

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

‘Sport refers to all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being, and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games.’ UNESCO (2015). It is a physical activity where athletes challenge and compete in the form of competition, physical fitness or entertainment. It has been an important activity of the human race since the ancient period by representing a diverse identity of social, cultural, and spiritual aspects of development. In addition to offering physical exercise, it served as an essential component of daily life, encouraging self-control, teamwork, and a spirit of competition. India is considered a complicated country due to its many religious, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds (Nicholson et al. 2011). With origins in the Vedic age and epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana, ancient sports like archery, wrestling (Malla-yuddha), chariot racing, and kabaddi were very popular. In addition to being traditional entertainment, these types of activities were considered not only as an activity, but also as a means of developing moral ideals, cognitive clarity, and physical endurance. Sports have evolved rapidly alongside changing social and political circumstances which has become a unifying force in diverse and cosmopolitan nations like India. This diversity, combined with societal challenges such as gender discrimination, socioeconomic status, financial conditions, and cultural barriers, stifles sports growth and makes athletic success difficult (Riordan and Krüger 1999; Taylor et al. 2015).

India is the world's most populous country after China, and it is home to at least one-sixth of the global population (World Bank). With 29 states and seven union territories, India is home to the largest democracy in the world and is distinguished by its diversity in terms of religion, culture, language, and ethnicity (Chelladurai et al. 2017).

By examining the laws, promotions, and challenges to sports development, this country profile offers a thorough understanding of India's extensive sporting ecosystem. Gaining international recognition as an independent nation in 1947, administratively India is still very

young compared to the other nations in the world. As a result, sports policies in contemporary India are likewise new and developing as the country attempts to establish a distinct identity at the international level. While India has been independent for slightly more than 75 years, it is crucial to remember that the Indian subcontinent has a rich sporting culture and legacy that dates back thousands of years. Apart from Indigenous sports, many sports were also brought in by colonization and Western influence, such as cricket, football, golf, tennis, squash, hockey, boxing, and pool. As a result, popular sports from both domestic and international cultures make up India's current sports landscape (Polson and Whiteside 2016).

Despite having the world's second-biggest population, India's performance in international sports, outside of cricket, has been regarded as 'dismal' (Nandakumar and Sandhu 2014). Although India has earned medals in the global arena in tennis, badminton, boxing, and wrestling, the number of medals won is disproportionate to the size of its population and expanding economy, making India an underperforming country on the global stage.

In comparison to more economically developed countries, India continues to have a low per capita income and high poverty rates, making public investment resources scarce (Mahapatra 2020, Mukherjee 2020). Religion also has an impact on sports in a country since religious views may limit sports participation, hence limiting development (Chandran 2016). For instance, women's participation in sports is incredibly uncommon in some religious practices, and India being a diversified country is greatly impacted by it (Jona and Okou 2013). Gender discrimination is also one of the barriers, as female athletes are not given the same opportunities. They have to deal with more social demands, which discourages them from participating in sports. (Jacob, J., 2023). Aside from these sociological considerations, a nation's level of development also impacts sporting success. Some countries are forced to invest heavily in sports due to more pressing requirements, but others choose to engage in such fields deliberately. These reasons, to a considerable part, appear to explain why nations have varying

sporting standards. However, these concerns are insufficient to explain India's poor sporting performance, as other countries with similar issues have performed well. Some underdeveloped countries are performing better in sports compared to India. With India's emphasis on academics and economics, Indian parents have traditionally valued education. Education has traditionally been a preferred choice for Indian parents, owing to the belief that it can lead to a more stable and secure profession than sports (Navigus Blogs 2017). The emphasis on education, along with the impression that athletics is not a suitable job choice, definitely reduces the number of Indians who participate in sports (Sajad 2018).

However, these difficulties alone cannot fully explain India's poor sporting performance, especially when compared to other countries that are successful in international sports despite similar socio-economic and institutional barriers. India's weak sporting culture is one of the main causes of this inequality (Chandran, 2016). Barriers such as sports infrastructure, financial support, well-equipped coaches and corruption are also the main reasons that prevent young athletes from participating in sports. Historically, the value of athletics as a respectable career choice has been overshadowed by society's emphasis on intellectual and financial goals. Sometimes parents prioritize their children's academic achievements over their athletic endeavors to provide them with a secure and reliable future. This viewpoint stems from the deeply ingrained belief that an athletic career does not offer the social prestige and financial security associated with a career in engineering, medicine or the civil service. (Sajad, 2018).

