



# International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health

P-ISSN: 2394-1685  
E-ISSN: 2394-1693  
Impact Factor (RJIIF): 5.38  
IJPESH 2025; 12(3): 380-388  
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<https://www.kheljournal.com>  
Received: 09-04-2025  
Accepted: 12-05-2025

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## From policy to podium: Evaluating the evolution and implementation of India's sports policies from 1984 to khelo India

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**DOI:** <https://www.doi.org/10.22271/kheljournal.2025.v12.i3f.3822>

### Abstract

India's pursuit of becoming a sporting nation has seen the introduction of multiple sports policies and grassroots development schemes over the past four decades. This study undertakes a comprehensive analysis of India's evolving sports governance framework, with a particular focus on the Khelo India Programme, the most ambitious and contemporary initiative aimed at transforming the nation's sporting landscape. Through a chronological exploration of key policy interventions—including the National Sports Policies of 1984 and 2001, the Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA), Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA), Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS), National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS), and the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF)—this research evaluates the conceptual evolution, design, and on-ground implementation of these efforts.

While these initiatives sought to democratize access to sports, bridge urban-rural divides, and foster excellence through institutional frameworks, their effectiveness has been impeded by fragmented execution, bureaucratic hurdles, and underutilization of funds. The research places special emphasis on Khelo India, examining its integrated approach to talent identification, athlete development, funding mechanisms, and infrastructure creation. Using policy document analysis, field insights, and comparative performance data, particularly in athletics, the study critically evaluates how Khelo India fares against international benchmarks such as those set by the United States' and UK Sport.

Despite its strategic vision and substantial government investment, the Khelo India programme reveals significant shortcomings in the areas of talent nurturing, clarity in stipend distribution, quality coaching, and the inclusion of athletes from remote and tribal regions. Challenges such as age fraud, doping among youth athletes, and inadequate representation of Union Territories further highlight systemic inefficiencies. A statistical analysis of India's performance in youth categories, especially in athletics, underscores a consistent underachievement relative to global peers.

The findings suggest that while Khelo India represents a positive policy shift towards an ecosystem-driven sports model, it must evolve through greater transparency, technological integration, inter-ministerial coordination, and public-private partnerships to realize its full potential. The research argues for a recalibration of national sports policy to prioritize sustained grassroots engagement, long-term athlete development models, and institutional accountability, positioning India to cultivate not just sports champions, but a widespread and resilient sporting culture. Only through such structural reforms can India's sports development ambitions align with its global aspirations.

**Keywords:** Khelo India, talent identification, grassroots sports development, sports policy in India, youth athletics, sports infrastructure, coaching deficit, doping in sports, age fraud, public sports funding, national sports policy, inclusive sports culture, Indian sports ecosystem, stipend disparity, rural athlete representation

### Introduction

Physical education, games, and sports have gotten a lot of attention in India over the years, thanks to various plans. However, it wasn't until 1982, when India hosted the IX Asian Games that "Sports" as a policy topic gained traction. Additionally, a distinct Ministry of Sport was established inside the larger Ministry of Human Resource Development during this year. The National Sports Policy of 1984 was the first step in creating a structured and methodical framework for the development and promotion of sports in the nation. The sheer participation

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of Indian sportsmen in various competitions and events was insufficient to promote sports in India. The legislators felt pressured to implement a policy in order to raise the sporting bar for the nation. With this idea in mind, a resolution on the National Sports Policy was approved by both Houses of Parliament in August 1984.

It was decided that when the policy was put into place, the results would be tracked and reviewed every five years so that the next course of action could be planned in case it was thought necessary. The National Sports Policy's emphasis areas were added for use in the educational field in the National Education Policy of 1986. Along with the National Sports Policy, the government established the Sports Authority of India (SAI) in 1984 as a top body to advance (a) the training of coaches, (b) the preparation of physical education teachers, (c) participation in sports and physical activity, and (d) the development of sports infrastructure. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports currently has authority over sport. The Ministry reformulated the National Sports Policy in 2001 to make it more concrete and to specify the measures to be undertaken and the agencies (for example, state governments, the Indian Olympic Association [IOA], and the national sports federations) to carry out these measures after noting that the National Sports Policy of 1984 was not implemented properly and that its goals were not realised (Chelladurai *et al.*, 2002) <sup>[10]</sup>.

The National Sports Policy of 2001 places a strong emphasis on "Broadening Sports" at the grassroots level and "Promoting Excellence in Sports" at the national and international levels. The following are the key elements of the policy: 1. Strengthening of scientific and coaching assistance for sports; 2. Upgrading and development of infrastructure; 3. Support for National Sports Federations and other sports

entities; 4. Broadening the base of sports and achieving excellence 5. Promotional incentives 6. Increased engagement of women, scheduled tribes, and rural youth; 7. Corporate sector involvement in sports promotion; and 8. Increased public awareness of sports.

Before the recent Khelo India Scheme, the government had adopted a number of schemes which aimed at accomplishing the two primary goals of the National Sports Policy 2001; we'll look at the provisions and effective implementation of these policies in chronological order.

