

Political aspects of hosting mega sporting management essay



This paper aims to firstly, describe and examine the political aspects of hosting mega sporting on two major levels- national and international levels. On the national level, mega sporting events are able to foster collaboration among the public sector, the private sector and the community. Such events are able to improve government efficiency and used as a tool for the development of new ideas such as environmental sustainability, diversity and community involvement. Furthermore, such events can bring about urban transformation, civic unity and aids in the building of both a national and a cultural identity. At a more macro international level, mega-sporting events can be used as a platform for the promotion of international human rights and social justice and can serve as a tool for the international recognition of states.

Secondly, this paper will analyze economic aspects of hosting mega sporting event by examining the total commercial activity within the country and by weighing the effects of the construction of infrastructure for the mega sporting event. In this segment, the impacts of the commercial activity with respect to the tourism industry, the employment rate and foreign direct investments on the host country will be examined.

Lastly, this paper seeks to examine the success of India in hosting the recent XIX Commonwealth Games 2010. A successful mega-sporting event depends on the host's ability to plan and execute the event so that it is able to achieve new levels of global recognition as well as significant economic, political and social development in the future.

Reasons for Hosting Mega Sporting Events

Political Agendas

In this segment of the paper, the political agendas for hosting mega-sporting events will be discussed on two distinct levels- national and international.

National Level

Civic Pride and Unity

Hosting mega sport events can lead to civic pride[1]. It plays an important role in the way people in the host country view themselves and their community. It allows people in the host country to share their experiences of living in the country and demonstrate values that are close to the heart of the people living in the country. The passion and commitment exhibited by these volunteers will not be able to be matched by salaried workers employed to perform the same duties. Volunteerism allows the people in the country to feel a sense of pride for their country. A society of volunteers is essential to achieving the host country's vision of being an exciting global destination, which is vibrant, cosmopolitan, and at the same time culturally rich and diverse.

Hosting mega-sporting events can aid the building of national identities in some countries such as South Africa by promoting social integration and fostering tolerance amongst the people. Sports can cut across barriers that divide the society, as in the case of South Africa where football was seen to foster social cohesion between the Whites and the Blacks. The lasting image of Nelson Mandela presenting the Rugby World Cup Trophy to the Afrikaner captain Francois Pienaar in 1995 at the event held in South

Africa[2] illustrates how mega-sporting events can bring intangible benefits such as cohesion and unity.

Host countries use mega-sporting events as a great opportunity to demonstrate a positive cultural image, successful integration and traditional values in the international arena with an intention of increasing tourism in the future. The most suitable occasions to display traditional activities depicting nationalism, orientalism and cultural identity in the games are the opening and closing ceremonies[3]. At the 1982 Ninth Asian Games, the overall theme of the unity in diversity in Indian nationalism and culture was the spirit of the ceremonies. There were displays of a variety of dancers depicting the different states in India. (Give more concrete evidence)

Urban Transformation

Mega sporting events are catalysts of substantial urban transformation, particularly from transition from industrial city to a post-industrial city due to changes in the global economy[4]. States are more dependent on the service and tourism industry rather than the manufacturing, local capital investment and public sector intervention due to globalization, deregulation and deindustrialization of the economy[5]. Therefore, more initiatives are being taken by the government to develop and improve infrastructures and fast track the already proposed development plans. For example, Tokyo used the 1964 Olympic games as an opportunity to transform the city from a congested, war-damaged chaos to a modern, prosperous metropolis. Tokyo spent US \$2.7 billion in 1964 on an urban renovation plan which included extensive road improvements, harbor expansions and development of urban amenities, housing, tourist accommodation and waste and sewage disposal <https://assignbuster.com/political-aspects-of-hosting-mega-sporting-management-essay/>

systems. Among Tokyo's vast Olympic expenditure, it was estimated that less than 3% of the expenditure was spent on the construction of purely competition related facilities – the majority was instead spent on meeting the city's short term and long-term development plans[6].