Despite all of this, the country's sporting transformation has gained prominence following the achievements at the Olympics in Paris. The remarkable success of the Indian Hockey Team, Manu Bhaker, Neeraj Chopra, Aman Sehrawat, Sarabjot Singh, and Swapnil Kusale established a standard for enticing youth to engage in sports. These trendsetters are inspiring the younger generations of parents to slowly start supporting their children's desires to become professional

sportspeople. This gradual change represents not only the influence of role models but also a slow, gradual change in social attitudes toward sports.

India has made a significant investment in sports development over the years. With the impressive financial support of Rs 470 crores INR for the preparation of the 2024 Olympics athletes, the government of India has shown its best interest in sports. Since 1954, several programs have been implemented to improve sports in India (Chelladurai et al. 2002). However, despite the fact of investing heavily in sports, the country's performance remains below average. On a positive note, India's developments over the years are encouraging, but maintaining this pace would require a proper administration of funds as well as addressing the structural issues that are afflicting Indian sports more realistically.

Throughout the years, India has developed several policy measures targeted at providing necessary resources for sports, like financial support and infrastructure development. India is considered a sports underperformer despite having one of the world's largest populations and a rapidly expanding economy (Chelladurai et al. 2002). This is not due to a lack of funding in sports since India has already implemented several different sports initiatives (Nair and Chelladurai 2017), but due to the lack of a governance framework to track the performance of these policies and their inefficient implementation. Governments and institutions have played an increasingly important role in nurturing and promoting sports in India. Policies and frameworks designed to regulate, promote and develop sports have also been crucial in channeling resources, monitoring investments and nurturing talent. The new draft of sports policy (NSP 2024 Draft) has emerged as a strategic approach to address systemic issues such as governance, transparency, unequal access, inadequate infrastructure and a lack of professional training opportunities in the future.

Even if India isn't the only country struggling to advance in sports, it's been argued that other nations can teach us something; in fact, policies can be applied across national lines if necessary (Houlihan 2002). Policy transfer is the process through which one political system (past or current) makes use of information regarding policies, administrative systems, institutions, and ideas from another (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000) to get a better understanding of how other nations have dealt with a similar problem.

To sum up, the purpose of this study is to analyze how the National Sports Policy is being implemented and how it affects the expansion and advancement of sports in Northeast India. Concisely, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1. How do stakeholders perceive the implementation of sports policies and SPLISS pillars across different states of Northeast India?*
- 2. What is the perceived impact of sports policy implementation on sports development according to players, coaches, and administrators in Northeast India?*
- 3. How do perceptions of sports policy implementation differ among stakeholders based on their role, gender, age, education, experience, and awareness level?*
- 4. What are the key challenges to implementing sports policies in Northeast India? And what tactical suggestions can strengthen their influence on regional sports development?*
- 5. How effective are the existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in ensuring inclusive and sustainable sports development across the states of Northeast India?*

1.1. SPORTS POLICY

The term "policy" originates from the Middle English word "policie," which comes from the Latin word "polītīa," meaning "citizenship, political organization, or government." Policies describe how public affairs are conducted or how the government is run. The origins of the two

other key terms, politics and police, are the same as those of policy. Many contemporary languages only use one word. For instance, the German and Russian words politik and politika refer to politics and policy. Policy refers to the course of action taken by an organization or individual to attain a specific goal. It is a guidelines, rules, regulations, laws, principles, or directions that help in explaining the questions of what, when, where, who, how and for (or to) whom it is to be done.

Policy can be viewed as a blueprint that directs the government to accomplish specific objectives. It may be characterized as a public necessity by assuming importance and, to the greatest extent feasible, measuring its actual accomplishment. Several approaches are being explored to attain specific outcomes, which could be either favorable or negative, as well as by not taking any action about a particular subject or matter. As a result, it appears to be a superior role reserved for the highest levels of administration.

