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## Jet charter business in India yet to be fully explored: Rajeev Wadhwa, Founder & Chairman, Baron Luxury & Lifestyles Pvt. Ltd.

The jet charter business has significant growth potential and offers leading international brands and business leaders immense opportunity in India.

### The jet charter business can be classified into following categories:

1. **Luxury Charter Services** – This caters to Ultra HNIs and affluent society of achievers. The objective behind such charter service is maintaining status, confidentiality and privacy, luxury services, flexibility and reduce travel stress.
2. **Utility Charter Services** - This comes in essential application category largely due to issues related to airports. Unlike 5,200 airports in America, which by size is three times bigger but population wise three times lesser, India has 150 airports but schedule airlines have active service to only 65 airports. It is therefore the growth sector for those business houses that have business establishments in remote locations with poor airport connectivity. The objectives of such charters are time saving, convenience, and increased productivity and, of course reduced stress.
3. **Special Application Charters** - This is used for services like medical evacuation, under slung load carrying for construction and infrastructure projects, aerial surveys for geological studies, power wash for high tension transmission lines, law enforcement agencies including police surveillance at the highways, coastal areas and for crowd control during political rallies and festivals. Disaster management and operations of rescue services in case of natural calamities, act of god or terror.



**RAJEEV WADHWA**  
 Founder & Chairman,  
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The luxury charter market in India is mature and is witnessing a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 18 per cent, from 8,00,000 passengers to 1.4 million in the last three years that includes inbound traffic of foreigners and Indian customers using charters abroad. The number of revenue flights operated by Non Scheduled Operators Permit (NSOP) operators in 2011 was 74,012 which grew by approximately 14 per cent in 2012-13 on domestic routes. The international flights by Indian operators in 2011 grew from 1,446 to 16 per cent in 2012-13 with over 10,000 passengers going abroad by private jets.

Utility charter services is still at a nascent stage in India. Efforts are being made to use private jets to connect business districts, commercial towns, establishments and tourist destinations though such initiatives lack political will and government support. Unless well supported with subsidies, tax benefits and anchor customers who can sponsor operating cost, the charter service will not grow to its potential. Aircraft used for such services are basic and charter flights cost should be recovered by selling seats under NSOP. The government should have a policy to promote utility charter services under a special licence of air taxi operations.

Special Application Charters are niche market in India. While Air Ambulance services are offered by many charter providers, there is no company that offers insurance cover for it in India. Indian charter companies do not have skill sets and certification to offer services like power wash for high tension transmission lines and under slung load carrying for construction and infrastructure projects. We lack equipment and skilled manpower, and outsource the same at a very high price from developed countries. Disaster recovery and charters for rescue operations can be encouraged by government but again it is an ignored sector in India.

Whenever, we talk about charter market the first thing that comes in mind is, it is not for common man. This service is only for the rich and affluent, though we have given an overview of the charter market that encompasses various applications where the charters are used and its applications.

India has long way to go before jet charter services mature. It is the collective effort of operators, federal and various government agencies to come together to recognise this industry and incentivise certain programmes to support applications that can promote tourism, trade and nation safety. It is surprising to note that, while USA Highway traffic Police uses 15,000 helicopters for road surveillance we have none in India. General aviation in India is growing under the shadow of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the laws that do not give any recognition to promote this sector. Also, airport constrains and taxation have been a big hurdles. The growth of the private jet industry in India demonstrates the health of our business economy and constrains are created locally to make the business models in this sector impossible.