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## Delhi commonwealth games and human rights

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### Abstract

India hosted a mega sporting event of commonwealth games in 2010. Stake holders with different reasons in mind like transformation of the city by developing sports and civic infrastructure, beautification of the host city, developing roads bridges, health and sanitation and improving transportation for the overall development. On one side, citizens are shown a wonderful picture of games as a game changer whereas on the other hand these games have a story other way round i.e. violation of the environmental laws and human rights.

**Keywords:** Transformation, infrastructure, human rights

### Introduction

The Commonwealth Games or the 'Pan-Britannic-Pan-Anglican Games' were first organized in Hamilton, Canada in 1930 was first proposed by John Astley Cooper in 1891. They are organised every four years since 1930 by the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF), a union of around seventy countries and are referred to as the 'Friendly Games'. Delhi hosted the 19th Commonwealth Games from 03<sup>rd</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010. India had previously lost the CWG bids in 1990 and 1994 and dropped out of the race in 1998 to give support to Kuala Lumpur. Delhi has previous experience of playing host to only the Asian Game i.e. in 1951 and 1982. Delhi's bid to host the Games against Hamilton and Ontario, both from Canada gave it a chance to conduct the Major International Sporting event in the capital city. They are related to the overall development in terms of infrastructure, beautification, health and sanitation, tourism, along with scams and violation of environmental laws and human rights.

### Objectives

1. To find out the reasons to organize Common Wealth Games.
2. To find out the types of developmental work took place in Delhi and economical expenditure done on them.
3. To find out the types of human rights violations as a result of Common Wealth Games in Delhi.

### Methodology

The source of literature for the sake of this paper has been gathered from the journals, books and newspapers.

### Reasons for organizing commonwealth games

1. These games were a matter of 'National Pride' for being in world limelight for at least few weeks.
2. In order to stimulate economic growth and development these games are supposed to produce and restructure billions of dollars worldwide. It is anticipated that years before the event, millions would be pumped into the economy for the contemporary infrastructure such as large sporting amenities. And if the host city furnishes a good appearance of the area, then it will attract business and tourists in the upcoming years. In the course of the games, thousands of guests including athletes, officials, journalists, television staff, and sport fans are expected, who might make longer their stay well beyond the period of the games, and spend well above the average level of per-capita expenditure.

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3. In addition mammoth advertising revenues are likely to be churned out from companies craving to get their products or services out to a large consumer audience world-wide.
4. The games gave the city a broad international coverage it could more often than not only dream about. Even while the CWG merely absorb 70 of the world's 200 nations, these 70 nations consist of 30% of the world's population.
5. The games are by and large related with urban renewal programs that come first the event and help in upgrading the image of the host city all the way through exclusive developments.
6. To develop a pool of trained officials for major events and sport.
7. To boost tourism in India.

### **Types of developmental work which took place during the C.W.G**

#### **Sports venues**

As per the reportings by the various newspapers lot of developmental work which took place is given under different headings:

1. Commonwealth Games village was constructed on the embankment of river Yamuna just next to the Akshardham Temple. Stretched over an area of 40 acres, have the capacity for 8,500 participants and officials. It will be a state-of-the-art village with two zones, a residential area and an area for training facilities comprise air-conditioned auditoriums, dining halls, banking facilities, fitness, cultural and communication centers.
2. New sporting venues the Yamuna Sports Complex in Surajmal Vihar and 05 new outdoor stadia and two indoor stadiums. Land measuring 40000 sq. mts. were earmarked.
3. The sports complexes which were upgraded for the CWG were Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Sports Complex used for opening and closing ceremonies, and also athletics, lawn bowls, and weightlifting; Major Dhyanch and National Stadium for hockey; Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Aquatic Complex for swimming Indira Gandhi Sports Complex for gymnastics, cycling and wrestling; Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range Thyagaraja Sports Complex for netball, and Talkatora Indoor Stadium for boxing. These will have new illumination systems, changing rooms, galleries, leak-proof roofs, air-conditioning plants etc.

