing to customer satisfaction. In this definition, assessment of satisfaction is made during the service delivery process.

4.3.2 The SERVQUAL Scale

The SERVQUAL scale was introduced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1988 and revised in 1991. According to them, service quality should be measured by subtracting customer's perception scores from customer expectation scores ($Q = P \pm E$). The greater the positive score represents the greater the positive amount of service quality or visa versa. The gap that may exist between the customers expected and perceived service is not only a measure of the quality of the service, but is also a determinant of customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Their aim was to build a general instrument which would measure service quality across a broad range of service categories. By conducting interviews with consumers in five service sectors: appliance, repair and maintenance services, a long-distance telephone company, retail banking, and credit cards, the authors came to the conclusion that, regardless of the type of services being considered, the criteria used by consumers in evaluating service quality were similar. Moreover, their work suggested that service quality could be categorised into five dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1991) described as:

- Reliability -the ability to perform the promised services dependably and accurately.
- Responsiveness- the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- Assurance - the knowledge and courtesy of employees as well as their ability to convey trust and confidence.
- Empathy - the provision of caring, individualised attention to customers.
- Tangibles- the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials

SERVQUAL has been also used in studies in the hospitality and tourism industries. Fick and Ritchie (1991) studied perceived service quality in airlines, hotels, restaurants and ski sectors, and demonstrated the usefulness of the SERVQUAL instrument to indicate the relative importance of expectations in affecting customer satisfaction. Based on the SERVQUAL, Coyle and Dale (1993) identified different determinants of service quality from the viewpoints of hotel guests and hotel management. Bojanic and Rosen (1994) applied the SERVQUAL instrument to a particular restaurant chain, and found that the three most important expectations of restaurant patrons were assurance, reliability and tangibles.

But SERVQUAL has also been seriously criticised (Carman, 1990; Babakus and Boller, 1992; Smith, 1995). The main criticisms of the model relate to the application of expectations and the gap scoring. First, the conceptualisation of expectation as a comparison standard in the model is a difficult concept to quantify. Second, if the variables are difficult to quantify then, by implication, the gap score becomes that much less secure as a measurement. Finally, the doubt has been expressed as to the universal quality of the dimensions. (Eckinci and Riley, 1998).

4.3.3 Quality Dimensions

As stated above, one of the major problems encountered in trying to replicate the scale to different services was the failure to generate the similar generic dimensions. This is noted in various studies assessing quality in tourism. For instance, in the domain of travel agencies, Leblanc (1992) identified nine dimensions which differed significantly from SERVQUAL, whereby corporate image appeared as the most important dimension.

Saleh and Ryan (1991) identified five new dimensions: & conviviality, & tangibles, & reassurance, & avoid sarcasm and & empathy but the first dimension appeared to account for most of the variance. Getty and Thompson (1994) created LODGQUAL, which displayed only three dimensions: Tangibility, reliability and contact. Suh, Lee, Park and Shin (1997) identified four new dimensions: friendly service, tangibles, reliability and customer-centrality. A multi-services comparison of SERVQUAL was conducted by Fick and Ritchie (1991) to four service segments (airline, hotel, restaurant and ski area services) and concluded that SERVQUAL, and any adaptation of it, was most successful when comparing firms within a common service segment rather than across segments.

In response to this weakness of SERVQUAL, many studies attempted to adapt the model to the specific service context studied. In tourism context, one such study carried out is using a new scale developed called HISTOQUAL, which is used to evaluate service quality provided in historic houses. The scale provides measures to assess a historic properties service quality along each of the five service dimensions: Responsiveness, Tangibles, Communications, Consumables and Empathy. The results obtained on using HISTOQUAL shows that for the three properties studied, responsiveness and tangibles seem to perform fairly well, the communications and consumables and empathy were dimensions identified for improvement (Frochot and Hughes, 1998).

Another study on the service quality of travel agents in Hong Kong was conducted by Lam and Zhang (1998). The purpose of the study was to assess customers' expectations and perceptions of service provided by travel agents, and to explore how the service factors derived from the factor analysis were related to overall customer satisfaction. Responsiveness and assurance, reliability, empathy, resources and corporate image, and tangibility were the dimensions of quality identified. The results showed that customers' perceptions of service quality fell short of their expectations, with the reliability dimension having the largest gap. Notably, 'Resources and corporate image" was the least influential dimension in predicting customer satisfaction, which appeared to be a different from that of LeBlanc (1992) study in Canada, in which corporate image was the most significant factor in explaining customers' overall satisfaction with services provided by travel agencies.

4.3.4 SERPERF Measure

Although SERVQUAL used a gap measure (expectations minus perceptions) to evaluate consumers' quality evaluations, the present research opted for a measure based on perception statements only. The reason supporting this choice was justified by a review of existing studies which demonstrated the superiority of perception statements over other existing measures and particularly over the gap measure. For instance, Cronin and Taylor (1992) demonstrated that performance based measure of service quality (SERVPERF) contributed most to the variation observed, and also showed that perception and preference measures correlated higher with satisfaction than the gap measure. Crompton & Love (1995) aiming for operationalisation of quality in the context of festivals, found performance-based measures to outperform other measures, including the gap measures. These findings along with the ease in administering a performance based measure are reasons for adopting the performance measure in this study.

4.3.5 Customer Satisfaction & Quality

In the satisfaction research literature, one pertinent issue relates to distinguishing satisfaction, as far as it is possible, from other conceptual considerations such as quality and value. Perceived service quality differs from satisfaction in that service quality is the customers' attitude or overall judgment of service over time, while satisfaction is considered to be connected with a specific transaction (Bitner, 1990; Bolton& Drew, 1991).

The confusion about these two concepts is due to the difference in the definition of expectation in the service quality management and the consumer satisfaction literature. Expectations in the satisfaction literature have been operationalised as predictions of service performance; while expectation in the service quality literature is interpreted as what service provider should offer. Satisfaction is generally deemed to be more affective or emotional than quality. Also, there is some emerging consensus that satisfaction is super ordinate to quality. Furthermore, Iacobucci et al (1985) suggested that the standards of comparison in satisfaction and quality might differ. Judgments of service quality might compare observed service expectations against industry standards (that is, managerial specifications), while judgments of customer satisfaction might compare observed service experience against the customer's own specifications. This would highlight actual tourist experience as an essential factor in the satisfaction judgment but not essential in the quality judgment.

4.3.6 Components of Satisfaction

There are various approaches to classify service encounter elements, which identify them as components of satisfaction. Czepiel et al. (1985), suggest that satisfaction with a service is a function of satisfaction with two independent elements: functional element and performance delivery element. For a restaurant, the functional element is the food and beverage, and the performance-delivery element is the service. Davis and Stone (1985) also divide the service encounter into two elements: direct and indirect service elements. For example, in the case of hotels, direct services may be the actual check-in/checkout process, while the indirect services include the provision of parking facilities, concierge, public telephones for guests use, etc.

Lovelock (1985) divides the service attributes into two groups: core and secondary. Airline service provides a good example, with customers first making inquiries and reservations, and then checking in their baggage, getting seat assignments, being checked at the gate, receiving on-board service in flight, and retrieving their baggage at the destination airport. Each of these activities is an operations task that is secondary to the core product of physically transporting passengers and their bags between two airports. But these secondary tasks have a greater potential to generate customer dissatisfaction if performed poorly. Unlike material products or pure services, holiday experiences are an amalgam of products and services. Therefore it is possible to say that satisfaction with a destination experience is a sum total of satisfactions with the individual elements or attributes of all the products and services that make up the experience.

4.3.7 Satisfaction- Dissatisfaction Continuum

Past research in customer satisfaction and service quality have resulted in increasing research efforts to look at new ways to evaluate these concepts. Historically, the assumption has been that a linear relationship exists between satisfaction/dissatisfaction and disconfirmation or performance evaluations. Researchers such as Oliva et al (1992) proposed a catastrophe model theorising the nature of the relationship of satisfaction with transaction costs. This theory hypothesizes that satisfaction and dissatisfaction occur at different points; specifically these behaviors are associated with transaction costs and brand loyalty. Research by Cadotte et al (1987) using structural modeling, also found evidence to support the catastrophe model. This view also challenges the assumption that there is a linear relationship exists between satisfaction/dissatisfaction and disconfirmation or performance evaluations.

4.3.8 Overall Satisfaction & Satisfaction with Individual Attributes

There is also a related issue in the exploration of customer satisfaction which concerns on the relationship of component satisfaction with overall satisfaction. In this context, doubts are raised on the assumption that satisfaction with a hospitality experience is a sum total of satisfactions with the individual elements or attributes of all the products and services that make up the experience.

This issue is better explained with two types of models: compensatory or no compensatory models. Non-weighted compensatory models presume that customers make trade-offs of one attribute for another in order to make a decision, i.e. a weakness in one attribute is compensated by strength in another. Weighted compensatory models (sometimes referred to as expectancy-value models) also assume that people have a measurement of belief about the existence of an attribute, but that each attribute has an importance weight relative to other attributes.

Non-compensatory models (no trade-offs of attributes) can take one of two forms: conjunctive or disjunctive based on the number of attribute in which a minimum threshold level is set. In disjunctive models, rather than establishing a minimum level on all important attributes, consumers establish such levels only on one or a few attributes. Research evidence conducted in tourism and hospitality enterprises (Mazursky, 1989; Cadotte and Turgeon, 1988) support the disjunctive models. In that study, they divided the attributes into the following four categories: satisfiers, dissatisfiers, critical and neutral.

Satisfiers were those attributes where unusual performance apparently elicited compliments and satisfaction, but average performance or even the absence of the feature did not cause dissatisfaction or complaints. Dissatisfiers were more likely to earn a complaint for low performance or absence of a desired feature than anything else. But an operation that exceeds the threshold performance standard apparently will not receive compliments on the attribute.

Critical attributes were capable of eliciting both complaints (dissatisfactions) and compliments (satisfactions), depending on the situation. Quality of service, food quality and helpful attitude of employees ranked high in eliciting both complaints and compliments. Critical factors deserve special attention, because of their potential for both hurting and helping a business, and for it the objective is to raise performance beyond the basic standard norm.

Neutral attributes neither received a great number of compliments nor many complaints, probably indicating that they were either not salient to guests or easily brought up to guests' standards. Cadotte and Turgeon also draw attention to the fact that the classification of these factors is not permanent but constantly changes. Some dissatisfier type attributes were probably critical at one time, but over time, the evolving higher industry standards push them further to that level

4.3.9 Satisfaction - Comparative Assessment

Recognising the role of culture and country in tourists' satisfaction, there are various comparative researches in the area of tourists' satisfaction studies. Comparative assessment of tourist satisfaction with destinations across two nationalities is done by Kozak (2001), with the prime objective of investigating whether there are differences between satisfactions levels of two nationalities visiting the same destination. The analysis of findings indicated that British tourists were more likely to be satisfied with almost all individual attributes than German tourists. Differences were also observed in dimensions like trip related variables like, type of the trip, choice of accommodation type, duration of the trip and intention to revisit.

The study by Choi and Chu (2000) found differences in factors determining the overall satisfaction levels of Asian and Western tourists. It seems obvious that nationality might have a significant effect on consumer or tourist behavior. Therefore, such differences in attitudes and behavior focus on the importance of destination management in exploring the feature of each customer group, segmenting tourism markets and developing new marketing strategies which are appropriate for each market.

There are also studies which explore the role of culture related factors on holiday satisfaction. Master and Prideux (1998) studied Taiwanese tourists visiting Queensland, and shows that cultural related factors have lesser role compared to other factors in the tourists' satisfaction with overall holiday experience. Though tourists' shows preference for some Taiwanese type facilities and Taiwanese speaking staff at the destination, and complained about the lack of that in the destination, they were very much satisfied with the destination.

Satisfaction assessment studies conducted on destinations have focused on identifying various quality dimensions of the holiday experience and its impact on the satisfaction with the holiday experience. For example, Yuksel (2001) conducted a study on the satisfaction of tourists with turkey, and identified 16 factors of which ten factors were found more influential in effecting tourist satisfaction than other factors. Among the identified factors, the hospitality component, consisting of attitudes of local people and service employees towards tourist ranked highest in significance. In addition to the quality of natural attractions, their study also revealed the impact of accommodation facilities, food quality, variety of experience, convenience of access to tourist facilities and service quality on the tourist satisfaction.

Another study assessing the image of Toronto as a tourist destination found that irrespective of the origin of visitors, essentially the same attributes were rated as important. Among the attributes, the top drivers of satisfaction for all visitors were accommodation services, food services and cuisine and variety of things to see and do. It is interesting to note from their study that it is the general variety of things to see and do that is important to all visitors. The study also found difference in perception of destination attributes between visitors from US, Canada and other overseas visitors (Mansfield, 1995).

On the international tourists satisfaction with the destination Kerala, a study conducted by Sarngadharan and Retnakumari (2005) revealed that Kerala has been far above the expectations of international tourists in relation to attractions and hospitality. Another study, conducted by TCS showed that more than 50 percent of the foreign tourists are not satisfied with local transportation facility, shopping facilities and avenues for entertainments. The same study, however, reports higher level of tourists' satisfaction for accommodation and food aspects provided in the destination (TCS report, 2000).

4.3.10 Satisfaction-Comparison Standards

Satisfaction is related to expectations, at the same time, the satisfaction from the same hospitality experience may differ from one customer to the other, and this can be because customers have different needs, objectives and past experiences that influence their expectations. Therefore it is important to gain a clear idea of the customer needs and objectives that correspond to different kinds of expectations

As noted before, the most recent reviews on satisfaction within the marketing literature have highlighted the need for a context-dependent approach. It might be envisaged that the particular characteristics of tourism have a notable effect on tourist satisfaction. Seaton and Bennett (1996) identified some differences between tourism and other services: "beyond the generic characteristics that distinguish services from goods, tourism is a high-involvement, high-risk product to its consumers; tourism is a product partly constituted by the dreams and fantasies of consumers; and tourism is an extended product experience with no predictable critical evaluation point". This implies that, the nature of standards used as pre purchase standards can be other than the predictive expectations. Many other standards are proposed in consumer behavior literature. Table 4.1 lists a few standards used in the customer satisfaction research.

Table: 4.1 Standards Used in Customer Satisfaction Research.*Source:*Yuksel, 2001

Predictive expectation	A pre purchase cognition about how good the product performance will be
Normative expectation	Consumers belief of what should happen in their next consumption
Favorite brand	The performance one gets from ones most preferred brand
Typical performance	The performance a consumer believes a typical or average product/service of this type provides
Minimum tolerable	Minimum performance a consumer believes a product or service must provide
Equitable performance	The performance of a product the consumer thinks he should get given what was put into the exchange
Ideal performance	The performance that is best one can imagine
Last received	The most recent experience the consumer had with the brand or product category

The criticism against using pre purchase expectation in the customer's post purchase product evaluation is based on the argument that consumer may approach a consumption with a different standard or no standard in their mind. And in many cases, may not have much motivation to process or generate expectation for certain kinds of products. In fact, the difference in the process of evaluation in a more experience dominated service category like tourism may even make expectations redundant.

In some consumption situations, the satisfaction may be related to the successful adaptation of the tourist to unpredictable events. This may suggest the role of performance primarily by the tourist. Moreover, it is possible to make a clear link with the sort of satisfaction experiences—spontaneous, artful, affective and packed with meanings that are increasingly sought by tourists (Fournier and Mick, 2000).

There are also criticisms on the standards of comparison used in the model. for example, Franken and Van Raij (1997) had also suggested that the standard against which satisfaction was judged – in general leisure-time activity – might be broader than an individual's expectation as derived from earlier experiences (temporal expectation) and might encompass the individual's achievements in other spheres of life (spatial expectation) and the perceived level of satisfaction others derived from the activity (social expectation).

The other aspect is that the satisfaction process may differ across product and services. For example depending on the contextual factors like low/ high involvement, high/ low experience, different standards may be used. And hence the satisfaction process may differ in each case accordingly.

In many cases of consumption with the extended time, the pre purchase expectations may not be stable i.e., during the consumption process the expectation may be also modified. Furthermore, within a tourism consumption context, which is characterised by hedonic, intangible and subjective components, emotional benefits it provides, makes emotional aspects of consumption experiences influencing tourist satisfaction. In such case, emotion states (particular emotion processes of limited duration) and emotion traits (the tendency for an individual to experience a particular emotion with frequency in day to-day life) can be also explanatory variables in the total satisfaction experience with the holiday (Yuksel, 2001).

Experience based norms derived from the past experience can also influence the standards formed in expectation. This means consumers often have experience with other destination and this information can be an important source of influencing expectation as compared to a focal brand expectation created with the help of information from external sources.

Evidence is also from practitioners and industry observers concerning the widened experience (and expectations) of tourists. More tourists are now further up the tourist career ladder. Moreover, they get there faster through a more frequent and greater variety of tourist experiences than were possible in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This means, tourists are also in a learning curve, and providers have to satisfy a more discerning set of travelers than in the past and these phenomena will have a bearing on the kind of standards with which tourists come to a destination (Yuksel, 2001).

4.4 Market Segmentation in Tourism

Market segmentation has become in recent years an element of considerable importance in the marketing strategy of firms in the travel and tourism sector. This is basically due to the intensified competition in this type of activity and the existence of an increasingly exacting and segmented demand, seeking a provision of services adapted to its specific requirements.

Concept of market segmentation is rooted in the idea that, in order to satisfy the needs of their customers more successfully and reach them in the most effective and efficient way, marketers should identify groups of customers with homogeneous characteristics and behaviors and try to adapt their offer as much as possible to the unique needs and desires of the segment members (Kara and Kaynak, 1997).

According the classification of the segmentation criteria proposed by Frank et al (1997), the variable known as general and objective (demographic, socio-economic and geographic variables) have been frequently used in the field of services and have been the most popular in this sector, as they enable the reference market to be divided in a simple way, easily identifying different segments. However, it is often observed that, people of different objective characteristics behave in a similar way and conversely, individuals who have similar general objective characteristics present different behaviors and desires. According to Haley (1995), these variables are in general poor predictors of behavior and therefore, less optimum for segmentation based strategies.

Bryant and Morrison (1980) argue against the prevalent use of geographic variables in the tourism marketing of destinations. According to them, this traditional approach using geographic variables presents three potential limitations: (1) it is not based on consumer behavioral patterns, (2) it assumes complete homogeneity of the country segment, and (3) it overlooks the homogeneous segments that exist across national boundaries.

4.4.1 Psychographic Segmentation

One of the major limitations in the conventional approach of using socio economic and demographic variables to segment markets relates to its inability to reveal underlying motivation for travel. These shortcomings can be overcome with the use psychographic or the desired benefits as variables for segmentation. Plog (1994), for example based on his segmentation study, concludes that segmentation system based on psychographic elements produced clearly defined groupings of individuals with similar personalities, life styles and interest patterns, and these profiles would be distinct enough to offer some actionable guidelines on which marketers can develop product and appropriate communication strategies.

Profiling tourists based on their psychographic make up involves the measurement of his or her attitudes, interests and opinions (AIO). These AIO measurements can be general or product specific, depending on the objectives of the research. For instance, Woodside (1986) based on a study, concluded that lifestyle information may be more important in predicting foreign travel behavior than demographic variables, and encouraged travel organisations to adopt the use of lifestyle data as market segmentation tool.

4.4.2 Motivation Segmentation

Segmenting using desire benefits or travel motivations is another approach, which involves understanding what motivations influence people's travel habits and destination selections, and this is also found crucial in predicting tourists future travel patterns. This market base data will in turn be useful in the appropriate development of destination facilities in a destination area. With the better understanding of the motivations and behavioral patterns of tourists, marketers of tourism products can exploit market opportunities better, and with that can maximise the impact of the marketing expenditures.

One way to understand travel motivation is to examine the concept of push and pull demand stimulation. The idea behind the two dimensional approach is that people travel because they are pushed by their own internal forces and pulled by the external forces of the destination attributes (Pearce and Catabiano 1983).

Several studies were conducted from the perspective of benefit segmentation to identify underlying dimensions of push and pull factors. Woodside and Jacobs (1985) reported the benefits experienced from traveling to Hawaii by three different national samples: Canadian visitors most often reported rest and relaxation as major benefits realised from their Hawaiian visits, mainland Americans reported cultural experiences and Japanese visitors reported family togetherness as the major benefit realised.

In examining the motivations for the overseas travel using the concept of push and pull factors, Yuan and McDonald (1990) found that individuals from each of the countries (Japan, France, West Germany, and the UK) travel to satisfy the same unmet needs (push factors). However attractions for choosing a particular destination (pull factors) appear to differ among the countries. The results also revealed that individual's place different levels of importance on the various factors among the countries.

Crompton (1979) identified nine motives, seven of which he classified as "social physiological " and two of which he classified as "cultural." The social psychological motives identified were escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, nostalgia, enhancement of kinship, and facilities of social interaction. The two cultural motives identifies were novelty and education.

4.4.3 Tourist Typologies

Closely related to the use of psychographics in the tourism study is the development of traveler or tourist typologies. Researchers have advocated traveler types as potential market segments for travel and tourism marketing (Dann, Nash and Pearce 1982). Unlike demographic and socioeconomic analysis, psychographics consists of multidimensional constructs, such that there is no one standard category of defining different types of tourists. Rather, it is left to the creative insights of researchers to develop the dimensions.

Plog's 1974 study attempted to develop five types of tourists: the allocentric, near-allocentric, mid-centric, near phsychocentric and phsychocentric. Darden (1997) identified five distinct groups of vacation orientation: budget travelers, adventurers, homebodies, vacationers and moderates.

One of the better known typologies is that developed by Cohen (1972), he suggested that different tourists fell into four different categories along a novelty -familiarity continuum: the organised mass tourists, the individual mass tourists, the explorer, and the drifter. The categorisation depends on their preferences toward experience of novelty and strangeness/familiarity. According to Cohen, the organised mass tourists are the least adventurous, stays within his or her environment bubble throughout the trip itinerary, which is usually arranged in advance, with well prepared guided stops. The individual mass tourist is one who's travel arrangements are made by travel agents, but differs from the organised mass tourist in that the former can exercise a degree of control over his or her trip itinerary. The explorer tries to get off the beaten track and interact with the locals. In this case novelty dominates, the tourists does not immerse completely in the host society, but retains basic routine and comforts of his native way of life. The drifter is the opposite extreme of organised mass tourists. He tries to integrate into the host culture by living and working among the locals.

In another study, Mo, Howard and Howitz (1994) developed an International Tourist role (ITR) scale - a 20 item, 3 dimensional scale instrument - to capture novelty construct with international pleasure travel. The scale has three dimensions: (1) the Destination oriented dimension (DOD) which represents an individual's preference for novelty and familiarity when choosing among international travel destinations; (2) the Travel services dimension (TSD), which measures the extent to which an individual prefers to travel with or without institutionalised travel services when traveling abroad; (3) the Social contact dimension (SCD), which reveals individual's preferences regarding the extent and variety of social contacts with local people when traveling in a foreign country.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the development of important concepts like destination image, tourist satisfaction and market segmentation, which are distinct domains of inquiry in the tourism literature, and forms the conceptual background for this research. The review showed the importance of the concept of destination image for destination marketers in positioning the destination and for influencing the tourists' choice of destination. The image development process, its components and its affect on tourists' behavior is linked to a process of matching the demand side with the supply side provision. This chapter also reviewed some studies aimed at revealing relationship of various image components, like overall image, affective image and perceptual image to destination choice, satisfaction and other trip related variables. Of these components, this study uses only the perceptual component formed after the actual visit.

One of the important objectives of this study involves relating overall satisfaction, which is more affective in nature, to the perceived quality of destination on various attributes. Towards this end, for gaining better understanding of satisfaction in the tourism context, this review described various studies and related concepts on which satisfaction is assessed for specific activities within the total holiday experience. Also, studies on satisfaction with destination are reviewed, as this is the area which this study is mainly focused.

Notable from the review is the wide-ranging holiday elements on which the holiday satisfaction can develop. And within each element there can be various dimensions which represent the quality of that element. This means, assessment of satisfaction for a temporarily and spatially extended consumption like holiday, with a provision from a multitude of suppliers, tend to make satisfaction concept difficult to analyse and interpret. In this context, the dominant methodologies used in service quality assessment with its limitations are reviewed. And this indicated the preference for a performance oriented evaluation methodology .

The review of market segmentation in tourism, an important area of investigation in this study, shows the various types of segmentation approaches adopted in the field of tourism study. The review noted the evolution of the segmentation concept from a basic demographic and geographic segmentation to benefit segmentation and psychographic segmentation using various tourist role typologies. Among these types, this study adopts the benefit segmentation as it provides useful information for the destination planning efforts.

The development of satisfaction to related concepts like service quality and behavioral outcomes are also reviewed with a particular purpose of linking these concepts within the bounds on this study. This chapter also brought out the hedonic nature of holiday consumption in which the tourists seek a high degree of experience benefits, within a short duration of the trip. Consequently, this study also recognises the limitation of applying a standard methodology using performance rating within such a context. This part is particularly discussed with the role of various standards, which can influence expectation in a holiday, affecting the satisfaction process.

Chapter 5
Destination Quality and International Tourist Market Assessment

5.1 Introduction

The analyses carried out for this study has a broad purpose of understanding international tourists visiting Kerala in terms of the benefits they seek, their quality perception towards the destination and the factors influencing their holiday satisfaction. To this end, the data were subjected to various univariate, bivariate and multivariate analyses.. This chapter covers the findings and interpretations related to the analyses of data pertaining to particular objectives defined for the study.

As part of destination quality assessment, the findings presented include the analyses of the quality variables representing destination quality, the destination quality dimensions and its impact on the holiday satisfaction., and the differences observed for tourists trip satisfaction and overall destination impressions when compared for various tourist sub groups, based on demographic, country and trip related variables. This is followed by the findings on international tourist market assessment carried out for various trip, country and benefits/activity segments. Finally, the finding on the demand side view on the destination attractiveness is illustrated.

