Market Potential for Cruise Tourism In India

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Abstract
The Indian tourism sector is one of the largest service industries in the country in terms of its contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP) and foreign exchange earnings (FEE), as well as for providing employment to millions. Ministry of tourism in India is already promoting new concepts like rural, golf, wellness, adventure, medical, heliport, and sustainable / ecotourism in order to make it a major global tourist destination. With cruise tourism emerging as one of the most dynamic segments of the leisure industry globally, India believes to add this to its kitty. In this paper, efforts are made to explore the potential for cruise tourism in India and strategies that are employed by the government to attract investment.

Keywords: cruise tourism, market potential, India

1. INTRODUCTION
Cruise Shipping is an important and growing component of the leisure industry worldwide. It contributes directly and indirectly to the economy of the country concerned. This sector has a number of spin-off effects in service sector. Besides generating revenue in the form of passenger fares, port charges, etc., it also promotes many industries like handicraft, guide service and catering, etc., and earns valuable foreign exchange for the country.

Cruise lines have a dual character; they are partly in the transportation business, and partly in the leisure entertainment business, a duality that carries down into the ships themselves, which have both a crew headed by the ship's captain, and a hospitality staff headed by the equivalent of a hotel manager. A "Cruise is a tour by ship." Cruise lines are popularly known as floating resorts which runs through the oceans and seas from different home ports to various destinations. Cruise line offers various packages of tour to different beautiful parts of the world in different countries to their clients or guest, sold through the travel agents. Package tour includes all food and accommodation facilities inside the ship or on board. With various entertainment facilities such as casino, swimming pools, sauna, Jacuzzi, sports facilities, theater, movies, cafe, live concerts and shows, shopping complex, library, internet cafe, child care center, discotheque, bar, pubs, lounges and many more. Cruise line is like a small city inside the ship. They have a capacity to carry more than two thousand passengers or guest and hundreds of crew members, depending upon how size of the cruise line.

Carnival cruise line is the largest and the most popular cruise line in the world with twenty-four cruise ships or vessel, which operates from different ports of United States. "Freedom of the sea" under the company "Royal Caribbean" Cruise Line is the biggest cruise line in the world. Other famous cruise lines in the world are Norwegian cruise, Cunard cruise, Star cruise etc. Currently the five largest cruise line operators in the world are Carnival Corporation &plc., Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd., Star Cruises, MSC Cruises and Louis Cruise Lines.

2. TARGET TOURISM SEGMENTS FOR THE INDIAN CRUISE SECTOR
Four distinct tourism segments can be identified as presenting distinct potential for the Indian cruise tourism sector.

2.1 Foreign tourists comprising International Arrivals in India would form an immediate and most certain target. Cruise tourism would not only benefit from the existing foreign tourists but by itself would lead to an augmentation in this tourism segment because we would have foreign tourist
‘flying into India’ to take the cruises. Cruise tourism would also enable the country to extend the stay of foreign tourist in the country by offering a value added tourism platter.

2.2 Indian tourists comprising Outbound Travelers would form the second and natural target, especially if the Cruises from India also offer the chance of touching foreign shores. Indians who today fly to Singapore to take a cruise would naturally opt to take a cruise from India and reach Singapore.

2.3 Indian tourist who today form the Domestic Travelers would form the third important segment because it is only circumstance which constrains them to travel within the country and if availability, accessibility and affordability were addressed the high value domestic tourists would happily added cruises to their tourism itinerary choice.

2.4 Cruise Tourist arrivals in India representing dedicated cruise travelers who have been coming into India through various ports till date. It is expected that as India offers better infrastructure and destinations, other cruise liners will come to India bringing enhanced levels of cruise tourist.

3. CRUISE TOURISM PORTS IN INDIA

3.1 Types of Cruise Ports

With respect to cruise ships, ports may act as a ‘Port of Call’ or as a ‘Home Port’.

- As a Port of Call the port would act as the transit and receiving ports to national and international ships that touch several destinations as part of their cruise circuit. Travelers who disembark at the port visit destinations either close at hand or may sometimes even fly to distant destinations. At times travelers who disembark at a particular port may embark the ship at some other port closer to the destination they have chosen to visit.

