



Sports Governance in India

This editorial is based on [“India at Commonwealth Games: Sports governance needs to change”](#) which was published in The Indian Express on 28/07/2022. It talks about the upcoming Commonwealth Games and sports governance in India.

For Prelims: Commonwealth Games, National Sports Development Code of India 2011, Indian Olympic Association, National Anti-Doping Agency, Fit India Movement, Khelo India, National Sports Award Scheme.

For Mains: Current Model of Sports Governance in India, Issues Associated with Sports Governance in India, Government Initiatives to promote Sports Culture in India.

The **21st edition of the [Commonwealth Games](#)** kicks off with the opening ceremony in the host city of **Birmingham, United Kingdom**. India is leading the way as a strong contingent.

Given **India's economy** and the country's **young demographics**, the narrative of **[Sports in India](#) is undergoing a transformation**. But sport's booming interest in India has **not necessarily translated into better performance in the overall sports sector, barring a few sports like cricket and shooting**.

There is a **high level of complexity in the Indian sport sector** as **diverse organizations** (e.g., **governing bodies, private companies, not-for-profit foundations**, etc.) are responsible for delivering and managing sport in India. Ultimately, the **size and complexity of the sector** is a significant contributor to a series of **specific governance challenges for sport in India**.

What is the History of Sports Governance in India?

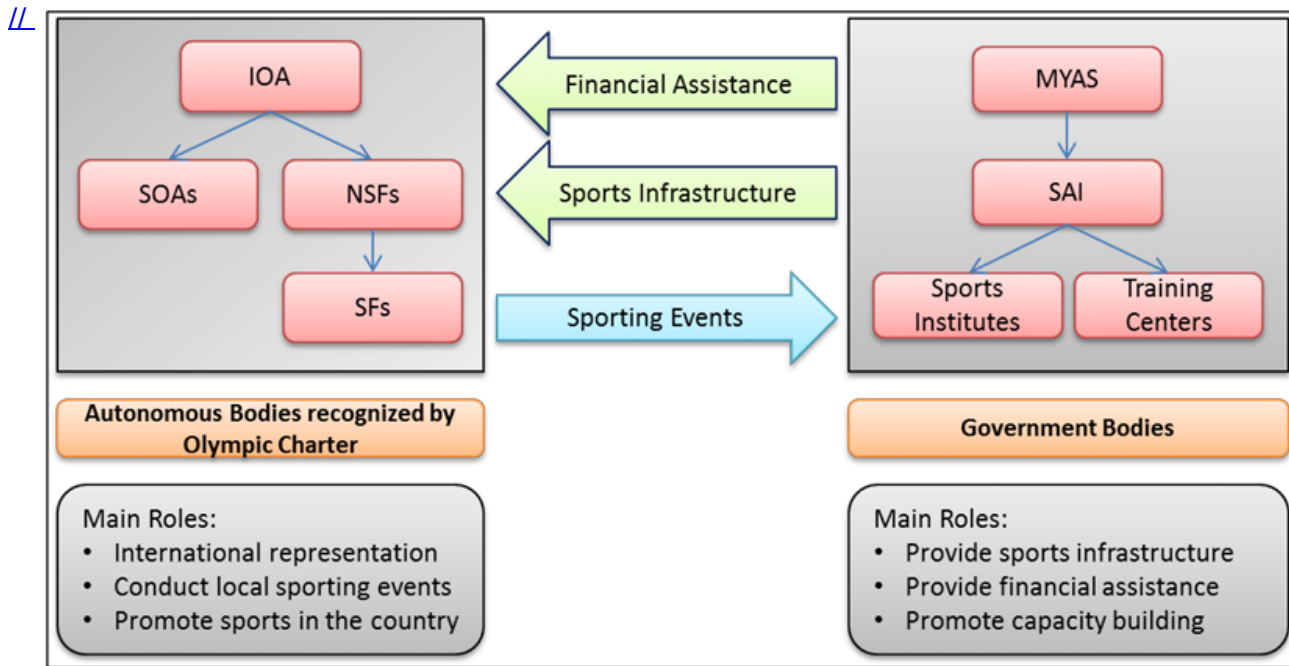
- In the **early 1950s**, the **Federal Government** created the **All India Council of Sports (AICS)** to apprehend the declining standards of sports in the country.
- In **1982**, after Asian games, the department of sports was transformed into the **Department of Youth Affairs and Sports**.
- In **1984**, National Sports Policy was initiated.
- In **2000**, the department was converted into a **[Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports \(MYAS\)](#)**.
- In **2011**, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports notified the **National Sports Development Code of India 2011**.
- In **2022**, Ministry of Civil Aviation launched **[National Air Sport Policy 2022](#)** (NASP 2022) for **Aerobatics, Aero modeling, Ballooning, [Drones](#), Hang gliding and powered hang gliding, Parachuting etc.**

What is the Current Model of Sports Governance in India?

- The model in India has stakeholders such as the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS)**,

[Indian Olympic Association \(IOA\)](#), [State Olympic Association \(SOA\)](#), [National Sports Federation \(NSF\)](#), [Sports Authority of India \(SAI\)](#), etc.

