

Promoting Cross-border Tourism in India and Bangladesh through Trans- boundary Waterways

Cross Border Tourism and Regulations

Regulations

- While we need regulations, they need to be confined to only the parameters of international protocols without which there could be violations of bilateral agreements.
- Regulations are also a means to implement such agreements but should in no way should be detrimental to promote, expand and propagate cross border tourism, especially on the riverine areas where developmental activities are, as it is, below the national average in both countries.
- So, I am not really talking about ‘regulations’, but trying to expound the fact that we got to see beyond the horizon and formulate plans in order to promote tourism in these least developed areas.

Plans ... to develop riverine areas

- It's like a make or buy decision ...

Do we ask the locals to attract tourists to their villages saying they have interesting handicrafts, textiles, cuisine – BUY

OR

Agencies come forward to build infrastructure so that tourists find it easy to get there and see that local handicrafts, textiles, cuisine are close at hand –

MAKE

And specially for border areas with rivers on either side, so much like the Brahmaputra entering Bangladesh, vast swathes of flood plains host a teeming population that hungrily await the latter – give them the means (infrastructure) and the platform to display their traditional skills.

Some ideas --



- As we are talking about cross border tourism with emphasis on rivers flowing out to other nations and the population around such areas, let us not forget the immense benefits it can bring about culturally, socially and economically which, otherwise, cannot happen due to poor infrastructure in these areas.
- We do have cruise boats sailing on the Brahmaputra and the Ganga and also on to Bangladesh where these rivers flow into and now there is a protocol in place to allow tourists to sail into and out of both countries. This is a very positive development.
- What we need are smaller vessels so that more people can come in as capital investment will be less.

... Ideas

- With adequate amenities on these vessels adventurous tourists can be attracted to experience a unique product where they can venture into unexplored areas.
- These cruise vessels should have expedition type programmes with an aim to explore particular areas of interest – wildlife, indigenous people, historical sites etc.
- We can also have houseboats at select locations where tourists can come and enjoy the nearby areas.
- All the above will promote local handicrafts, textiles and cuisine which in turn will bring economic benefits to the local communities.



... ideas

- Employment generation will get a boost with boat operators needing personnel in technical and housekeeping departments, tourist guides will find work, there will be employment at the jetties.
- Local markets will see an uptick, restaurants and recreational parks can come up.
- A general expansion of economic activities will take place.



Back to Regulations ...

- We need regulations to encourage and aid tourism in the border areas and not to restrict the flow of tourists, of course, within the parameters of local and international laws.
- Let's have tourism centric regulations with emphasis on local area/ community development.
- Plans should be in place to encourage community leaders, local entrepreneurs so that they come forward and help in their own development.
- Financial aid, expert counselling on tourism should be imparted to the communities so that they derive the benefits tourism brings in. This will have a cascading effect on the overall development of the region.

THANK YOU