- As a Home Port or Hub Port, the port would act as the base for a cruise ship, which would take passengers around a cruise circuit and then come back to the home port to berth. Travelers would either ‘fly in’ or ‘drive in’ to the homeports to take their cruise.

3.2 Identified Ports for Cruise Tourism in India

India is ranked as the ninth most popular tourist destinations in the world and is today considered as a preferred cruise destination. The government of India has recognized Cruise tourism as a thrust area and initiated a number of positive measures to promote the cruise industry and position India as a global cruise destination.

India has over 7,500 km of coastline, peppered with places of great interest for the cruise guest. Along the coastline, India also has 12 Major Ports and 184 minor ports. To encourage cruise shipping, major ports, which are managed by the central government, have been encouraged to create facilities for cruise shipping.

Since most major ports on the western coast in India meet the requisites of a port of call, a nascent trend of cruise ships calling at Indian ports at regular intervals has started recently in the cruise industry. This has led the ports of western coast of India figuring on the itineraries of international cruise ships. Government of India, as part of its cruise tourism development initiatives has identified 6 Indian ports to be developed as ‘world class cruise terminals’ and to be promoted as ‘integrated Indian cruise circuit’. These identified Ports include Mumbai, Goa, Cochin, New Mangalore, Tuticorin, and Chennai.

### Mumbai Port

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port-of-call</th>
<th>Mumbai</th>
<th>City, adjacent to port</th>
<th>Mumbai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major drivers for Cruise tourism, USP of the port</td>
<td>• Beaches, monuments, museums, world heritage sites, renowned eateries, shopping &amp; entertainment facilities; proximity of exotic tourist locales in the vicinity too enhances its attraction.</td>
<td>• Mumbai has many gothic architecture heritage buildings, a reminder of the glorious past of the city in conjunction with tall skyscrapers indicating its importance in India’s commerce &amp; trade.</td>
<td>• Excellent air connections to other cities make it an ideal boarding/destination point for passengers doing the regional cruise circuit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A variety of tourist options, moderate climate, and international standard hotels in a cosmopolitan & safe environment, make it among the most preferred tourist destinations in the country.

**Places of tourist interest in vicinity**
- The Gateway of India, Marine Drive (Queen’s Necklace), Elephanta Caves, CST Station Heritage Building, Home to Bollywood: Indian Cinema Industry, Juhu Beach, Chowpatty Beach, Karnala Bird Sanctuary, Harbour cruises, Ajanta & Ellora Caves etc.

**Goa Port**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port-of-call</th>
<th>Marmagoa</th>
<th>City, adjacent to port</th>
<th>Goa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major drivers for</td>
<td>Sun, sand &amp; beautiful beaches;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise tourism, USP</td>
<td>Lush countryside, exotic locales, swaying palms, seafood &amp; architectural splendors of its churches, convents and old houses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the port</td>
<td>Key offerings of serenity, relaxation &amp; parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A meeting point of religions and cultures of East and West over the centuries, Goa has a multi-hued and distinctive lifestyle quite unique from the rest of India</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of tourist</td>
<td>Visits to the Beaches – Anjuna, Baga, Benaulim, Calangute, Colva, Dona Paula; churches, temples, and historical places in &amp; around Panaji, Vasco; Forts – Aguada, chapora &amp; Cabo de Rama, Rivers – Mandovi &amp; Zuari</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest in vicinity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Cochin Port**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port-of-call</th>
<th>Cochin</th>
<th>City, adjacent to port</th>
<th>Cochin (Kochi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major drivers for</td>
<td>Ayurveda &amp; Yoga, rejuvenation therapies, spices &amp; seafood, lagoons &amp; backwaters, hill stations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise tourism, USP</td>
<td>Souvenirs &amp; artifacts, traditional dance &amp; art forms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the port</td>
<td>Beaches, Churches &amp; Synagogues, monuments, local arts, Chinese Fishing nets &amp; village, tea &amp; coffee plantations, dense forests etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of tourist</td>
<td>Alleppey backwaters, Munnar, Periyar Wild Life Sanctuary, Jewish Synagogue, beaches, temples &amp; churches, specialized resorts for Ayurveda, shopping bazaars for spices etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest in vicinity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**New Mangalore Port**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port-of-call</th>
<th>New Mangalore</th>
<th>City, adjacent to port</th>
<th>Mangalore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major drivers for</td>
<td>Proximity to historical heritage temples of Hampi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise tourism, USP</td>
<td>Vibrant green forests, paddy fields, gigantic monolithic statues, sunbathed beaches, exquisite temples, mild sandalwood, traditional buffalo races &amp; conventional red-tiled roof houses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the port</td>
<td>Lush hills surrounding Mangalore offer scenic views of the Arabian Sea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest in vicinity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tuticorin Port**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port-of-call</th>
<th>Tuticorin</th>
<th>City, adjacent to port</th>
<th>Tuticorin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major drivers for</td>
<td>The 1000-year old temples at Thanjavur, a World heritage site, Kanyakumari – the southernmost tip of India symbolizing confluence East &amp; West and Kancheepuram – a temple town.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise tourism, USP</td>
<td>Gateway position to India’s culture and heritage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the port</td>
<td>Proximity to International Sea routes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Places of tourist interest in vicinity
• Thanjavur, Kanyakumari, Kancheepuram, historical temples, Churches and ancient structures around Tuticorin, Madurai, Ooty, Kodaikanal, Tanjore, Kovalam.