International

Strengthening of Global Image and Positioning

Some countries host mega sporting events as a tool to articulate and signal key messages regarding the host- a dynamic that extends beyond the state based pursuit of public diplomacy[7]. These signals are critical tools of legitimization for the host country in gaining support both domestically and internationally. The media and global communications have played an important role in this aspect by allowing the event to be seen from all over the world at any real time. By hosting mega-sporting events like the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games, the host countries are provided with a “ low cost” but “ high profile” resource for publicizing their policy on international issues or towards specific states.

“ Semi peripheral” countries use mega-sporting events as a tool to signal developmental advances. The Olympics held in Beijing in 2008 illustrate how mega sporting events played an extremely important role in International politics. The Chinese saw the Olympics as less of a sporting spectacle and more of a “ coming out” party[8]. The mega sporting event was used as an opportunity for China to showcase its economics and political development. In fact, the premier of the People's Republic of China, Wen Jiabao stated in an interview in April 2008 that the Beijing Olympics present an opportunity

for China to show the world how “ democratic, open, civilized, friendly and harmonious” it is[9].

Hosting mega sporting events are also used to signal decisive and desirable social change. The 1995 Rugby World Cup in Africa played a significant role in reconciling the blacks and the Whites in South Africa. In particular, it gave the whites in South Africa an opportunity to “ embrace the symbols, leaders and idea of a new, multiracial, democratic country essentially to complete the symbolic journey from the old to new South Africa[10]. Also, the 2010 Football World Cup held recently in South Africa shows the country’s re-entry into the international community and its journey from a pariah state to a global intermediary.

Stage for the Promotion of International Human Rights and Social Justice

Countries use mega-sporting events as a stage to promote international human right issues. This is especially evident during the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 when widespread protest and increased media attention showed how human rights issues were violated by the Chinese government. In the 1968 Mexico games, there were protest and threats of boycotts against the apartheid regime in South Africa. South Africa was also banned from participating in the games. The expulsions of South Africa from the Games lead to international pressure of the anti-apartheid movement and sports sanctions to be imposed on the country until the eventual fall of the apartheid regime. The mega sporting event was successful in the continued enforcement of South African sanctions, maintaining the anti-apartheid movement[11]. The sporting event played an important role in generating <https://assignbuster.com/political-aspects-of-hosting-mega-sporting-management-essay/>

international consciousness for the apartheid regime against South Africa and also helped induced political and social change within the country.

Economic Consequences in the hosting of Mega Sporting Events

In this segment of the paper, the economic agenda of hosting mega sporting events will be discussed in detailed with respect to the total commercial activity and the use of the public funds for the building of infrastructures for the mega sporting event.

Total Commercial Activity

Tourism Industry

The tourism industry will benefit with the increasing media coverage given in conjunction with the hosting of such mega sporting event. Conservative studies estimate increase in post Games tourists to be from 1. 5% to 3% for the last Olympic Games in 2008[12]. This increase in the number of post Games tourist is due to the media coverage of hosting such event. Viewers of the mega sporting event are more likely to develop an interest in visiting the host country, which may lead to a greater desire to visit the country in the future. The mega sporting event gives the host country an opportunity to showcase itself to the world as a leading city for sports and a perfect venue for events as well as an attraction worthy place of repeated visits.

On the other hand, a potential downside to hosting the event is the negative externalities such a congestion may dissuade regular non-interested visitors from visiting the city during the event[13]. This will lead to a fall in the number of people visiting the country. Also, if local restaurants and hotels

are at full capacity, the event may simply supplant rather than supplement the regular tourism industry[14]. For example, in the 2002 World cup held in South Korea, there was an increase in the number of European visitors to the country but this was offset by a similar decrease in the number of regular tourists and business travelers from Japan who chose to avoid the hassles. [15]There were no change in the total number of foreign visitors visiting the country and the number was stagnant at 460 000. This shows a contradiction to the belief that mega sporting events attract large number of visitors to the host country.

Employment Rate

Mega sporting events can result in an increase in the employment rate of the country. New jobs are created in various aspects of the sporting event ranging from transport to construction industry. For example, it was predicted that the Olympic games held in Atlanta and Sydney would generate as many as 77 000 and 100 000 new jobs respectively.