- A broad level graphical representation of the arrangements amongst them is as follows:



What are the Issues Associated with Sports Governance in India?

- **Unclear Demarcation of Rights and Responsibility:** Sport is delivered by many different parties. Currently, there is very little distinction between management and governance within Indian sport. In many Indian sporting organizations, the executive committee — the body ostensibly responsible for governance — usually finds itself doing the management work.
 - **Lack of Checks and Balances:** In the pretext of autonomy, they have been allowed to function in any manner without checks and balances.
- **Lack of Transparency and Accountability:** The current sports model faces accountability issues such as that of having **unlimited discretionary powers** and also there is **no transparency in the decision-making with irregularity in revenue management**.
 - For instance, in July 2010, the [Central Vigilance Commission](#) released a report which showed that there were **irregularities in 14 projects of Commonwealth Games** held in India.
 - The **2013 Indian Premier League spot-fixing** and betting case arose when the Delhi Police arrested three cricketers, on the charges of alleged spot-fixing.
 - Subsequently, the [Lodha Committee](#) was **appointed by the Supreme Court of India** to analyze and recommend implementable actions for improving the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- **Inadequate Professionalization:** Many Indian sport organizations, particularly the governing bodies, have not made structural adaptations to meet the associated challenges of a commercialized and professional sector.
 - These organizations continue to rely on volunteers to manage the operations of the organization rather than hiring skilled professionals to handle the increased workload.
- **Sports as a Hobby vs Profession:** In India, sports is **primarily viewed as a hobby due to its low success rate, academic pressures** and [job-seeker mentality](#), making it difficult for youth to pursue sports as a profession.
- **Lack of Sufficient Infrastructure:** Status of sports infrastructure in India is yet to reach the desired level. This creates an obstacle in developing a culture of sports in the country.
 - According to the **Constitution of India**, sport is a [State subject](#) consequently there is **no comprehensive approach for the development of sports infrastructure uniformly** throughout the country.

- **Performance Enhancing Drugs:** Use of performance enhancing drugs is still a major problem in the sports sector. This problem still needs to be addressed effectively, despite the creation of the [National Anti Doping Agency](#) in the country.

What are the Recent Government Initiatives to Promote Sports Culture?

- [Fit India Movement](#)
- [Khelo India](#)
- [SAI Training Centers Scheme](#)
- [Sports Talent Search Portal](#)
- [National Sports Awards Scheme](#)
- [Target Olympic Podium](#)

What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Adequate Infrastructure Investment:** To become a leading sports nation, India will have to invest heavily in **building a modern infrastructure with** international best practices in **sports training, [sport medicine](#), research and analysis** across the sport institutions with **adequate attention to all major sports**.
 - The **quality of infrastructure can be scaled up to the village level** and **regional centers** should be made available for those who are serious at taking their sport professionally.
- **Effective Legislative Backing:** In the absence of strong legislation, there will be no efficacy in the functions of the sports authorities. Also, there might be **absolute political intervention**, which can be easily checked with a **well-drafted legislation reducing anomalies**.
- **Restructuring Governance and Management:** There should be a **proper** demarcating of roles and responsibilities among different bodies involved in the Indian sport sector to **maximize the use of resources and ensure** there are **no gaps in meeting the needs of sport**.
 - However, this needs to be done in **conjunction with the sectors in stake** and **cannot be dictatorial along with inclusion of professionals in the strategic and management spot**.
 - Formation of the separate **‘Corporate Functions’** group for **management of sponsorships, [media rights](#) and government funding** will help fix the responsibility of **revenue management**.
- **Creating Sports Awareness:** By incorporating sports into children’s daily lives, it will not only boost their confidence, self-image and personality, but also open the gateway to a possible career in sports.
 - **Towards Bottom-Up Approach:** The change has to begin from the primary education level to build a **sporting culture in the country**.
 - The **education system** should be revamped to give sports an equal importance in the holistic upbringing of a child.
- **Developing as a Potential Training Hub:** India has an **immense coaching talent with vast experience** in different sports that can act as a catalyst for the development of India as a **training hub for sports like Kabaddi and Cricket at an international sphere**.
 - **Example: Iten, Kenya.**
 - There is a small town called **Iten in Kenya**. It has produced more than 10 world champions in athletics in the last couple of decades.
 - Almost every middle-distance runner in the world has been to Iten for training at least once in their lifetime.

Drishti Mains Question

“Complexity of the current model of sports governance is a significant contributor to a series of challenges for development of sports culture in India.” Comment.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following statements in respect of the Laureus World Sports Award which was instituted in the year 2000: (2021)

1. American golfer Tiger Woods was the first winner of this award.
2. The award was received mostly by 'Formula One' players so far.
3. Roger Federer received this award maximum number of times compared to others.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

Q. Consider the following statements in respect of the ICC World Test Championship: (2021)

1. The finalists were decided by the number of matches they won.
2. New Zealand was ranked ahead of England because it won more matches than England.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans : (d)