Chennai Port
Port-of-call | Chennai | City, adjacent to port | Chennai
---|---|---|---
Major drivers for Cruise tourism, USP of the port
• Rich heritage, vibrant social & cultural ethos, variety of cultural and artforms
• Bustling metropolis, ancient temples, clean sea front, international hotels
• Famous for silk shopping
Places of tourist interest in vicinity
• Chennai city sightseeing, Chepauk Palace, Mahabalipuram, Pondicherry, Kancheepuram, Thanjavur, Madurai, Chidambaram and Tiruchy.

4. POTENTIAL ARISING FROM CRUISE TOURIST ARRIVALS IN INDIA

Although lacking even basic Cruise-related Infrastructure, Indian ports have been able to attract substantial number of cruise vessels and tourists in recent years. In the Tourism 2020 Vision document, WTO forecasts for India that India has the potential to reach nearly 8.9 million by 2020.

4.1 Forecast of International Tourist arrivals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2002-03</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2025-26</th>
<th>2030-31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrivals Worldwide</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>799</td>
<td>1010</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>2040</td>
<td>2579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrivals in India</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>12.38</td>
<td>17.20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WTO Report: Tourism 2020 Vision & CRISIL Analysis

A WTO study indicates averages of 1.4% of all international arrivals across the world are cruise tourists. Considering that, once cruise facilities are developed in India the same % would be applicable, we have arrived at the potential market for cruise tourism.

4.2 Forecast of Indian Outbound Tourists enjoying leisure facilities abroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2002-03</th>
<th>2005-06</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2025-26</th>
<th>2030-31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Indian Outbound Tourists</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>9.05</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>17.45</td>
<td>24.23</td>
<td>33.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Leisure &amp; Holiday Tourists (17%)</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>5.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Business Tourist (29.1%)</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>9.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Considering only 50% of Business Tourist for analysis</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Outbound tourists enjoying leisure facilities abroad (2+4)</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>10.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India (All numbers in millions)

Of these outbound tourists enjoying leisure facilities abroad, we estimate that about 10% would be interested in undertaking cruising. Of this percentage, the Indian cruise market is estimated to attract 1/5th of the tourists i.e. a mere 2% of Indians travelling abroad for leisure related activity. This number is quite conservative and would be potentially much higher with development of infrastructure for Cruise tourism in the country.

4.3 Forecast of Indian Outbound Tourists taking cruises from Indian Ports
Thus from the analysis, it can be concluded that there will be about 33.65 million Outbound tourists by the year 2030-31, of which 212,317 will undertake cruise activity from Indian ports.