5.2 Sample profile

Data were collected from 405 respondents. Some questionnaires were incomplete in response to key demographic, trip related variables, and to the items in perception and importance rating scales. Such questionnaires were not included in the analysis. After screening and scrutiny, 17 questionnaires were discarded as not sufficiently complete for analysis, and the data of the remaining 388 questionnaires were analysed. Adequacy of the sample size was ensured by checking the sample representation in the various cells of cross tabulations aimed at categorising tourists based on demographic and trip related variables. Sample control measures taken, as explained in the methodology section of this study, also helped to increase confidence in the sample, for its adequacy in representing international tourist market to Kerala.

Table 5. 1 Distribution of Respondents as per Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	217	55.9
Female	171	44.1
Total	**388**	**100.0**

Out of 388 respondents, 217 were males and 171 were females and these forms 55.9 percentage and 44.1 percentage of the total sample (Table 5.1). This gender representation of sample is found comparable to a survey conducted by the by tourism department for collecting general tourism statistics (GOK, 1997). In the sample, though, male is represented more, the female tourists are also adequately represented for the purpose of comparison.

Categorising the sample in terms of respondent's marital status (single and married (couples/partners), found the sample more of married tourists. Percentage wise, 56.2 percent of the sample is married and 43.8 percent are singles (Table 5.2). In contrast to this, some destinations, as reported in the literature review, have tourists profile highly skewed in favor of singles group. Whereas, some destinations may be visited predominantly by couples and groups of married tourists. Marital status and gender may have some affect on the tourists' preference for a particular destination, especially for a destination like

Kerala, which is situated far away from many of the generating markets in US and Europe. In this study, the sample is adequately represented by both married and singles tourists.

Table 5.2 Distribution of Respondents as per Marital Status

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Single	170	43.8
Married	218	56.2
Total	**388**	**100.0**

The employment status of the sample is categorised broadly into employed, retired, student and homemaker. As the Table 5.3 shows, both students and homemakers are represented very low in the sample. Majority of the respondents were in the employed group, and forms 73.9 percent of the sample. The retired group, which is a distinct group in itself for many tourism markets, forms 18.5 percent of the total sample. The detail of occupation profile is not assessed because the comparison aimed was between employed and retired.

Table 5. 3 Distribution of Respondents as per Employment Status

Employment status	Frequency	Percent
Employed	287	73.9
Retired	72	18.5
Student	16	4.2
Home maker	13	3.4
Total	**388**	**100**

One of the important socio-demographic variables used in this study is educational level of the tourists, which can also have some affect on various travel related variables. Grouping tourists based on their educational qualification and comparing various perceptions related to their holiday experience is carried out in this study. The educational profile of the sample, as shown in the Table 5.4, indicates that the sample is highly represented by those with postgraduate qualification, followed by those with junior college level. Nearly 42 percent of the sample is with postgraduate, followed by junior college with nearly 30 percent of the sample. Tourists with high school level are represented at 22 percent in the sample. Nearly 70 percent of the sample is having educational level junior college and above. This pattern may also indicate that the overall educational profile of international tourists visiting Kerala is one with above average education level.

Table 5. 4 Distribution of Respondents as per Educational Level

Educational level	Frequency	Percent
High school	85	21.9
Technical	30	7.7
Junior college	111	28.6
Post graduate	162	41.8
Total	**388**	**100**

The Table 5.5 shows the age break up of the sample. The mean age of the sample is 44.7 and median age is 45. A median split of age into two categories is used for subgroup comparison using the age category. Almost 25 percent of the sample is with age 34 or less and those with age 54 or less forms 75 percent of the sample. Age wise, majority of the sample is in the 45-54 age categories, which forms nearly 28 percent of the total sample. The sample is less represented in the age group 24 and less, and over represented in the 50 plus category, when compared to the sample survey carried out with the international tourists by the tourism department of Kerala in 1996 (GOK, 1997).

Another important trip related variable used for sub group comparison is tourists' visit history to Kerala. The detail of this variable for the whole sample is provided in Table 5.6, by grouping into three levels: tourists taking a repeat visit to Kerala; tourists coming repeat to India, but first time to Kerala and; tourists coming first time to India.

Table 5. 5 Distribution of Respondents as per Age

Age category	Frequency	Percent
24 or less	16	4.1
25-34	83	21.4
35-44	87	22.4
45-54	108	27.8
55-64	63	16.2
65 or above	31	8.0
Total	**388**	**100**

Nearly 25 percent of the sample is with a repeat visit to Kerala. 170 tourists are coming first time to India and this forms 44 percent of the sample. 31.4 percent of the sample has already visited India before, but are coming to the Kerala for the first time.

Table 5. 6 Distribution of Respondents as per Visit History

Visit history	Frequency	Percent
Repeat visit to Kerala	96	24.7
Repeat visit to India	122	31.4
First visit to India	170	43.8
Total	**388**	**100**

Trip duration is another variable compared with other perception and outcome measures. For the sample, the average trip duration in Kerala measured as number of nights in Kerala, shows a mean of 12 nights, and a median value of 10 nights. 25 percent of the sample is staying more than 14 nights. Majority of the tourists are in 10 or less night's category. With 203 tourists, this category forms almost 54 percent of the total sample. Tourists staying 20 nights or less forms 88 percent of the sample (Table5.7).

Table 5. 7 Distribution of Respondents as per Nights Stayed in Kerala

Total nights	Frequency	Percent
10 or less	203	52.3
11-20	138	35.6
21-30	31	8.0
31 or above	16	4.1
Total	**388**	**100**

The type of tour taken is another trip related variable used to classify tourists. As used in the industry, trip type is classified as FIT (fully independent traveler) and Group inclusive tours (GIT). In this study, FIT type is less of a conducted tour and GIT is more of conducted tour in groups. FIT comes with minimum package, and in many case without any package. With 241 tourists in FIT, it is the dominant category and forms 62.1percent of the total sample (Table 5.8).

Table 5. 8 Distribution of Respondents as per Trip Type

Visit history	Frequency	Percent
GIT/conducted tour	147	37.9
FIT/Un conducted tour	241	62.1
Total	**388**	**100**

5.3 Destination Quality Attributes

The qualitative stage of analysis preceding the final quantitative stage of the study involved generating the major quality variables representing the quality of the Kerala as a tourist destination. At the exploration stage itself, it was recognised that quality assessment of a destination, which is referred to as an integrated complex tourism product in the tourism literature, involves some tradeoffs in terms of selecting the attributes. This is needed due to the difficulty involved in assessing quality of complex product with its constituent supply sectors, facilities, attractions and features.

As the destination Kerala is taken as the unit of analysis, each element or sector within it can be considered as a service product with multiple product levels as represented by the Kotler's augmented product model for tourism product (Lumsdon, 2000). Thus, the approach taken for this study involves identifying major dimensions, which these varied destination products and services might represent at an aggregate level. While doing this, compromise is made with regard to the detailed picture of quality for each service product elements. So, seeking an exploration of quality at the destination level, the aggregate product and service elements are included in the final questionnaire used in the study. For example, the accommodation, which is a service product with many levels, is represented at an aggregate level. This is because, tourists are most likely to stay in more than one accommodation, and each can involve many service encounters. The total accommodation experience can be viewed as an overall impression formed based on multiple service encounters tourists had at different accommodations.

Image assessment studies of the destination covered in the literature review chapter indicates that tourists can also have integrated assessment of quality for the individual accommodation products and services experienced at the destination. This points to the likelihood of tourists forming impression for the distinct holiday experience components within the total holiday experience.

Twenty four destination attributes were generated through a qualitative exploration conducted in stages, each stage refining a set of variables assessed at the next stage. As this study focuses on the assessment of quality of the destination, generating attributes beyond a level of detail was constrained by the variety of products and services consumed by the tourists throughout the holiday. For this reason, an aggregate view of destination quality as perceived by the tourists is studied.

As the total holiday product is comprised of various components, assessing the quality of destination involves assessing the quality perception on all the relevant components. But, many holiday components themselves have products and services with multiple dimensions. For example, accommodation quality will include many components in the area of both functional and technical elements of the quality, and this can complicate the quality assessment at the destination level. When there is a range of products and services consumed, it is difficult to include all the detail items within each holiday component. This certainly limits the detail insights the study can provide in spotting the specific problems within each holiday component. Instead, with the requirement of getting an aggregate view of quality of the destination, the detail coverage of specific components is not included in the studyThis was particularly needed to make the questionnaire manageable to administer to the international tourists who may lack temperament to fill a long questionnaire.

For assessing destination quality, performance oriented methodology is adopted, eliciting tourists ratings on various destination attributes. This choice excludes using separate expectation and perception rating scale. Apart from the problem of capturing expectation and perception separately, the criticism raised in the tourism literature against using such a gap measurers also favored the selection of direct perception measurements. This approach reflects the SERVPERF scale using perception ratings as the criteria in determining the quality. Moreover, since the study also had various other related objectives to assess, which needs additional variables to be included in the questionnaire, it was decided to use only performance oriented assessment of the destination on various quality attributes to make questionnaire less complex.

Twenty four destination attributes were generated based on in-depth interview and literature review of tourism satisfaction studies. These attributes represent quality perception for a destination generated through staged procedure. While generating the quality dimensions, the generic dimensions of the standard SERVQUAL scale were found not suitable for assessing quality at a destination level, due to its complex levels of the constituent products and services.

Attributes were generated and structured to measure levels of tourist perception and its nature toward the destination. Review of literature displayed substantial variance in the number and nature of attributes, considered relevant to tourists' perception of quality of a destination. Because of this, a uniform set of attributes applicable generally to all destinations was not available.

Moreover, this study, which is of exploratory type, does not intend to create a generic comprehensive scale for assessing quality of any tourist destinations. So, many attributes included in the study tend to be destination specific. Some of the attributes relates to the main supply sector elements like accommodation and restaurants. Whereas, other attributes reflect certain components of the basic infrastructure and attraction features of the destination on which tourists tend to have some perception, which can influence their total perception towards the destination. The Table 5.9 gives the descriptive statistics of the 24 attributes and the ratings given on a scale of four, by tourists.

Average rating for the selected 24 attributes showed different ratings and all attributes ratings of 2 or above, in a scale of 4. Considering the positive bias in a survey of this type, and comparing with similar studies done in other countries, following categories were established: less than 2.5 as below average, 2.5 to 3 as average and above 3 as above average. The Table 5.10 shows the attributes classified into 3 categories for better description. This shows, at an aggregate level, which attributes can be considered to have got a high rating, medium rating and low rating. As it can be seen from the Table 5.10, most of the tourism industries supply elements, like accommodation, tour operator service, restaurants etc are in the medium-rating category. Whereas, some of the destination inherent attractions, such as safety, local people, climate etc are represented in the high rate category.

Table 5.9 Descriptive Statistics of Destination Attributes

Attributes	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Deviation
Quality of accommodation	388	1.00	4.00	2.7342	.7251
Tourist information	385	1.00	4.00	2.4500	.8203
Airport	384	1.00	4.00	2.6231	.7989
Restaurants	379	1.00	4.00	2.8760	.8054
Local transportation	376	1.00	4.00	2.4516	.7668
Safety	388	1.00	4.00	3.1572	.7033
Hygiene	388	1.00	4.00	2.0902	.8257
Staff	376	1.00	4.00	2.9574	.8475
Local people	388	1.00	4.00	3.4948	.6686
Staff language	379	1.00	4.00	2.4382	.7329
Tour operators	323	1.00	4.00	2.5986	.8242
Tour guide	292	1.00	4.00	2.6085	.7721
					Contd…..

Table 5.9 contd...					
Climate	385	1.00	4.00	3.3844	.7091
Rest and relax	382	1.00	4.00	3.1342	.9372
Fun	341	1.00	4.00	2.4374	.8233
Nightlife	328	1.00	4.00	2.0762	.7684
Shopping	370	1.00	4.00	2.4675	.8493
Basic amenities	382	1.00	4.00	2.3154	.7172
Reaching	385	1.00	4.00	2.4652	.6512
Sightseeing	385	1.00	4.00	2.7486	.7377
Beaches	380	1.00	4.00	2.8474	.8333
Natural	378	1.00	4.00	3.2564	.6992
Cultural	384	1.00	4.00	3.1745	.7641
Historical	365	1.00	4.00	2.3478	.7914

Table 5.10 Destination Quality Attributes Category wise

High	Medium	Low
Safety (3.157) Local people (3.4948) Climate (3.3844) Natural attractions (3.2564) Cultural attractions (3.1745) Rest and relax (3.1342)	Accommodation (2.7342) Airport services (2.6231) Restaurants (2.8760) Staff (2.9574) Tour operator (2.5986) Tour guide (2.6085) Beaches (2.8474)	Tourist information (2.4532) Hygiene (2.0902) Fun (2.4374) Nightlife (2.0672) Shopping (2.4675) Basic amenities (2.3154) Sightseeing (2.7486) Historical (2.3478) Communication (2.4382) Accessibility (2.4652) Local transportation (2.4516)

5.3.1 Response Wise Assessment of Quality Attributes

Accommodation is one of the major components of a holiday experience. As mentioned before, the quality of accommodation is assessed at the aggregate level. And in many cases, tourists may be staying in more than one accommodation property. The variable, as represented in this questionnaire is for the overall perception of tourists towards their accommodation experience. Even if the overall evaluation is not an algebraic sum of evaluation of quality of various accommodation properties stayed, a highly positive evaluation given to one of the accommodation property stayed can compensate for the poor quality of another accommodation stayed. It is a major component of trip budget after the cost of travel, and international tourists, especially, seek high standards in the accommodation facilities they choose in the destination. This is one of the major supply sectors in the tourism industry, controlled largely by the private sector. There are also other destination quality dimensions provided by various supply sectors. The related attributes are the quality and variety of the restaurants, tour operator and tour guide service, attitude of staff working in tourism, local transportation and airport services.

Chart 1 and Chart 2 shows the response pattern for accommodation and restaurants attribute. Comparing these charts reveals that both these attributes have almost similar response ratings. 23 percent of the respondents gave excellent response for accommodation quality and 20 percent gave 'excellent' response to restaurants quality. Put together, both 'excellent' and 'good' rating for the both attributes includes nearly 70 percent of the total sample and therefore, can be considered as those with positive evaluation for these dimensions. Majority of the respondents have given a 'good' response, which is followed by the proportion of tourists who have given an 'OK' response for both the accommodation and restaurant quality, and this forms 28 percent of the sample for quality of accommodations and 26 percent for the overall quality of the restaurants. This is not an encouraging response.

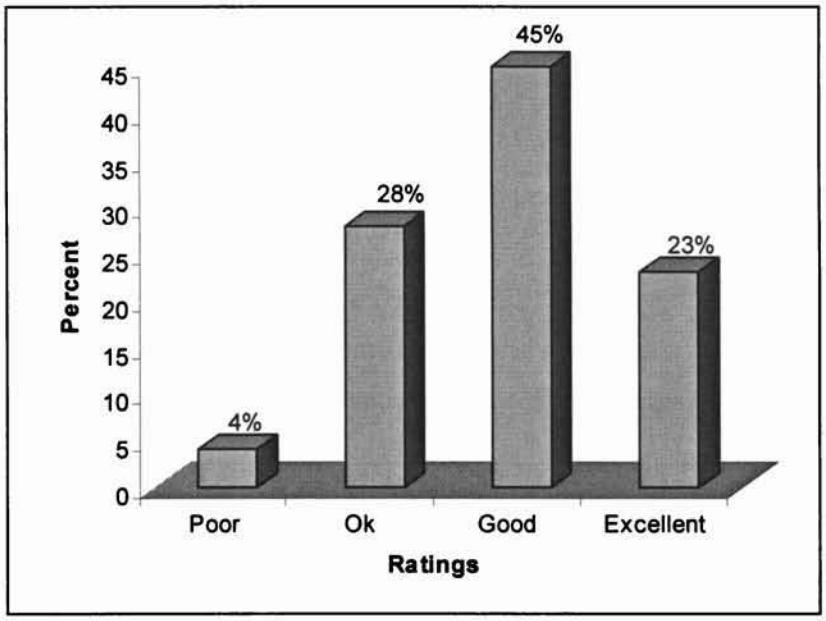

Chart 1: Rating of Restaurants

The rating of 'OK' by tourists could be even considered as a negative evaluation, because, even giving an 'OK' for these attributes may be a polite way of saying poor, given the positive bias in such evaluation.

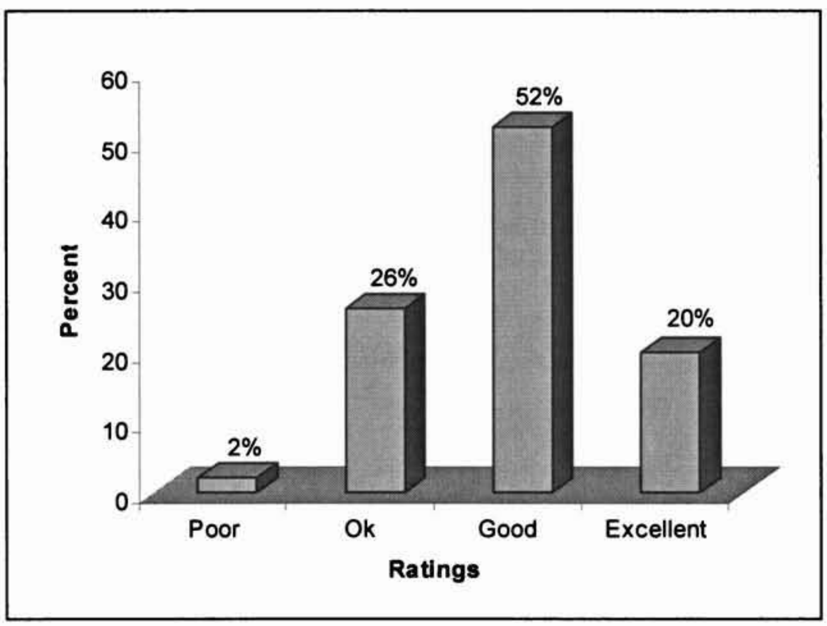

Chart 2: Rating of Accommodations

In other words, services with high experience qualities, such as accommodations and restaurants, should seek positive response rating of 'excellent' or 'good'.

Similar pattern of response is seen in the evaluation of airport services and facilities (Chart3). As the point of entry and exit to the destination, according to literature review, airport service facilities may also form a source of tourists' quality perception. The inclusion of this attribute is based on the literature review, which refers to studies, highlighting the importance of this attribute. The response categories for this attribute follows the same pattern as in the case of accommodation, with 48 percent giving a response of 'good', followed by 'OK' response category with 31 percent and 'excellent' rating given by 14 percent of the sample. But the difference is observed at the level of response for each category. Compared to accommodations and restaurants rating, this attribute has a high proportion of tourists in the sample giving 'OK' rating and a lower proportion giving the 'excellent' rating (14percent).

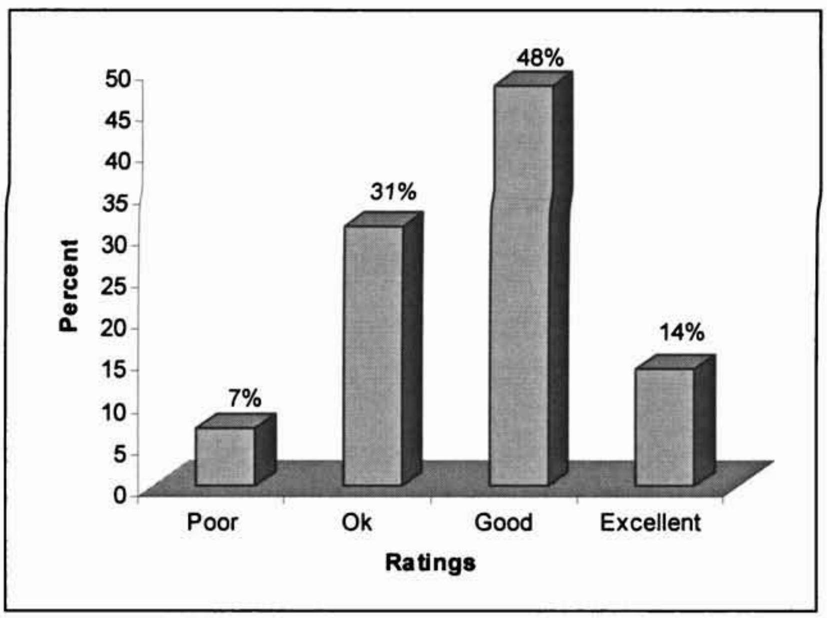

Chart 3: Ratings of Airport Facilities & Services

For the quality of local transportation used by the tourists in the destination, an almost similar pattern of response (chart 4), like the one given for airport services is noted. In the case of local transportation, which also like accommodations, is provided mostly by the private sector, is a core tourism supply sector which tourists use in their trip.

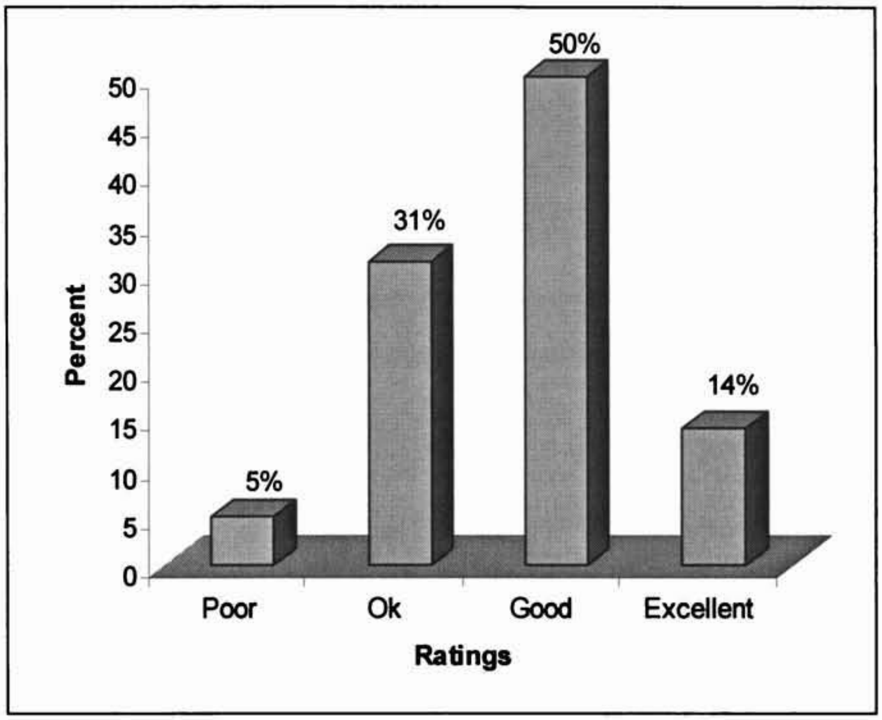

Chart 4 Rating of Local Transportation

For this attribute too, like airport services, those who have given an 'OK' rating are proportionately double that of those who have given 'excellent', and this difference in rating reflects in the low score received for this attribute, and indicates the gap existing for quality provision in this supply sector.

Staff attitude and staff language skills are people related attributes of the destination, which mostly emphasize the functional quality in the service provision. And this is one important area many tourism firms focus their quality improvement efforts.

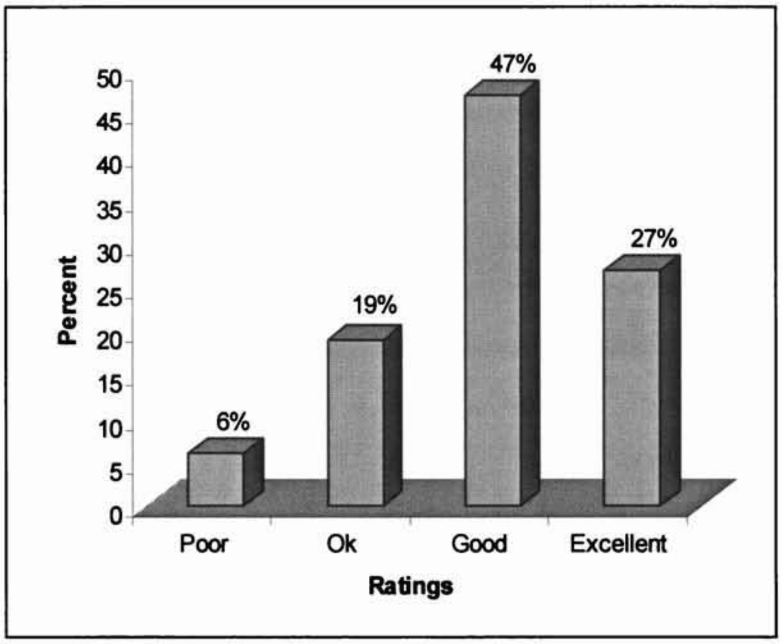

Chart 5 Rating of Staff Attitude

The response to these attribute shows a different pattern compared to accommodations and restaurants attribute ratings (Chart5 and Chart6). In this case, a higher proportion of the sample has given an excellent rating (27 percent) compared to other supply elements. Nearly 75 percent have given above average rating, and this is a good sign for the destination quality management activities. But, for the language skills of the staff, the rating obtained is lower. About 9 percent of the sample has given a poor rating for this attribute. This aspect can be considered more as a technical quality, and an average rating was what expected, and it is encouraging that 56 percent have given 'good' rating for this dimension.

Tour operator service and tour guide service are evaluated separately (Chart 7 and Chart 8). These are service provisions, which coordinate with the other supply elements. The ratings indicate the responsiveness and the reliability of the tour operation, and for the tour guide, it includes the interpretation quality. The ratings for these service attributes are lower than the ratings for other supply provisions. Many have not availed the service and therefore have given a 'NA' response.