Between 1984 and 2001 The National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) was founded in 1998 under the Charitable Endowments Act 1890, it was notified by the Government of India in November 1998. The Fund was established with the intention of giving momentum and flexibility to advancing the cause of sports. It was created with the intention to support athletes' success by giving them the chance to train with renowned international coaches who can offer them technical, scientific, and psychological support as well as exposure to international competitions. The Fund also aimed at providing financial support for the construction of infrastructure and other sports-related activities. However, it wasn't until the "NSDF Target Olympic Podium (TOP) Scheme" was developed with the aim of identifying and assisting prospective medal contenders for the 2016 and 2020 Olympic Games that it gained public attention and recognition.

Contributions to the NSDF are accepted from statutory entities, international organisations, private and public corporate sectors, trusts, societies, and individuals. The Indian government pays a matching contribution.

**Major contributions to the NSDF (Rs.one crore and above) come from the following sources**

**Table 1:** Contributions to NSDF

S.No	Name	Year	Amount (in Rupees)
1.	Contribution by Shri Kapil Dev	2000-01	12,100,000.00
2.	Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)	2007-08	10,000,000.00
3.	Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)	2007-08 and 2008-09	500,000,000.00
4.	State Government of Madhya Pradesh	2009-10	10,000,000.00
5.	State Government of Haryana	2009-10	10,000,000.00
6.	State Government of Maharashtra	2011-12	10,000,000.00
7.	Jaypee Sports International Limited	2011-12 to 2013-14	300,000,000.00
8.	India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL)	2014-15 to 2017-18	300,000,000.00
9.	Bank of Baroda	2015-16	10,000,000.00
10.	Power Grid Corporation of India Limited	2004-05, 2016-17 and 2017-18 and 2018-19	45,500,000.00
11.	State Bank of India	2003-04 and 2016-17	10,500,000.00
12.	Coal India Ltd	2016-17	250,000,000.00
13.	Bharat Dynamics Ltd	2016-17	22,500,000.00
14.	The New India Assurance Co Ltd	2016-17 and 2018-19	40,000,000.00
15.	Power Finance Corporation Limited	2000-01 and 2016- 17 and 2018-19	21,200,000.00
16.	TOTAL		1,551,800,000.00

**Source:** Annual Report, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

As seen in the table, the maximum funds trickled down from contributors to the benefit of sports on or after 2016, demonstrating the fund's redundancy in previous years; however, the NSDF was active and had helped players prior to 2016, but the efficiency and intensity of contribution was comparatively very low.

### Pykka implementation

The Panchyat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA) intends to achieve the above goals by providing basic sports facilities and equipment at the Panchayat level, as well as supporting rural sports and games through annual contests at

the block, district, state, and national levels. On the 9th of May, 2008, the Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan programme was conveyed to all state governments and other organisations involved in the execution of PYKKA. According to a government report, the Planning Commission recommended a budget allocation of Rs. 1500 crore for the 11th Plan period, against which a budget allocation of Rs. 92 crore was supplied in 2008-09 and a budget allocation of Rs. 160 crore was granted in 2009-10.

**RGKA Implementation:** In 2014, the former Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA) was replaced by the

Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA). With limited funds, under the PYKKA Scheme, playfields were established in villages and block panchayats. To address this shortcoming, the revised RGKA scheme mandated the construction of a sports complex in each block of the country for both outdoor and indoor sports disciplines on land measuring approximately six to seven acres at a cost of Rs. 1.60 crore (Rs. 80 lakh each for the outdoor playfield and the indoor sports hall).

**USIS Implementation:** With effect from 2010-11, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is piloting a scheme called the Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS). Under this programme, state governments and union territories receive 100 percent funding for the creation of Synthetic playing surfaces (for hockey, football, and sports); and Indoor multipurpose hall. State governments, local civic bodies, schools, colleges, and universities under the control of the federal and state governments, as well as sports control boards, were all eligible for aid under this program. The projects' financial limits were Rs. 5.50 crore with normal lighting for a synthetic athletic track, Rs. 4.50 crore (5.00 crore with normal lighting) for a synthetic hockey field, Rs. 4.50 crore with normal lighting for a synthetic turf football ground, and Rs. 6.00 crore for a multipurpose hall measuring 60 metres by 40 metres.

**NSTSS Implementation:** The National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS) was established to find and develop excellent athletes aged 8 to 12. The scheme is being implemented by the government of India's Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports over a five-year term, from 2015-16 to 2019-20. It intends to encompass all schools in various states and UTs across the country (both rural and urban). The entire expected budget for conducting the Talent Search Test is predicted to be Rs. 41.30 crores (Rs. 42 cr. approx.), which will amount to around Rs. 120 crores over the five-year reference period.

**Failures of the erstwhile schemes:** All of these projects, however, were established with lofty goals in mind, but they were cancelled ahead of schedule due to flaws in specific areas that they were unable to address, as detailed in the MYAS Annual Report for the 2016-17 session.

