Impact of Commonwealth Games 2010 on the Image of Delhi

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ABSTRACT

The Games have recently concluded, however its impact still lingers on; and is here to stay. Apart from the tangible development, the intangible aspect of these Games that was aimed at and was created is the Image. The Image of Delhi, of India, is what was to be boosted, was created during the course and is now imprinted on the Globe. Apart from the global perspective, the nation too now views Delhi in a different light and most important of all, the Games have changed the way the city lives and breathes, forever altering Delhi’s perception of itself.

This image, however, just represents the tip of an iceberg that encapsulates a host of other aspects and it is in fact the part beneath the surface that actually builds up that image. It is the result of a number of social, political and economic decisions and the intent behind these decisions has not always been transparent. It is also important to understand that one single undertaking might have different impacts on the different socio-economic strata of society. This impact might also vary in its significance during their execution and after the conclusion of the Games. It is this cycle of decision-making, execution and the subsequent impact that contributes to the image created.

OVERVIEW

Intrigued by the varied interpretations of the same phenomena, we are aiming to understand it with the help of the people who have been impacted, people behind the creation of this image and people who have studied this event in its entirety. We intend to compare the common readings, rationalize the contradictions, join the dots and thereby create a larger canvas representative of the inherent Image after the Delhi Commonwealth Games 2010.

Why do we want to study the topic?

Delhi organized the Commonwealth Games in October 2010. A lot was written and said about the Games and the image of Delhi they created not just for the nation, but for people from all over the globe.

Going through the various articles in magazines and newspapers and listening to Television shows, we compared our personal views on the Impact of Commonwealth Games 2010 on Delhi and realized that the image of Delhi due to Commonwealth Games varies across socio-economic strata. Also, this image was based on different aspects for different people as some considered the aesthetics, some the infrastructural development some the sporting culture etc.

Thus the group decided to research and understand what the factors that constituted the image were, how they varied across different strata (based on preferences) and what these preferences were.
As a group of people having observed the changes in the city, both from within the city and from an outsider’s point of view, we have seen the city evolve through the Games. As students of architecture, we would like to extend our views to a more comprehensive and formal understanding of what the Games envisaged for the city in terms of the image and what it holds in store for the future.

**BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The Commonwealth Games were organized at a time when India was trying to establish itself as a growing economy in the world. The Games were seen by many as an opportunity to enhance the image of the country and in the process create opportunities and facilities.

"The people felt it was high time India got the Games"

"It means a lot to us. We feel this will change the whole perception of the Commonwealth."

"This is very important for my country. Finally India is going to have the Games. It's a big business opportunity, many jobs for many young people," Indian Olympic Association president Suresh Kalmadi told reporters.

The study aims to find out is whether the Games were able to create the *image* it aimed for. It is aimed at studying and analyzing all the facets of the Games - the original intent, the controversies along the way, the final outcome (positive and negative) and the reaction of the public to all this.

The reaction of the public is principally the image of Delhi for each of them. Since the parameters on which each person bases their reactions/opinions varies, an interesting complex image of Delhi and the CWG would emerge.
PREPARATION AND WORK THUS FAR

The group decided to map the image by conducting a series of interviews, polls and by conducting pilot studies. Before beginning with these, a basic theoretical groundwork on the Commonwealth Games - the preparation, the aim, the controversies and the accomplishments was done through various online journals, government websites, and interviews of people associated with the Games as well as watching news channel reports.

THEORETICAL BASEWORK

The initial total budget estimated by the Indian Olympic Association in 2003 for hosting the Games was ₹1,620 crores. In 2010, however, the official total budget soon escalated to an estimated ₹11,500 crores, a figure which excluded non-sports-related infrastructure development. Business Today magazine estimated that the Games cost ₹60,000 crores (US$13.02 billion). The 2010 Commonwealth Games are reportedly the most expensive Commonwealth Games ever.¹

CONTROVERSIES

▪ Delays

The organisation of CWG 2010 was beset by delays: in January 2010, the Indian Olympic Association vice-chairman Raja Randhir Singh expressed concern that Delhi was not up to speed in forming and organizing its Games committee and following a 2009 Indian Government report showing two thirds of venues were behind schedule, Commonwealth Games Federation president Mike Fennell stated that the slow progress of preparations represented a serious risk to the event.