However, countries need to be cautioned to have labor reserves so as to avoid the risk of destroying the economy. It may prove risky for small economies having full employment rates to host mega sporting events as it can lead to the problem of inflation and this will in turn cause the economy to deteriorate.

Foreign Direct Investments

Hosting mega-sporting events can attract foreign direct investments in both the private and public sector from multinational companies. Many multinational corporations are attracted to countries with sophisticated

infrastructure with a safe and pleasant atmosphere. These foreign direct investments will benefit the host country in terms of productive factors such as marketing know-how, training facilities and technological expertise. The host country will also benefit from the spill over effects such as labor training, upgrading of production skills and motivation of local component suppliers, stimulus to competition and development of managerial skills and knowledge about the foreign markets[16]. All these skills will work together to increase the competitiveness of the host city.

The effect of the construction of infrastructure

Mega Sporting Events requires the host country to invest large sums of money in the construction of sporting arenas, which may be used by the government otherwise to improve health care facilities and the education system. For the 2002 Fifa World Cup, South Korea invested an estimated \$2 billion dollars in the construction of ten new stadiums and Japan spent \$ 4 billion dollars in building seven new stadiums and refurbishing three existing ones[17]. The extent to which these facilities and infrastructures are used in the future is extremely important, as the demand is likely to decrease substantially after the mega-sporting event and there is a tendency for these infrastructures to become “ white elephants”. For example, after the 2002 World Cup, only five out of the ten new stadiums had regular tenants. Also, huge amount of money is invested in maintaining the infrastructures. Therefore, it is necessary for the host country to weigh its benefits and cost before deciding to host the mega sporting event.

An Analysis: The XIX Commonwealth Games 2010

Having described the reasons for countries to host mega sporting events, it is now imperative that these reasons be analyzed in the context of the XIX Commonwealth Games 2010(CWG) held recently in India. In its bid for the Commonwealth Games, Delhi's aim was mainly to stimulate economic growth and development and at the same time improve the city's infrastructure[18]. In this segment of the paper, the success of the Games will be assessed on whether the aims of the host country have been fulfilled based on the following variables:

Creating a Lasting Legacy

Focus on Post Event Legacy

Strategy Alignment

It is essential for countries hosting mega-sporting events to implement initiatives that leave a long term sustainable benefit tailored for the Games.

In this aspect, one of vision of the CWG organizing committee was a clear green vision -“ to strive towards reducing carbon footprint and becoming the sustainable development benchmark for multi-disciplinary games in the future”[19]. They implemented many strategic initiatives such as building Green infrastructures, having Green ceremonies and hospitality and at the same time initiated a variety of green procurement policies to create awareness of the environmental degradation and promote environmental movements. A green concerts were held to generate public interest in the Games, sensitize them about the “ Green Games” theme and at the same time to induce the public to support its “ Low Carbon Campaign”. The public

was encouraged to take pledges to protect the environment and badges promoting “ GO GREEN, IT WORKS!” were distributed to encourage the people to do their part in caring for the environment[20].

Social Development

Ideally, a successful mega sporting event is one that provides benefits – economic, political and social to a variety of stakeholders. However, this wasn't the case in the Commonwealth Games. It was reported that children of over 400, 000 construction workers at the Games sites are deprived of basic rights like sanitation, schooling and healthcare[21]. It is important that these children are given their constitutional rights by the government in their attempt to provide world-class infrastructure for the Commonwealth games. Many of the poor are marginalized as a result of the CWG because slums near the Yamuna region where the site of the CWG is at have been demolished. It is estimated that 30 000 to 40 000 families will be displaced by the government as a result of the CWG[22].

Infrastructure

In order for a mega sporting event to be successful, it is important that the event fits into the city's development goal. A legacy of abandoned infrastructure and economic ruins tarnishes the image of the host country.

In the aspect, the Commonwealth Games will benefit the people in India to a large extent in the future. Delhi went through a massive transformation with the building of a new airport terminal, construction of more metro routes and the addition of new buses to facilitate the transport system within the city for

both the locals and tourists. In addition, new flyover and underpasses was also built at an estimated cost of RS. 1650 Crores to solve the traffic congestion problems that the country currently face. However, there is a concern that there will be an underutilization of the sporting infrastructure post event. Many of the stadiums will be vacant and it will be especially difficult to gain access to the stadium since many of it is government owned.