Sports policies are rules and regulations created by a state or central governing body to control, guide, and govern the growth and development of sports in a particular area. These rules and regulations frequently aim to achieve social, economic, and health objectives through participation in sports. (Girginov, 2001) defined sports policy as a set of values, goals, and planned or unplanned), actions or inactions created by reputable local, national, or international organizations to achieve shared goals concerning a particular community within a specified range of time, space, and resources.

Sports encompasses a wide range of concepts, including elite, amateurs, Olympic, young, paralympic, grassroots and sport for all. Over the past 20 years, sports scholars have looked more closely at sports policy as a subject of study within the academic literature on sports. Sport policy "has remained on the margins," according to Houlihan (2005), "while other policy areas have been the subject of extensive analysis." Research in sports policy has been one of

the main important concepts where articles addressing the implementation and analysis of the state's and government's involvement in influencing the evolution of sport can be found.

Thus, the foundation of these definitions and the plethora of related concepts is therefore the connection to the goals of sport development and sport for development. According to Shilbury et al. (2008), sport policy is a term that overlaps with these two areas. The authors claim that encouraging people to participate in sports is a commonality between these two disciplines. As a result, the material that governs sport policy needs to be specified. In this regard, Houlihan and Zheng (2014) divide the political function of sport into two groups: domestic and diplomatic. However, the application of sports policy is justified by these two factors.

1.1.1. Domestic versus Diplomatic

Two dimensions can be derived from the synthesis of domestic effects. Green (2006) and Sam (2007) have emphasized the dichotomy of elite sport and sport for all as dominant ideas in sport policy which represents the intrinsic values of sports. However, there is also the instrumental aspect or practical side of how sport influences a region's social, economic, and societal conditions.

Many authors have studied the intrinsic value of sport in a range of contexts. Sport policies are generally based on the 'quantitative' growth of the number of sports initiatives and development at a specific amount of time. Given that sport in general has gained popularity recently and has now received increased government attention (Zheng et al., 2018) also suggested that this was a genuine problem for the Chinese in recent times.

(Jedlicka et al. 2020) Investigate how the nature of the political regime affects the creation of sports policies, and thus examine state involvement in sports and its impact on sports performance. The instrumental value of sport is also influenced by outside forces, which may

be characterized as diplomatic. According to Houlihan (2008), 'politics and sport' refers to state spending, policies and interventions in the sports industry to achieve its broader goals of maintaining national identity, international relations and other diplomatic purposes. On the other hand, he distinguishes 'politics in sport' as a tool that examines how sports organizations deal with problems that arise within the sport itself, such as solving problems within the sports federation or solving problems of athletes, coaches and other stakeholders. Sport has become an important political instrument on the government agenda. Such instruments are crucial in achieving beyond competition and recreation.

1.2. SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

Sports development is the process of creating and improving the leadership, programs and structures of sports organizations to build a community that inspires everyone to reach their full potential and be physically fit. Green (2001) points out that the prerequisites for sports development include moving from the old to the new system, making it a gradual process. Simply put, sports development is the process of improving new methods in sports.

"More specifically, the term sport development refers to the procedures, practices and policies that are an integral part of the work and serve as a guide for creating opportunities for the development of sport and the delivery of sport experiences."

According to Hylton, K. (2013), sports development is the process of promoting and putting into practice positive change in athletics and leisure activities to develop systems, procedures, opportunities, and structures that encourage participation and performance enhancement in various groups and domains.