4.4 Total Cruise Tourism Potential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
<th>2025-26</th>
<th>2030-31</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Tourists</td>
<td>64,599</td>
<td>89,759</td>
<td>124,720</td>
<td>173,298</td>
<td>240,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise Tourists</td>
<td>45,510</td>
<td>86,935</td>
<td>166,068</td>
<td>317,231</td>
<td>605,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Tourists</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>64,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>158,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outbound Tourists</td>
<td>57,096</td>
<td>79,287</td>
<td>110,102</td>
<td>152,894</td>
<td>212,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185,205</td>
<td>283,981</td>
<td>464,890</td>
<td>743,423</td>
<td>1,217,103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Upside of the analysis

It may be noted that the above analysis represents the base minimum number of cruise tourists that would embark / disembark from Indian Ports. The actual movements may be higher depending on the infrastructure developed and the marketing efforts undertaken to promote cruise tourism in India.

Downside of the analysis

The analysis has been undertaken as a standalone exercise without considering the effects of technological, social and economic developments on tourism globally. For example, falling prices of international air travel may completely change the way tourism and cruise tourism is undertaken. Incidents similar to terrorist attack on World Trade Centre can never be foreseen. Their positive / negative impact and the extent of the same too remain unknown and cannot form a part of the above forecasting exercise.

5. CRUISE CIRCUITS

5.1 Rejuvenation Cruise: Goa- Mangalore-Cochin (Kerala Backwaters)-Male

Concept: Goa and Cochin are especially well known for their Ayurveda therapy. Ayurveda’ as an alternative healing therapy has become very popular. Many westerners have made Ayurvedic spas their annual retreat, combining a relaxing holiday with cleansing of their bodies. In fact, most cruise ships these days have trained wellness experts on board who offer relaxing treatments. India scores high on this parameter since it is the birthplace of Ayurveda. There are a number of Ayurvedic resorts in Kerala that can be easily accessed from Cochin, the famous ones being Coconut Lagoon, Kumarakom, Taj Garden Retreat at Kumarakom and Thekkady and Somatheeram, Kovalam. Other well-known spas include the Indus Valley Ayurveda Centre at Mysore, the Park Hyatt Goa resort and spa and the Golden Palm resort and spa, Bangalore. A theme designed on wellness of mind and body with such centres as destinations is bound to attract a sizeable international audience as also the crème de la crème of the Indian society since ‘spirituality and wellness’ has become the ‘in thing’ these days.

5.2 Discover India’ Cruise : Mumbai-Goa-Cochin-Tuticorin, Cochin –Goa-Mumbai-Porbander

Concept: The Government of India has successfully launched its ‘Incredible India’ campaign. This has brought India into the limelight as an exotic destination. Taking this one step ahead, it could come out with a ‘Discover India’ cruise theme. This would target an itinerary with major Indian ports
as port of call. Thus, the cruise ship could have stopovers at Mumbai, Mormugoa, New Mangalore, Cochin, Tuticorin and Chennai. Shore/land excursions to places of interest around each port would form an intrinsic part of the itinerary. Ministry of Tourism should also look at developing the required infrastructure at more exotic Indian locales like Lakshadweep or Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Cruise operators are keen on including these destinations as port of call; however in absence of basic infrastructure it is impossible to do so.

This would be an ideal package for travelers who would like to visit different Indian destinations and also experience the novelty of a cruise and can typically be targeted at the foreign tourist.

5.3 ‘Shopper’s Bonanza’ Cruise: Mumbai-Porbander-Dubai, Cochin-Mumbai-Dubai

Concept: This theme could be built in an itinerary that would have stopovers at Dubai, Porbander and Mumbaiepecially designed for Dubai shopping Festival period. The Dubai shopping festival lasts for a month from January to February. Over 2,300 retail outlets participate in this festival, offering goods and services ranging from gold, jewellery, electronics, and cars to cosmetics, textiles and handicrafts, at big cash discounts.

From Porbunder the passengers can take land excursion packages to Jaipur, which would add variety into the shopping by giving it an ethnic touch. Some of them could also opt for an Agra visit for the Taj Mahal. The State Tourism departments could organise similar shopping festivals in and around the port areas. Handmade artifacts, hand-embroidered garments, ethnic Indian jewellery are a rage in markets abroad. Foreign tourists visiting Mumbai generally go to Chor Bazaar – an antique hunter’s delight.