PYKKA (RGKA later), USIS, and NSTSS, were unable to address issues such as Consistent hosting of sporting events to identify talent; • To develop and nurture talent at grassroot levels • Lack of coordination between the centre and states leading to low levels of infrastructure creation and utilisation across the country • Limited effort to use sport's soft power to unite the country and use sport to harness the energies of the youth in far-flung areas • lack of focused programmes to push women to make a mark in sport. Another flaw was identified in the government study, which focused on the PYKKA Scheme's successful implementation of targets. By the end of the 12th Plan (2008-09 to 2012-2013), there were 2.5 lakh proposed play fields in village panchayats and 6,375 in block panchayats. However, only 60,421 village panchayats and 1,852 block panchayats came into existence by 2013.

**Khelo India Implementation:** A new reform was suggested as a way to improve the country's sports environment through a holistic, integrated strategy. As a result, during the fiscal year 2016-17, a new umbrella programme called "Khelo India" was created by combining the three existing schemes

Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA), Urban Sports Infrastructure Plan (USIS), and National Sports Talent Search System Programme (NSTSSP).

#### The scheme was designed to achieve the following goals:

1. Involvement of a large number of young people in sports through annual sports tournaments;
2. Identification of sporting talent;
3. Nurturing of sporting skill through sports academies
4. Establishment of sports infrastructure at the local, district, state, and federal levels.

The Khelo India budget for the fiscal year 2016-17 was Rs. 140 crore, which included a value of Rs. 43.96 crore sanctioned/released for organising Annual Competitions in 2016-17 and a sum of Rs. 64.10 crore for infrastructure development.

However, the current scheme was rebuilt into the updated Khelo India- National Programme for Development of Sports in order to broaden its reach and achieve the same twin objectives of mass participation and promotion of excellence in sports. The Cabinet adopted the redesigned "Khelo India- National Programme for Sports Development" at its meeting on September 20, 2017.

#### Following are the Components of the redesigned Khelo India Scheme

1. Playfield development
2. Community coach development
3. State level khelo india centres
4. Annual sports competitions
5. Talent identification and development
6. Creation/upgradation of sports infrastructure
7. Support to national sports academies
8. Physical fitness
9. Sports for women
10. Sports for peace & development
11. Promotion of sports among persons with disabilities
12. Promotion of rural and indigenous/tribal games.

Without a doubt, all of these programmes were developed with good intentions and with the goal of expanding India's sports culture. However, it is critical to understand why prior programmes failed, resulting in the creation of new sports development schemes. Schemes are well-designed, but are they well-implemented as well? Analysing the current scheme, the revised Khelo India programme, will reveal which failures are occurring when attempting to apply policies at the grassroots level.

#### Analysing the success/failure of khelo india

**Talent Identification:** We're on the hunt for talent, but are we developing them to be the best in the world? The first Khelo India School Games, held in 2018, were a watershed moment for Indian athletics. According to a Business Standard examination of times and distances in Under-18 track and field events staged in the United States and the United Kingdom, India's junior athletes have a long way to go before they can catch up to American and British athletes. The records of these junior international athletes were then compared to the Khelo India school games records set by India's junior players. A comparison of timings achieved in track events reveals that India's school athletes have consistently underperformed their American and British counterparts, as shown in the table below.

**Table 2:** Khelo India school games (2018) results compared with us and UK

Event (Boys)	India's Record (in minutes)	US Record (in minutes)	UK Record (in minutes)
100 Mtr	10.76	10.15	10.61
110 Mtr Hurdle	14.12	14.46	13.51
200 Mtr	21.82	20.51	21.34
400 Mtr	49.05	45.38	47.82
800 Mtr	01:52.08	01:49.9	01:48.7

**Table 3:** Khelo India school games (2018) results compared with us and UK

Event (Boys)	India's Record (in metres)	US Record (in metres)	UK Record (in metres)
Pole Vault Athletics	4.70	4.87	4.86
Long Jump	7.04	7.74	7.22
High Jump	2.01	2.18	2.04

**Table 4:** Khelo India school games (2018) results compared with us and UK

Event (Girls)	India's Record (in minutes)	US Record (in minutes)	UK Record (in minutes)
100 Mtr Run	12.36	11.28	11.66
200 Mtr Run	24.76	23.21	23.76
400 Mtr Run	56.39	52.05	53.68
800 Mtr Run	02:13.37	02:07.10	02:04.5

**Table 5:** Khelo India school games (2018) results compared with us and UK

Event (Girls)	India's Record (in metres)	US Record (in metres)	UK Record (in metres)
Pole Vault	3.50	4.11	4.35
High Jump	1.76	1.85	1.77
Triple Jump	12.29	13.25	12.36
Shot Put	13.88	14.56	15.46

The statistics clearly shows that our sports institutes and coaches must put in a lot of effort to ensure that Indian young athletes compete on an equal footing with their American and British peers. Young athletes from the United States and the United Kingdom are performing as well as their elders, and America is leading the pack, just as it does in Olympic podium finishes. Our ladies are straining to match the International Standard of Athletic Achievements, while our boys are struggling to compete with the American kids. The absence of sufficient dietary facilities, inadequate training facilities, and a flippant attitude of sports administrators towards school level athletes may explain some of India's juvenile athletes' poor performance when compared to Western competitors.