#### **Hotels and Leisure**

Approximately nineteen five-star in addition to budget hotels were intended ahead of the year 2010, including in east (two in Mayur Vihar, one in Shahdara) and south Delhi (two in Jasola and one in Okhla). Supplementary facilities like restaurants, shopping places, recreational centres and tourist complexes on the Yamuna river-bed, were also developed for commercial purposes. For the duration of the event, evening entertainment/cultural programmes, arts/craft exhibition of commonwealth countries, food festivals and heritage packages were also well thought-out.

#### **Transport**

To make sure smooth ride for the sportspersons and tourists in the host city between the airports, sports centres, hotels and tourist places, new transport facilities were developed.

**Airports** The Delhi government modernized the international airport. Contracts for the same were awarded in early February 2006 to international consortia, despite opposition. the new airport handle 80 million passengers a year by 2021, as compared to 12.8 million passengers in 2004-05.

**Roads:** The ring road in the city is to also become an expressway. Besides the existing two Ring Roads.

**Buses:** A multi-modal transportation system was developed. The High Capacity Bus system was started in seven corridors. This Postpone other public projects for years. Delhi Transport Corporation would have about 1,100 dedicated low floor shuttle buses (200 A.C, 800 non A.C, and 100 A.C, mini buses) to link the airport, hotels, stadia and tourist spots. All buses had an Automatic Vehicle Tracking System.

**Metro:** An estimated cost of Rs 16,887 crore was given for the Delhi Metro expansion.

**Flyovers and bridges:** Rs 5,700 crore has been allocated for flyovers and bridges alone.

**Parking facilities:** Nine new automated car parks built in the vicinity of the games venues with a capacity for 7,500 vehicles.

#### **Health and Sanitation**

The Health Department has proposed to construct a state-of-the-art sports specialty hospital near the Games Village with network connectivity to super specialty hospitals, and has also underlined the need for 50 new high-tech ambulances for placing near different venues of the Games for sports persons. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi has also laid out the plans for Improvement of surroundings of railway stations, parking and bus stands. Procurement of mechanical sweepers and garbage recycling stations, as also Accessories and uniform for sanitation staff etc. Setting up of health posts, polyclinic, ambulance services, additional equipment in existing hospitals, Training /disaster preparedness and Upgrading storm-water drains at the games village and at venues.

#### **Power**

Delhi plans to be power surplus by the time the Commonwealth Games are held. To make sure additional power to Delhi, the government had undertaken a large power-production initiative to increase production to over 5,880 mega watts (MW) from the current 4,500 MW. The power distribution system was reorganized, more power was directed to Delhi and new power plants were constructed.

#### **Water**

Delhi Jal Board had planned to boost water supply to a large extent by 2010. Two fresh initiatives have been embark on to boost water supply from Centre for Civil Society 13the current 670 million gallons per day (MGD) to 941 MGD. Plans were also in progress to streamline Delhi's solid waste management system.

#### **Social and environmental costs of big games**

- Postpone other public projects for years.
- Cost of living in the city increases with massive hikes in land and housing prices along with increase in carbon foot and disturbed the eco-system.

- The Games also cause large-scale human right violations.

### **Human rights violations as Delhi prepared for CWG**

- Slum demolitions without rehabilitation.
- Destruction of a temporary night shelter for the homeless.
- Evictions of homeless residents, several of who are construction workers for the Commonwealth Games.
- Arbitrary arrests and detention of “beggars” and homeless people. Plan to eradicate beggars and cripples from the streets of Delhi ahead of the Commonwealth Games in 2010 for presenting a cleaner image of the city for the Games. The public, too, should be educated about the "evils of almsgiving, which. Promotes parasites in the society and de-motivates them from doing hard work". Begging is already illegal in Delhi. Anyone caught begging can be arrested and taken before the beggars' court before being incarcerated in one of 12 beggars' homes, which are more like jails than homeless hostels. At present, the law is under-used. Delhi's beggars' homes have room for 3,600 inmates, but just 1,400 are held in them. Many more will have to be built if the estimated 60,000 beggars in the city are to be out of sight before 2010.
- Destruction of livelihoods of hawkers, vendors and others who work on the streets;
- Inconvenience to the public and accidents because of digging up of streets and redoing pavements.
- Plan to “hide” slums behind bamboo screens so as to save visitors and athletes the “not so-pretty” sight
- Stalls selling freshly made food have been banned.
- Thousands of small industrial units have already been closed down, as have shops and neighbourhood stores.
- the cycle rickshaw has been prohibited from most city streets;
- Street vending is being zoned out of existence; and hundreds of thousands of slum dwellers are being uprooted and pushed to the periphery of the city.
- Over 40,000 families were ruthlessly removed from the banks of the river in 2004, just as the Commonwealth Games Village is coming up on.
- A majority gets employed in the construction industry. And often because of the pressure to make things happen quickly, companies blatantly sacrifice labor protections, including longer hours of work, less pay and no safety regulations.
- Environmentalists however warn that the construction on the river-bed is inadvisable as covering the banks with impermeable concrete would threaten Delhi's largest groundwater recharge zone.
- Usage of the Yamuna river-bed for building of the Commonwealth Games Village as it threatens the ecology of the river.
- The state becomes a police state and deploys heavy machinery and troops to undertake surveillance, which makes even ordinary movement difficult. Even while the security for athletes, officials, journalists and spectators is important, it often happens at the expense of human rights, especially those of vulnerable groups.
- About 50 workers were killed in accidents in CWG construction sites in Delhi and fatalities are related projects such as the Delhi Metro, and this was attributed to the pressure.
- Labour laws violations to meet deadlines, and worker safety considerations were neglected (Amis, 2013). Exploitation of workers in CWG was common and this