Building a broad base of Support

Hosting a successful mega-sporting event requires the country to have strong:

Common Goal

It is important for the general public, business organizations and the government to provide a single voice and a common goal for the nation so that the best of the country can be presented to a global audience. India's decision to bid for the Commonwealth Games was non-transparent and undemocratic[23]. The CWG was used as an attempt by the government to invigorate an elite driven program of urban transformation that focuses on privatization, secularization and constructions of monuments to vanity. It is disappointing how India's attempt to gain national prestige undermined the urban social movements in India.

Government Support

Financial Guarantees

The government need to be a guarantor for financial obligations and liabilities related to the event for the mega-sporting event to be successful. The government has to make use of their resources wisely to effectively make the event successful due to the huge amount of money involved. In this aspect, the Commonwealth Games 2010 can be deemed as a complete failure.

Firstly, the government did not make use of their resources efficiently. The government for the mega sporting event used millions of dollars, which were irrelevant to the common man in India instead of using it for social development programs and improving the education and healthcare systems in the country. It is important for the government to keep in mind that the money invested in such events comes from public funds and the event should then benefit the public it derives capital from, not restricting itself to the elite rich minority, while simultaneously ensuring that it does no harm to the community[24].

Secondly, there were widespread corruption in various aspects of organizing the event including the procurement and awarding of contracts for the construction of the games venue. For example, the Commonwealth Games organizing committee after investigation of financial irregularities charged TS Darbari and deputy director general Sanjay Mahendroo.

Security

The government needs to play a critical role in keeping the people safe and the job of getting the athletes, support staff and supporters in and out of the country with optimal security. . Mega sporting events, due to their growing <https://assignbuster.com/political-aspects-of-hosting-mega-sporting-management-essay/>

visibility and importance, have become a major target for terrorists and other disruptive forces.

Security questions emerged after gunmen who fired on a tourist bus in New Delhi two weeks before the games injured two visitors from Taiwan[25]. The Indian government have invested around 370 Crores on security[26]. The Indian Government liaised with various central security agencies within India and all predicated countries in the mega event to increase the level of security. Special monitoring security with the electronic surveillance like CCTV, X-Ray baggage scanner was also placed on the relevant positions to check out the disturbance and trouble. The government should be applauded for their attempts in tackling this security issues.

Economic Development

Tourism Rate

There have been a dip in the number of tourist visiting the city due to poor marketing by the Tourism Department and the CWG Organizers and due to negative media coverage surrounding the Commonwealth Games along with Dengue and floods threat. The government had estimated that one million tourists would arrive at the CWG but only 75606 tourists turned up. This caused an adverse impact on the hotel and service industry.

Employment Rate

The employment rate have increased successively in the development and building of infrastructure in Delhi in preparation for the CWG. The building of the CWG infrastructure has involved a great number of contractors,

construction companies and daily wage earners. Even after the CWG, jobs are still secured due to the management and maintenance of the infrastructure, in particular the sport venues and stadiums. The CWG has helped in increasing our employment rate by 1.1 million and this will remain even after the Games[27].

Economic Growth and Foreign Direct Investments

On this aspect, it is too soon to conclude if India have gained or loosed because it has only been one month since the CWG. However, it can be concluded that Delhi will benefit. Delhi has a presence of good connectivity, which allows the city to be linked with other economically vibrant cities in the country. There is a high literacy rate within the population and many of them are highly entrepreneurial. Due to good connectivity, the city has the potential to attract private developers and foreign direct investments in the housing and infrastructure sectors

Conclusion

The Commonwealth Games was not much a failure as many critics have said it to be. The Games went smoothly and the country was able to benefit from the infrastructures built such as the enhanced transport system and the jobs created. However, there were many other aspects that were not as successful- there was corruption charges against some members of the government and there was a lack of social development in the country. Also, the country was unable to shed the “developing country” label due to many controversial issues that arose before and during the Games.