### Talent Development

Now that talent has been identified, it's time to talk about Developing Talent, which can only be ensured if high-level training camps with appropriate athletic facilities are organised, and master trainers are involved in training the selected athletes under the Khelo India Games. A more vexing question is whether or not these athletes, who were chosen by an expert panel, are attending the camps. Are they willing and able to participate in these valuable training camps? Willing, yes, because 90% of them aspire to be sports stars in the future, but are they able to attend these camps without encountering any obstacles, according to the statistics? While Pune hosted the second Khelo India Games in 2018, it has been revealed that more than half of the athletes selected for the first edition have yet to join the government's flagship programme. Only 625 of the 1,518 under-17 athletes picked by a high-powered panel have signed up for training camps at the sports ministry's identified 89 academies. The main reason the remaining 893 athletes didn't attend these camps was their apprehension about leaving their schools in the middle of the school year.

**Selection Dilemma:** The reason for their inability as highlighted by the SAI (Sports Authority of India) Director is that "Khelo India talent is selected throughout the year, and it is not possible for all of the players to change schools in the middle of the academic year to join an academy." Athletes have also raised concerns about additional issues that have prevented them from enrolling in the Khelo India Training Academies. They would have to leave their current academy and coaches and relocate to the centre allotted to her/him. Athletes were not allowed to continue training at their original academy and take advantage of the scheme's perks, according to the government's regulations.

**Uncertainty about Stipend:** One of the most common reasons for non-attendance was a lack of clarity about the stipend. The government has announced that it will train athletes selected under the Khelo India scheme and provide them with an annual stipend of up to Rs 5 lakh apiece for the next eight years. According to project officials, there were several pull outs due to misunderstanding regarding cash remuneration. A trainee who chose not to participate in the programme claimed that his coaches and parents believed he would be paid Rs 5 lakh per year under the scheme. He changed his mind after the government declared that the actual stipend will be Rs 10,000 per month (Rs. 1,20,000 per year). It seems absurd to assume that this standard number of 10,000 would work for all athletes. A sprinter would have quite different needs than a hockey player, and each would have various costs associated with training, equipment, recovery, and travel.

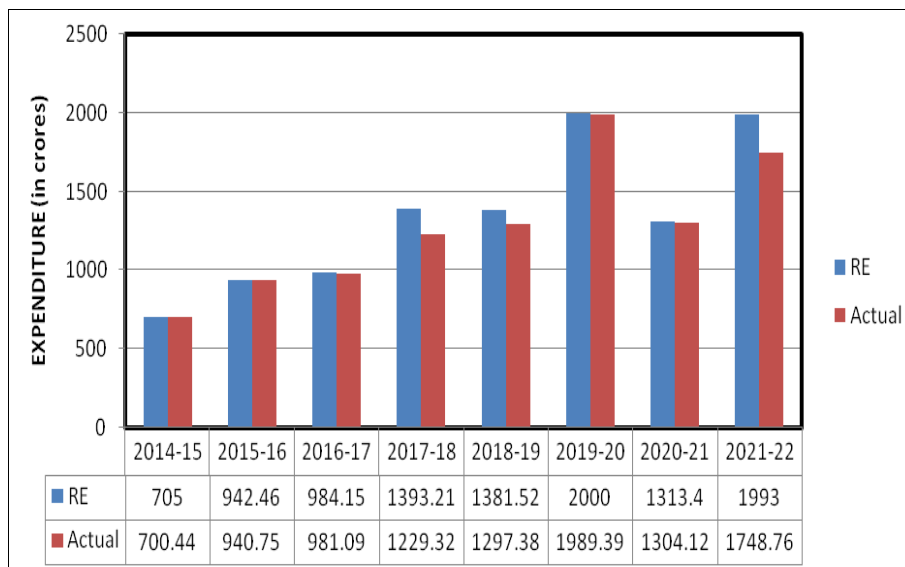
**Underutilised and Lack of Funds:** The Standing Committee on Human Resource Development's assessment on the Khelo India programme, which was submitted in December 2019, noted a significant underutilization of funding. Committee highlighted that, only 324 crores out of 520 crores in 2018-19 and 318 crores out of 500 crores in 2019-20 were really used.



Two conclusions can be drawn from this: either money was used inefficiently or the budgeting mechanism was flawed and overstated the real expenses needed to implement the plan. Given that only 13 states received the grant money for building infrastructure, the former is more likely to be the case. Since sports are a state matter, state/UT governments are

solely responsible for developing the necessary infrastructure. However, states are unable to build or upgrade a world-class sports infrastructure due to a lack of funding.