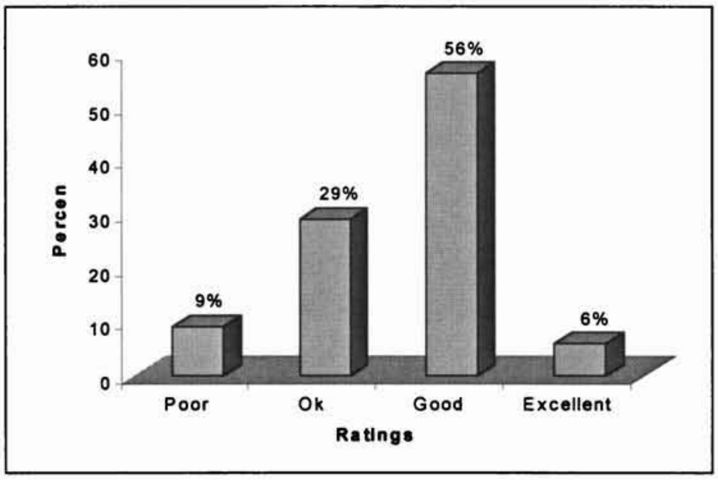

Chart 6 Rating of Staff Language Skills

For the tour operator evaluation, unlike accommodation and restaurant ratings, there is lower rating noted. In this case, the 'OK' response is almost same as 'good' response. This indicates that a majority (38 percent) rates the level of service of tour operator as average. Only 14 percent has given an 'excellent' rating for this attribute.

For the tour guide services also, a different pattern of evaluation is observed which again reflects a majority rating 'OK', which may be pointing to a poor level of service. Majority (44 percent) have rated 'OK' for this service; followed by 38 percent respondents giving 'good' rating and 14 percent giving 'excellent' rating.

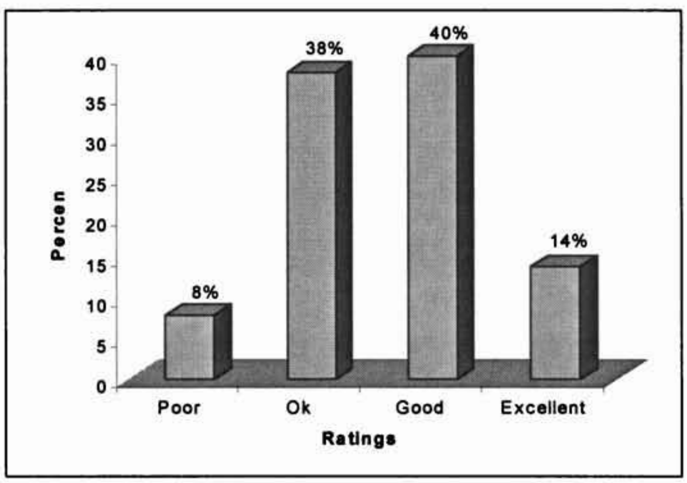

Chart 7 Rating of Tour Operators Service

Tourist information provision in the destination is also perceived in a pattern similar to response for accommodation and restaurants (Chart 9). Majority of the tourists perceive this service provision as 'good', whereas, about 29 percent tourists in the sample perceive the quality as 'OK'.

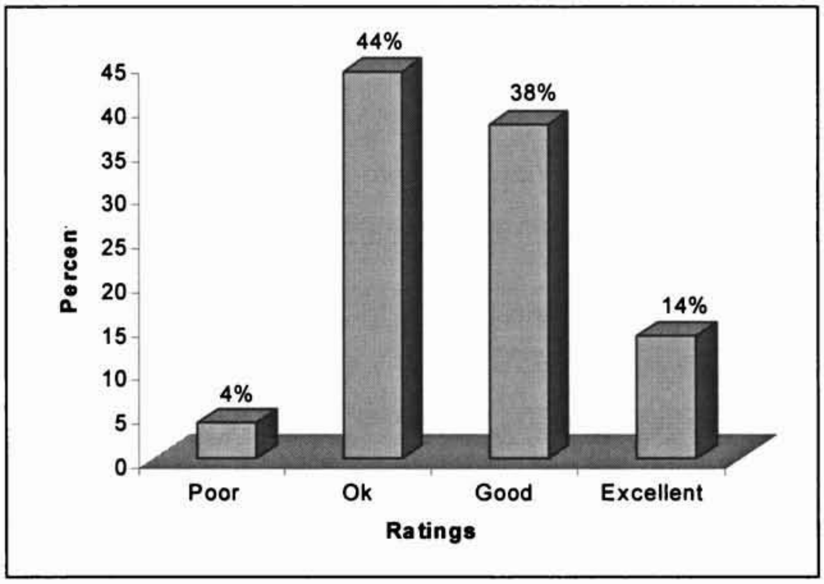

Chart 8 Rating of Tour Guides

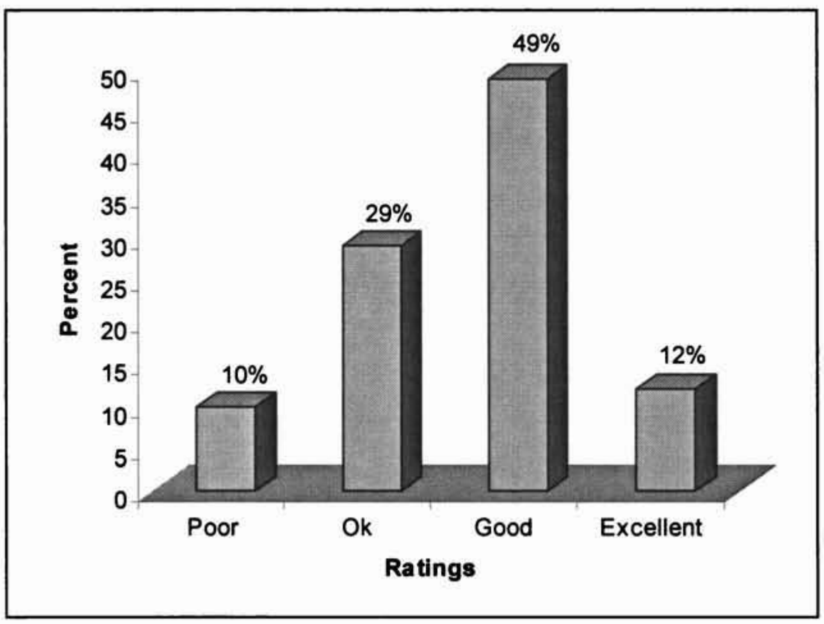

Chart 9 Ratings of Tourist Information

Information forms an important part of quality dimensions of the destination. This is an aspect destination development efforts need to target, because the private supply sectors may not give much attention to this aspect. Compared to accommodations rating, the percent of response in the 'excellent' category is lower for this dimension.

The safety aspect of the destination is another parameter similar to tourists' information, which can create the right facilitating environment for the tourists to enjoy their holiday. The pattern of quality perception rating for this dimension exhibits a different pattern (Chart 10). Respondents who have given 'excellent' rating for this attribute forms 32 percent of the sample. Those who gave a 'good' rating for this attribute forms 54 percent of the sample. Percentage wise, 'excellent' rating group comes second after the group of respondents who have given 'good' rating. Unlike the rating pattern for accommodation and tourists information quality, 'OK' response forms the biggest category of response. For the quality response for the safety attribute, with 13 percent of the respondents giving 'OK' rating, this category is placed third after 'good' and 'excellent' rating.

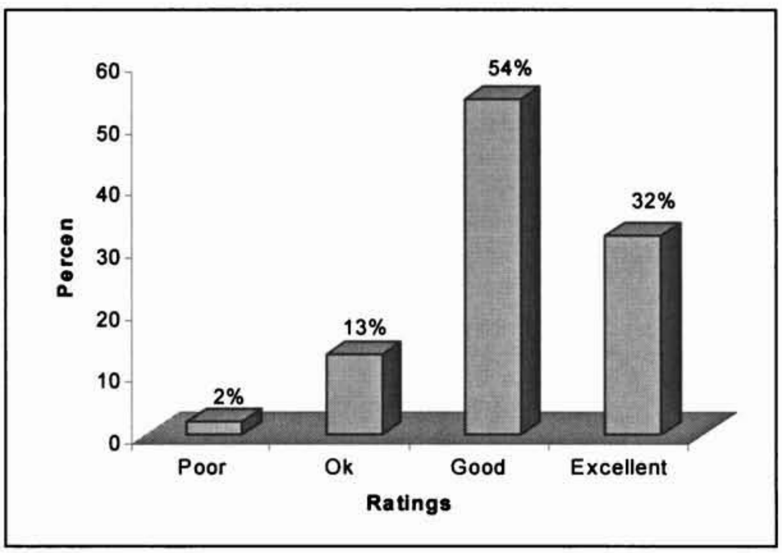

Chart 10 Ratings of Destination Safety

This difference in pattern of the response compared to other provisions may also reflect the expectation level with which tourists perceive this dimension. Tourists may be expecting a particular level of safety based on the certain information they receive prior to their visit. The actual experience after the visit on the safety aspect may be much higher than what they expect, and this could be the reason for a higher percentage of response in 'good' and excellent category. The major drop in the quality perception was observed for the hygiene parameter, and this is one area destination needs to improve a lot. In comparison with other dimensions, this dimension is perceived most adversely by majority of the respondents. As Chart 11 shows, 26 percent of the respondents have given a 'poor' rating for this dimension; another bigger group of respondents have given 'OK' to this attribute.

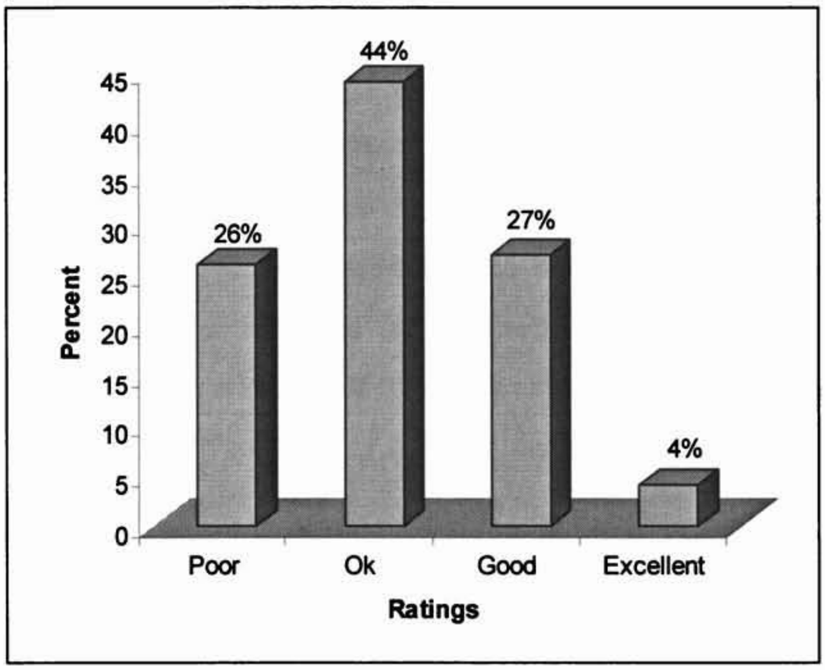

Chart 11 Ratings for Hygiene

In short, about 70 percent of the sample have below average perception for the destination in this dimension., Those who perceive this dimension positive for the destination forms only 35 percent (including 'good' and 'excellent' response) of the sample.

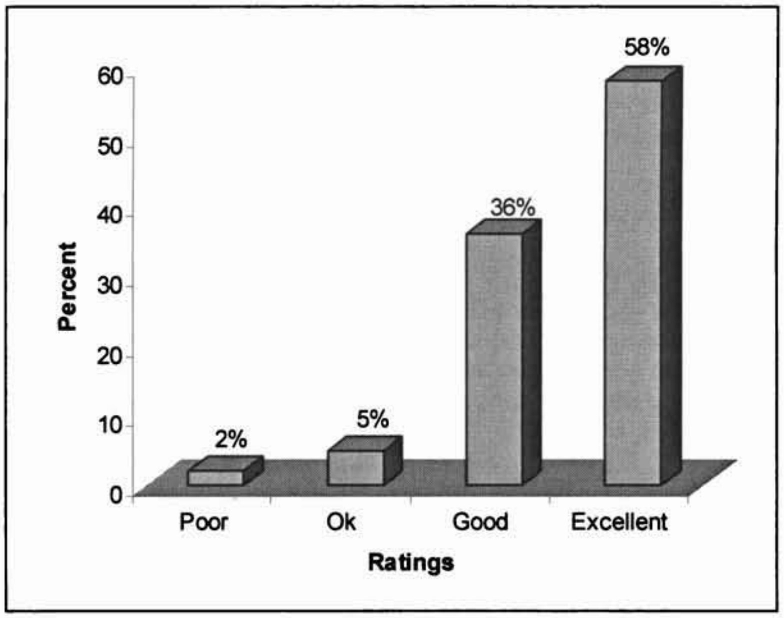

Chart 12 Ratings For Local People

The perception is different for the dimension representing the local people. The helpfulness and friendliness of the local people is assessed as this also aids in setting a proper environment to experience the nature and other attractions. The pattern of response for this dimension is very different from the other dimensions (Chart 12). In fact, the pattern is almost reverse when compared to many of the holiday services provided by the private sector. For this attribute, 58 percent of the sample gave excellent rating. This is followed by the next biggest group, formed by those who have given a rating of 'good' for this dimension (36 percent). Compared to this, just 7 percent of the sample, has given a below average rating for his dimension.

The next set of variables assessed were attractions which tourists seek from their holiday. Each destination has their unique sets of attractions. Some destinations have wider range of attractions, representing almost all the domains of tourism attractions, whereas, other destinations may have very few attractions, like seaside resorts of some European destinations. Even with one form of attraction, destinations can attract large number of tourists, all coming for the same kind of benefit.

An exploratory stage of the study revealed the presence of a range of tourist attractions for the destination Kerala. As an image assessment at the aggregate level for the destination, it was found difficult to include all the separate destination attractions for the perception rating. The attractions were grouped into one common classification scheme adopted for the attractions in the tourism literature: natural attractions, cultural attractions and historical attractions.

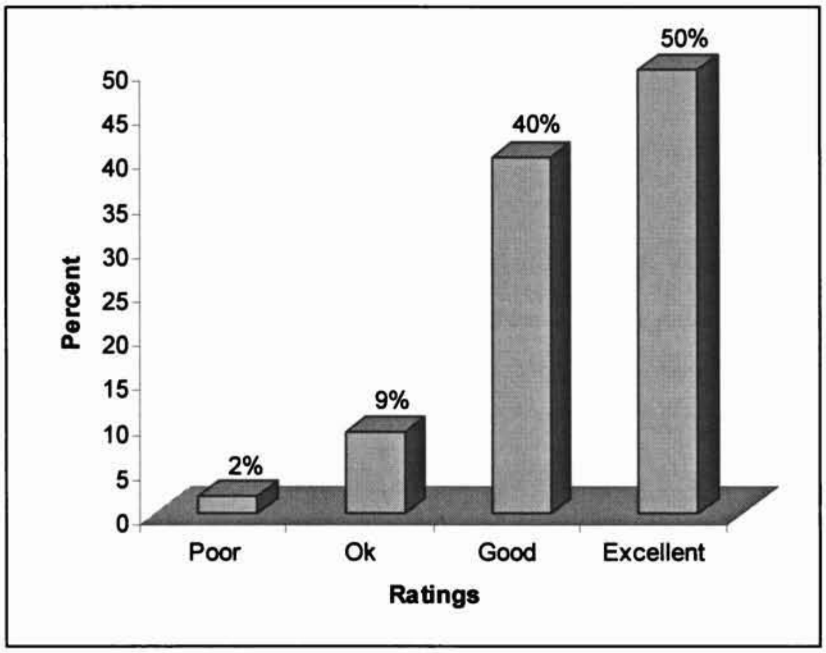

Chart 13 Ratings for Climate

Other attractions apart from the core attractions are climate and, 'rest and relax environments', fun, nightlife and shopping. Items were included mostly based on tourism research literature, brochures, tourists views elicited through personal interviews, and discussions with experts from the tourism trade.

Climate is an attraction perceived favorably by majority of the tourists (Chart13). 50 percent of the respondents gave an 'excellent' rating for this attribute, followed by another 40 percent who gave 'good' rating.

Response pattern for this attribute is similar to the response pattern for the local people; with nearly with 50percent of respondents giving 'excellent' rating, this is lower than 58 percent of excellent rating given for local people.

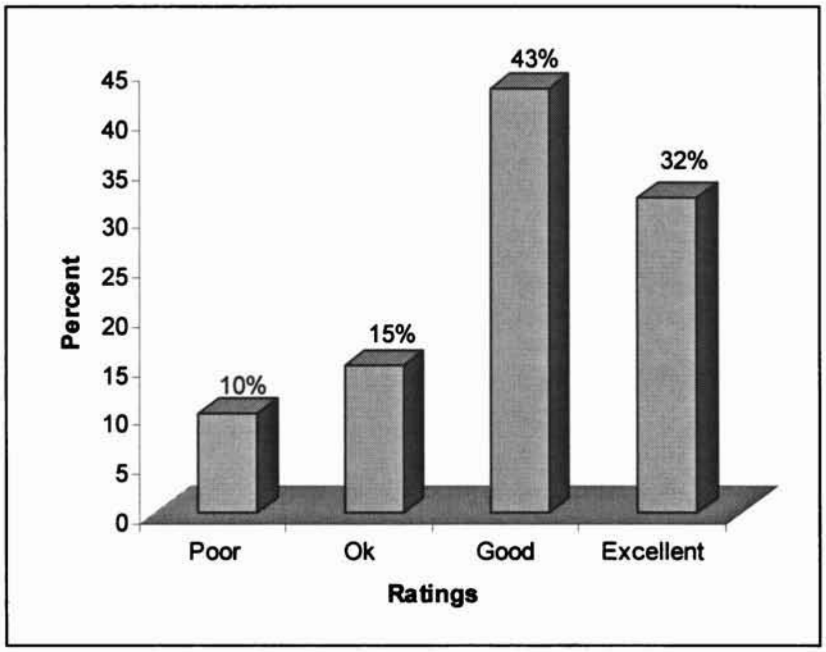

Chart 14 Ratings for Rest and Relax

Another attraction which is implicitly sought in many of the destinations is the availability of quiet and relaxing environments, surrounded by nature, which represents mostly an out- door experience. For this attribute, the rating pattern is much better than many of the supply elements like hotels and restaurants. (Chart 14). The share of response belonging to 'excellent' rating is 32 percent, below the group (43 percent) who have given a 'good' rating for this attribute. This pattern of percent of 'excellent' ratings coming second after 'good' rating is distinct, compared to perception rating on other attributes, in which case, percent of 'excellent' ratings mostly comes after 'OK 'ratings.

Another observation for this attribute is that a relatively high proportion of respondents have given poor rating; 10 percent of the respondents who have given poor rating for this attribute may also indicate that there is a group perceiving the destination, on this attribute, quite differently compared to others. And this is definitely an aspect which needs to be explored further.

Other categories of attractions assessed are activities of fun and excitement, nightlife and shopping (Chart 15, Chart 16 and Chart17). Among the tourists to Kerala, those who seek these activities are lower as revealed in the preference rating given in the importance - performance analysis in the last part.

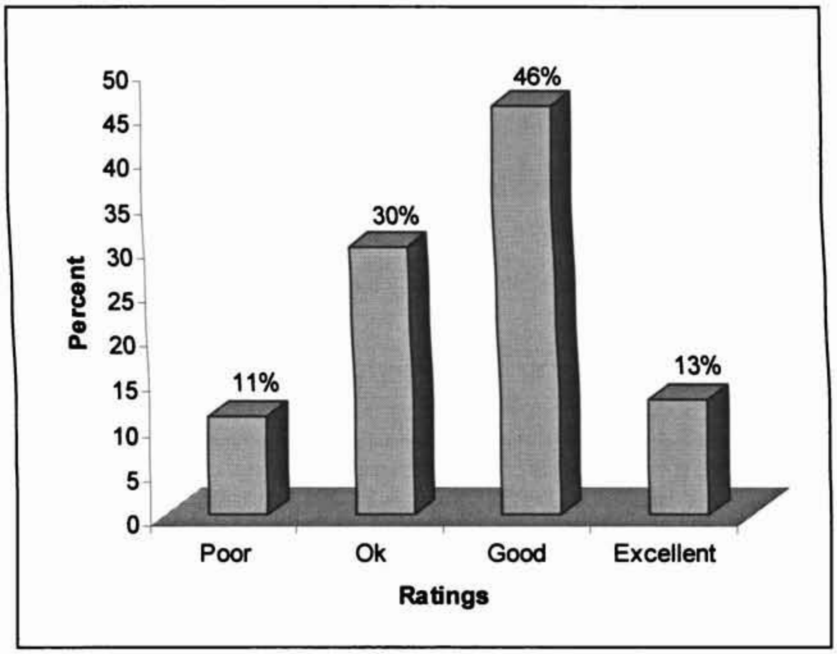

Chart 15 Ratings for Shopping

In the perception rating, for the fun component and the nightlife component, majority of the respondents have given a rating of 'OK' for these dimensions; 45 percent for activities of fun and excitement and 55 percent for nightlife. This pattern of response coupled with a relatively high share of response in 'poor' rating creates an overall low score for quality rating.

For shopping provision too, a similar pattern of response like accommodation and restaurants is detected, but in this case, the percentage of respondents giving poor rating is more with 11 percent. And corresponding to this, the percent of respondents who have given an excellent rating is also lower at 13 percent. This is also a dimension which receives a high share of response in the 'OK' rating (about 30 percent).

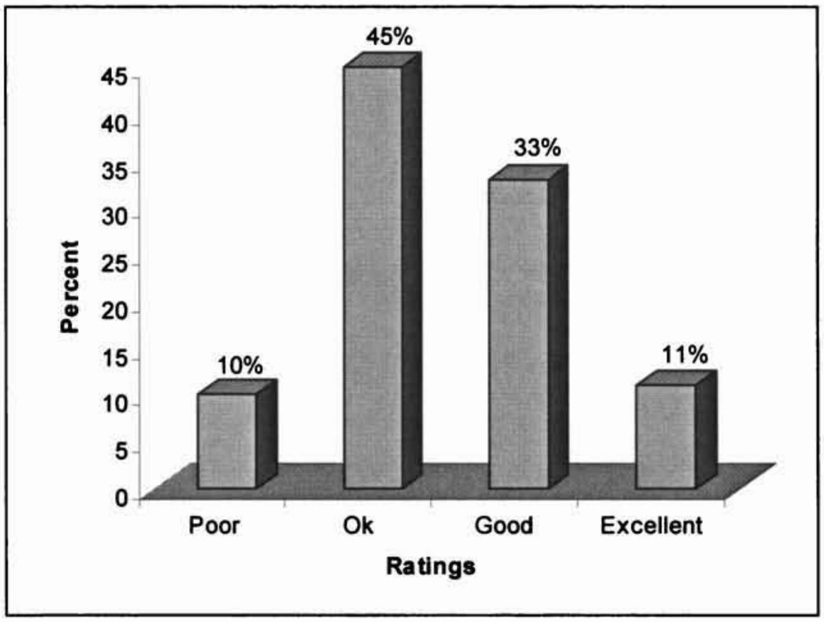

Chart 16 Ratings for Activities of Fun and Excitement

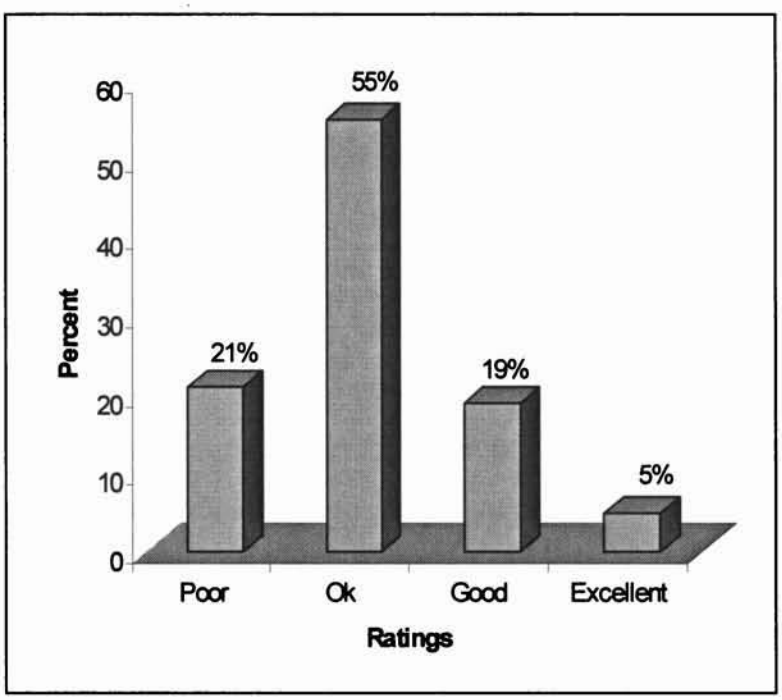

Chart 17 Ratings for Nightlife

Basic amenities near places of attractions are related to the destination infrastructure which can be an important element supporting tourists to experience the attractions better. This was an attribute expected to get a very poor level of rating for the destination. But, as the Chart 18 shows, 41 percent of the sample has given a 'good' rating for this dimension. This is surprising, because in the qualitative stage of study, many tourists complained about the lack of basis amenities.