The Zaveri bazaar nearby famous for its gold, silver and diamond jewellery, Colaba Causeway – a good bargain for clothes, Breach Candy and Kemps corner – for more trendy and slightly expensive clothes are areas frequented by foreign tourists.

In Goa, the Anjuna flea market, the Mapusa Friday market, the Arpora Saturday night bazaar and Ingo’s Saturday night markets at Haystack are bazaars visited by tourists. Cochin is well known for handicrafts like camel-bone carvings, woodcarvings, articles made of coconut shells, ethnic handwoven textiles and the very famous Spice market. Chennai is famous for its silks and traditional merchandise like bronze and brass castings, traditional jewellery, metal works and stone carvings.

5.4 Heritage Cruise: Mumbai-Goa-Cochin-Colombo, Mumbai-Mangalore-Cochin-Colombo

Concept: Heritage destinations have been a source of attraction for most tourists. Some monuments in India fall under the World Heritage List. Few among them like Elephanta caves and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, churches and convents of Goa, monuments at Mahabalipuram and Hampi are accessible from the ports of Mumbai, Mormugoa and Cochin respectively. One-day excursions can also be arranged to other famous Indian heritage sites like Taj Mahal, Humayun’s tomb, Qutb Minar. In Colombo there are many significant places of historical and archaeological interest which should not be missed; for e.g a visit of Sri Maha Bodhi (Sacred Bo-Tree), which is the city’s holiest site, and was grown from the tree under which Buddha achieved enlightenment, then there is city tour of Kandy, the last capital of Sri Lankan kings and is a World Heritage Site, then there is also the Nuwara Eliya which is called - The "Little England" of Sri Lanka and many more destinations of this nature.


Concept: this cruise itinerary is to market the cruise based on the season, which is most appropriate for the sea-dipping and beach activities. This cruise basically targets those people who are the beachgoers and want to visit different types of beaches along the Indian coast, bask in the sun, just relax in special message centres on the beach or go for land excursions.
The beaches of Goa are the highlights of travel in this state, making Goa the premier beach vacation destination. The first beach stopover in Goa is Anjuna beach also famous for its flea market and rave parties, then visit Baga and Dona Paula beaches that can make any beach holiday a memorable one.

All in all Goa’s 100-km long coastline gives an enthusiastic beach lover an opportunity to discover new secluded beach sites every day. In addition there is also a traditional carnival, which is a part of Goa’s rich Potuguese heritage 900-km length of the Kerala coast is lined with sandy beaches, rocky promontories and coconut palms that definitely merit a visit in every tourist itinerary the beaches of Lakshadweep are a paradise for divers offering exotic diving spots. Male too has its own beauty and charm to offer.


**Concept:** As the name suggests this cruise itinerary is designed for nature lovers. Indian geography has a continental spread, with varied and diversified ocean and coastal ecology. Those interested can actually study and see these eco systems on this cruise. Learning these can be made fun by combining them with various activities

- Snorkel over some unique corals in Lakshadweep
- Paddle Canoes around the shallow foreshores rich in marine-life
- Ride the boats into the rich backwaters of Kerala
- Explore the wilderness of uninhabited islands, secluded bays & aqua waters, home to dolphins, dugongs & turtles in Goa

5.7 High seas cruise or ‘Cruise to Nowhere’ : Chennai – Andaman- High Seas , Cochin- Lakshadweep-High Seas , Vishakapatnam-Paradeep-Andamans-Highseas

**Concept:** A popular type of cruise in the Southeast Asian market is a ‘nowhere cruise’ where the itinerary is designed purely for the pleasure of cruising with no stopovers at any port of call. Thus, tourists who have already visited destinations in and around India but who have not yet experienced the novelty of a cruise would be the target audience. This could be an ideal weekend cruise. Here, the emphasis would be on the on-board facilities and entertainment offered in the cruise ship.