The Graph compares the Budget Estimates with the Revised Estimates and Actual Expenditure to analyze the utilization of funds claimed and actually used.



Source: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

**Graph 1: Annual Sports Expenditure**

As the data plainly shows, the Revised Estimates are consistently higher than the Actual expenditures made by the Department of Sports, highlighting the underutilization of the Sports Budget.

Inadequate sports facilities and protracted talent identification procedures have been a problem for young athletes in rural areas of the nation. The Khelo India Scheme makes it clear that developing talent in tribal, coastal, and remote areas would receive special emphasis. This significance hasn't been

realised because, besides Manipur, athletes from the other Northeastern states and the Union Territories have mostly been ignored, according to March 2020 data from the Parliament.

#### **No. of Athletes chosen from various Indian states and union territories as part of the Khelo India Talent Identification Program**

**Table 6: No. of Athletes chosen as a part of Talent Identification Program**

S. No.	State/Union Territory	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	6	9	15
2	Andhra Pradesh	27	24	51
3	Arunachal Pradesh	7	3	10
4	Assam	21	22	43
5	Bihar	9	1	10
6	Chandigarh	29	14	43
7	Chhattisgarh	7	23	30
8	Daman & Diu	0	3	3
9	Delhi	139	98	237
10	Goa	13	5	18
11	Gujarat	42	55	97
12	Haryana	217	188	405
13	Himachal Pradesh	5	21	26
14	Jammu & Kashmir	8	11	19
15	Jharkhand	10	17	27
16	Karnataka	75	73	148
17	Kerala	47	75	122
18	Ladakh	1	2	3
19	Madhya Pradesh	42	46	88
20	Maharashtra	172	209	381
21	Manipur	47	62	109
22	Meghalaya	1	2	3
23	Mizoram	18	10	28
24	Odisha	17	38	55
25	Puducherry	2	4	6
26	Punjab	124	88	212

27	Rajasthan	52	39	91
28	Sikkim	2	0	2
29	Tamil Nadu	76	90	166
30	Telangana	44	36	80
31	Tripura	2	7	9
32	Uttar Pradesh	111	71	182
33	Uttarakhand	21	21	42
34	West Bengal	54	65	119
Total		1451	1429	2880

The Table clearly demonstrates that, aside from Manipur, all other North Eastern states (even those with populations higher than Manipur) have not received the required impetus for Talent Identification in their region. Additionally, the Ministry ignores Chhattisgarh, a prominent Tribal Belt region, when it comes to talent identification. As is evident from the table, even the Union Territories are not given comparable weight in the talent identification process. Regions may gain from an unbalanced Talent Identification structure, but not the entire nation. To increase the number of medals won at the international competitions, the government will have to search far and wide for the top athletes.

### Physical Fitness

The desire to appear fit is closely related to the idea of six pack abs. However, studies show that having six-pack abs or a lot of shoulder muscle is not a sign of being healthy; rather, it is merely a way to artificially flaunt a beautiful and trim figure. Strength comes from inside and can be attained without having six-pack abs. The next problem that is ruining sports is winning on the basis of an artificial booster. No famous athlete, including Roger Federer, Serena Williams, Rafael Nadal, Djokovic, Messi, MS Dhoni, Sachin Tendulkar to mention a few, has ever been found guilty of failing a doping test, according to history. Both their skills and accomplishments come naturally to them by their hard work. There are also instances of age fraud to be eligible to compete in age-restricted competitions, continuing the corrupt ideology of sports.

Even Khelo India is exposed to these concerns. Young athletes competing in the Khelo India Youth Games have tested positive for prohibited substances like old-school anabolic steroids, masking agents, stimulants, drugs that increase blood oxygen levels, and hormones that help suppress oestrogen, the female sex hormone, and increase testosterone production. The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) came in to conduct tests during the youth games held in Pune in January 2019 and six competitors across four sports-archery, track and field, wrestling, and weightlifting-tested positive. Six people tested positive, with one each from the other three sports and three from wrestling. One of the adolescent wrestlers tested positive for a standard combination of illegal narcotics, including an anabolic steroid that aids in muscular growth, a diuretic that aids in washing the drug out of the body and acts as a masking agent, and a stimulant that heightens attention and lessens exhaustion.

The president of the Athletics Federation of India, Adille Sumariwalla, discussed the main issue. The major problems in Indian sport, particularly among young athletes, were drugs and age fraud. He is forced to run senior timings or world-class timings after using a prohibited substance. However, because the athlete is in the camp when they reach the senior level, the testing for drugs goes up. Even with the best training under foreign experts, the athlete can only just about maintain that level or do somewhat better once all of this has occurred. This is due to the fact that he or she has already peaked. Thus, all opportunities of further advancement are lost.

The players are either ignorant of the prohibited substance or aware of it but nonetheless use it to maintain their optimum performance. Since doping from a young age can negatively impact a person's natural athletic abilities, it is imperative to educate athletes about it in the first place. In the second place, it is vital to adopt preventive measures, if not punitive ones. But in addition to deterrent, punishments would be required for reformation.