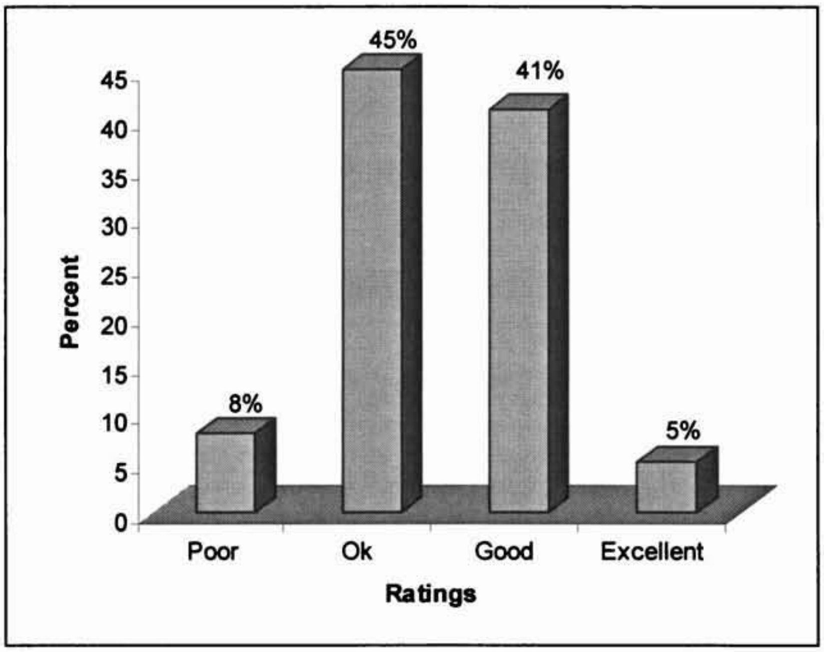

Chart 18 Ratings for Basic Amenities

Slightly more (45 percent) have given 'OK' response to this dimension, and this indicates a possible gap in the supporting infrastructure provided. Another notable difference for this dimension is that percent of respondents who have given a poor rating exceeds those who have given an excellent rating (5 percent).

Access to the destination refers to the connection to Kerala from other places. This is referred in the industry as connectivity. This attribute for the destination received 56 percent 'good' response and 33 percent with a rating of 'OK' (Chart 19).

Compared to the ratings of other supply elements, respondents in the 'OK' response category are much higher than those rated 'excellence' for it. Poor connectivity to Kerala may be a reason for this average rating.

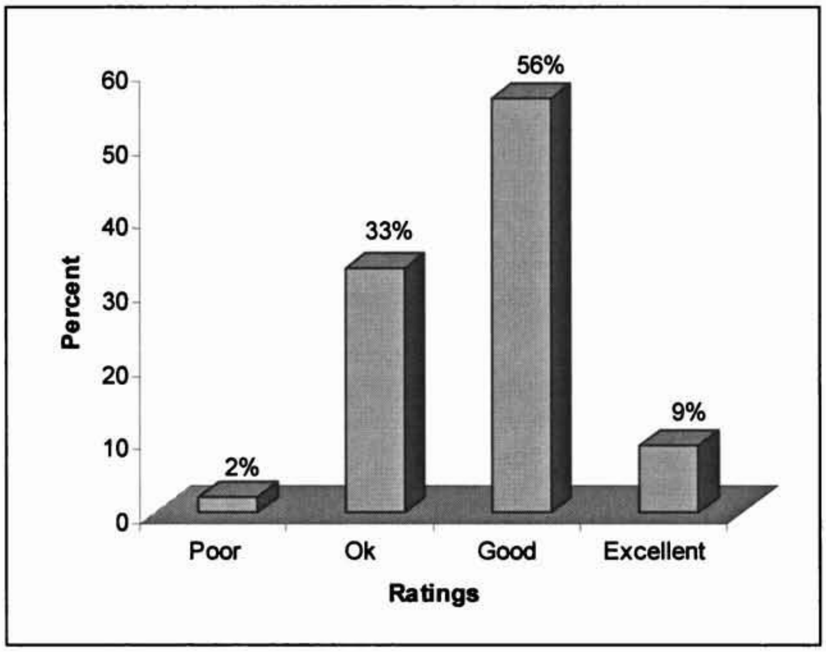

Chart 19 Ratings for Access

Opportunities for sightseeing represent another dimension of quality for the destination. As shown in Chart 20, response rating for this dimension is more towards a 'good' rating, with 50 percent of the tourists perceiving destination 'good' in this attribute. Almost an equal number of tourists is divided in their perception between a rating of 'OK' and 'excellent' response for this attraction.

The remaining charts show the ratings grouped for the attractions of the destination. Beaches, one of the main attractions of the destination is rated very high overall (Chart 21). At the same time, though, 54 percent rated 'good' for this attribute, an almost equal numbers are divided on the response 'OK' and 'excellent'; 18 percent of the respondents have given a response of 'OK' and 20 percent have given a response of excellent for this dimension.

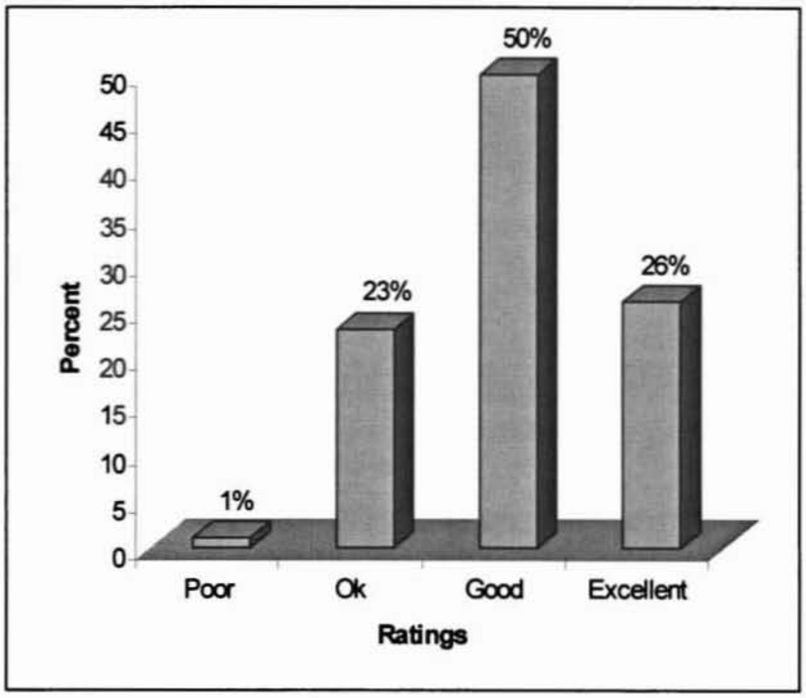

Chart 20 Ratings for Sightseeing

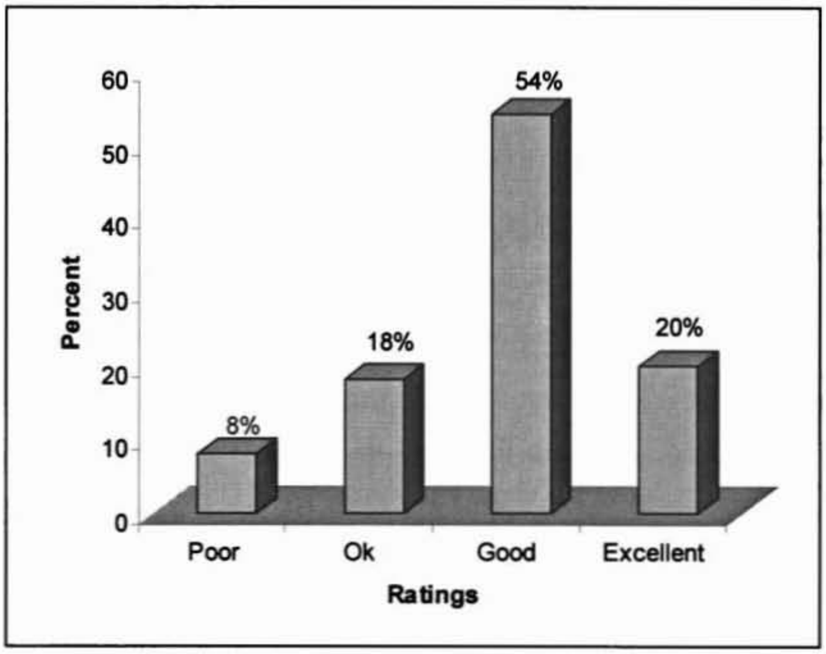

Chart 21 Ratings for Beaches

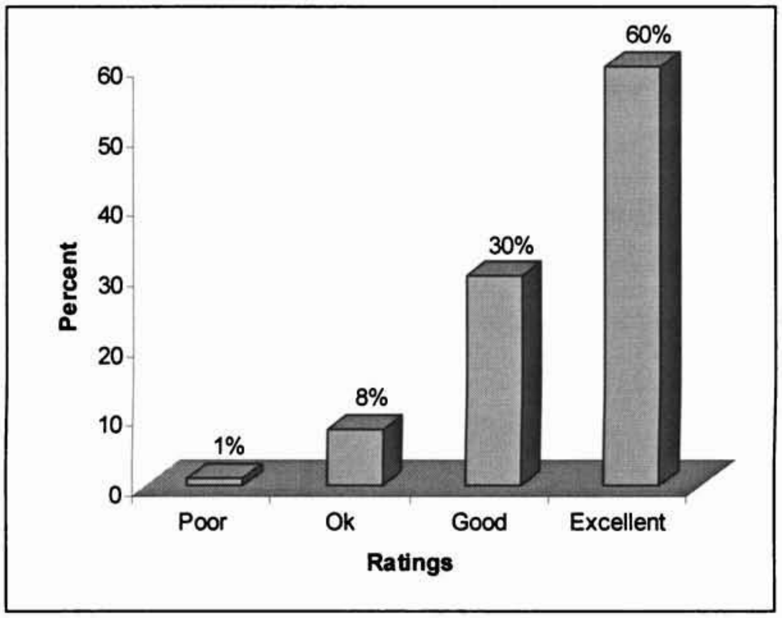

Chart 22 Ratings for Natural Attractions

Destination rating for the natural attractions is very high like attributes local people and climate (Chart 22). Majority of the respondents gave 'excellent rating' (60 percent), followed by another 30 percent who gave a 'good' rating for this dimension. This attribute is perceived overall with above average level of rating.

Another broad category representation of attractions is defined in terms of cultural and natural attractions (Chart 23 & Chart24). Compared to natural attractions, the ratings for these attractions are lower. For example, in cultural attractions, respondents who gave excellent rating is lower with 23 percent of the sample as compared with response for natural attractions, and the response is still lower for the historical attraction at 15 percent. About 21 percent have given a rating of 'OK' for cultural attractions, while for the historical attraction this proportion is higher at 29 percent.

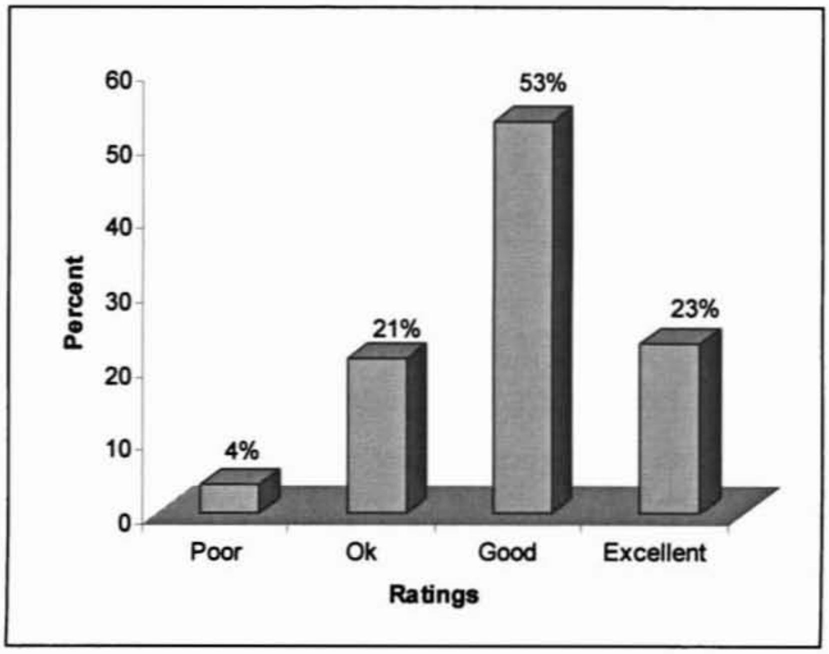

Chart 23 Ratings for Cultural Attractions

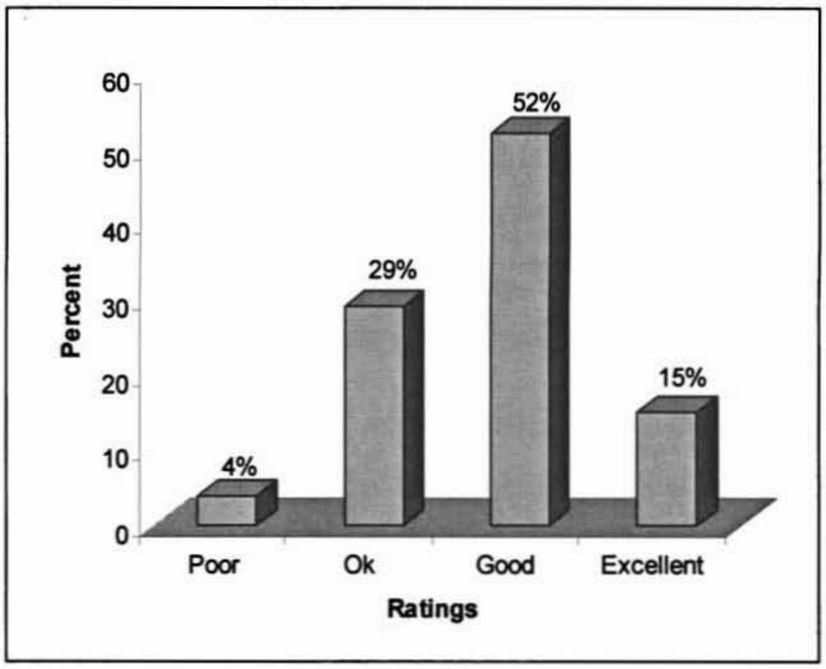

Chart 24 Ratings for Historical Attractions

5.3.2 Overall Satisfaction, Recommendation levels and Destination rating.

Respondents were assessed on their overall satisfaction with the holiday experience with Kerala and, found that they were overall satisfied with the trip. The percentage of respondents selecting each of the satisfaction categories is shown for the total sample in chart 25. Majority of the respondents (54 percent) have given a response of mostly satisfied, and this is followed by the next major group who have given totally satisfied as a response and forms 41percent of the total sample (Chart 25).

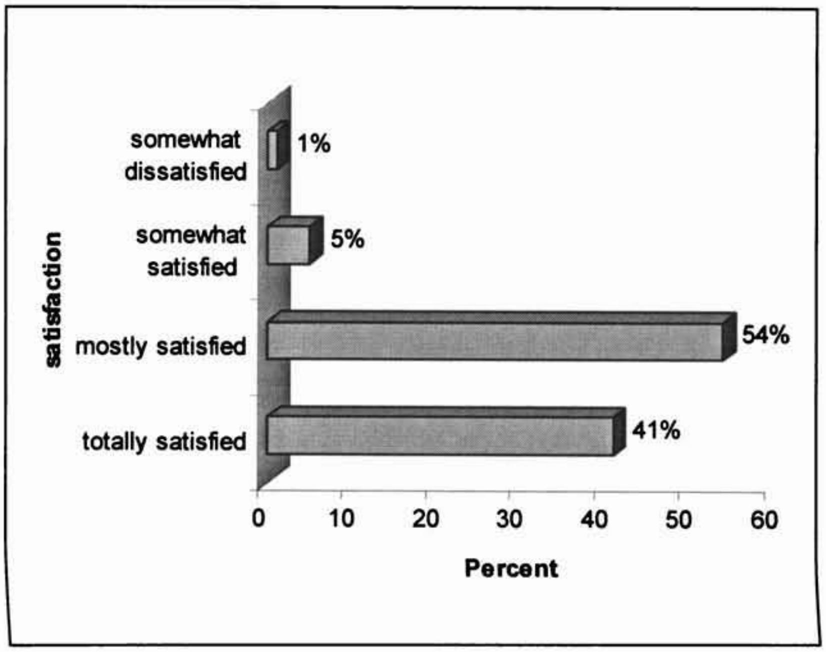

Chart 25 Tourists Overall Destination Satisfaction

There are very few who are dissatisfied and this indicates that tourists are likely to be satisfied or totally satisfied with their trip experience. And this pattern of response to satisfaction with the holiday experience is noted in other studies carried out in international contexts. While evaluating the factors affecting the degree of satisfaction, the difference in satisfaction level between mostly satisfied and totally satisfied is considered.

Closely related to holiday satisfaction is the measure of chance of tourists to recommend. Word of Mouth is an important source of influence in destination choice and this aspect make it relevant to examine this outcome variable.

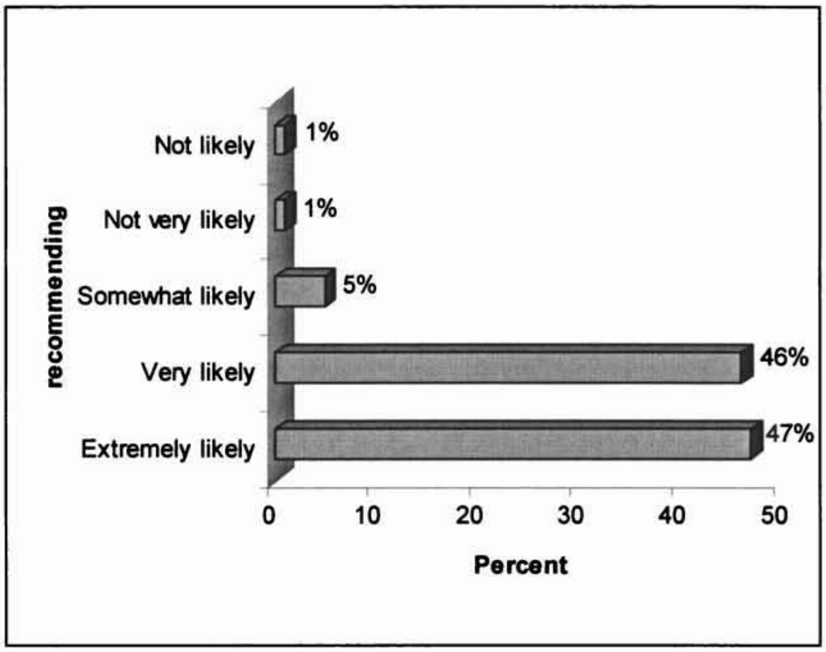

Chart 26 Tourists' Recommendation Levels

A similar response pattern is observed for this trip outcome measure (Chart 26). In this case, the tourists who are extremely likely to recommend are more (47 percent) than tourists who are very likely to recommend the destination to others. This feedback is very positive for the destination and this pattern will be a major influencing factor for a more share of tourists to come to Kerala. Like the satisfaction response, for this variable also, more than 93 percent are favorably inclined to recommend destination.

A correlation analysis between thee two variables given in Table 5.11 also shows a significant level of association. Given the nature of similar response pattern, it was expected to obtain a higher correlation coefficient.

Table 5.11 Correlation between Satisfaction and Recommendation levels

		Satisfaction	Recommending
Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.625 **
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		
Recommending	Pearson Correlation	.625**	1.000
	Sig.(2 tailed)	.000	
	N	388	388

** *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

This also indicates the limitation of relationship between satisfaction and recommendation levels. This could also explain why in some group comparison, though, significant difference is observed for satisfaction measure, the same is not observed for recommendation levels.

Rating the destination on a scale of 100 is also elicited to get tourists impression with the destination, and this can be considered as a measure of destination attractiveness compared to other destinations. In this measure also Kerla is given a higher rating. A very high rating (above 85) is given by about 18percent of the sample. At the same time, a major proportion of the respondents has given a rating between 66 and 75. 2 percent of the respondents have given a rating below average (less than 56) (Chart 27).

Table 5.12 shows the descriptive statistics for the overall trip outcome measures. This shows that overall tourists were likely to be satisfied and impressed with the destination, and shows high intend to recommend. Majority were either satisfied or very satisfied, and no one was extremely dissatisfied with the trip, and this perhaps reflects nature of tourists consumption in which tourists seek variety and comes with different kinds of expectation and tends to be overall satisfied with the trip.

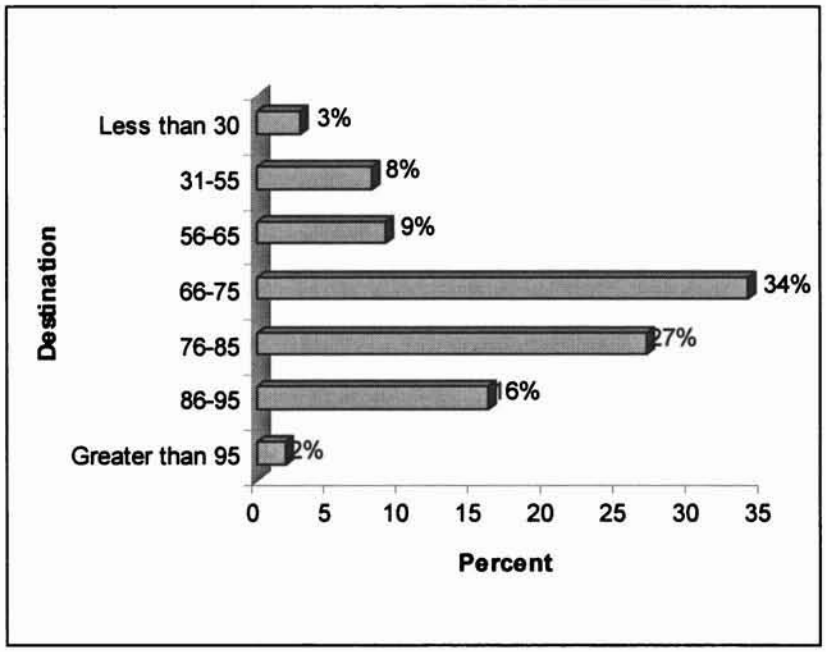

Chart 27 Impression Rating For Destination

The mean score for overall trip satisfaction is 4.21 in a scale of 5. Word of mouth 4.32 in a scale of 5 and destination rating for its overall impressiveness is 72.38 out of 100. The study focused on relative ratings given by tourists and therefore, assumes there is a substantial difference between a satisfied and extremely satisfied response in the context of a consumption of experiential product like tourism. This means, increasing levels of destination quality perception will influence tourists to move up from a merely satisfied response to an extremely satisfied response. And for this purpose, multivariate analyses were done which is reported next.

Table 5.12 Descriptive Statistics for the Overall Measures

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Satisfaction	2.00	5.00	4.2135	.6437
Recommending	1.00	5.00	4.3454	.7326
Rate	0.00	100.00	72.9459	14.5623

5.4 Destination Perception Factors- An Assessment using Factor Analysis

The representation of quality attributes, as discussed before, incorporated many items reflecting quality attributes of the destination. Some of the items relates to the supply provisions, which form the core service providers of the tourism industry. Some were related to the destination attractions and appeal, whereas, others reflect more general mix of tangible and intangible aspects of the infrastructure on which tourism also depends. With such a wide range of elements, there is possibility that tourists can also have perception on broad range of factors, which are a combination of the some of the individual items. In the process, tourist may view these factors as representing certain underlying aspects of the destination. One of the main objectives of this study is to generate a set of factors representing quality dimension for the destination Kerala. For this, an exploratory factor analysis was performed on destination attributes to investigate tourists' perception of destination in terms of broad factors.

Factors are assumed to represent the underlying quality dimensions for the destination. As an interdependence technique, exploratory factory analysis was carried out for data reduction and summarisation. It addresses the problem of interrelationship among a large number of variables, and the factors are some linear combination of the original variables.

Bartlett's test of values and KMO statistics indicates the suitability of data for factor analysis (Table 5.13). Principle component and varimax rotation procedure were used to identify orthogonal dimensions. The loadings of the original variables with the factors are analysed. Principle component factors with Eigen value of 1 or greater were rotated by varimax method. Variables with loadings equal to or greater than 0.45 were included in a given factor. When the factors are orthogonal, these loadings can be taken as the correlation of the variables with the extracted factors.

Table 5.13 KMO and Bartlett's Test Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.761
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	970.677
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

A total of 24 destination attributes from factor analysis resulted in seven factors. The Table 5.15 shows the variance explained by 7 factor solution. From the table it can be observed that The 7 factor groupings explained 65 percent of the variance, most factor loading were greater than 0.6, indicating a 'good' correlation between items and factor groupings to which they belongs.

Interpreting the quality dimensions on the basis of factors was difficult in many cases. One of the reasons is due to the fact that that SERVQUAL items were not directly incorporated for the study. Instead, the items selected were destination specific and reflects the unique characteristics of the destination. Another problem associated with the interpretation stems from the compromise made in specifying in detail the quality items. As discussed before, this was required, as the study assessed a quality of a complex tourism product like destination, and for which, generating attributes beyond a level of detail was limited by the constraints imposed by the methodology adopted. The specific service characteristics of each supply elements further complicated this selection process. Still, it is considered that the generation of broad factors can yield useful insights for representing quality of the destination at the aggregate level.