To develop and promote sports in India, especially in Northeast India, the Indian government has launched several successful initiatives. In addition to the central government's support, several state governments have also developed sports strategies for their particular

states to promote games and sports and encourage young people to participate in sports. These include the following:

1. Himachal Pradesh State Sports Policy (2001)
2. The Sports Policy of Madhya Pradesh (2005).
3. Meghalaya's State Sports Policy (2008).
4. Haryana Sports Policy (2015).
5. Punjab Sports Policy (2023).
6. Assam's State Policy (2018).
7. Kerala Sports Policy 2015 (Draft)
8. Gujarat Sports Policy 2022-27

1.3. SPORTS POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN INDIA SINCE 1954

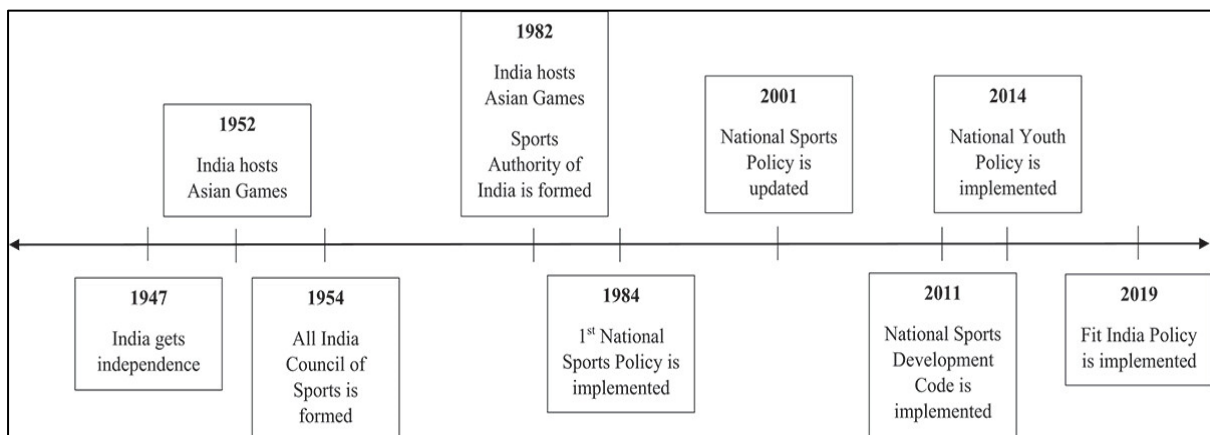
The introduction of sports policies and other initiatives in independent India marked a fundamental shift in how sports were perceived and managed over time. By providing opportunities for athletes from diverse backgrounds to compete and achieve success, these strategies aimed to bridge the gap between urban and rural communities as well as to develop sports in various parts of the country. Through financial support, infrastructure development, and talent identification at the grassroots level, these policies have attempted to solve shortages in resources and support systems and establish a favorable climate for sports growth in the country.

The importance of sports policies also continues to be emphasized in other regions of the country, such as Northeast India. The area, which is made up of eight states, is well-known for its vibrant culture and lengthy sporting heritage. Despite being called the sports hub of the country, Northeast India continues to face many difficulties such as resource shortages, poor infrastructure, financial disparity, and lack of support from the higher authority. However, the

region has produced numerous outstanding athletes who have made the country proud, such as Mary Kom, Sunil Chettri, Baichung Bhutia, Lovlina Bargohain, Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, and many more. The region's capacity to realize its full potential has been hampered by the unequal distribution of resources and the differences in how policies are implemented across governments. Thus, the central government has taken several initiatives to fulfill and develop the sports ecosystem in Northeast India and the country as a whole. Some of the initiatives are discussed below.

Figure 1.1

India's milestone towards sports development



1.3.1. ALL INDIA COUNCIL OF SPORTS (AICS) 1954

The first effort by the Indian government to support and develop sports at the local level was the creation of the All-India Council of Sports (AICS) in 1954. As an advisory organization, the AICS provided the government with information on a wide range of topics, such as national sports policies, elite athlete coaching, and government support for national sports regulatory bodies. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the education minister at the time, came up with the concept of creating AICS with a motive to develop sports in the country. AICS's establishment was seen as a major turning point in Indian history as the council served as

the advisor to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. This council, however, has contributed to numerous advancements and improvements in the nation's sports scene to date. The Council's main aims and objectives are as follows:

- Promoting sports as a way of life among the youth
- Expanding the promotion of sports in rural and tribal communities, as well as in regions impacted by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), the Northeast and Jammu & Kashmir;
- Promoting inclusivity in sports, with a special focus on women, people with disabilities, Indigenous people, etc.
- Preventing age fraud, drug abuse, and sexual harassment of female athletes.
- Grassroots-level talent identification and development.
- Integration of sports into the educational curriculum.