In order to prepare fit athletes for the future, Khelo India should serve as a platform where aspiring athletes may learn how to acquire physical fitness naturally without relying on artificial measures. Providing the best of training, sporting atmosphere, and sports infrastructure can help achieve this.

### Lack of Coaches

The 2019 study states that a lack of competent coaches has also been noted. Athletes concur that the true secret to their success is their trainers. Support from parents is a major motivator. But in the end, it all comes down to skilled trainers and how they can bring out the best in their wards. To do better at international competitions, the nation needs the best coaches.

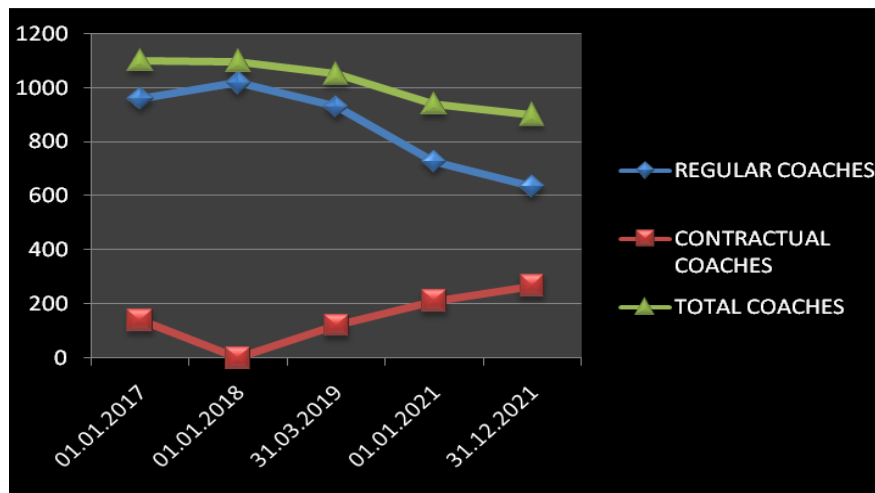
The government of India has taken a fantastic move with its Community Coach Development Programme. However, if we discuss the current situation of sports coaches, the data clearly demonstrates that there is a lack of permanent coaches in India as the majority of positions now being granted by the government are contractual positions, which do certainly lower the morale of coaching.

**The MYAS Annual Reports include information on both regular and contractual coaches, which is detailed here under**

**Table 7:** No. of Regular and Contractual Coaches

DD/MM/YYYY	Regular coaches	Contractual coaches	Total coaches
01.01.2017	959	141	1100
01.01.2018	1018	75 + 5 (Deputation)	1098
31.03.2019	929	122	1051
01.01.2021	728	212	940
31.12.2021	634	267	901

Source: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports



Source: Annual Reports (2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22) of MYAS

**Graph 2:** No. of Regular and Contractual Coaches

The data shows that, with the exception of 2018, the strength of Permanent Coaches has declined and the strength of Contractual Coaches has consistently increased (except 2018). The number of students earning their Diploma in Sports Coaching from reputable universities like NSNIS is rising, according to the most recent MYAS data. Deep reflection is required in light of the fact that there are fewer permanent job openings than there should be in order to utilise the talent of

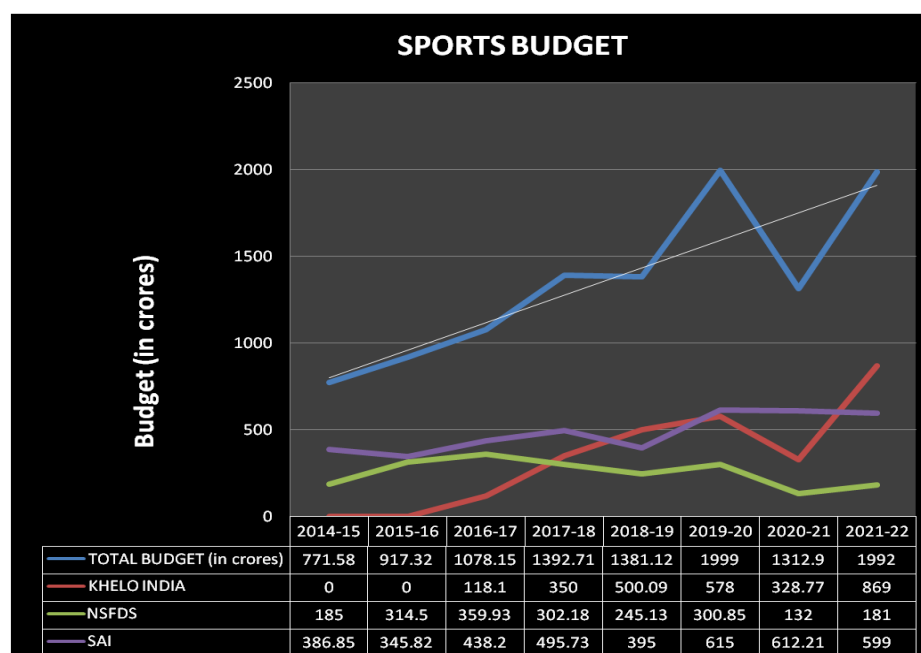
these new coaches. In addition to the lack of permanent posts, the data clearly demonstrates that the overall number of coaches has been declining since 2017 as well. This is worrying because without strong coaches, it is impossible to create a robust sports structure. The athletes of today want to be the coaches of tomorrow, but as they look at the sports industry's grim future with fewer or no jobs, they may be deterred and decide that sports is not a good career path.