It must be emphasized that while each of these themes could be promoted as an exclusive package, there could also be a combination of different themes, which probably might attract more cruise tourists. For example, a rejuvenation cruise by itself might not find many takers. However, if a high seas cruise with just one stopover in, say Cochin, is planned or if a rejuvenation and heritage theme is combined, more tourists would like to go in for it. Similarly, a high seas cruise could be combined with the Kerala backwater river cruise to give an exotic experience.

5.8 Eco Cruise across high seas : Mumbai-Cochin-Colombo-Maldives-Mumbai, Kolkatta-Paradeep-Chennai-Colombo

**Concept:** This cruise would enable the full benefits of cruising on the high seas to be enjoyed along with Ecotourism in Colombo and Maldives. Both these are very attractive foreign destinations which are also sufficiently close by so as to be linked competitively without unduly increasing operational costs.

5.9 River Cruises

The concept, duration and nature of river cruises will depend on the depth of the river, the features of the river course, the destinations connected, the size of the cruise ship/boat/floaters that would be feasible to ply on it. The connectivity of the river and nature of tourist traffic that have access to it would also determine the approach to the concept development. While a detailed study would have to be undertaken to determine the feasibility and potential of each of the river cruises, the following river cruises are recommended for development consideration.

- Sundarbans Cruise in West Bengal
- Brahmaputra Cruise in Assam
- Ganges Cruise in Bihar/West Bengal
- Mandovi River cruise in Goa
- Srisailam-Nagarjunasagar Cruise on river Krishna in Andhra Pradesh
- Basar – Rajahmundry – Dholeshwaram cruise on river Godavari Andhra Pradesh
- Kerala Inland Waterways and Backwater Cruise
- Cauvery Cruise in Karnataka

Some of the river cruises could be linked to adventure activities like rafting, sailing, river crossing etc. while certain other river cruises could offer other entertainment elements, refreshment, pleasure trips, floating restaurants or guesthouses, local sightseeing, nature watching, safaris across forests, sanctuaries etc.

6. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

- **Develop good infrastructure at identified Ports:** Create dedicated cruise terminals at Mumbai, Cochin and Goa. Upgrade port facilities at exotic locales like Lakshadweep & Andamans and Chennai, create dedicated cruise terminals at Chennai, Mangalore and Tuticorin, explore potential of other ports like Porbandar & Kandla in the West Coast; and Vishakapatnam, Calcutta & Paradeep in the East Coast.

- **Dedicated terminals would need to address security concerns and facilitation:** Cruise Terminals located within Cargo Port area create security issues. In creating dedicated terminals, this aspect has to be addressed and resolved. Also hospitality related aspects to enable necessary facilitation services to the cruise tourists would have to be built into the cruiseterminal development plans.

- **Terminal Plans would need to be developed in consultation with key players:** In finalizing the cruise terminal development plan, inputs from cruise lines, tour agents, and developers would ensure that the concerns of the key stakeholders are adequately addressed. This would ensure the long term success of the terminal.

- **Initiate Feasibility Studies:** Feasibility studies for individual cruise terminals would need to take into account the port specific developmental aspects duly incorporating capital cost towards dredging based on geographical features of the concerned port, land acquisition costs etc. Such feasibility studies would cover the technical and financial aspects of the terminal development and identify viability and sustainability aspects of the development.

- **Structure bankable PPP Options:** Globally the development of cruise tourism has been achieved purely in the private sector with the Government playing a supportive and strategic role. It would be important for India to follow this precedent by creating the necessary enabling environment and giving the private sector the space it needs to grow.

- **Make cruise terminals into destinations by themselves:** Cruise terminals represent the entry point of the cruise tourists into various tourism locations. Besides offering the facilities and amenities that would be essentially from the point of view of tourist facilitation, it would be an important strategy to make the cruise terminals themselves into minitourism destinations much like a tourist village showcasing India’s art and handicrafts, ethnic bazaars, a small museum offering a birds eye view of the tourist attractions of the region, food stalls with typical Indian cuisine, children’s play area etc. In addition to being an effective promotional medium of the country’s brand it would also increase the commercial and business potential of the terminal making it more amenable for private sector participation. Similarly, taking into account that the cruiseseason (in India) is from September to March each year, the Port authorities can use integrated cruiseterminal facilities for other usage such as convention centers, symposiums, exhibitions etc.