included “low pay, unsafe working conditions, lack of housing, use of child labour, non-registration of workers, and denial of social security benefits”.

- Sex slavery and prostitution boom. There has been a boom in the number of young girls, mostly from impoverished parts of India, coming to Delhi after being offered jobs by disguised criminals, only to be taken prisoner and forced into sex slavery. The number of victims is believed to be in the hundreds. Many brothels have been running English courses for sex workers and upgrading their facilities in anticipation of a business upturn during the games. Overseas prostitutes are also expected to come as tourists and ply their trade-One anti-trafficking NGO has claimed that there are reports of 40,000 women being brought in from northeastern India alone. A spokesperson said that recruits from that part of India were favored because of their lighter skin. It has been reported that over 3,000 bar girls in Mumbai have stopped going to work; this has been blamed on an exodus to Delhi for the Commonwealth Games-

### **Who gains from mega sporting events?**

- Free reign is given the global entrepreneurs to exploit public funds for private profit and the Games have become a tool of commercialism and corporate greed. The city is packaged as a product to be sold, with the focus on the supposed economic benefits of sport and tourism.
- Members of the organizing committees.
- A two-week advertising attract a high media attention, with television broadcasting to billions of people, companies also line up for sponsorship and advertising.
- Lots of businesses such as marketing firms, hotels, restaurants, and transportation services make big profits. And lastly the winners are also the media who gain more advertising revenues during the event and
- Real Estate Players But by far the biggest winners are the big real estate players because they use the Games as vehicles to push in mega constructions, which can accelerate their businesses in a small span of time.

The cost of living in the city increases with massive hikes in land and housing prices. The Games also cause large-scale human right violations. As seen, no modern games have made money when all costs, including public money and land transfers, infrastructure costs, and security are factored in. “Far from making profits, the host countries come under severe debts. And these debts run up by the state and big business are to be paid by none other than ordinary citizens, by means of higher taxes for years to come”. Taxpayers are in actuality legally accountable for any debt left over from the big mega events. The principle thus applied by the mega sporting events promoters is simple i.e. privatize all the profits and socialize the losses. Public funds pay for the lion's share of the costs of these games. On the contrary these facts are hardly ever shared with the public. The truth of each mega event lies buried beneath a mass of concealed subsidies, unaccounted expenditures, creative book-keeping, and massive branding exercises. Right from the bidding till closing ceremony an estimated of Rs 28,000 crores were spend.

### **Conclusion**

Huge mega sporting events like common wealth games are an economic approach put forward to dole out big economic

benefits by means of a massive program leading to urban restoration beside advertising and marketing revenues. Over the years, these mega sporting events have lost glimpse of sports, instead they have been becoming an excuse for cities to take for granted substantial debt, produce huge disarticulation and turn out to be advertising/marketing machines. The profit, if any, from the games are funnelled to the cities' privileged classes at the cost of the majority of different sections of the city. The mega sporting games never pay for themselves; it is the public money that does along with violation of environmental laws and human rights.

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