**Table 8:** Financial allocation: (excluding Expenditure on Seminars, Committee Meetings etc.)

Year	Total Budget (RS. In crores)	Khelo India (RS. in crores)	NSFs (Rs. in crores)	SAI (Rs. in crores)	Per Capita Per Day Expenditure
2014-15	771.58	—	185	386.85	0.162 paise
2015-16	917.32	—	314.50	345.82	0.019
2016-17	1078.15	118.10	359.93	438.2	0.022
2017-18	1392.71	350	302.18	495.73	0.028
2018-19	1381.12	500.09	245.13	395	0.028
2019-20	1999.00	578	300.85	615	0.039
2020-21	1312.9	328.77	132	612.21	0.026
2021-22	1992	869	181	599	0.039

Source: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

**Total Budget, Khelo India, NSFs and SAI Revised Estimates**



**Graph 3:** Financial Allocation

The Department of Sports' Annual Financial statement is displayed in the table. The information also includes the amount of money allocated to the Sports Authority of India, the National Sports Federation, and the most ambitious scheme of the central government Khelo India. Due to the fact that Khelo India Games first began its operations in 2016, the allocation to the organisation's for the first two years is displayed as being zero. The graph clearly shows the growing trajectory of the budget allocation to sports. However, if we focus on the per capita per day allocation, it does not even reach the one rupee mark. In response to a parliamentary question, Mr. Rajyawardhan Singh Rathore, the former sports minister, stated that India spends an average of 3 paise per person per day while China spends Rs 6 per person per day. If we use the most recent data for the years 2021-2022, the World Bank's population projection for India was 131 crore, while the sports budget was Rs. 1992-crore. When the Complete Sports budget is divided by the total population, and then by 365 days the result is 0.039 paise, which is not even close to one rupee. The predicted sports budget for 2022 is Rs 1787.77 crore, with upper and lower bounds of 2739.51 and 836.04 crore, respectively, according to future times series estimates. The trend line (as shown in the graph) with

an increasing slope plainly suggests that the sports budget is likely to rise; the question is whether we will be able to compete against China, our strongest sporting rival, who spends Rs 6 per person per day.

Sports Authority of India since 2014 is receiving a large share of the Sports budget and the share has continuously increased except a severe dip in 2018-19.

Allocation to Khelo India, the most ambitious project of the Central Government, is noteworthy in that it has increased steadily over time. Additionally, there is a clear connection between the growth of the sports budget and the expansion of funding for the Khelo India Scheme, which will be proved later in the chapter.

Speaking of the allocation to National Sports Federations, which is the only section displaying a downward trend, there are serious concerns. This indicates that as the Sports Budget increases, a larger portion is going to SAI and Khelo India, which is leading to a continual reduction in the allocation to National Sports Federations. In 2021-2022, it decreased from a record high of Rs. 360 crore (2016-17) to Rs. 181 crore.

The following findings are highlighted by a correlation analysis of the total sports budget, Khelo India allocation, SAI, and national sports federations.

Descriptive Statistics					
		Mean	Std. Deviation		N
Total Sports Budget		1355.5975	452.44849		8
Khelo India		342.9950	303.01055		8
National Sports Federations		252.5738	79.67259		8
SAI		485.9763	110.50574		8
Correlations					
Total Sports Budget			Khelo India	National Sports Federations	SAI
Total Budget	Pearson Correlation	1	.942	-.100	.801
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.814	.017
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	1432967.454	903869.133	-25151.780	280167.176
	Covariance	204709.636	129124.162	-3593.111	40023.882
	N	8	8	8	8
Khelo India	Pearson Correlation	.942	1	-.282	.711
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.499	.048
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	903869.133	642707.771	-47616.532	166570.361
	Covariance	129124.162	91815.396	-6802.362	23795.766
	N	8	8	8	8
National Sports Federation	Pearson Correlation	-.100	-.282	1	-.374
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.814	.499		.362
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-25151.780	-47616.532	44434.053	-23030.274
	Covariance	-3593.111	-6802.362	6347.722	-3290.039
	N	8	8	8	8
SAI	Pearson Correlation	.801	.711	-.374	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.017	.048	.362	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	280167.176	166570.361	-23030.274	85480.627
	Covariance	40023.882	23795.766	-3290.039	12211.518
	N	8	8	8	8

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The Correlation Table clearly shows High Degree Positive Correlation between Total sports Budget and Khelo India Allocation i.e. 0.94 which shows that with the increase in sports budget in the past 10 years the allocation made for the promotion of Khelo India has also increased. Also, Total Sports Budget and SAI Allocation are also showing high degree positive correlation of 0.80 which again highlights that increase in Sports Budget is accompanied by increase in SAI Allocation. However, if we compare it with the allocation made to National Sports Federation it shows a weak negative correlation of -0.1 which shows that Allocation to National Sports Federation is decreasing with increase in Sports Budget however a weak correlation also suggests that these two variables are not affecting each other to a great extent.