- **Focus on home porting in the long term:** Significant benefits can be derived from home porting. These benefits include pre-and post-cruise transport and accommodation, increased visitor expenditure, and stores for cruise ships. India should, as a long-term objective, emphasize in developing the Indian cruise ports as ‘home ports’ rather than only ports of call.
Government should continue to address the infrastructure requirement issues that would support home porting.

- **Focus on the ‘Drive In’ Market equally with the ‘Fly in’ Market:** Increasing world over the ‘drive in’ cruise market is gaining in importance unlike the previous trendswhere cruise tourist had to ‘fly in’ to take the cruise from the designated ports. This essentially meant that in addition to the main cruise ports, we would need to focus closely on the other ports along the Indian coast which may be developed as cruise ports which may become the starting or transit stop for cruise vessels to pick up ‘drive in’ cruisers. It has been seen that **accessibility and availability** form critical aspects to popularize cruises. Accordingly the drive in market would be extremely important for India for the following two reasons:
  - To tap the huge potential of the domestic tourists
  - To make the cruises accessible to the foreign tourists who may be visiting other Indian Destinations

- **Quick connectivity to other destinations/ attractions/ tourism locations to increase choices:** An important strategy in cruise tourism development would lie in ensuring easy, timely and quick access to heritage locations, monuments, natural features, tourism destinations that lie in proximity to the cruise ports. This would ensure that tourists, especially international tourists, do not miss the opportunity to see the prominent locations that may lie. Enabling cruise tourists who arrive at the Mumbai port the necessary air connectivity to visit the Taj, enabling those arriving at the Mangalore/Cochin Port to see Hampi, and linking Goa port to Somnath/Dwarka are some ideas that could be explored.

- **Create and position river cruises to complement and strengthen cruise tourism development:** Like Europe, India has destinations in its interiors many of them which are connected by beautiful rivers. Developing River cruises that connect these destinations would not only create the access that is so important for cruise tourism, but would also enable India to strongly position its tourism destinations and its exotic heritage.

- **Develop an effective media campaign:** The positioning and promotion efforts would have to be supported through a proactive media plan which would cover both domestic as well international markets. The Media Plan will cover audio-visual presentations and films out-door advertising, organizing events & exhibitions, preparing attractive brochures, leaflets, posters, hand-outs, TV inserts etc. The department of tourism would need to identify the media requirements and provide for a suitable yearly budget for this activity. Effective promotion would demand representation in international forums including road shows, trade fairs, exhibitions, seminars etc and entering into tie-ups with proper bodies. Participation in International Sea trade Shipping conferences, conventions, trade shows, promotional fairs would also be relevant. The objective would be to create visibility and reinforce the brand name overseas.

- **Simplify procedures to reduce harassment at Ports:** The regular port procedures would need to be reviewed in the context of cruise tourist as these would be in the nature of harassment for a holidaying passenger. Some examples of such simplification would be:
  - Streamline clearance of tourist and baggage at Customs, using electronic machines wherever possible.
  - Immigration officers can board at previous port of call and finish formalities on route.
  - Visa requirements may be done away with – eg Colombo, Singapore
  - Expedite issue of passes
  - Simplify health checks and clearances

Similarly, effective bilateral relationship with other cruise destinations (especially in the region) would be important to make travel visa/clearances quick and efficient. For example, Singapore has understanding with Thailand whereby Thailand automatically endorses the Singapore visa when the vessel arrives. Such arrangements need to be actively considered and pursued.
CONCLUSION

India being is one of the top most destinations for travel sport for domestic and international cruise tourists. Cruise Tourism is becoming an increasingly popular leisure choice in India. Cruises, which were at one time considered the prerogative of the rich, are today fast reaching to all class of travelers. India's virgin forests, undisturbed idyllic islands, long historical and cultural tradition of architecture, theatre and performing arts, 7,517 kms long beautiful coastline and strong port positioning imparts a natural advantage to the country to attract international cruise line. India's positioning in South East Asia and its proximity to already popular cruise destinations would enable strong cruise circuits to be created over a period of time.

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