



National Sports Policy 2025

For Prelims: [1991 Economic Reforms](#), [Olympics](#), [Khelo India](#), [Fit India Movement](#), [Wrestling Federation of India](#)

For Mains: Evolution of sports policy in India, Challenges in India's sports ecosystem, Sports governance and reforms

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the **National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025 (Khelo Bharat Niti 2025)**, replacing the **National Sports Policy, 2001**. It outlines a roadmap to make India a global sporting powerhouse with a focus on the [2036 Olympics](#).

What are the Key Pillars of the National Sports Policy 2025?

▪ Pillars of NSP 2025:

- **Excellence on the Global Stage:** Focuses on strengthening sports from grassroots to elite levels through early talent identification, development of competitive leagues and infrastructure, and creation of world-class training and coaching systems.
 - It also aims to enhance National Sports Federations' governance, promote sports science and technology, and train coaches, officials, and support staff.
- **Sports for Economic Development:** It promotes sports tourism, startups, and private investment to strengthen India's role in the global sports economy.
- **Sports for Social Development:** The policy emphasizes the role of sports in promoting social inclusion by encouraging participation from marginalized groups, reviving traditional and indigenous games, and fostering diaspora engagement and volunteering.
- **Sports as a People's Movement:** To make sports a national movement, the policy aims to promote mass participation and a fitness culture through campaigns, introduce fitness indices for institutions, and improve access to sports facilities across the country.
- **Integration with Education (NEP 2020):** Aligned with National Education Policy 2020, it seeks to integrate sports into school curricula and train educators to foster early sports engagement.

▪ Strategic Framework:

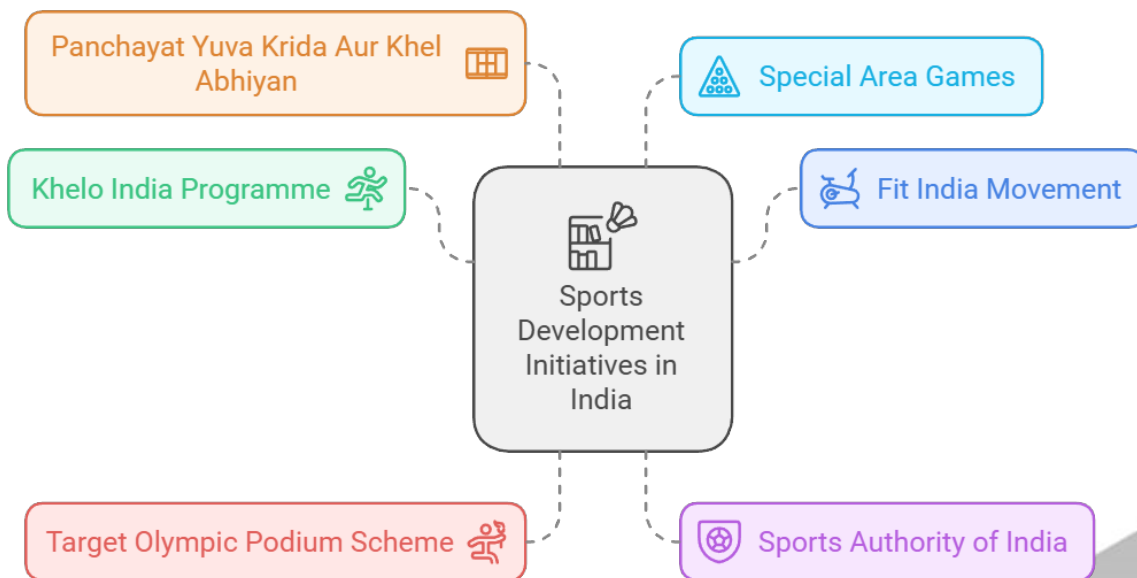
- **Governance:** NSP 2025 aims to establish a legal and regulatory framework to ensure transparency and accountability in sports administration.
- **Private Sector Participation:** Mobilize private investments via [Public-Private Partnerships \(PPPs\)](#), [Corporate Social Responsibility \(CSR\)](#) and innovative funding initiatives.
- **Technology and Innovation:** Use [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#), [data analytics](#), and emerging technologies for performance tracking and program delivery.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Set up a national framework with **Key Performance**

Indicators (KPIs) and time-bound targets for regular progress tracking.

- **Model Policy for States:** Serve as a guide for **States and Union Territories** to create or update their own sports policies aligned with national goals.

How has India's Sports Policy Evolved?