In spite of delays and the corruption cases levied on the organisers, commentators stated that they were confident that India will successfully host the Games and do so on time.²

- **Corruption Charges**

Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) accused the Organizing Committee of large-scale procedural violations, including corruption, and has noticed mismanagement of funds in 16 CWG projects. The CVC has asked the CBI to register a corruption case.

Public Works Department (PWD), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Delhi Development Authority (DDA), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), a Government of India Enterprise have all been booked for corruption.³

- **Environmental Controversies**

The organisers signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Environment Programme to show the intention to host a "sustainable Games" and to take the environment into consideration when constructing and renovating venues. Thyagaraj Stadium is intended to be a key example of environmentally considered construction.

In opposition to this intention, a number of environmental controversies arose and the adverse ecological impacts of various aspects of the Games have been protested by city residents. City residents filed a public interest petition to the Supreme Court of India against the felling of 'heritage' trees in the Siri Fort area to make way for Games facilities.

The court appointed architect Charles Correa to assess the impact and he severely criticised the designs on ecological grounds. In spite of this, in April 2009 the Supreme Court allowed the construction on the grounds that "much time had been lost" and "the damage already caused to the environment could not be undone".

The Commonwealth Games village, located on the flood plains of the Yamuna, has also been the subject of controversies about the flouting of ecological norms. After a prolonged legal battle between city residents and the state, construction was permitted to continue on the basis of an order of the Supreme Court of India in July 2009.⁴

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- **Social Controversies**

Large-scale construction and "beautification" projects have resulted in the demolition of hundreds of homes and the displacement of city dwellers—at least 100,000 of New Delhi's 160,000 homeless people have removed from shelters, some of which have been demolished.

Bamboo screens have been erected around city slums to separate visitors from the sights of the slums, a practice which human rights campaigners have deemed dishonest and immoral. $^5$

**WHAT WERE THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF THE GAME?**

- **Improvements in Infrastructure**

The city saw an improvement and increase of the existing infrastructure.

A four-lane flyway, 2.2 km stretch from Lodhi Road to trans-Yamuna, linking the Games Village to the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium has been constructed, reducing the travelling time between the village and the Stadium. In response to concerns over the large number of trains that pass by the Delhi metropolitan region daily, road under-bridges and over-bridges along railway lines have been constructed. Flyovers, cloverleaf flyovers, and bridges have been built to expand road infrastructure.$^6$

To support its commitment to mass transport, nine corridors were identified and are being constructed as High Capacity Bus Systems. Additionally, the Delhi Metro was expanded to accommodate more people and boost the use of public transport during and after the 2010 Games.

Indira Gandhi International Airport has been modernised, expanded, and upgraded. Costing nearly $1.95 billion, Terminal 3 has improved airport passenger capacity to more than 37 million passengers a year by 2010. The airport is to be connected to the city via a six-lane expressway (Delhi–Gurgaon Expressway) and the $580 million Delhi Airport Metro Express line.$^7$

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To prepare for the energy-usage spike during the Games and to end chronic power cuts in Delhi, the government had undertaken a large power-production initiative to increase power production to 7,000 MW (from the current 4,500 MW).  

- **Training the Workforce**

As part of the preparation for the expected influx of English-speaking tourists for the Games, the Delhi government implemented a program to teach English, and the necessary skills for serving tourists, to key workers—such as cab drivers, security workers, waiters, porters, and service staff. In the two years prior to the Games, 2,000 drivers were taught English. In addition to Delhi, the Indian Government plans to expand the program to teach people in local tourist destinations in other parts of India.

- **Improvement of Sports Infrastructure**

12 competition venues and 20 training venues were constructed and used in the Games.