Table 5.14 Rotated Component Matrix

a

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
quality of accomodation	.713	.117	3.051E-02	.249	.299	-.249	6.583E-02
tourist information	.710	-2.04E-02	5.616E-02	5.641E-03	.180	.373	-1.54E-02
airport services	.594	-.143	.269	-1.62E-02	-6.45E-02	.249	.110
local transportation	8.801E-02	-9.98E-02	.778	.166	.498	4.581E-02	6.321E-02
safety	8.982E-02	.224	.173	.245	.614	-5.44E-02	.232
hygeine	.142	7.134E-02	.151	.153	.753	.243	9.207E-02
staff	.402	6.839E-02	.185	3.595E-03	.250	.253	.640
local people	-3.44E-02	5.155E-02	6.840E-02	.147	.137	7.567E-02	.873
communication	.244	.210	.174	5.654E-02	.124	.163	.645
tour operators	.183	.206	.124	8.620E-02	.191	.818	.110
tour guide	8.438E-02	.152	.120	.295	3.779E-02	.746	.198
climate	-2.41E-02	5.744E-02	.738	-2.53E-03	5.439E-02	.225	-.103
restand relax	.145	.235	.587	-3.33E-02	.686	7.471E-02	.161
fun	1.948E-03	5.169E-02	.256	.719	.320	.170	-5.94E-02
nightlife	.167	2.079E-03	6.209E-02	.815	.200	9.827E-02	9.648E-02
shopping	9.961E-02	.182	9.368E-02	.696	-.206	.133	.152
reaching	.502	.268	.378	.217	-.337	7.623E-02	.128
sightseeing	.105	.386	.342	.694	-2.45E-02	.205	1.164E-02
natural attractions	.174	.724	.762	4.753E-02	.133	7.363E-02	.220
cultural attractions	.223	.574	.248	.135	.262	.297	.148
historical attractions	-2.72E-03	.717	-3.45E-02	7.581E-02	.187	5.595E-02	.298
beaches	.510	.202	.672	.409	.125	-.160	.355
restuarants	.512	3.560E-02	.299	.272	.204	-.264	7.116E-02
basic amenities	.417	.329	.174	.259	.575	.261	.141

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization
a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

The first factor explained 29.8 percentage of variance and encompassed 5 items regarding accommodation, tourist information, airport facilities, connectivity/reach, and restaurants.

These items were considered to reflect the quality of the core supply services which tourists use to make the trip pleasurable. Tourists may have different expectations from these facilities, and consequently different perceptions, as compared to the core attractions to which tourists are primarily attracted towards the destination.

The first factor can be interpreted as the component of the total destination experience which reflects the core destination facilities quality. As the items represented include tourists' information, airport facilities and connectivity, in addition to the accommodations and restaurants, it makes it imperative to broaden the meaning of core destination facilities. Here the quality dimension reflects at a higher level of abstraction than the core destination service. Further, elements such as tourists' information, airport services and connectivity/access can be considered as a range of facilities, which directly supports the destination experience. As reflected in their factor scores, respondents scoring high on this dimension can be considered to have a high perception of the destination on its support facilities.

The second factor explained 7.19 percent of variance and is encompassed by three items regarding natural attractions, cultural attractions and historical attractions. This can be considered as the core of the destination attractions. But the less degree of variance explained by the factor indicates that this factor was not formed completely. Perhaps this reflects that each of the attraction can itself be a quality dimension. But at the aggregate level of assessment, this dimension conceptualises the core destination attraction elements provided at the destination. For example, this dimension resembles more of the 'physical plant' representation as depicted in the Smith's model of tourism product in the second chapter (Smith, 1994).

It can represent a unique combination of attractions, based on which tourists are primarily attracted to the destination. This can also include, as depicted in the Smith's model, weather and built environment; but the dimension generated in the factor model of this study has not included these elements. This dimension can be interpreted as the core of destination attractions, and a high perception of tourists in this dimension can indicate the strength of the destination.

The third factor explained 7.04 percent of variance, encompassed 3 items regarding climate, beach and 'rest and relax' environments. This can be considered as a part of the core element represented in the Smith's model. In this study this element has been represented separately. And these elements are a combination of push and pull elements. Seeking environments for rest and relax can be more driven form the internal motivation level of the tourists. For some destinations this element can be a predominant perceptual dimension of the total image of the destination. And in such cases it is more appropriate to view it as a core component in itself.

The fourth factor is comprised of activities of fun and excitement, nightlife, shopping and sight seeing and explained 6.6percent of variance. This dimension resembles the freedom of choice and involvement dimension represented in the Smith's model. It relates to activities which encourages a degree of spontaneity, and also refers to the possibilities of participation and some degree of engagement, which can also provide avenues of relaxation. This dimension can be considered as an extension of the core attraction which gives variety to the experience at the destination, and may be destination specific, depending upon the level it represents in the destination product category.

The fifth factor is formed with items like hygiene, safety, basic amenities and local transport facilities and explained 5.56 percent variance. This dimension is not adequately represented in the Smith's tourism destination product model. Nevertheless, this dimension in this case can be identified as a component reflecting the core element of the support facilities, which can provide a proper context for many tourists to experience the destination.

This factor also may be further made up of certain distinct quality dimensions which perhaps have not been generated in this study. This dimension can be considered to represent the general infrastructure provisions of the state on which tourists can readily perceive gap in the performance.

The sixth factor covers two items regarding tour operators and tour guide and explained 4.92 percent of variance. This dimension represents another major supply provision facilitating travel. This dimension can be considered both as an extension of destination facilities and as a component of the service quality provided in the destination.

There is another dimension derived related to the people component of the specific and general services provided in the destination. This comes under seventh factor, and encompasses three items staff, locals, and communication skills, and explains 4.3 percent of variance. This dimension resembles more closely the hospitality element of the smith's model, which can be a socio- cultural dimension of the service provided in the destination; this is an aspect which can make visitors feel 'good'. Compared to the seventh factor, which represent more of a technical quality of the service provision, factor six may represent more of the functional experience of the service. The Table 5.15 shows the summary of factor groupings.

Table 5.15 Summary of Factor Information

Factors	Loadings	Eigen Value	Percent of variance explained	Reliability alpha
Destination facilities		7.56	29.87%	0.745
Accommodation	.713			
Tourist information	.710			
Airport facilities/services	.594			
Convenience in reaching	.502			
Restaurants	.512			
Core attractions		1.704	7.099%	0.732
Natural attractions	.724			
Cultural attractions	.574			
Historical attractions	.717			
Relax environment		1.691	7.044%	0.673
Climate	.738			
Beach cleanliness	.672			
Rest and relax	.587			
Activities		1.588	6.616%	0.756
Fun	.719			
Nightlife	.815			
Shopping	.696			
Sightseeing	.694			
Support infrastructure		1.336	5.566%	0.695
Hygiene\sanitation	.753			
Safety	.614			
Basic Amenities	.575			
Local transport	.498			
Trip service		1.182	4.923%	0.825
Tour operator	.818			
Tour guide	.746			
People		1.055	4.396%	0.683
Staff	.640			
Locals	.873			
Communication	.645			
Total variance			**65.462%**	

As shown in Table 5.15, the most satisfactory item is destination attractions (3.04) followed by destination beach/ relax environments (3.06) and people element (3.01). The least satisfactory items are destination activities (2.52), destination support infrastructure (2.58) and trips service dimension (2.52).

Cronbach alpha test were used to determine the internal consistency, and the coefficients range from 0.825 for factor 5 to 0.673 for factor 3, indicating that variables can be considered moderately consistent internally which also means the factor structure is not complete. The summary of factor scores and reliability as scores are as give below:

- The first factor alpha = .745 and mean factor score for items is 2.7
- The second factor alpha = .732 and mean factor score for items is 3.05
- The third factor alpha = .673 and the mean factor score for items is 3.061
- The fourth factor alpha = .756 and the mean factor score for items is 2.5
- The fifth factor alpha = .695 and the mean factor score for items is 2.58
- The sixth factor alpha = .825 and the mean factor score for items is 2.52
- The seventh factor alpha = .683 and the mean factor score for items is 3.01.

5.5 Factors affecting Holiday satisfaction

The quality dimensions perceived for a destination by the tourists, may contribute differently to their holiday satisfaction. This section aims to analyse the different levels of impact of quality perception on the overall satisfaction. A multiple regression model using least squares method is employed to assess the impact of tourist destination perception attributes on their overall trip satisfaction. Since the trip satisfaction level was above average, it was useful to associate the relative influence of various destination perceptual attributes on the final measure of trip satisfaction. This indirectly helps to determine which destination attributes/components are considered more important by the tourists, which in turn enable to assess the critical components of tourists' perception of destination in Kerala.

The factor scores which are the output from the factor analysis were used as the input to the regression model. As discussed in the chapter 4 of literature review, the assessment off the holiday satisfaction process may be quite a complex process due to the multiple dimensions and its potential to make differential impact on the overall satisfaction. The range and nature of the expectation formed on these attributes can also further complicate this process. Some of the attributes can be more of satisfiers with more potential for inducing satisfaction, while other attributes can be more of a disatisfiers with the potential to induce dissatisfaction. And in any case, overall satisfaction is not likely to be simple algebraic sum of the perception of individual attributes. Instead, it could be a weighted sum of the attributes as represented by the various quality dimensions. In such case, multiple regression can be viewed as an indirect method of inferring these weights.

The least square multiple regression analysis develops the relationship between the dependant variable and several independent variables. The dependant variable of the model was the level of overall satisfaction. The seven orthogonal destination perception factors were the independent variables of the model. The reason for using factor scores was to avoid the multi collinearly effect of the model due to the high correlation among variables. In other words, it was a kind of determining how likely various destination attributes where predictors to overall level of trip satisfaction. The following Table 5.16 shows the result of regression model.

Table 5.16 Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.727[a]	.528	.504	.5245

a. Predictors: (Constant), REGR factor score 7 for analysis 1 , REGR factor score 6 for analysis 1 , REGR factor score 5 for analysis 1 , REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1 , REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1 , REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1 , REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1

The above table presents the results of regression model to assess the relationship between overall satisfaction and the seven orthogonal factors taken as representations as tourists' perception towards the destination. The model accounts for 50.4 percentage of the variance in the dependant variable, which means there could be other factors not included in the model. The standardised estimates of beta coefficients for each variable reflect relative importance of variables in the model. All factors emerged are significant (sig $p > .05$) independent variables in the model. The higher the estimate for a variable in the regression model, the higher the importance of it.

In terms of impact, the Table 5.17 suggests that factor 2 (destination attractions) and factor 3 (destination beach/relax environments) have higher impacts on the overall satisfaction level followed by factor 5 (destination support infrastructure) and factor 1 (destination facilities). Factor 4, factor 6 are factor 7 have relatively low influence on the dependant variable. The influence of factor two is as expected, because this dimension represents the core elements of the destinations, which has attracted tourists to the destination, and a strong link can be established between relatively high levels of perception on this dimension and the corresponding levels on holiday satisfaction.

Compared to factor 1, the emergence of factor 2 as an important dimension is a more interesting observation. This dimension has emerged as distinct dimension, and reflects a special appeal of the destination. And this dimension indicates the importance of quite, clean and exotic place for rest and relax on the holiday satisfaction. In an experiential consumption category like tourism, the importance of this subtle quality of the destination is uncovered with this analysis. This dimension with its constituent elements reflect the quality of the destination environment to encourage and rest and relax which is a push benefit tourists seek from their holiday experience.

Reading the relative factor weights (beta square) from the regression model presented shows the relative impact of various destination quality perception dimensions. Destination attraction dimension is almost nine times (beta square .09) powerful in determining satisfaction as compared to destination trip service dimension and destination activities dimensions. Destination attraction dimension is almost six times as powerful as destination people dimension in influencing satisfaction.

Table 5.17 Regression Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.374	.051			.000
	REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	.308	.052	.279		.001
	REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	.350	.052	.316		.000
	REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1	.346	.052	.313	3.376	.001
	REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1	.112	.051	.101	2.663	.008
	REGR factor score 5 for analysis 1	.325	.053	.295	2.848	.005
	REGR factor score 6 for analysis 1	.112	.055	.102	2.328	.021
	REGR factor score 7 for analysis 1	.145	.051	.132	2.215	.028

a. Dependent Variable: satisfaction

These findings lead to an observation that relative impact of destination support infrastructure can be more than destination facilities, which represent the core of the supply elements. This highlights the importance of quality in the basic infrastructure elements like basic amenities, safety and hygiene, as it impacts on the overall destination perception and satisfaction. This may also be due to the fact that some of the attributes in the destination facilities dimensions can be more of disatisfiers than satisfiers.

Additionally, this pattern of influences indicates the nature of consumption in the tourism. As discussed in the literature review chapter, consumption of a highly experiential product like tourism destination by the tourists from the developed countries can be influenced by quite a different pattern of expectation levels. Tourists who are from the developed countries may have a low expectation with regard to certain facilities provided in the destinations .The relatively lesser influence of people components and service performance may also mirror this difference in consumption nature in the tourism.

5.6 Sub-group Comparisons

Trip out come measures like satisfaction level, intention level to recommend (Word of Mouth) and impression rating of destination were subjected to comparative analysis based on socio- demographic and trip related variables. This was used to identify any significant difference in mean scores and in distribution of responses for various sub groups, cases are reported as statistically significant for $p > .05$. These are part of descriptive analysis aimed to reveal significant subgroup difference, if any. Significant differences are observed for gender, age, education levels, country and trip related variables like duration of stay, visit history and trip budget.

As shown in the Table 5.18, gender wise difference is seen for satisfaction levels and destination rating levels. Trip satisfaction level and ratings are more positive for male than female tourists.

In destination image studies, gender is an important variable included in the image assessment process and this relates to the assumption that gender can be also a variable influencing the level of perception toward a destination. It is possible that destination with multiple attractions and features might appeal differently to different genders. Since this is an exploratory analysis, no detail assessment was done to single out the impact on satisfaction due to gender as an intervening variable. From the table it can be interpreted that, those who are more satisfied and gives high destination ratings are more likely to be males than female tourists. At the same time, the difference of gender is not significant for intention to recommend the destination.

Table 5.18 Gender Wise Comparison

Gender	Trip satisfaction				
	Group size (n)	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**	**sig**
MALE	217	4.4463	.6018	2.608	.0100
FEMALE	171	4.1342	.5857		
	Impression rating				
	Group size (n)	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**	**sig**
MALE	217	74.3750	13.79	2.526	.012
FEMALE	171	69.7943	18.98		

The influence of age difference on the overall destination perception is the next sub group comparison made. Significant differences between age groups were observed for trip out come measures (Table 5.19). This variable produced a more distinct impact on all the three trip outcome measures. For comparison, the age variable was categorised with a medium split into two categories, one less than or equal to 45 as group1, and greater than 45 as group 2. Tourists belonging to high age category (greater than 45) are more likely to give higher rating, satisfaction levels and intention to recommend than those in the lower age category.

Table 5.19 Age Wise Comparison

Age	Trip satisfaction				
	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**	**sig**
Group1 =< 45	210	4.2471	.5737	-2.717	.007
Group2 >45	178	4.4306	.6219		
Age	**Impression rating**				
	N	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**	**sig**
Group1= < 45	210	69.2941	17.87	-3.607	.000
Group2 >45	178	75.9028	13.74		
Age	**Recommendation**				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
Group1= < 45	210	4.2941	.826	-1.8	.05
Group2 >45	178	4.4444	.551		

This exploration like gender sub group analysis is based on the assumption that age differences can also predispose tourists to seek different benefits from the trip; with different expectation levels from the holiday, this can also have an impact on their satisfaction levels. It is also to be noted that, it is more of a degree of satisfaction that is highlighted as a difference in measure. In other words, this can be interpreted that more tourists of age greater than 45 have given response of 'extremely satisfied' than those with age less than 45.

For representing educational level, tourists were grouped into four levels: high school, technical, junior college and postgraduate. Significant difference was seen in the level of satisfaction rating between tourists grouped to different educational level. Tourists with higher education levels expressed higher overall satisfaction rating than tourists with lower education levels as the one-way ANOVA results shown in the Table 5.20 & Table 5.21. The detailed ANOVA output is provided in the appendix -I.

Table 5.20 Education Level to Satisfaction

	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	95percent Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
High school	85	4.0588	.4851	3.9414	4.1762	3.00	5.00
Technical	30	4.3571	.4880	4.1679	4.5464	4.00	5.00
Junior college	111	4.5484	.5017	4.4210	4.6758	4.00	5.00
Post graduate	162	4.3544	.6589	4.2509	4.4580	2.00	5.00
Total	388	4.3291	.6010	4.2626	4.3956	2.00	5.00

Table 5.21 Education Level Comparisons of Satisfaction ANOVA

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.072	3	2.691	7.942	.000
Within Groups	105.700	384	.339		
Total	113.772	387			

As observed, the group with post graduate has higher level of satisfaction than those with high school. Also, those with junior college are more likely to express high level of satisfaction than tourists with high school as educational levels. But the differences are not established for other trip out come measures.

No significant differences in destination ratings and recommendations levels are seen for between tourists of different educational levels. And this aspect can weaken the link between educational level and satisfaction levels, as this difference shown may be due to some other intervening variables. Nevertheless, the difference observed for satisfaction is mainly due to a greater proportion of tourists with college and above degree expressing extreme levels of satisfaction as compared to those of highs school levels, who tend to give just 'satisfaction' as the response.

5.6.1 Country Differences

The sample represents totally tourists from 20 countries as shown in the Table 5.22. In the international tourism, the marketing efforts are largely targeted on specific countries. In most cases, the countries are considered as generating markets. As revealed in the literature, there are many studies in the tourism literature exploring the influence of country on the destination choice and holiday satisfaction levels. And in many case, the difference is linked to the broad influence of culture, which each country represents, on the holiday consumption process.

Table 5.22 Distribution of Respondents as per Country Profile

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Albania	2	.5	.5	.5
Australia	21	5.4	5.4	5.9
Canada	13	3.4	3.4	9.3
Finland	6	1.5	1.5	10.8
France	31	8.0	8.0	18.8
Germany	50	12.9	12.9	31.7
Sri Lanka	8	2.1	2.1	33.8
Ireland	5	1.3	1.3	35.1
Italy	19	4.9	4.9	39.9
Japan	3	.8	.8	40.7
Kenya	2	.5	.5	41.2
Netherlands	18	4.6	4.6	45.9
Norway	5	1.3	1.3	47.2
Poland	2	.5	.5	47.7
Scotland	6	1.5	1.5	49.2
Spain	9	2.3	2.3	51.5
Sweden	5	1.3	1.3	52.8
Switzerland	15	3.9	3.9	56.7
UK	115	29.6	29.6	86.3
US	53	13.7	13.7	100.0
Total	388	100.0	100.0	

International tourism as a cross-cultural consumption experience, and the role of culture and the country of origin as intervening variables in the destination image formation is noted from the literature review. In this study, the subgroup comparison based on tourists' country of origin is aimed at exploring the relationship between country of origin and the destination experience.

Among the countries represented in the sample, only four countries, such as UK, US, Germany and France are selected for sub group comparisons. These countries together represent 40 percent of the sample and are the major generating markets for Kerala, forming a significant share of tourists to Kerala. And these are the countries highly represented in the sample which makes comparison meaningful among them. The sample has 115 tourists from UK (29.6 percent), 53 from US (13.7 percent), 50 from Germany (12.9 percent) and 31 from France (8percent).

Analysing trip outcome measures for tourists from selected countries shows some significant difference in satisfaction and rating of destination. Overall, tourist form UK are more likely to be satisfied with the trip and impressed by the destination compared to other countries. As the following Table 5.23 shows, comparison of satisfaction levels for UK and US tourists. Tourists from UK are more likely to be satisfied with destination and more likely to recommend compared to tourists from US and Germany. This may partially explain why UK continues to be the leading market for Kerala. And as the table shows the difference more significant for satisfaction levels, at more than 99 percent confidence level than recommendation levels. The same difference were not noticed when the tourists from UK were compared with tourists from France.

Table 5.23 Selected Countries to Satisfaction

Country	Trip satisfaction				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
US	53	4.2400	.6565	-3.008	.003
UK	115	4.5217	.5017		
Country	**Recommendation**				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
US	53	4.26	.8033	-2.540	.012
UK	115	4.5217	.5017		
Country	**Trip satisfaction**				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
Germany	50	4.2200	.5455	-3.457	.001
UK	115	4.5217	.5017		
Country	**Recommendation**				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
Germany	50	4.3000	.6468	-2.383	.018
UK	115	4.5217	.5017		

Rating of the destination assessed purely in terms of its appeal and unique attractions reveal a different pattern (Table 5.24). The same difference, as revealed from the holiday satisfaction levels and recommendation levels were less visible for the rating levels. The differences are noted between US tourists and tourists from Germany and France. Tourists from US are more likely to be impressed by the destinations compared to Germany and France. US is an emerging market for Kerala, and this observation could indicate the growing appeal for the destination with its unique features, for this market. Another significant country wise difference is seen in the case of destination rating between UK and Germany, with tourists from UK giving higher rating than tourists from Germany.

Table 5.24 Selected Countries to Impression Rating

Country	Impression rating				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
Germany	50	69.900	17.1871	-5.014	.000
UK	115	80.9130	10.6946		
Country	**Impression rating**				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
US	53	75.500	14.5423	2.230	.028
Germany	50	69.900	17.1871		
Country	**Impression rating**				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
US	53	75.500	14.5423	2.277	.026
France	31	66.612	20.5502		

5.6.2 Trip Related Differences

Like major demographic variables, tourists are also grouped on certain trip related characteristics for the assessment of the sub group differences on tourist perception, satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions. Visitation pattern of international tourists often reflect their choice of a particular destination, the type and the frequency of trip, spending levels and so on. In this study, visit history (repeat visits), spending levels and trip type are selected as trip related variables for sub group comparisons.

Tourists who make repeat visits to the destination are an important group for any destinations. Creating a desire in tourists to revisit the destination is an objective many destinations aim for. For Kerala too, this can be a viable strategy for achieving sustainable advantage in an increasingly competitive international tourism market.

It is an important sub objective for this study to explore certain characteristics of this important group. Repeat tourists are attracted to a destination for different reasons. The cultural affinity between the tourist's country of origin and the destination can be one such influence. It's expected that repeat tourists will have more favorable perception towards the destination.

When tourists are grouped to repeat tourist and first time visitors, as shown in Table 5.25, significant differences are seen for all the three trip outcome measures. Repeat tourists are more likely to be satisfied, impressed and recommend Kerala than the first time tourist. This finding confirms similar pattern observed in other studies of this type, as referred in the chapter 4. Repeat tourists have certain appeal to Kerala, and are therefore more attracted to Kerala. At the same time, it is important for a destination to check whether repeat tourists go back with a higher satisfaction level. Later section of comparison tries to describe certain trip and socio demographic characteristic of this group for Kerala.

Table 5.25 Visit History to Satisfaction

Visit history	**Trip satisfaction**				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
Repeat	96	4.5195	.5029	2.265	.024
First time	292	4.3417	.6271		
	Impression rating				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
Repeat	96	79.3421	10.7809	3.595	.000
First time	292	71.500	18.0086		
	Recommendation				
	N	Mean	SD	t	sig
Repeat	96	4.6053	.5435	3.4821.8	.001
First time	292	4.2833	.7452		

The difference is seen more in the case of recommendation levels. And this is a positive aspect form the destination point of view, because word of mouth is an important source of influence in the destination choice among the international tourists.

Duration of stay is another important trip related variable assessed for sub group comparisons. It is an important strategy, as stated explicitly in the tourism policy for Kerala, to encourage tourists to stay longer in the destination. For the comparison between tourists grouped into different duration of stay in Kerala, tourists were divided into three classes representing three levels of length of stay: low (1-6 nights), medium (7-12 nights) and high (7-12 nights). This categorisation is devised based on the interviews with the industry experts, eliciting their opinion on short stay and long stay in Kerala.

The most represented group is in 7 to 12 night's category. The Table 5.26 and Table 5.27 shows the one way ANOVA out put, revealing significant differences between tourists in each duration category on the satisfaction level with the destination. The detailed ANOVA output is provided in the appendix-II. It is noted that tourists staying in 7 to 12 nights have higher trip satisfaction levels than tourists staying 1 to 6 nights.

The assessment related to the duration of the trip is linked to the different expectation levels of the tourists who tend to stay longer. Correspondingly, the different levels of expectation can have some affect on the tourists' perception of the destination.

Table 5.26 Duration of Stay to Satisfaction

Duration	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	95 percent Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1-6	77	4.0000	.7442	3.8171	4.1829	3.00	5.00
7-12	156	4.3424	.6958	4.1205	4.3639	2.00	5.00
13-17	87	4.2500	.5345	4.1165	4.3835	3.00	5.00
Total	320	4.1822	.6789	4.0989	4.2654	2.00	5.00

Table 5.27 Duration of Stay Comparison of Satisfaction ANOVA

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	2.946	2	1.473	3.252	.040
Within Groups	115.492	317	.453		
Total	118.438	319			

The difference between the destination perception rating and the trip satisfaction is noted for this subgroup comparison. This may indicate the different nature of these two concepts. As the Table 5.29 & Table 5.30 shows, the reverse is seen for the destination impression rating. The detailed SPSS output is provided in the appendix-III .The tourists staying in 1 to 6 nights and 3 to 17 nights are more impressed with the destination than tourists in 7 to 12 night's category.

Table 5.28 Duration of Stay to Impression

	N	Mean	Std-Deviation	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1-6	77	77..229	12.3350	74.3719	80.0875	40.00	100.00
7-12	156	69.4872	18.4232	66.5734	72.4009	.00	95.00
13-17	87	74.5238	13.0711	71.6872	77.3604	30.00	100.00
Total	320	72.6592	16.1170	70.8697	74.4488	.00	100.00

Table 5.29 Duration of Stay Comparisons of Impression ANOVA

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	3407.517	2	1703.758	6.802	.001
Within Groups	77897.021	317	250.473		
Total	81304.538	319			

The type of tour taken is another trip related variable used to classify tourists. Broadly trip type is classified as FIT (Fully independent traveler) and Group inclusive traveler (GIT). FIT is more un-conducted tour and GIT is more conducted tour type. FIT comes with minimum package, and in many case without any package. With 241 tourists in FIT, it is the dominant category and forms 62.1percent of the total sample. Tourists' choice of a particular type of travel reflects among other things, their preference for safety, convenience and different expectation levels from the attractions provided in the destination. With a multitude of features and facilities, each group can perceive destinations differently. Apart from the size, there is a view in the industry that FIT group is increasing for the Kerala. This increase can be attributed to the convenience of travel services and other support facilities available in the destination. The study compares trip outcome measures of tourists belonging to these two categories. Unlike other trip related variables, the differences observed were less for this sub group comparison. The only significant difference noted is for recommendation levels, with tourists in FIT category having higher recommendation levels than tourist in GIT category.

