

Mapping the Urban Catalytic Trajectory for 'Convention and Exhibition' Projects: A Case of India International Convention and Expo Centre, New Delhi

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Abstract : Great civic projects contribute integrally to a city, and every city undergoes a recurring cycle of urban transformations and regeneration by their insertion. The M.I.C.E. (Meetings, Incentives, Convention and Exhibitions) industry is the forbearer of one category of such catalytic civic projects. Through a specific focus on M.I.C.E. destinations, this paper illustrates the multifarious dimensions that urban catalysts impact the city on S.P.U.R. (Seed. Profile. Urbane. Reflections), the theoretical framework of this paper aims to unearth these dimensions in the realm of the COEX (Convention & Exhibition) biosphere. The 'COEX Biosphere' is the filter of such catalysts being ecosystems unto themselves. Like a ripple in water, the impact of these strategic interventions focusing on art, culture, trade, and promotion expands right from the trigger; the immediate context to the region and subsequently impacts the global scale. These ripples are known to bring about significant economic, social, and political and network changes. The COEX inventory in the Asian context has one such prominent addition; the proposed India International Convention and Exhibition Centre (IICC) at New Delhi. It is envisioned to be the largest facility in Asia currently and would position India on the global M.I.C.E map. With the first phase of the project scheduled to open for use in the end of 2019, this flagship project of the Government of India is projected to cater to a peak daily footfall of 3,20,000 visitors and estimated to generate 5,00,000 jobs. While the economic benefits are yet to manifest in real time and 'Good design is good business' holds true, for the urban transformation to be meaningful, the benefits have to go beyond just a balance sheet for the city's exchequer. This aspect has been found relatively unexplored in research on these developments. The methodology for investigation will comprise of two steps. The first will be establishing an inventory of the global success stories and associated benefits of COEX projects over the past decade. The rationale for capping the timeframe is the significant paradigm shift that has been observed in their recent conceptualization; for instance 'Innovation Districts' conceptualised in the city of Albuquerque that converges into the global economy. The second step would entail a comparative benchmarking of the projected transformations by IICC through a toolkit of parameters. This is posited to yield a matrix that can form the test bed for mapping the catalytic trajectory for projects in the pipeline globally. As a ready reckoner, it purports to be a catalyst to substantiate decision making in the planning stage itself for future projects in similar contexts.

Keywords : catalysts, COEX, M.I.C.E., urban transformations

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