The Council also carried out some other significant tasks, such as serving as the primary liaison between the Government and National Sports Federations as well as financially contributing to the National Sports Federations. This was deemed a critical function since the needs of various sports federations were examined and a financing chart was created so that funds could be distributed to them. Following the establishment of AICS, state federations and district councils were created to provide an appropriate hierarchy from the lowest to the highest level, giving Indian sports organizations a solid structure.

1.3.2. NETAJI SUBHAS NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SPORTS, PATIALA

The National Institute of Sports named after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was established in 1961 in Patiala. The primary goal of establishing the institute was to offer high-quality training and scientific sports coaching to elite athletes. The institute attempted to achieve some other aims, such as

- To provide short-term and long-term academic courses in sports sciences, Sports coaching, Physical education and other relevant subjects.
- To develop outstanding coaches by offering a coaching course for anyone interested in pursuing a career in coaching. The courses offered in several sports were deemed a significant step in addressing the country's demand for qualified coaches to lead teams. This institute has provided competent coaches to many government departments, including state and national federations.
- To organize National Coaching Camps for elite athletes preparing for international events.
- The institute aimed to promote sports research, which are crucial for the growth of sports and for providing scientific support to elite athletes to achieve high levels of performance.
- Organizing sports-related conferences, seminars, and workshops.
- To provide guidance and information on sports infrastructure through professionals.
- Identified and developed sports talent through national tournaments under Govt. of India's sports promotion schemes.

1.3.3. MINISTRY OF SPORT, 1982

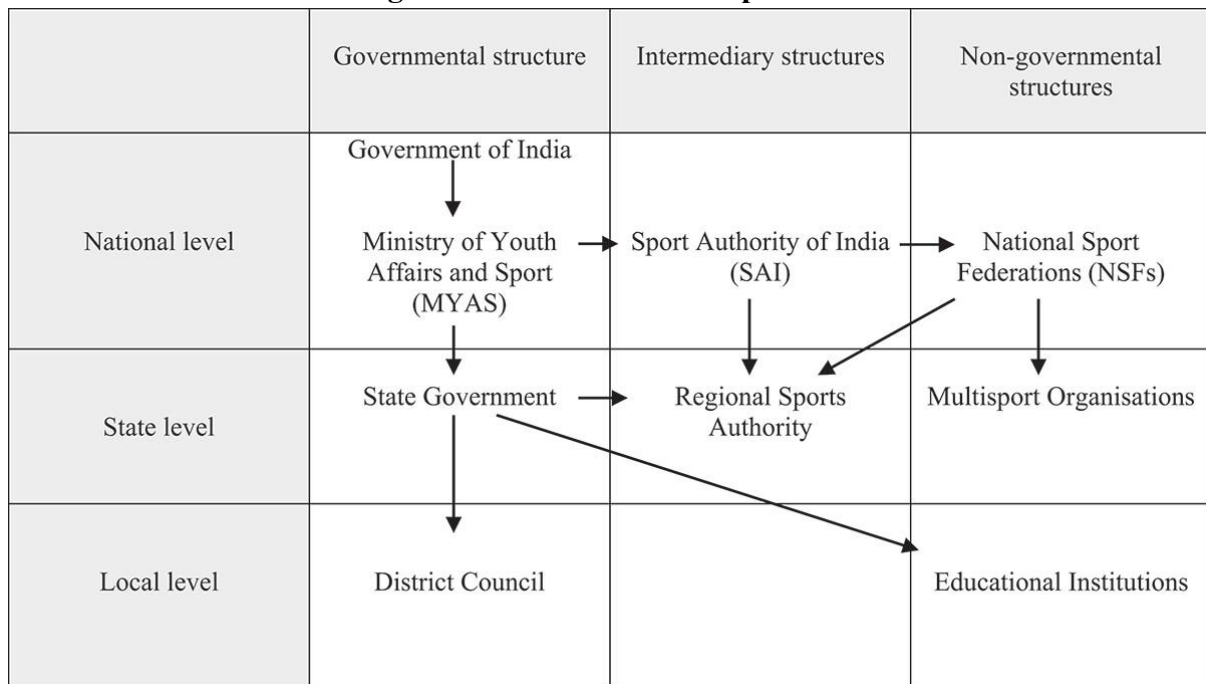
In a bid to formalize the Sports Policy, the Government of India took the next major initiative in 1982 by setting up a separate Ministry of Sports, which was previously called as the Ministry of Sports and now the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, MYAS.