The Commonwealth Games Village located along the east bank of the River Yamuna, in proximity to competition and training venues as well as city landmarks, spread over an area of 63.5 hectares (157 acres) was built. Comprising five main zones—the Residential Zone, the International Zone, the Training Area, the Main Dining and the Operational Zone—the Games Village, which is a non-smoking zone, is universally accessible particularly to accommodate para-sport athletes.

As can be seen, the Games have had their share of controversies but have also resulted in tangible development of the city. It remains to be seen which of these aspects remains etched in the minds of the citizens. It is this perception, this image, that we wish to identify and study.

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METHODOLOGY

FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Theoretical: Reading literature on studying/analyzing the image of a city to understand the parameters used to map the image of a city.

Practical: Interviewing people who have been involved in the Games process, as spectators or organizers and talking to experts who have studied the various aspects of the Games.

Empirical: Visiting the areas actually affected by the Games like:-

- Shiv Mandir, Sewa Nagar where forced evictions took place
- Bhiwani Boxing Club where improvements in infrastructure took place during CWG Games.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

STEP 1 READING LITERATURE

The group would begin the research with reading up literature on studying/analyzing the image of a city. The literature would give the group a general idea of what are the parameters of mapping the image. This would give the research its preliminary form/shape.

STEP 2 SURVEYING/INTERVIEWING

- SURVEYING: The group would prepare a general questionnaire. A varied audience would be taken for the sample survey. People of varied socio-economic strata and areas of domicile would be interviewed.

- INTERVIEWING: The group would interview (audio and video) experts to get their views on various images.

STEP 3 ANALYSING THE COLLECTED DATA

The data collected would then be analyzed by the group. The group would try to understand the factors that influence the image of people and try to comprehend if a positive or negative image of Delhi is formed after CWG.

STEP 4 DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

The group would then map the overall views of people on image. A conclusion would be put forth if the group reads a pattern in these views.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMAGE VS AUDIENCE</th>
<th>AIM</th>
<th>DELHITES</th>
<th>PEOPLE OF OTHER CITIES</th>
<th>EXPERTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AESTHETIC IMAGE</td>
<td>To understand the factors that contribute to the aesthetic image of the city and how it has been affected by the CWG.</td>
<td>Locals</td>
<td>Domestic Tourists</td>
<td>Architects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONVENIENCE/INFRASTRUCTURE IMAGE</td>
<td>To understand how much people have benefitted (if they have) from the infrastructure growth and the eventual image of Delhi thus formed.</td>
<td>Locals</td>
<td>Domestic Tourists</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SPORTS IMAGE</td>
<td>To Analyze The Impact Of CWG On The Sporting Culture</td>
<td>Locals</td>
<td>Domestic Tourists</td>
<td>Sportsmen And Sports Critics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOURISM IMAGE</td>
<td>To Understand The Growth (If Any) In The Hospitality Industry Due To Image Of Delhi After CWG</td>
<td>Local Tourists</td>
<td>Domestic Tourists</td>
<td>Tourism And Hospitality Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGE</td>
<td>To understand the perceived environmental sensitivity of India</td>
<td>Local Media</td>
<td>Local Media</td>
<td>Environmentalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC/BUSINESS IMAGE</td>
<td>To Understand The Trend Of Investments</td>
<td>Local Businessmen (Those Whose Business Is Directly Affected By CWG)</td>
<td>Businessmen From Various Cities.</td>
<td>Economists</td>
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<tr>
<td>CORRUPTION IMAGE</td>
<td>To understand what image of the city and country has been portrayed due</td>
<td>Local Media and citizens</td>
<td>Local Media and tourists from other parts of the</td>
<td>Media Persons and Government Authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIALIST IMAGE</td>
<td>To understand what image Delhi has portrayed after CWG in terms of a truly democratic society aiming at inclusive growth</td>
<td>Local Media and citizens (particularly the lower strata—which reportedly did not get to enjoy equal opportunities /privileges—were instead hidden /shooed away during the Games</td>
<td>Local Media and tourists from other parts of the country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANAGERIAL SKILLS IMAGE</td>
<td>To understand how the world perceives the image of the country in terms of capability to organize mega-events</td>
<td>Local Media and citizens</td>
<td>Local Media and tourists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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