### Rural-Urban Divide

The majority of SAI, Khelo India Centers are located in urban areas, with the majority of centres being located in the country's megacities, leaving a small share for the rural areas to reap the benefits of the programme. This is despite the fact that the central government frequently brags about bridging the Urban Rural Divide to make sports facilities accessible in all areas of the country. The locations of the eleven "SAI Regional Centres" (SRC) are Chandigarh, Zirakpur, Sonipat, Lucknow, Guwahati, Imphal, Kolkata, Bhopal, Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Gandhinagar (counting clockwise from the north). This information demonstrates the rural areas' ignorance of their ability to benefit equally from the greatest national sports policies.



### Elected representatives of the sports bodies

A brief stay in any ministry is essentially the only qualification or requirement you need to run a sports organisation. That is the only thing that is deemed acceptable. Unfortunately (or fortunately), the majority of sporting organisations in our nation are run by politicians and ex-bureaucrats who have served on committees for many years while generally knowing little about sports in general. The position of authority at the top of the hierarchy occasionally appears to be passed down through families as an inheritance. While the Indian government continues to pour several crores into the budget for sports, it appears that the main result of this has been that sports organisations have become lucrative places to do business.

Although it is a well-known fact and is carefully taken care of in medal-winning nations like China that Sports Bodies require representatives from the sports field who can fully justice to the requirement of the players as they are a sportsperson themselves, they can relate to the athletes' both physical and mental needs, in India this is the last priority. Indian sports appear to be governed by dynasties. Former office holders' sons, cousins, and family acquaintances continue to stay on to their positions because they do not see the need to resign. Nepotism is pervasive, and a glance at a few stark examples will show how politicians and bureaucrats administer sports federations as if they were family gatherings.

S. No.	Name of the Federation	Name of the President	Background
1.	Swimming Federation of India	Mr. RN Jayprakash	Proven Business Leader, Holds important designations in Governmental, Industrial and Authoritarian Bodies.
2.	Archery Association of India	Mr. Arjun Munda	Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, BJP
3.	Badminton Association of India	Mr. Himanta Biswa Sarma	Chief Minister Assam, BJP
4.	Basketball Federation of India	K. Govindraj	INC
5.	Cycling Federation of India	Mr. Parminder Singh Dhindsa	Shiromani Akali Dal
6.	TT Federation of India	Mrs. Meghna Ahlawat	Wife of Dushyant Chautala
7.	Wrestling Federation of India	Mr. Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh	BJP
8.	Softball Federation	Rana Gurmeet Singh Sodhi	BJP

These are just a few examples, but there are many other cases of people holding these positions solely because of their prior political status or well-known business names, with no connection to the sports in question. Not only these Federations, but there are also individuals in control of numerous sports organisations at universities and colleges who have no connection to sports in either their personal or professional lives. Heading a Sports Federation means that you are not held responsible for your actions or mediocre results. Also, you periodically have the opportunity to travel abroad, and the best part of the offer is that no one has the right to inquire about your credentials.

How can we anticipate outcomes comparable to those of China or America when those in charge of sports organisations have little knowledge of the sport?

### Conclusion

This chapter has traced the evolution of national sports policies in India, highlighting both the strategic intent behind their formulation and the persistent gaps in their execution. While early efforts, such as the National Sports Policy of 1984 and its 2001 revision, laid a foundational framework for promoting sports in the country, their impact remained limited due to inadequate implementation, lack of coordination between central and state agencies, and insufficient focus on grassroots development.

The analysis revealed that despite significant investments and schemes such as PYKKA, RGKA, USIS, and NSTSS, systemic challenges-ranging from infrastructural deficits to talent identification inefficiencies-curtailed the transformative potential of these programmes. Their premature discontinuation underscores the need for a more integrated, long-term approach to sports development.

The Khelo India programme emerged as a comprehensive response to past shortcomings, aiming to democratize sports participation, strengthen infrastructure, and cultivate excellence. Its multi-dimensional focus-including playfield development, talent nurturing, women's participation, and support for indigenous games-marks a significant policy advancement. However, the programme still faces challenges in execution, such as bureaucratic delays, inconsistent

monitoring mechanisms, and uneven resource distribution across states.

Ultimately, while India's sports policy landscape has progressively matured, bridging the gap between vision and ground-level implementation remains critical. For India to truly evolve into a sporting nation, it must ensure sustained policy continuity, robust grassroots engagement, greater accountability in programme delivery, and a deeper integration of sports into the socio-cultural fabric of the country.

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