Originally called the Department of Sports, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports was founded during the organization of the IX Asian Games in New Delhi. The main role of this Ministry is to develop the sports ecosystem in India. This can be done by creating sports infrastructure and promoting capacity building for grassroots sports, providing financial and

non-financial support to the athletes, promoting sports culture in the society and helping in achieving excellence in various national and international competitions. To achieve these goals, the Indian government has developed numerous structures, schemes, policies and initiatives which are discussed in more detail in this chapter below.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Figure 1.2
The organisational structure of sport in India.



The administrative framework for sports administration in India functions on three levels: national, state, and local, with the participation of government, intermediary, and non-governmental institutions. The Government of India exercises leadership over sports administration at the national level through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS), which provides policy and budgetary support. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) is an intermediary organization that provides training programs, operates infrastructure and aids the athletes. Non-governmental bodies such as National Sports Federations (NSFs) govern individual sports, whereas multisport organizations, including the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), organize multi-sport events.

At the state level, the State Government is responsible for implementing policies and offering resources for sports development. The Regional Sports Authority acts as an intermediary organization, coordinating training programs and infrastructure at the state level. Multisport organizations collaborate with the government to promote sporting disciplines.

At the local level, the District Council is responsible for development of sports at the grassroots level in schools and local communities. The schools are major institutions involved in talent identification, training, and promoting sports engagement. This systemic framework allows coordinated effort towards sport development in India to ensure effective collaboration between the government, the federations, and institutions across levels.

1.3.4. THE NATIONAL SPORTS TALENT SEARCH SCHEME (NSTSS), 1985

In order to find athletes with exceptional performance and athletic ability between the ages of 8 and 12 (class IV to VI), the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports launched the National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS) in 1985. The screening of players involves various physical and skill-based tests to assess potential in different sports disciplines. This initiative will not only help in developing young talent but also provide a structured pathway for their development in the competitive sports arena. There are two stages to the screening process. The first step involves finding anthropometrically, physically, and physiologically capable players free of anatomical defects. The second phase involves developing or nurturing them through training in junior sports academies, central sports centres, or sports academies in any district. These players were funded by the central government, and the scheme was monitored by the Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System (CPSMS). The program's yearly expenditure is around Rs. 42.00 crore and is estimated to be around Rs. 210 crore for 5 years. Additionally, this scheme is envisaged to cover all the schools (both in rural and urban areas) for five years and is locally monitored by the concerned state authorities under the supervision of a nodal

officer. This comprehensive approach aims to ensure that educational resources are effectively allocated and utilized, thereby enhancing the quality of education across various regions.

1.3.5. TARGET OLYMPIC PODIUM SCHEME, 2014

The MYAS has also implemented the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS). The initiative was started in September 2014 with the intention of providing financial support for prospective Olympic medalists. Earlier, forty athletes from various disciplines such as athletics, swimming, boxing, archery, shooting, and badminton were identified and were provided financial assistance of Rs 50,000 per month (Chelladurai and Nair 2017). The scheme is fully functional and is currently assisting more than 70 athletes who have the capability of winning medals at the Olympics. This scheme, however, not only provides financial assistance to the athletes but also equipment support, coaches, and sports science staff.

1.3.6. COME AND PLAY SCHEME, 2011

Following the dual goal outlined in the sports policies, the "come and play" scheme was also implemented in the subsequent year of 2011. The main objective of this initiative is to make sure that the sports facilities are utilized at the optimum level not just for professional athletes but also for the general public. This was to encourage people to involve themselves in sports to promote a fit and healthy lifestyle. This scheme provides a free-of-cost utilization of sports centres and sports facilities across the country, ensuring that everyone has access to these resources regardless of their financial situation.