Spending levels of tourists is an important variable studied both in tourism marketing and destination performance comparison studies. It is a measure which is often used to rate the performance of a destination, apart from the normal arrivals and receipts data. As discussed in chapter 3, increasing the spending levels is an important objective set in new tourism policy of Kerala (vision 2020). In this study tourists are grouped into different spending made in the destination, excluding the travel expense. Spending levels are divided into three categories: less than 500$ in low budget, group between 500 and 1500$ in medium budget group 2, and above 1500$ in high budget group. The low group is represented more with 46.2 percent, followed by medium group and high group. This assessment is also attempted as a surrogate measure of tourist income, which was found difficult to capture in this study because of non-response.

Grouping tourist based on the spending levels and assessing their destination perception and satisfaction levels are important steps to be taken as part of destination marketing efforts. Apart from the outcome measures, their characteristics can also be compared. In this study, tourists are grouped into three groups of varying spending levels as low spending, medium spending and high spending.

Table 5.30 Budget to Satisfaction

Budget	N	Mean	Std Deviation	95percent Confidence Interval for Mean		Mini	Maxi
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Low	161	4.1286	.7599	3.9474	4.3098	2.00	5.00
Medium	139	4.3636	.6235	3.9474	4.3098	2.00	5.00
High	77	4.0667	.6856	3.8896	4.2438	3.00	5.00
Total	377	4.1888	.7017	4.0899	4.2876	2.00	5.00

Table 5.31 Budget of Trip Comparison of Satisfaction ANOVA

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.166	2	1.583	3.291	.039
Within Groups	92.849	374	.481		
Total	96.015	376			

The relevance of categories was validated by collecting multiple opinion and views on this aspect from the industry. Significant level of difference in trip out come measures for tourists belonging to different budget groups is seen. As shown in the Table 5.31 and Table 5.32, significant difference is seen between tourists in the medium spending group and high spending group. Tourists in the medium spending level category have satisfaction level higher than tourists in the high spending group. The detailed ANOVA output is provided in the appendix- IV.

The destination perception rating when compared between these groups also reveal a similar pattern. As Table 5.33 and Table 5.34 shows, a significant difference is observed in this measure between tourists belonging to medium spending and high spending group.

Table 5.32 Budget to Impression

Budget	N	Mean	Std Deviation	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum
Low	161	72.2857	14.2108	68.8973	75.6742	20.00	95
Medium	139	78.1818	15.3080	74.4186	81.9450	35	85
High	77	70.3333	19.7413	65.2336	75.4330	38.00	89
Total	377	73.6735	16.6880	71.3226	76.0243	20	95

Table 5.33 Budget of Trip Comparison of Impression ANOVA

ANOVA	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2145.665	2	1 072.832	3.970	.020
Within Groups	52159.437	193	270.256		
Total	54305.102	195			

The detailed ANOVA output is provided in the appendix-V. Tourists in the medium spending levels have given higher destination perception rating than tourists in the high spending levels. The differences as observed for this sub group comparison is more than the sub group comparison made based on the trip type. As related to other sub group comparisons, these differences may be due to the different levels of expectation held by tourists in these groups. At the next stage of analysis, these important sub groups are analysed based on their trip, demographic and other profiles.

5. 6 .3 International Tourist Market Profile based on Country and Trip Related Variables

One of the study objectives relates to analysing the pattern of relationship between demographic, country and trip related variables. This section reports the findings of cross tabulations carried out to reveal the association between the variables. So the first set of associations explored is for the selected counties in terms of the main trip related variables. Only in the case where significant association is noted is illustrated.

The international tourism involves cross cultural exchange, the country of origin with the related culture is an important source of variation the tourist's choice of destination and trip characteristics Reasons for selecting the four countries for the analysis (UK, US, Germany, France) are because of their adequate representation in the sample and the status of being the leading generating markets for Kerala. The framework for this analysis is drawn from similar kinds of studies done at other international tourism markets, exploring country differences on various travel characteristics.

For the country representation also, a wide difference between UK and other countries are there. Percentages are used for relative comparisons. Relative proportion of each group between each country group is compared. The following Table 5.34, along with the chi square tests, shows a relatively high proportion of the US tourists (41.5 percent) in the group 3 compared to UK, which has only 13 percent in this group. The same pattern is seen for the other two countries, though with a lesser level of difference, when compared to UK. The significant level of the association is also very high as noted in the chi-square tests.

Table 5.34 Budget * Country Cross tabulation

Budget	Country				Total
	France	Germany	UK	US	
Low	16 51.6%	13 26%	70 60.9%	16 30.2%	115 46.2%
Medium	3 9.7%	12 24%	30 26.1%	15 28.3%	60 24.1%
High	12 38.7%	25 50%	15 13%	22 41.5%	74 29.7%
Total	31 100.0%	50 100.0%	115 100.0%	53 100.0%	249 100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	42.925[a]	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	46.836	6	.000
N of Valid Cases	249		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.40.

For UK and France, there is a relatively high share of tourists in the low spending group. Whereas, for the medium spending group, the representation of countries shows less variation, except for the France which has low representation (9 percent) in this group. In summary, tourists from US, Germany and France are relatively more represented in the high budget category than tourists from UK, whereas tourists form UK and France compared to tourists from US and Germany are relatively more in low budget category.

The other variable compared with country differences is trip history, reflecting the tendency of tourists of certain countries to visit the destination again. In this regard, country can be considered to have some affect on the tourists to take a repeat visit. This aspect of tourist behavior is relatively well explored in the tourism research literature and is documented in the literature review chapter. As the Table5.35 and chi-square tests shows, county wise difference is seen in the tendency to make repeat visits to the destination. The association pattern is not as strong as the one observed for the country and the spending levels and is shown by the chi square value shown.

As noted from this table, it is the relative proportions of tourists from each country in the respective groups that are taken as inputs for the comparison. All the selected countries have a higher proportion of tourists in the first time visits category. However, UK and Germany have relatively higher proportion of tourists in repeat category as compared to tourists form US and France.UK and Germany have 31.3 percent and 32 percent in repeat type as compared to US and France, which has 6.5 percent and 17 percent respectively. The very low representation of the tourists from France in the repeat category may be due to the relatively low representation of this country in the sample. At the same time, the relative difference observed might also be due to the difference in the nature of destination marketing efforts targeted at these countries. This is another dimension which can be explored in further studies.

Table 5.35 Visit History * Country Cross tabulation

Visit History	Country				Total
	France	Germany	UK	US	
1 Repeat	2 6.5%	16 32.0%	36 31.3%	9 17.0%	63 25.3%
2 First Time	29 93.5%	34 68.0%	79 68.7%	44 83.0%	186 74.7%
Total	31 100.0%	50 100.0%	115 100.0%	53 100.0%	249 100.0%

Chi-Square

	Valu	df	Asymp. (2-
Pearson Chi-	11.14a	3	.01
Likelihood	12.92	3	.00
N of Valid	249		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less minimum expected count is

A travel characteristic, like the type of the trip chosen may be also affected by the culture related factors associated with the tourists' country of origin. Choice of a travel type indicates the kind of travel benefits and costs tourists consider. Travel motivations can also be linked to the trip type. For example, Plog's tourist typology, as referred in segmentation section of the review chapter, also refers to the travel type chosen. At this stage of analysis, the focus is on detecting some pattern of difference between tourists from the selected countries in terms of their choice of different trip type.

Table 5.36 shows significant differences in the travel type used by tourists form different countries. Tourists form US and France are more represented in FIT group than GIT (fully conducted tour), as compared to tourists form UK. Tourists from UK are almost equally represented in both travel types. Tourists from US show a substantial variation in representation between the two types, with 86.8percent of tourist coming as FIT type. This comparison is again a replica of such analysis conducted for other tourism destinations, and indicates the influence of country as a significant variable to consider in examining the choice of travel type. This observation also supports the view from the industry about such differences seen between tourists belonging to different countries.

Table 5.36 Travel Type * Country Cross tabulation

Travel Type	Country				Total
	France	Germany	UK	US	
1 GIT	12 38.7%	17 34%	58 50.4%	7 13.2%	94 37.8%
2 FIT	19 61.3%	33 66%	57 49.6%	46 86.8%	155 62.2%
Total	31 100%	50 100%	115 100%	53 100%	249 100%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.823[a]	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	31.787	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	249		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.57.

Apart from the repeat visits, duration of the stay also indicate the destination loyalty. This aspect can have a bearing on the spending levels too, which is analysed separately. Here selected country wise comparison for trip duration is carried out. Tourists' expectations, as noted before, can be induced by cultural factors, and this in turn may indicate the influence of country on the duration of the trip. The trip duration were divided into four groups: NK1 (1-6 nights), NK2 (7-12 nights), NK3 (13-17 nights) and NK4 (more than 17 nights).

Table 5.37 Nights Stayed in Kerala * Country Cross tabulation

Nights in Kerala	Country				Total
	France	Germany	UK	US	
NK1		5 10%	16 13.9%	24 45.3%	45 18.1%
NK2	21 67.7%	24 48%	43 37.4%	19 35.8%	107 43.0%
NK3	2 6.5%	11 22%	33 28.7%	3 5.7%	49 19.7%
NK4	8 25.8%	10 20%	23 20%	7 13.2%	48 19.3%
Total	31 100%	50 100%	115 100%	53 100%	249 100%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	51.080[a]	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	52.596	9	.000
N of Valid Cases	249		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.60.

In summary, US has more tourists coming in short duration category compared to UK and Germany, which has more tourists coming in the NK3 and NK 4 category put together (Table 5.37).

This variation in the representation of tourists for each country on the different trip duration groups can be also due to different levels of expectations tourists have towards the holiday experience from Kerala, and perhaps, this may also explain the differences in the satisfaction and destination perception level observed in the earlier section.

Apart from the country wise differences, there is also association observed between different trip related variables. The relationship between duration of the trip planned for and travel type is another significant association observed. This might indicate that tendency of tourists to stay more or less may be reflected in their choice of travel arrangements.

Table 5.38 Nights Stayed in Kerala * Travel Type Cross tabulation

Nights in Kerala	Travel Type		Total
	GIT	FIT	
NK1	38 25.9%	39 16.2%	77 19.8%
NK2	60 40.8%	96 39.8%	156 40.2%
NK3	28 19%	59 24.5%	87 22.4%
NK4	21 14.3%	47 19.5%	68 17.5%
Total	147 100%	241 100%	388 100%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.797[a]	3	.002
Likelihood Ratio	14.489	3	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	.497	1	.481
N of Valid Cases	388		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 25.76.

The major difference for the travel type is seen for tourists in the NK1 category. As shown in Table 5.38 and chi square tests, though GITs are less in number compared to the FIT type, they are relatively more represented in the NK1 category with 25.9 percent compared to FITs (16.2

percent). For the NK2 category, the difference is less between the FIT and GIT. The FITs on the other hand are relatively more represented for the NK3 and NK4 category.

In summary, the tourists staying longer are more likely to come as FIT type than as GIT type. And this is a pattern which shows tourists coming in GIT type more represented in short duration categories NK1 and NK2.

Table 5.39 Budget * Travel Type Cross tabulation

Budget	Travel Type		Total
	GIT	FIT	
1 Low	65 45.7%	88 37.4%	153 40.7%
2 Medium	61 43%	70 29.8%	131 34.8%
3 High	16 11.3%	77 32.8%	93 24.5%
Total	142 100%	235 100%	377 100%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.849[a]	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	26.056	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.317	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	377		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 34.50.

Tourists among different travel types, with the different expectation levels in terms of costs and benefits, may also exhibit different tendencies to spend in the destination. The spending levels to the trip type are shown in Table 5.39 with chi- square tests.

In this study, spending levels are taken as surrogate of income levels. The correlation between these variables need not be perfect. Still, the income levels can also have some affect on the trip type selected. So, a pattern of association is explored for the trip type selected and the spending levels. As Table 5.39 shows, significant association is seen in the level of spending between tourists coming in FIT and GIT type and tourists in the spending level 3 is less compared to tourist in spending level 1 and 2. Still, a majority is represented in this group from the FIT type.

The relative percentage of tourists belonging to FIT type is more in the high spending group, forming 32.8 percent of the group, as compared to tourists form the GIT type, which forms 11.3 percent in this group. This indicate a higher percentage of tourists in FIT category in high spending group compared to tourists in GIT type, whereas, GIT category is almost equally represented in low spending and medium spending groups. This perhaps reflects the affect of travel type on the spending levels.

The two measure of destination loyalty: the tendency to visit the destination again and the tendency to stay longer are also compared. Exploring the relationship between repeat visits and tendency to stay more or less also shows significant relationship.

As the Table 5.40 shows, repeat tourists are staying longer in Kerala than the first time tourists. Comparing the relative proportion of tourists from each type, on the respective trip duration category, shows a major difference in the NK3 and the NK4 category. The repeat tourists form 30.2 percent and 25 percent in these categories, whereas, for the first time tourists, the representation in these categories is 19.9 percent and 15.1 percent respectively. Another major difference is noted for the NK1, where tourists belonging to first time are relatively more represented

(22.6 percent), compared to tourists in the repeat category (9.4 percent) within that group. This finding supports the notion that repeat tourists are more experience oriented type with a high degree of involvement in the destination and, therefore tend to stay longer .The process can be also like this: a few of the first time tourists, who initially stays less, as they take repeat visits their trip duration increases.

Table 5.40 Nights Stayed in Kerala * Visit History Cross tabulation

Nights in Kerala	Visit History		Total
	Repeat	First time	
NK1	9 9.4%	67 22.6%	77 19.8%
NK2	34 35.4%	123 42.5%	156 40.2%
NK3	29 30.2%	58 19.9%	87 22.4%
NK4	24 25%	44 15.1%	68 17.5%
Total	96 100%	292 100%	388 100%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.161[a]	3	.003
Likelihood Ratio	14.463	3	.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.248	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	388		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.82.

Table 5.41 Budget * Visit History Cross tabulation

Budget	Visit history		Total
	Repeat	First Time	
1 Low	34 35.8%	119 42.2%	153 40.7%
2 Medium	51 52.7%	80 28.4%	131 34.8%
3 High	10 11.5%	83 29.4%	93 24.5%
Total	95 100%	282 100%	377 100%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	51.277[a]	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	49.360	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.810	1	.051
N of Valid Cases	377		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 27.36.

Apart from the repeat visits category, the high spending groups are also attractive tourist segments for any destinations. When these dimension are compared, a different relationship is revealed between repeat visit tendency and spending level of the tourists. Table 5.41 and the chi-square test show the significant difference between repeat and first time visitors in their representation in various budget groups. The gap observed in terms of the spending levels, relates to a greater percentages of repeat tourists in medium budget category, compared to first time tourists; 52.7 percent of repeat tourists versus 28.4 percent of first time visitors are represented in this budget group. First time tourists, however, have higher representation in high budget and low budget category. The difference is more considerable in high spending group; with 29.4 percent of the first time versus 11.5 percent of the repeat visitors in the high spending group.

5.7 Market Segmentation

One of the important objectives of the study was to derive the international tourist segments based on the benefit segmentation criteria, which is widely used in other 'good's and service industries. For this purpose, Cluster analysis, a multivariate procedure is carried out. Cluster, by definition, is a group of similar objects, and segmentation involves identifying groups of target customers who are similar in buying habits, demographic characteristics or psychographics. The periodic data collection by the tourism department on the international tourists generates mainly demographic data which is then used to segment the market. This study, identifying a need for segmentation beyond the usual demographic characteristics, used benefits sought by the tourists from their holiday experiences as criteria for segmenting the market. This is also aimed to reveal the nature of expectation tourists have toward the destination Kerala.

The following sections shows the analysis of tourists segments based on push and pull factors. The aim of the analysis is to identify tourists segments looking for similar benefits in the destination Kerala . Since the number of clusters was not decided aprioi, hierarchical clustering procedure was undertaken as the first stage of clustering method.

Tourists' importance for specific destination attractions/activities, and benefits sought were rated on a 5-point importance scale (extremely important to not at all important). Destination attractions/activities which attract tourists to the destinations, like backwater attractions, ayurveda massage, local cuisine, are some of the pull factors used for this purpose.

Table 5.42 Benefits/Activities Sought by the Tourists

Attractions/Benefits	Mean rating
To enjoy beaches	4.11
To enjoy wildlife sanctuaries	3.47
To enjoy climate	4.34
To get good ayurveda massage	3.01
To taste Kerala's local cuisine	4.04
To visit historical sites	3.66
To see local art forms and cultural attractions	3.79
To enjoy hill stations	3.02
To enjoy backwaters/house boats	3.80
To enjoy nightlife	2.2
To do shopping	3.14
To have activities of fun and excitement	2.73
To rest and relax in quiet places	4.51
To experience different cultures and ways of life	4.43
To enjoy comfort of good resorts/hotels	3.42

Also, some of the benefits sought (Push factors) like rest and relax, learn/know other cultures, were also included in the assessment of tourists motivation for the trip. The set of activities and benefits included in the questionnaire for importance assessment with its overall mean importance rating is given is given in Table 5. 43.

The importance ratings for each of benefit activity elements, when aggregated for the whole sample, indicate a dominant pattern of benefits and attractions tourists seek from their Kerala holiday experience. For example, the high mean rating got for experiencing climate, beaches, rest and relax environments, local culture and local cuisine is due to average or above average importance given by majority of the tourists for these attractions. Most of these are part of the general destination environment attractions, not specifically developed for tourism. Yet, the value tourists give to these attractions reveals the importance of it from the tourism development point of view. Conversely, the low ratings got for destination attractions like nightlife and activities of fun and excitement reveals lesser than average importance given by majority of international tourists for these attractions.

Tourists preference pattern also reveal lot of variation in terms of the importance given for the range of attractions and benefits sought from the trip to Kerala. For example, some of the attractions like ayurveda massage and nightlife received wide variation in rating among tourists. To get a better picture about the tourists' requirements, the sample was segmented using the cluster analysis. The cluster analysis was, therefore, used to reveal the nature of tourists segments, defined by its level of importance given to the range of attractions and benefits provided by the destination. The importance ratings are used as the input for the cluster analysis.

Conceptually, a limited number of clusters would be expected because of the limited variety of holiday forms available in the destination. However, variety of activities in the destination, suggests a heterogeneous tourists market. As a result, the search for substantial and actionable segments should lead to identification of a few larger segments that should be useful for market planning process.

As the first stage, for using hierarchical clustering procedure with Euclidean distance as similarity measure between cases, the ward's method was used to maximise within the cluster homogeneity. It is a frequently used clustering algorithm known to produce stable and interpretable results. Next stage involved comparison of three, four, five and six clustering solutions, along with the examination of the agglomeration schedule to yield more relevant groupings. In this study the leveling point occurs at a 5 cluster solution. At the final stage, k-clustering was carried out with benefit ratings using a 5 cluster solution.

The Table 5.44 shows five cluster groups, which are expected to show varying degrees of activities and benefits sought from the vacation to the destination Kerala. This table is the output of the k-means clustering method which shows the case listing of cluster membership and the final cluster centers. The final cluster centers describe the mean value of each variable for each of the 5 clusters. The solution table presents the mean importance scores of the original 20 benefit attributes represented for all the five benefit segments. Table 5.45 shows the ANOVA test with F values indicating the significance level of all 20 variables used for clustering. The individual mean differences and the salience across the segments then define the nature of the segment. The original variables are used to interpret the clusters .The interpretations of the clusters based on the mean values are used for the characterisation and labeling of the clusters.

Table 5.43 Final Cluster Centers

Importance	Clusters				
	1	2	3	4	5
Beaches	4.32	3.82	4.41	3.74	4.23
Wildlife	3.64	2.00	3.98	3.32	2.31
Climate	4.33	4.50	4.52	3.94	4.38
Ayurveda	2.53	3.41	3.74	2.50	3.11
Cuisine	3.83	4.67	4.25	3.85	3.54
Historical	3.42	2.83	3.98	3.88	3.15
Art & Culture	3.78	3.17	4.11	3.91	2.69
Hill stations	2.89	1.50	3.33	3.38	2.54
Backwaters	4.04	2.33	4.16	3.94	4.08
Nightlife	1.14	2.00	2.92	1.56	3.85
Shopping	2.08	3.50	3.77	2.71	3.92
Fun& Excitement	1.44	2.08	3.51	2.56	3.85
Rest/relax	4.50	4.42	4.69	4.32	4.15
Local Ways of Life	3.72	3.78	4.59	4.67	4.19
Resorts	4.08	4.02	4.07	1.88	3.62
Low cost	3.11	3.20	3.54	3.44	3.78

Table 5.44 ANOVA test of Cluster Analysis Variables

ANOVA

	Cluster		Error		F	Sig.
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df		
beachimp	5.559	4	.693	372	8.026	.000
wildlifeimp	30.670	4	1.078	372	28.446	.000
climateimp	3.911	4	.320	372	12.208	.000
ayurvedaimp	28.631	4	1.738	372	16.478	.000
cusineimp	6.648	4	.694	372	9.584	.000
historicalimp	10.852	4	.851	372	12.753	.000
artcultureimp	13.625	4	.558	372	24.435	.000
hillstationimp	20.791	4	1.168	372	17.803	.000
backwatersimp	17.888	4	.781	372	22.914	.000
nightlifeimp	60.810	4	.879	372	69.158	.000
shoppingimp	40.189	4	.915	372	43.902	.000
funexciteimp	59.309	4	1.037	372	57.212	.000
restrelaximp	2.556	4	.351	372	7.281	.000
waysoflifeimp	3.340	4	.311	372	10.724	.000
resortsimp	61.902	4	.750	372	82.558	.000
lowcostimp	4.205	4	1.124	372	3.740	.005

The F tests should be used only for descriptive purposes because the clusters have been chosen to maximize the differences among cases in different clusters. The observed significance levels are not corrected for this and thus cannot be interpreted as tests of the hypothesis that the cluster means are equal.

The cluster membership details provide the following summary: The first cluster with 72 cases, forms 18.5 percent of the sample; The second cluster with a 42 cases forms 11 percent of the sample; The third cluster with 122 cases, which is a bigger cluster, forms 31.4 percent of the sample; the fourth cluster with 68 cases forms 17.5 percent of the sample; fifth cluster five with 56 cases forms 14.4 percent of the sample.

5.8.1 Interpreting Clusters in terms of the Activities and Benefit ratings

From the Table 5.44, comparing the mean value of the variables was the first step in the interpretation of the clusters. At this stage it was noted that using the absolute ratings of the variables would be difficult to reveal the difference in the preference between the clusters. Hence, relative ratings between clusters, on the preference, were used for the interpretation. With this method of interpretation, the first cluster with 72 cases forms with tourists who gave relatively high importance to beaches, climate, backwaters, resorts, rest and relax, and are less cost conscious. This can be interpreted as a group giving less importance to cost and gives more importance to rest and relax and enjoyment with the nature in idyllic resorts.

The next cluster with 45 cases is a small cluster which has almost similar requirements as the first cluster .The similarities pertains to importance given to the resorts and the rest and relax as the benefits sought, and are less cost conscious. But the main difference, compared to cluster 1, is in the relatively high importance given to ayurveda rejuvenation experience. Compared to cluster 1, this cluster gives relatively less importance to beaches, but gives more importance to the cuisine experience.

The Third cluster is a big cluster with 122 cases. What differentiates this cluster from the other clusters is the medium to high importance given for most of the activities and benefit items. This group seeks a wide range of attractions and activities from the destination, which includes attraction like beaches, backwaters, hill stations, ayurveda, and benefits like rest and relaxes and resorts. Another observation for this cluster is that compared to the clusterl and cluster 2, this cluster is more cost conscious. This cluster also gives high importance to knowing local culture (ways of life).

The fourth Cluster is with 68 cases. This cluster gives only an average importance to beaches and climate, but like other clusters listed before, gives importance to rest and relax. What differentiates this cluster from other clusters is that this group gives relatively high importance to knowing the local culture, art forms and historical attraction compared to other groups. It has to be noted that in many cases even the cluster four also express such a higher level of importance for these items. But for interpretation, items that this group gives less importance are considered. It is revealed that compared to cluster 3, this cluster gives relatively less importance given to resort quality, nightlife and activities of fun and excitement from the destination..

Lastly, cluster 5 is another group identified with 56 cases. This cluster is also more similar to cluster 1 and cluster 2 in terms of giving differential importance to natural attractions and benefits sought like rest and relax. But a relative assessment reveals that, this cluster gives very high importance to nightlife and activities of fun and entertainment than any other clusters. In addition, this cluster gives less importance to resort and accommodation standards, and gives more importance to local culture like cluster 4, but compared to cluster 4, this group is more cost conscious.

5.8.2 Cluster Profiling

The next stage of segmentation analysis leads to profiling of these above generated clusters with trip related and demographic variables. Only demographic and trip characteristics which shows significant differences ($p > .05$) between clusters, are taken to profile the clusters.

The Table 5.46 shows the classification of the clusters on different demographic and trip related variables. Gender wise, male are more represented in the cluster 1 and cluster 5.Cluster 1 with 66.7% males and cluster 2 with 69.2% males shows a significant variation in representation of gender as compared to other clusters, where the difference between the gender representation is less. For comparing clusters on the age variable, the age categories were formed at 5 levels (< 24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+). Such a narrow division was made to reveal clearly the differences between the clusters.