- **State of Sports in India Post-1947:** India hosted the **first Asian Games in 1951**, signaling its regional aspirations. In 1954, the **All-India Council of Sports (AICS)** was created to advise the government and support elite athletes.
 - However, modest funding meant Indian athletes often missed international events due to financial constraints.
 - Despite limited state support, legends like **Milkha Singh, Gurbachan Singh, Praveen Kumar Sobti, and Kamaljeet Sandhu** brought India glory in athletics. Meanwhile, India's men's hockey team dominated the Olympics from the 1920s to the 1980s.
- **Beginning of India's Sports Policy:** The now Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) began as the **Department of Sports in 1982 during the IX Asian Games in New Delhi**. It was renamed the **Department of Youth Affairs & Sports in 1985 during the International Youth Year**.
 - In 2000, it was elevated to a full-fledged Ministry, and later bifurcated into two departments as Youth Affairs and Sports.
 - **In 1984**, India introduced its **first National Sports Policy (NSP)** that focused on infrastructure, mass participation, and elite excellence.
 - It advocated integration of sports with education (formalized in the National Policy On Education 1986).
 - The Sports Authority of India (SAI) was established in 1986 to implement policies.
 - Between 1986 and 2000, sports saw uneven implementation due to its **status as a State subject**, with low budgets and limited public or market engagement.
- **Impact of Liberalisation on Indian sports:** The **1991 economic reforms** and the rise of cable television significantly boosted sports visibility and public interest, especially among the **urban middle class**, which began engaging with sports beyond just cricket.
 - In response, the **1997 Draft Sports Policy** proposed States focus on mass sports and the Centre on elite athletes, but it was never enacted.
- **Indian Sports in the 21st Century:** The MYAS launched a **revised National Sports Policy (2001)** focused on mass participation and international success.
 - While sports gained budgetary support, Olympic medals remained limited—**Rathore (2004), Bindra (2008), Vijender and bronzes in boxing from Vijender Singh (2008) and Mary Kom (2012)**.
 - The **National Sports Development Code (2011)** aimed to reform NSFs, addressing governance and doping, but faced implementation challenges.
- **Major Sports Schemes:**
 - **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (2014):** Coaching and support for elite athletes.
 - **Khelo India (2017):** Talent scouting across schools/universities.
 - **Fit India Movement (2019):** Encouraged fitness at the grassroots level.



What are the Challenges in India's Sports Ecosystem?

- **Governance and Ethical Failures:** India's sports governance suffers from politicisation, **red tape**, and **lack of professionalism**. Mismanagement cases, such as the [Wrestling Federation of India sexual harassment case \(2023\)](#) and **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)'s** suspension by **International Olympic Committee (2022)**, reflect systemic issues.
 - Poor athlete support, seen in incidents like [Vinesh Phogat](#) missing Olympic qualification over a minor weight issue, exposes gaps in scientific coaching and planning.
- **Cricket-Centric Sports Market:** Cricket dominates media, sponsorships, and funding. In **2023**, **cricket dominated 87% of India's sports market, leaving just 13%** for all other sports like football, hockey, and badminton.
 - Other sports like athletics, hockey, or wrestling get minimal visibility and investment.
- **Low Athlete Representation:** Although India sent its **largest-ever Olympic contingent of 117 athletes to the [Paris 2024 Games](#)**, the number remains significantly lower than countries like the U.S. (594), France (572), and Australia (460).
 - This highlights persistent gaps in grassroots talent scouting and early-stage athlete development, despite India's large population.
- **Lack of Structured Talent Scouting:** India lacks a streamlined grassroots scouting system. Rural and tribal talent often goes unnoticed.
 - For example, Tulsidas Balaram (Indian footballer) was discovered by chance, highlighting the need for systemic scouting.
- **Gender Disparity in Participation:** Women face fewer opportunities, infrastructure gaps, and social stigma.
 - **49% of girls drop out of sports** (six times higher than boys) due to safety concerns, lack of role models, and body image issues. **21% of women athletes report childhood abuse**, undermining safe and equal participation (UNESCO, 2024).
- **Overemphasis on Academics:** Cultural pressure prioritizes academics over sports as a career. Parents and schools often treat sports as extracurricular, not essential. This limits early sports participation and physical literacy.

What Measures can be Taken to Promote Sports in India?

- **Strengthen Grassroots Talent Identification:** Launch structured scouting programs in rural, tribal, and underserved regions. Leverage initiatives like **Khelo India** and **Fit India Movement** to create a bottom-up approach.
 - Introduce models like Australia's Talent Search Program, which uses **physiological tests in schools to identify potential Olympians**.
- **Upgrade Sports Infrastructure:** Develop inclusive and accessible sports facilities at the district and block level.

- **PM-USPY (PM-Uchchatar Shiksha Prasadhan Yojana)** can be expanded to integrate sports in universities.
- **Reform Sports Governance:** Ensure autonomy, transparency, and professionalism in National Sports Federations (NSFs). Appoint sports professionals, not politicians, in key federation roles.
- **Promote Gender Equality in Sports:** Provide safe and inclusive spaces for girls and women in sports. Ensure gender audits, grievance redressal mechanisms, and equal pay in national teams.
 - **UNESCO's "Sport and Gender Equality Game Plan" (2024)** calls for eliminating violence in sports and increasing female participation globally.
- **Leverage Technology and Sports Science:** Leverage AI, wearables, and data analytics beyond cricket for performance tracking and injury prevention.
 - Establish zonal and national sports science centres for nutrition, psychology, and biomechanics support.
 - Countries like China and the UK use advanced labs and data systems for Olympic training.
- **Foster Sports Culture and Public Awareness:** Launch mass media campaigns to normalize sports as a career and lifestyle. Organize community sports festivals, school leagues, and state championships regularly.
- **Institutionalize Monitoring and Evaluation:** Set KPIs at central and state levels for tracking sports outcomes. Use real-time dashboards and third-party audits to assess progress.
 - NSP 2025 envisions a national framework for sports evaluation, which must be operationalized effectively.

Conclusion

India's transformation into a global sporting power demands more than policies—it needs implementation, accountability, and sustained vision. With NSP 2025 and the 2036 Olympic aspiration, India stands at a historic juncture. If backed by reforms, inclusivity, and investment, sports can emerge as a powerful engine of national development.

Drishti Mains Question:

Discuss the key features of the National Sports Policy 2025. Examine the persistent challenges in the Indian sports ecosystem and suggest systemic reforms.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q1. 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 the 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)

Q2. 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)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/national-sports-policy-2025>