In terms of age, cluster 5 is represented more with tourists in less than 24 and 25-34 categories. Cluster 3 has relatively more tourists in the middle age group (35-44 and 45-54 age category), whereas, cluster 1 and cluster 2, compared to other clusters, are high in the 55-64 age category and well represented in 35-44 and 45-54 age categories. In contrast, to this, cluster 4 has more representation in 25-34 and 35-44 category.

On the educational levels, all clusters have high representations in the postgraduate category. However, relative comparison between clusters reveals cluster1 and cluster 2 having higher representation in this category compared to other clusters. Another difference noted is for cluster 3, which has relative to other cluster groups, more representation in the low education category (high school level). As the selected demographic variable shows variation in representation for different cluster groups, this point to the possibility of distinguishing these clusters based on these variables.

Table 5.45 Cluster Profile

Characteristics	Cluster1	Cluster2	Cluster3	Cluster4	Cluster5
Gender					
Male	66.7%	52%	49.2%	51.9%	69.2%
Female	33.3%	48%	50.8%	48.1%	30.8%
Age					
<24	2%	----	6%	4%	11%
25-34	9%	18%	12%	32%	33%
35-44	26%	17%	36%	25%	24%
45-54	30%	28%	30%	24%	15%
55-64	24%	28%	13%	9%	10%
65+	9%	9%	3%	6%	7%
Education					
High school	14%	15%	23%	15%	12%
Technical	6%	5%	15%	10%	17%
Junior college	22%	28%	16%	28%	28%
Post graduate	58%	52%	46%	47%	43%
Visit History					
Repeat	38.6%	45.3%	19.7%	20.5%	16%
First time	61.4%	54.7%	80.3%	79.5%	84%
Budget					
Low	30%	38%	23.6%	31.8%	42.4%
Medium	24.3%	37.5%	44.5%	40.9%	35.4%
High	45.7%	24.5%	31.9%	27.3%	22.2%
Duration					
1-6	16.7%	33.3%	18%	20.6%	30.8%
7-12	44.4%	50%	36.1%	35.3%	53.8%
13-17	22.2%	8.3%	27%	17.6%	------
17+	16.7%	8.3%	18%	26.5%	15.4%
Travel Type					
GIT	23.5%	8.3%	44.5%	40.5%	38.5%
FIT	76.5%	91.7%	55.5%	59.5%	61.5%

The pattern of variation exhibited in each cluster also differs for different demographic variable. The gender wise difference shown between clusters is different compared to the age wise difference. These differences may also explain partly the variation in preferences between the segments.

As far as the trip related variables are concerned, significant difference were observed between the clusters in terms of tendency to revisit, with clusterl and cluster 2 having relatively high share of repeat tourists compared to other clusters. For the travel type, significant difference were seen with cluster 1 and cluster 2 having relatively higher representation of FIT type compared to cluster 3 and cluster 4. In cluster 3 and cluster 4, the difference in representation between FIT and GIT type is less compared to other clusters. And for the travel spending levels, clusterl is having higher representation of high spending category, whereas, cluster 3 and cluster 4 have more representation of low spending groups. Another significant difference noted is for cluster 5, which has more representation of low- spending groups compared to other clusters. For the trip duration levels, cluster 2 and cluster 5 have high share of tourists in 1-6 and 7-12 night's category. Compared to these clusters, cluster 3 and cluster 4, have got a higher representation of tourists in the 13-17 nights duration category.

5.8 Importance - Performance Analysis

Importance Performance analysis is carried out to link tourists' quality perception and their requirements in an understandable way so as to provide some insights on the destination attractiveness as perceived by the tourists. This is an attempt to assess destination attractiveness from the demand side, and forms one of the method for studying either destination or specific tourism products. There are also studies in the tourism literature assessing destination attractiveness from the supply side. This is a technique developed to develop firm's management strategies. In its essence, IPA combines measures of attribute importance and performance into a two-dimensional grid. In an effort to ease data interpretation and derive practical suggestions, a set of key attributes of a target product is generated and subjects rate each attribute for its importance to a purchase decision. Ideally, attribute importance needs to be measured prior to, rather than after, an actual purchase experience, because IPA in general pursues understanding the role of the key selected attributes in a purchase decision. Performance is then measured using the same set of attributes so that importance and performance can be directly compared within the same attributes via the IPA plot (or grid). The mean values of importance and performance scores are then used as the crossing point in constructing the IPA grid.

Importance-performance analysis involves the simultaneous consideration of tourists' assessment of the importance of salient attributes and level of satisfaction with the destination attributes and provision in a usually understandable way. The method defines a two dimensional grid with the horizontal axis indicating the tourists perception of the destination and the service providers performance. The vertical axis indicates the importance of the attribute to the tourists, ranging from not important to very important.

Tourists' perception and importance values are plotted on the grid that is divided into 4 quadrants that are formed based on the mean scores of the importance perception ratings. These values are then assessed according to the quadrant on the grid. Each quadrant suggests different response from a marketing strategy point of view.

Attributes that are rated high in importance and high in performance / perception score suggest that service providers keep up the 'good' work and continue resource directed towards these areas. In contrasts, attributes having low importance rating and a low performance rating suggest that investing resources to these areas may have little advantage. Attributes that are rated high in importance and low in performance are areas that the providers should pay particular attention. Lastly, attributes rated low in importance and high in satisfaction are areas providers should continue to maintain the level of effort.

In this study, tourists' impression on the 16 destination attributes and provisions are compared with the importance rating on an importance - performance matrix to assess the destination attractiveness. The 16 attributes are used for representing destination quality and form the basis of quality performance details of the destination, which are placed in the x-axis. Apart from the general attractions used for assessing quality dimensions of the destination, tourists' impression with specific attractions experienced at the destination is also elicited for assessing the destination attractiveness. For assessing destination attractiveness, only tourism specific attractions, benefits and activities are included in the importance-performance analysis.

Table 5. 47 shows the descriptive statistics of the tourists' impression on the appeal of various destination specific attractions like beaches, backwaters, hill stations, heritage sites, wildlife, art and craft forms, local culture/ways of life, ayurveda massage and local cuisine, on a scale of 1-4 (poor to excellent rating). The high level of missing value for each attraction is due to the response (NA) given by tourists, in case they have not experienced the specific attractions. Using the same category applied for assessing aggregate destination quality attributes, the attractions with impression rating above average (3 or more) are

backwaters, hill stations, ayurveda and cuisine. Slightly lower in rating was recorded for local culture, beaches and artforms. Heritage and wildlife attractions, on the other hand, got only average rating for tourists' impression created.

The quality requirements, also based on these attributes, are placed on the y-axis. Some of the attributes are controllable, whereas, some are less controllable. In many service strategy formulation studies for individual firms where IPA is used, the general practice is to include only controllable variables.

Table 5.46 Attractions Descriptive

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
beaches	322	1.00	4.00	2.8280	.8473
backwaters	287	1.00	4.00	3.4706	.7181
hillstaions	210	1.00	4.00	3.1034	.7455
heritage sites	282	1.00	4.00	2.3450	.6708
wildlife	195	1.00	4.00	2.5761	.9833
artforms	277	1.00	4.00	2.8671	.8056
localculture	315	1.00	4.00	2.9551	.7720
ayurveda	317	1.00	4.00	3.0990	.8867
cusine	312	1.00	4.00	3.2051	.8077

That is needed because, in such cases, IPA is used as a prescriptive tool. In this study, as the focus is on assessing quality of a destination, both controllable and uncontrollable factors are used. And in this framework, most of these attributes only represent quality at an aggregate level. For example, attributes like local culture and many natural attractions are difficult to improve beyond a level. Still, IPA is used as a descriptive tool to understand the destination attractiveness so that more than improving an area, it is expected to reveal the strengths of the destination on which destination promotion and positioning activities can be based. More often they are resources given, based on which tourism should be developed.

Tourists' perception rating and the importance rating for the selected destination attributes and activities are used as input for the importance -performance analysis. Following are the impression rating for attractions (on a scale of 4) and its importance rating (on a scale of 1 to 5): beaches (2.834, 4.11), wildlife (2.57, 3.47), climate (3.384, 4.34), ayurveda (3.09, 3.00), cuisine (3.205, 4.04), heritage sites (2.345,3.66), art/craft forms (2.86,3.79), hill stations (3.10,3.02), backwaters (3.47,3.8), shopping (2.46,3.14), nightlife (2.0672,2.2), fun/excitement activities (2.437, 2.7), rest and relax environments (3.134,4.5), accommodation /resort std (2.734,3.4), local culture (2.95,4.4).

The average level of rating with various attractions of Kerala and the average importance of the attractions for tourists were calculated for the whole sample. As part of assessing destination attractiveness matrix, these mean scores were plotted in an importance - performance rating matrix as shown in Chart 25. the grand means for impression rating (x= 2.95) and importance (x = 3.5) determines the placements of axes on the grid. Each attraction is then assessed by locating in the appropriate quadrant.

Attractions placed in the top right quadrant are rated very important with the level of rating above average; attractions in the top left quadrant are rated very important, With impression rating below average; attractions in the bottom left quadrant are considered less important and impression rating below average; attractions in the bottom right quadrant are rated above average on impression and below average on importance.

The importance - performance matrix shows that climate, backwaters, cuisine, rest and relax environments, and local culture are located in quadrant 1(high important and high impression). These attributes can be considered as the strengths of the destination. The representation of local cuisine as an important dimension of quality, and its significance, as revealed from this study indicates that this attraction can be further highlighted in the destination promotion activities. Further, the presence of local culture, rest and relax environments in this quadrant projects certain unique characteristics of the destination, which can be further packaged effectively in the destination positioning exercises.

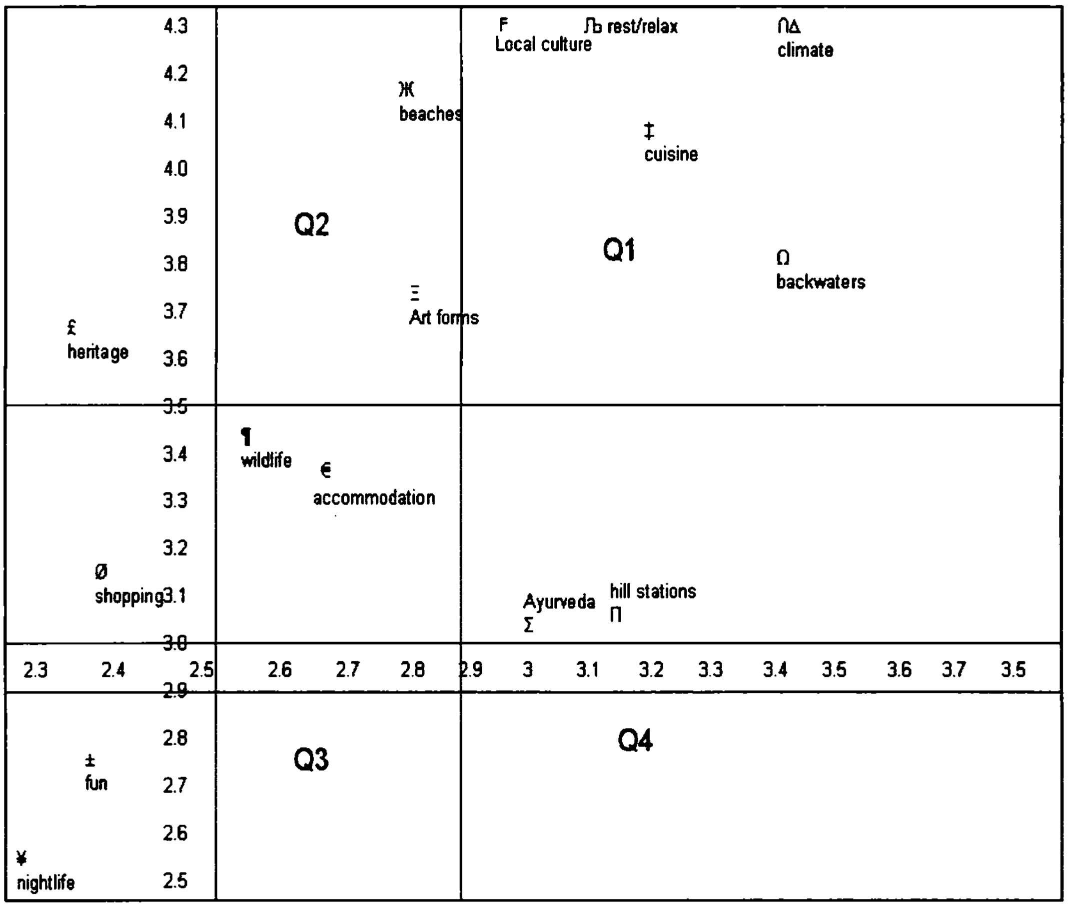

Chart 28 Importance –Performance Matrix

Beaches, art forms, heritage attractions are in quadrant 2 (high important and low impression), and indicate areas where destination development efforts need to be strengthened to turn them into areas of perceived strengths for the destination. The beaches are one of the important attractions for the destination, but as this study reveals, there is a gap existing for enhancing the quality of beaches and its appeal. Similar problems can be identified for the other attractions in this quadrant, like art forms and heritage sites, and these are areas which needs further exploration as part of destination development activities.

Another observation relates to items, which fall in the quadrant three. Wildlife, resort, accommodation standards, shopping, nightlife and fun activities come in quadrant 3 (low importance and low impression). But this picture may not completely reveal the importance of these attributes. And in reality, this may even reflect the perceived strengths of the destination, as this attribute can be more of dissatisfier than as a satisfier; a drop in the performance level on this attribute may even push this into a weakness area for the destination. The presence of nightlife and shopping activities also in this quadrant may indicate that these areas need less attention. Perhaps, a lesser degree of effort is needed on these areas, as part of destination development activities, compared to other areas of attractions. But the presence of niche segments, as revealed by the segmentation study, indicates the potential to attract particular segments with preference for these attractions. The same observations can be made for ayurveda and hill stations, which comes in quadrant 4 (low importance, high impression), and on which it can be considered that destination is doing better than what is required. Nevertheless, the presence of unique segments that seek high levels of quality from ayurveda rejuvenation experience may indicate the importance of taking initiatives to improve quality in these attractions.

Chapter 6

Summary of Findings, Discussion and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The study was carried out with the broad objective to understand the international tourists visiting Kerala, in terms of benefits sought, destination quality perception and the nature of their holiday satisfaction developed with various destination perception factors. Apart from contributing to the knowledge of tourism marketing pertaining to an emerging destination in a third world country like India, the study also aimed at providing the relevant information about tourists, which can be an useful input to the destination marketing efforts in the State. Understanding tourists, their perception of destination, are all considered essential inputs in the destination marketing efforts, which also forms the focus of the study. This chapter gives summary of findings and the related implications for destination marketing and development, based on the different analyses carried out under specific objectives of the study.

One of the main objectives of the study was to assess the quality perception of international tourists coming to Kerala. As part of understanding tourists' perception, this study also attempted to identify the image of the destination in terms of a few quality dimensions and the extent to which these dimensions contribute to their satisfaction with the holiday in Kerala. For understanding the difference in level of tourists' perception, the study also tried to compare overall trip satisfaction and impression with destination for different tourists groups categorised into country of origin and various socio-demographic groups.

Understanding international tourists' requirements from the destination experience, in terms of benefits and activities sought by the tourists, was also attempted in this study. This information was used for segmenting the international tourists, which is an important input to the destination marketing efforts. The study also assessed the destination attractiveness, and for this purpose, used importance - performance analysis (IPA). For this study, IPA is used as a descriptive tool to understand the destination attractiveness, so that the outcome of the analysis would reveal the strengths and weakness of the destination on which destination promotion and positioning activities can be based.

Finally, related to understanding the international tourists market better, the study also tried to describe various tourist segments, who are staying more, taking repeat visits and spending more in Kerala.

6.2 Destination Quality Perception

The assessment of tourists overall quality perception ratings, which is related to the first objective of this study, showed that tourists are generally likely to be satisfied, impressed with the destination and intend to recommend it to others. This was revealed by the mean score for overall trip satisfaction level (4.21 in scale of 1-5), recommendation levels (4.32 in a scale of 1-5) and destination rating (72.38 out of 100 points), which were found to be above average. These outcome measures of the holiday experience indicated that overall quality perception for the destination is positive and this can be considered as strengths of the destination. And these strengths can give destination a firm ground to further improve destination promotional efforts in many of the target markets. This also supports the view that Kerala has the potential to maintain its current position as one of the leading holiday destination in India.

The study also focused on understanding the quality perception of international tourists visiting Kerala. For this purpose, the quality of destination, which is a complex product, is analysed using a set of attributes generated through a step-by-step procedure. A qualitative study was used to generate the relevant attributes, which was followed by an extensive quantitative phase of study, using a survey method. This was for improving the validity of the study. The reliability of the scale items was also verified as part of improving the accuracy of the findings and its interpretations.

Quality attributes generated through the qualitative phase of the study included both controllable and non-controllable items. Destination studies that use only controllable items do so with the purpose of correcting and diagnosing problems for the core destination management activities. But for this study, non-controllable items (culture, environment, climate etc) were included with the aim to provide a better quality assessment of the destination based on tourists' perspective, which is considered as a useful input for destination marketing programmes.

Apart from the descriptive analysis on the quality attributes, a detailed response wise analysis was carried out to reveal the response pattern in terms of similarities and differences between attributes. Average rating for the selected 24 destination attributes showed different ratings. All attributes have rating of 2 or above in a scale of 4. Considering the positive bias in rating of this type, following are the attributes considered with above average rating score: Safety (3.157), local people (3.4948), climate (3.3844), natural attractions (3.2564), cultural attractions (3.1745), rest and relax environments (3.1342).

The following attributes were with average rating: Accommodation (2.7342), airport services (2.6231), restaurants (2.8760), staff (2.9574), tour operator (2.5986), tour guide (2.6085), beaches (2.8474). And the following attributes were categorised as with below average rating: Tourist information (2.4532), hygiene (2.0902), fun (2.4374), nightlife (2.0672), shopping (2.4675), basic amenities (2.3154), sightseeing (2.7486), historical (2.3478), communication (2.4382), accessibility (2.4652) and local transportation (2.4516).

Many inherent attractions in the destination received a high proportion of 'excellent' rating at an aggregate level. Despite a less overall quality perception gap, the detailed analysis revealed significant gap in quality perception for many of the destination quality elements. Variations in quality perceptions indicated the possible areas were quality improvement efforts need to be targeted. And for those attributes, which are less controllable and have received positive ratings, are aspects to be stressed in the destination promotion activities. Many of the destination facilities elements like accommodations, restaurants, airport, and tourist information services received an average rating with majority of respondents rating these elements as either 'OK' or 'good'. Accommodations and restaurants, for example, have a significant proportion of respondents giving 'OK' rating. This showed the need for further destination wide quality improvement in these areas for achieving better quality experience for the tourists. Other travel related infrastructure provisions, such as airport services, tourism information services and local transportations were also perceived overall with average ratings. But a detailed response analysis revealed a further gap in quality perception for these destination elements, with majority giving an 'OK' and 'good ratings'. With a high level of experience qualities in many of these elements, it is reasonable to expect much higher quality perception for these elements. And the impact of this variation in quality perception, despite an overall high level of perception for the destination, was also revealed in the regression analysis. Majority of these elements are controllable items, and therefore, highlight the areas where corrective actions should be taken to improve quality.

Compared to the destination-facilities attributes, some of the process quality elements like people and the staff attitude received a higher share of rating in 'good' and 'excellent' response categories. The high quality perceptions of these elements exemplify the manner in which tourists are received in the destination and served both by the locals and the staff. These are, as this study points out, the core service quality elements and therefore the strengths of the destination on which destination can effectively differentiate from other destinations.

The major gap in the quality perception was observed for the hygiene parameter, and this is one area destination needs to improve a lot. In comparison with other dimensions, this dimension was perceived most adversely by majority of the respondents. Particularly, a predominant share of respondents giving a very low rating for the hygiene at the destination environment reveals the gap. And as this forms the part of the destination environment dimension, which also has got a high impact in the degree of satisfaction, concerted efforts should be initiated to improve hygiene as far as possible, starting initially with the places attractions and then extending to other areas. Other destination environment dimension like safety and places to rest and relax, with high levels of quality perception can be further used to highlight the particular quality of destination in the promotional activities.

Difference in the perception between people aspect of the total service (staff and local people) and the service level offered by the core trip service elements indicated that functional element of service quality exceeded technical quality of the services. Improvement of tourism service quality in the level of services provided by the tour operators and guides therefore needs to be encouraged further. At the same time, the functional element of the service quality- the way services are delivered -needs to be maintained.

In the areas of attractions, the destination is somewhat perceived lower for cultural and historical attraction as compared to natural attractions. The availability and range of historical and cultural attractions needs further investment and innovation for enhancing the existing products and developing entirely new products from these attractions. Some of the peripheral attractions like nightlife, shopping and activities of fun and excitement received comparably low rating and should therefore be improved; at the same time, the improvement in these areas also needs to be compatible with the ethos and the culture of the land.

6.3 Destination Quality dimensions

Apart from analysing the quality attributes separately, the study also explored the quality dimensions based on which tourists may have some image towards the destination. This analysis was aimed at addressing the second objective of this study. The findings indicated that some of the quality dimensions were not formed fully, and this possibly is due to a gap in the representation of factors for the quality dimension of the destination.

Still, the factors offered an insight into the pattern of assessment tourists are likely to develop as part of their destination image formation.

To derive a set of factors representing quality dimension for the destination Kerala, an exploratory factor analysis was performed on destination attributes. The generated quality dimensions which were used to investigate tourists' perception of destination in terms of broad factors, were also compared with the destination quality dimensions put forward in the Smith (1994) model of a destination. Generation of broad factors provided useful insights for representing quality of the destination at the aggregate level.

Seven destination perception factors were derived through a principal component analysis method. They are: Factor # 1(destination facilities), Factor #2 (destination- attractions), Factor # 3(relax & beach environment), Factor #4 (destination activities), Factor #5(destination support infrastructure), Factor # 6 (trip service) and Factor #7 (people). The mean factor scores showed that the most satisfactory perception factor items were tourist attractions (3.05), relax/beach environment (3.061), and people dimension (3.01). The less rated perception factors were destination activities (2.52), destination support infrastructure (2.58) and travel service dimension (2.52).

The quality dimensions delineated with the factor analysis reflects the quality dimension based on which tourists can have an overall image of the destination based on their trip experience. Quality of data for factor analysis was found to be moderate, and this is, perhaps, due to inability of including certain quality elements with a sufficient level of detail. The best-formed factor was destination facilities, which encompass five items, viz, accommodation, tourist information, airport facilities, connectivity/reach, and restaurants. These items can be considered to reflect the quality of the core supply services on which tourists depend to make the trip pleasurable. The formation of this dimension posits quality perceptual criteria tourists can have towards a destination, which can also contribute to an overall image of the destination.

The second dimension interpreted as the core of destination attractions, revealed for the destination, a high level of perception of tourists; this dimension can indicate the strength of the destination with the high factor scores. The third quality dimension, which is closely related to attraction dimension, was also favorably perceived by tourists with a high rating; this also can be counted as strength of the destination. This dimension encompasses items regarding climate, beach, and rest and relaxes environments, and can be a thought of as a less directly perceived dimension of the destination. A positive image of the destination is likely to be represented by these quality dimensions.

Some of the quality dimensions revealed were identified as more controllable than others. For example, the best formed factor, the destination facilities dimension, mainly represented by supply sectors of the tourism like accommodation, restaurants and local transportation when compared to other dimensions like quality of attractions, were found to be rated lower as showed by their factor scores. The conceptualisation of quality as represented by the distinct factors may be valid at a particular level of abstraction and could indicate the broad area relating to the destination image perceived .The difference in the perception level of these dimensions therefore, indicate the destination image areas where the destination is strong at. For example, core attractions dimension with a high score can be an area of favorable image for the destination, whereas, the destination services dimension, with a lower score, needs further improvement to become a favorable destination image component. This points to the need for improving technical service quality of some of the trip service elements like tour operator and tour guide service, which were found to be perceived lower compared to the people element of service provided in the destination.

6.4 Satisfaction Factors

A multiple regression model was developed for assessing the impact of the destination perception factors significant in explaining the varying levels of satisfaction among tourists. This analysis is linked to the third objective of the study. Among the factors, Factor 1 (core attractions) and Factor 3 (beach & relax environments) were found to have major influence on satisfaction, followed by factor 5 (destination infrastructure) and factor 1 (destination facilities). factor 7 (people), factor 6 (trip service) and factor 4 (destination activities) have relatively lesser influence on the holiday satisfaction.

The Quality dimension found to have the highest impact in predicting holiday satisfaction is destination attractions; and the next dimension, in the order of impact, is quality of beach and relax environments promoting restful mood, and points to the importance to this subtle quality of destination. And in retrospective, this aspect most closely resembles the 'gods own country 'theme, promoted as destination images in the media.

The critical role of the core attractions and the related destination relax environments indicated the potential to highlight these attributes for further achieving a favorable position in tourists mind. The analysis also suggests the critical role played by destination support infrastructure in influencing the degree of satisfaction in tourists. The other indicators for satisfaction are destination support infrastructure and destination facilities, in that order.

The differential impact of various quality dimensions indicates their importance in creating a favorable impact in the tourists. The presence of beach/ environment dimension after the destination attractiveness dimension shows the importance of managing these dimensions in the tourism development activities. This highlights the potential for the subtle quality of environments -which is formed with the combination of climate, beach, and rest and relax environments- to be reinforced further in the destination promotion activities.

6.5 Sub- Group Comparison of Tourists Perceptions

Exploring the sources of difference in tourists' perception of destination is related to the seventh objective of this study. Difference in the overall perception towards the holiday and destination were noted for tourists when they are grouped based on demographic, trip and country related variables. This indicated the possibilities of certain socio-demographic, country and trip related variables having an affect on the tourist satisfaction, destination impression and the intention to recommend the destination. Among the socio-demographics variables, the influence of gender, age and education levels on certain trip outcome measures indicates the profile of the tourists for which the destination appeals most. These findings are not conclusive; rather, they are indicative and list the possible sources of difference, which influence the tourists' perception towards the destination. The idea that destination experience can be culturally induced was also explored, which revealed country wise differences on the tourists perception and satisfaction scores. The influence of trip related variables on the overall trip outcome measures also suggests the travel profile of the tourists to Kerala who is most likely to have higher quality perception towards the destination. The summaries of these findings are:

1) Male tourists were more satisfied and impressed with their holiday experience in Kerala than female tourists.

2) Tourists belonging to high age category (a median split equal to or more than 45) are more likely to have higher impression, satisfaction and intention to recommend for Kerala, than those in lower age category (i.e. less than 45).

3) Significant difference is seen in satisfaction rating between tourists belonging to different educational levels. Tourists with higher educational levels expressed significantly higher overall satisfaction rating than tourist with lower education level.

4) Analysis of trip outcome measures for tourists from the selected major countries shows significant differences, indicating that tourists might be more or less satisfied depending on the countries from which they originate. Tourists from UK are more likely to be satisfied with the trip, impressed by the destination and goes with higher recommendation level compared to tourists from the US and Germany. Another difference is that tourists from US give higher rating for the destination than tourists from Germany and France.

5) Significant difference between first time and repeat tourists was seen for all the three trip outcome measures. Repeat tourists are more likely to be satisfied, impressed and recommend Kerala than first time tourists

6) Significant subgroup difference for duration of trip in Kerala were seen with tourists staying for duration 7 -12 nights in Kerala having higher levels of satisfaction than those staying for 1-6 nights. But the reverse is seen for the impression with the destination, where those staying for 1-6 nights and 13-17 nights are more impressed than 7-12 night's category.

7) Tourists who come without a conducted tour (i.e. FIT) are more likely to recommend the destination than tourists in a conducted tour (GIT). Whereas there is no significant difference in their satisfaction levels and rating compared tourist of GIT type.

8) Tourists belonging to different budget groups also show significant level of difference in the trip outcome measures. Tourists in medium spending level rate the destination high and have higher satisfaction level than the high spending group.

These differences in satisfaction and destination perception levels may reveal the possible match of the destination with tourists of certain profile. As exploratory stage of analysis, these findings revealed the possible sources of variation in tourists' perception towards the destination, and as such, needs further studies to confirm the influence of socio-demographic and trip related variables on the tourists' image and perceived quality levels at the destination. Research hypothesis stating the influence of demographic and country variables on the tourists destination perception can be put forth which can be tested in more controlled research studies in the future. For some subgroup comparisons, significant differences were not seen for all the three trip outcome measures, and this to some extent, may reduce the ability of that particular grouping variable to influence the perception. Implications of difference noted relates to the different levels of expectations tourists belonging to each group can be imputed to. Again, hypothesis reflecting the relationship between trip related variables like trip spending levels, duration of stay and type of trip type selected on the psychographic profile of the tourists can be explored in further studies. This may help in explaining the difference in expectation tourists has towards the holiday experience in Kerala and the consequent image variation held by different groups of tourists. This observed variation might also point to the possibility of different image perceptions tourists can have based on their actual visit experience.

Another implication of these differences is that Kerala as a tourism destination, with its inherent attractions and qualities, tends to match more with certain groups of tourists, who can be defined based on their demographic, country and other trip related variables. This has implications for the destination planners and marketers to understand the nature of expectation of tourists belonging to different groups and develop packages to match tourists' expectations with their actual experience.

Identifying the differences in perception between groups also has implications for destination marketing efforts. Tourists segments which are attractive for the destination, like high spending group, tourists in a particular age, income and education category, or coming from a particular country, if gives low ratings for the destination and holiday satisfaction are areas of concerns for the destination development and marketing efforts. It could be a strategy for the destination like Kerala to appeal to wider segments of tourists to increase the share of international tourists. In such case, for a complex heterogeneous product like destination with a potential to attract various tourists segments, relative difference in satisfaction and impression ratings points to the need for enhancement of quality perception of different segments of tourists

Country wise variation in tourists' perception tends to reinforce the link between the country of origin and the image towards the destination. For example, higher level of satisfaction and destination perception levels of tourists from UK as compared to other selected countries, points to the role of cūlture of a particular country as an intervening variable in the destinations image formation. And this may to some extent, explain a larger share of international tourists from UK to Kerala as compared to Germany and France. The higher level of destination perception of tourists from US also has implications for a higher potential of that market to generate tourists for Kerala.

The other major segments explored for variation in destination perception level includes, repeat tourists, tourists staying longer, tourists availing a particular travel arrangement, and the level of spending in the destination. The findings on the presence of repeat tourists with higher levels of satisfaction and perception with the destination indicate the strength of the destination in developing a loyalty in them. This group along with other relevant segments is profiled to discern certain pattern of association between them.

The gap observed in the quality perception between high spending and medium spending groups revealed the possible weakness to be examined as part of destination development and quality improvement efforts. Variation observed between tourists coming with different trip type relates to the possible difference in their expectation levels, which also needs to be examined to reduce that gap. Examining the duration of trip to explain partially the variation on tourists' perception also reveals a possible gap, which highlights a lack of relationship between length of trip and satisfaction levels. This has implication for destination management efforts in enhancing the quality perception of tourists spending more time in the duration.

The study also examined the pattern of relationship between demographic, country and trip related variables which is related to the seventh objective of this study. For example, the relationship between the tourists' country of origin and the trip related variables were explored in this section. The main findings of the cross tabulations carried out to reveal the pattern of association between the aforementioned variables are:

1) Significant differences were observed among tourists from selected major generating countries namely: UK, US, Germany and France for various travel and demographic variables. Tourists from US, Germany and France are relatively more represented in the high budget category than the tourists from UK. Whereas tourists from UK and France compared to Germany and US are relatively more in low budget category. In terms of repeat visits, tourists from UK and Germany have higher percentage in repeat visit group, compared to tourists from US and France, though, all these countries have a high share in first time visits.

2) Another pattern of relationship was observed for travel type; Tourists from US and France are more likely to be seen in FIT group than tourists from UK and Germany. Country-wise difference was seen for duration of stay also, with tourists from US seen more in short duration category than tourists from UK.

3) Another significant association was seen between travel type and duration of stay. Those staying longer in Kerala are more likely to come as FIT type than as GIT type, and those spending more also are more likely to come in as FIT type than GIT type.

4) The study also noted that tourists who make repeat visits are more likely to be staying for longer duration in Kerala, and more in high age category (age greater than 45) than those coming for the first time. But repeat tourists are seen relatively more in medium and low spending category than first time tourists which has a higher share in high budget category.

These findings indicated country-wise variation in terms of trip spending levels, repeat visit pattern and choice of travel arrangements. Relatively high share of repeat tourists or high spending tourists from a particular country highlight the different nature of each generating markets and has implication for adapting marketing strategies targeted at different generating markets. At the same time, further exploration of some favorable markets like UK, and US, may reveal the underlying factors manifesting relationships between variables. In addition to that, some association between the travel type and the budget for the trip points to ways of focusing marketing efforts on high spending tourists.

6.6 Benefits/Activities Segmentation of Tourists

For segmenting the international tourists market which forms the fifth objective of this study, the cluster analysis was carried out. The study revealed the presence of distinct segments seeking unique combination of benefits and activities from the destination. The five clusters identified were named as: relaxation with luxury seekers, rejuvenation with luxury seekers, want it alls, culture with value seekers, relaxation with Value seekers. The segments were differentiated on the basis of their degree of preference for certain combination of push and pull factors related to the holiday elements.

In their holiday, tourists tend to experience a range of attractions as part of the package; at the same time, certain attractions and experiences dominate their itinerary. As far as destination is concerned, the presence of such varied groups indicates the ability of destination to cater to a wide range of segments. The distinction was also noted between the groups for some of the demographic and trip related variables. Between some clusters, for age and education variable, significant difference was observed. These differences indicate the potential to identify those clusters in the target markets. Some of the differences noted for trip related variables like pattern of travel and staying arrangements also suggests the need for promoting different travel options to these segments. These findings, by providing different pattern of benefits and activity preferences for different segments along with the related demographic and trip related variables could be, therefore, useful to destination marketers in their planning of marketing strategies for the destination.

The first cluster with 72 cases are represented by tourists who give relatively high importance to beaches, climate, resorts and are less cost conscious. This can be interpreted as a group giving very less importance to cost and more importance to rest and relax, and enjoying nature in idyllic resorts. The next cluster with 45 cases is a small cluster, which has almost same requirements like the first cluster, but gives more importance to ayurveda rejuvenation than other clusters.

The third cluster is a big cluster with 122 cases. What differentiates this cluster from other clusters is the medium to high importance given for most of the activity and benefit items. This group seeks a wide range of attractions and activities from Kerala. But compared to cluster 1 and 2, they are more cost conscious. Cluster 4 is with 68 cases. Though this cluster gives importance to beaches and climate like other clusters, this group gives relatively high importance to knowing local culture, art forms and historical attractions compared to other clusters, and this cluster gives less importance to resort quality, nightlife and activities of fun and entertainment. Cluster 5 is another group with 56 cases; this cluster gives same importance to natural attractions and rest and relax like cluster 1 and cluster 2, but gives very high importance to nightlife and activities of fun and entertainment than any other clusters. This cluster, like cluster 4, gives less importance to resort quality and more importance to knowing local culture. But this cluster is relatively more cost conscious than other clusters.

These distinct groups also were profiled with demographic and trip related variables. Only where, significant difference ($p<.05$) between clusters for different demographic and trip characteristics seen is taken to profile clusters.

1) There are more males in cluster 1 and cluster 5.For other clusters the proportion is almost same. In terms of age, cluster 5 is represented

relatively more with tourists in less than 24 and 25-34 age category. Cluster 3 has relatively more people in middle age group (35-44 and 45 -54 category). Whereas, cluster 1 and cluster 2, compared to other clusters, are high in 55-64 age category, and well represented in age category 35-44 and 45-54. In contrast, cluster 4 has relatively more tourists in 25-34 and 35-44 age category.

2) On the education variable, all clusters have high proportion of tourists in postgraduate categories. Cluster 1 and cluster 2 have relatively high percent in postgraduate category compared to other clusters. Whereas cluster 3 relative to other cluster groups, has more tourists in high school category. Significant difference were observed among the clusters in terms of tendency to revisit also, with cluster 1 and cluster 2, compared to other clusters, having relatively higher share of repeat tourists.

3) Significant differences were also seen between the clusters for the trip type selected, with cluster 1 and cluster 2, having relatively high share of FIT compared to cluster 3 and cluster 4. The difference is less between FIT and GIT for cluster 3 and cluster 4. As far as trip-spending levels are concerned, cluster 1 is having higher percent of high spending tourists, whereas cluster 3 and cluster4 have more of medium spending tourists. Cluster 5 has more of low spending tourists compared to other clusters.

The results of the study, thus, imply that there are different benefit and activity segments among the international tourist market to Kerala. Learning about the nature of these segments may offer useful insights for travel marketing strategies. Instead of viewing one undifferentiated market, planners can market destination to a number of smaller homogeneous groups. This could help decision makers plan unique positional messages to appeal to each group. For example, promoting more of the varied resort and restaurant facilities would be more effective for the cluster 1. However, when marketing to cluster 5, it will be more appropriate for the package and promotional strategies to focus on the adventure, fun and entertainment orientation of the trip.

6.7 Destination Attractiveness

Importance-performance analysis is carried out to link tourists' quality perception and their requirements in an understandable way so as to provide some insights on the destination attractiveness as perceived by the tourists. This is related to the eighth objective of this study, which was aimed at assessing destination attractiveness from the demand side. Tourists' impression on the 16 destination attractions are compared with it's rating on an importance- performance matrix to assess the destination attractiveness.

More than as a diagnostic tool to support some of the ongoing destination development activities, the observations from this analysis were used for destination assessment. In other words, the strengths and the weakness identified with this method is aimed to support the existing destination promotion and positioning activities. Following are the impression rating for attractions and its importance rating in a scale of 1 to 4 and 1 to 5: beaches (2.83, 4.11), wildlife (2.57, 3.47), climate (3.38, 4.34), ayurveda (3.09, 3.00), cuisine (3.20, 4.04) , heritage sites (2.34, 3.66) , art/craft forms (2.86, 3.79), hill stations (3.10, 3.02), backwaters (3.47, 3.8), shopping (2.46, 3.14), nightlife (2.06, 2.21), fun/excitement activities (2.43, 2.72), rest and relax environments (3.13, 4.5), accommodation /resort std (2.73, 3.4), local culture (2.95, 4.40).

The average level of rating with various attractions of Kerala and the average importance of the attractions for tourists were calculated for the whole sample. As part of assessing destination attractiveness matrix, these mean scores were plotted in an importance-performance rating matrix. The grand means for impression rating (x= 2.95) and importance (x = 3.5) determines the placements of axes on the grid; each attraction is then assessed by locating in the appropriate quadrant. Attractions placed in the top right quadrant are rated very important with the level of rating above average; attractions in the top left quadrant are rated very important,

With impression rating below average; attractions in the bottom left quadrant are considered less important and impression rating below average; attractions in the bottom right quadrant are rated above average on impression and below average on importance.

The analysis indicated the importance of certain destination attraction elements like climate, backwaters, cuisine, rest and relax environments, and local culture as strengths of the destination based on which destination promotional activities can be further reinforced. Areas where destination attractiveness gaps observed includes, beaches, art forms, and heritage attractions, and points to need for further emphasis on area specific development efforts to enhance the tourists experience with these attractions. With an array of attractions, benefits provided and the associated experiences, it may be useful to view the destination as a composite product, with certain attractions forming the core and the others at the peripheral, augmenting the tourists' experience of core attractions. Attractions like nightlife, shopping and activities of excitements may belong to a peripheral category; these attractions also need improvement efforts, but to a less extent, as compared to some of the core attractions. Overall, findings indicate the need for different strategies for guiding both the product and promotional development activities targeted for different tourism products.

6.8 Conclusion and Future Research Directions

The Quality dimensions of the destination Kerala from the tourist's perspective is what explored by the study. In the process, the study attempted to understand tourists and their perception of destination, which are considered essential inputs in the destination marketing efforts. The major purpose of destination marketing is to build a positive image for the destination in the target markets and communicate the image effectively to differentiate it from the competition. To this end, the study provides insights regarding image and quality perception of tourists towards Kerala as tourism destination. The findings are also utilised for assessing the areas where quality gap occurs and how such gaps are contributing to the tourists' satisfaction with the destination experience. The implication of some of the findings in the destination planning and development efforts are identified and areas where more efforts are needed to improve the overall quality of the destination are suggested. Relative impact of quality dimensions was assessed; the findings of which are related to the positioning and promotional strategies for the destination. From the theoretical standpoint, the study relates to the various dimensions of a total destination product and suggests possible levels of image tourists can have based on their actual experience This study also sheds some light on the nature of international travel market for Kerala in terms of activities, benefit sought, country and trip profile.

Activities and benefit segments are explored for this study. But to have a better understanding of the tourists market, it is also required to identify the underlying motivational factors driving tourists towards Kerala. So, further research can be carried out in the area of tourists' motivations that influence their choice of a particular combination of benefits and activities.

This would reveal additional information on the nature of tourists market, which can help to formulate better destination promotional strategies. Such information may be critical in adjusting promotional messages and matching the motivations of the travelers to the pull factors of the physical facilities in the destination. For profiling the tourists, this study used only socio-demographic and trip related variables; further studies can profile tourist segments based on the psychographic variables.

This study has focused on the quality dimensions from the perspective of tourists. The significance of the quality dimensions will be more if it has the ability to differentiate the destination from other set of comparable destinations. Future research can focus on these aspects, comparing Kerala with other competing destinations in India and abroad and discern the quality dimensions, which has better ability to differentiate Kerala from other competing destinations.

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1348

Abstract

Proposed title: A Study on the Quality Attributes of Kerala as a Global Tourism Destination.

Candidate : Manoj Edward
Supervising Guide : Dr. C. A. Francis, Professor, SMS, CUSAT.

Introduction

Tourism industry has become one of the important industries for Kerala . Since 1990, the growth has been very impressive. Kerala attracted nearly 3 lakhs international tourists and 58.68 lakhs domestic tourists in the year 2003, and tourism industry in Kerala contributes approximately 6.29 percentage of state GDP. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Kerala is one of the fastest growing destinations in the world. Kerala with its wide range of attractions and 'Gods own country' positioning theme is trying to project as a quality destination. In this context, improving tourist quality perception and vacation satisfaction with Kerala as a tourist destination become important aspects of tourism development efforts in the state. This study, therefore, was carried out with the purpose of understanding the international tourists visiting Kerala better. Apart from contributing to the knowledge of tourism marketing pertaining to an emerging destination in a third world country like India, the study also aimed at providing the relevant information about international tourists, which can be an useful input to the destination marketing efforts in the state. Understanding tourists and their perception of destination are considered essential inputs in the destination marketing efforts, and this forms the major focus of the study.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore various destination attributes related to tourists' holiday experience with Kerala and assess tourists' perception of destination on the generated destination attributes

2. To identify the underlying destination image/ perception factors, and assess tourists' perception of destination on these factors

3. To study the level of impact of destination image factors on the tourists' overall holiday satisfaction

4. To study the level of tourists preference for various benefits and activities they seek in their trip to Kerala.

5. To segment the international tourist market based on their benefits and activities sought and determine the various socio- demographic and visitation characteristics of these market segments

6. To compare overall trip satisfaction and impression with destination for different tourists groups categorized into country of origin and various socio demographic groups.

7. To understand Country, trip and demographic profile of tourists who are staying more, taking repeat visits and spending more in Kerala.

8. To analyze the destination attractiveness using an Importance –Performance matrix.

Methodology

The focus of the study was to understand international tourists' activities and benefits sought, destination quality perception and vacation satisfaction factors with Kerala as a tourist destination. The scope of the study was restricted to international tourists visiting Kerala for the leisure purpose. The sample sizes of related studies carried out in international markets were used as benchmark for sampling decision. The site of the survey was the departure lounge of the two airports in the state, as this was found to be the exit point from the destination for majority of the international tourists.

The research was carried out in 2 phases. Phase 1 was devoted to the development of a survey instrument. The literature search and a number of unstructured interviews with tourists, people from the trade and tourism officials were carried out for this purpose. A pilot test was conducted with 15 international tourists to fine-tune the questionnaire.

Phase 2 involved collecting data using the questionnaire from international tourists.
For collecting data, tourists were met at the airport when they are about to leave, and distributed self-completion questionnaires to tourists. 405 tourists participated in the survey. No particular attempt was made to apply a random sample or to select particular segments, apart from restricting number of tourist surveyed to be 15 -20/ per day, and tourists selected at different times of the day i.e. about 5 or 6 per flight. For tourists with a family, only one questionnaire was given. Not more than 3 or 4 questionnaires were given to tourists who came in a group. The Survey was carried out at both Trivandrum and Cochin airport. Of the 405 questionnaires collected, 17 were discarded as not sufficiently complete for analysis. SPSS was used to analyze the findings.

The possible sources of difference in tourists' perception of destination and the pattern of relationship between variables were analysed using t tests, Anova and Chi square. The destination perception factors and its impact on the holiday satisfaction were assessed using factor analysis and multiple regression model. The cluster analysis was used for benefit segmentation of the international tourists market. Finally, for assessing the destination attractiveness importance – performance methodology was also used.

Major findings and Related Implications From the Study

The quality perception of the destination was assessed through certain destination attributes, derived at the initial qualitative phase of the study. Tourists' overall evaluation of the destination was collected in terms of overall impression, trip satisfaction and intensity for word of mouth. Apart from the overall quality measures, tourists' evaluation of individual destination attributes was analysed, both with the descriptive statistics and response category analysis, to understand where the quality perception for the destination is high, medium and low. The assessments of tourists overall quality perception ratings showed that tourists generally were likely to be satisfied, impressed with, and intend to recommend destination to others. Separate assessments for the selected 24 destination attributes showed that major quality gaps occur in the areas of hygiene, basic amenities, tourist information and local transportation. Some of the attributes like safety, rest & relax environments, natural attractions and climate are perceived for the destination with high quality. Tourists perception of some of the tourism supply elements, like accommodations, restaurants and tour operator service revealed quality gaps that points to the need for further enhancement of quality in these areas.

As part of understanding tourists' perception, this study also identified the tourists' image of the destination in terms of selected quality dimensions and the extent to which these dimensions contribute to their satisfaction with the holiday in Kerala. The factors derived offered an insight into the pattern of assessment tourists are likely to develop as part of their destination image formation. The underlying quality dimensions of the destination were derived through a principal component analysis method. The quality dimensions derived were identified as destination facilities, destination- attractions, relax& beach environment, destination activities, destination support infrastructure, trip service and people. Quality dimensions with higher quality perception are destination attractions, relax and beach environment, and people dimension. The less rated quality dimensions were destination activities, destination support infrastructure and travel service dimension.

A multiple regression model was used for assessing the impact of the destination quality dimensions on the tourists' holiday satisfaction. The Quality dimension found to have the highest impact in predicting holiday satisfaction is destination attractions; and the next dimension, in the order of impact, is quality of beach and relax environments, which are part of aspects promoting restful mood in the destination. This subtle quality of destination is also reflected in the 'gods own country' theme, promoted as a destination image in the media. Perception of destination infrastructure and destination facilities was also found to have some affect on the tourists' satisfaction with the destination experience.

Differences in the overall perception towards the holiday and destination were noted in tourists when they were grouped based on demographic, trip and country related variables. This indicates the possibilities of certain socio-demographic, country and trip related variables having an affect on the tourist satisfaction, destination impression and the intention to recommend the destination. Among the socio-demographics variables, the influence of gender, age and education levels on certain trip outcome measures indicated the profile of the tourists for which the destination appeals most. These findings are the outcome of an exploratory analysis that aimed to identify the possible sources of influence, which affect the tourists' perception towards the destination. The idea that destination experience can be also culturally induced was revealed with country wise differences on the tourists' perception and satisfaction scores. The influence of trip related variables on the overall trip outcome measures also suggest the travel profile of the tourists to Kerala who are likely to have higher quality perception towards the destination.

The study revealed the presence of distinct segments seeking unique combination of benefits and activities from the destination. The five clusters identified are: relaxation with luxury seekers, rejuvenation with luxury seekers, want it alls, culture with value seekers, and relaxation with value seekers. The segments were differentiated on the basis of their degree of preference for certain combination of push and pull factors related to the holiday elements. In their holiday, tourists tend to experience a range of attractions as part of the package; at the same time, certain attractions and experiences dominate their itinerary. As far as destination is concerned, the presence of such varied groups indicates the ability of destination to cater to a wide range of segments. The distinction was also noted between the groups for some of the demographic and trip related variables. Between some clusters, for age and education variable, significant difference was observed. These differences indicate the potential to identify those clusters in the target markets. Some of the differences noted for trip related variables like pattern of travel and staying arrangements also suggests the need for promoting different travel options to these segments. These findings, by providing different patterns of benefits and activity preferences for different segments along with the related demographic and trip related variables could be, therefore, useful to destination marketers in their planning of marketing strategies for the destination.

As part of under standing the international tourists market better, the study also tried to profile the various segments and explore country, trip and demographic profile of important tourist segments for the destination, such as those who are staying more, taking repeat visits and spending more money in Kerala. Cross tabulations were carried out to reveal the association between these variables. The findings indicate country wise variations in terms of trip spending levels, repeat visit pattern and choice of travel arrangements. Relatively high share of repeat tourists or high spending tourists from a particular country highlight the different nature of each generating markets and has shown the implication for adapting marketing strategies targeted at different generating markets. Further exploration of some favorable markets like UK and US also revealed the underlying factors manifesting relationships between variables. In addition to that, association between the travel type and the budget for the trip, points to ways of focusing marketing efforts on high spending tourists.

Assessing Destination Attractiveness Using Importance - Performance Matrix

Tourists' impression on the destination attractions are compared with it's rating on an importance- performance matrix to assess the destination attractiveness. The average level of rating with various attractions of Kerala and the average importance of the attractions for tourists were calculated for the whole sample. As part of assessing destination attractiveness matrix, these mean scores were plotted in an importance – performance rating matrix. The grand means for impression rating (x= 2.95) and importance (x = 3.5) determines the placements of axes on the grid. Attractions placed in the top right quadrant are rated very important with the level of rating above average; attractions in the top left quadrant are rated very important, with impression rating below average; attractions in the bottom left quadrant are considered less important and impression rating below average; attractions in the bottom right quadrant are rated above average on impression and below average on importance.

The analysis highlights destination attraction elements, like climate, backwaters, cuisine, rest and relax environments, and local culture as strengths of the destination based on which destination promotional activities can be further reinforced. Areas where destination attractiveness gaps observed were beaches, art forms, and heritage attractions, and points to the need for further emphasis on area specific development efforts to enhance the tourists experience in these attractions. With an array of attractions, benefits provided and the associated experiences, it may be useful to view the destination as a composite product, with certain attractions forming the core and the others at the peripheral, augmenting the tourists' experience of core attractions. Some of the attractions like nightlife, shopping and activities of excitements may belong to a peripheral category; Nevertheless, these attractions also need improvement efforts, but to a less extent, as compared to some of the core attractions. Overall, the findings indicate the need for different strategies for guiding both the product and promotional development activities targeted for different tourism products.