1.3.7. SPORTS POLICY 1984

Success sparks a desire that fuels greater ambition, filling a person with confidence and determination. This confidence can result in outstanding accomplishments, encouraging others to follow their own goals with equal zeal. Following the successful organization of the 1982 Asian Games in New Delhi, India had the confidence that they could succeed if the right proper

framework is implemented in the country (Chelladurai,2002) This led to the introduction of the National Sports Policy on August 21, 1984, through a resolution in the Houses of the Parliament. This program, which attempted to streamline sports and establish a methodical framework for them, was India's first organized and planned sports policy.

The major goal of the policy was to improve the country's sporting capabilities by providing better resources, financial assistance and training facilities for athletes. This initiative was supposed to not only improve the performance of the athletes at the international level but also to increase grassroots engagement in sports and physical activities. The policy focuses primarily on, (a) promoting sports at the grassroots level, (b) developing and preventing sports infrastructure, (c) developing coaches, and (d) training physical education teachers. As Chelladurai stated these thrusts make eminent sense because they are designed to fulfill three sufficiently separate goals: the pursuit of excellence, the quest for knowledge in sport and physical activity, and the quest for a healthy way of living. (Chelladurai et al., 1996). However, despite achieving success in implementing this policy, there have also been failures and drawbacks which are discussed below.

Achievements of National Sports Policy 1984

1. For the first time, it appeared that India was gradually and steadily heading towards sports professionalism. Cricket's growth was impressive, but other sports decline caused for alarm.
2. The National Education Policy 1986 which aims to incorporate sports into the school curriculum has highly contributed to the creation of a sports environment in schools and instill the habit of sports participation for youngsters.
3. Another triumph was the formation of SAI, even though it was occurred before the policy's implementation, it has since then become a prominent figure in Indian sports.

4. This policy has also helps in the establishment of sports infrastructure to create a centre of excellence and serve as a platform for aspiring athletes.

Failures of the Policy

1. One of the reasons was a lack of public knowledge, as most people were unaware that there was a sports policy in India.
2. The National Sports Policy 1984 was a vague model that merely attempted to set guidelines, but it could never focus on specific concerns such as (a) Governance, (b) Appointment of office bearers, (c) Increased funding for sports bodies, (d) Procedure for Association Elections, (e) Sports Association Audit and (f) Implementation of Effective Grievance Redressal Systems.
3. The absence of efficient monitoring systems for sports policy enforcement also leads to failure to achieve desired objectives.

In summary, the National Sports Policy 1984 failed to meet its objectives due to the government's unstructured model and the lack of implementation by some sports organizations. However, looking back, the positive aspect was that India had begun to consider the planned development of sports and will continue to develop the sports culture in India

1.3.8. SPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (SAI)

Under the Department of Sports, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) was established in 1984 to continue the tradition of the IXth Asian Games, which were hosted in New Delhi in 1982. SAI was established as a Society registered under the Societies Act, of 1860, with the specific goal of promoting sports and games as stated in the Resolution. SAI has also been given the dual responsibilities of advancing sports and attaining national and international athletic excellence. By training top athletes and running several programs for spotting and nurturing fresh talent, SAI has significantly influenced the growth of Indian sports. The programs are

being carried out by SAI's several regional and training facilities located across the nation. Additionally, SAI offers a variety of academic programs in sports and physical education. On behalf of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, SAI is also in charge with the upkeep and utilization of the Delhi stadiums, which were built for the 1982 IX Asian Games in New Delhi such as the Jawaharlal Nehru Sports Stadium, Major Dhyani Chand National, Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookherjee Swimming Pool Complex, Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Ranges and several other sports facilities.

The SAI's Operations Division is in charge of implementing numerous sports promotional campaigns aimed at scouting and developing outstanding athletes of all ages across the country. To achieve excellence at the national and international levels, the Sports Authority of India has established the National Centres of Excellence Scheme (NCOEs) to provide specialized training to promising athletes through numerous services such as state-of-the-art infrastructure and playing facilities, sports science backup, individualized diets prescribed by trained nutritionists, and overall supervision.

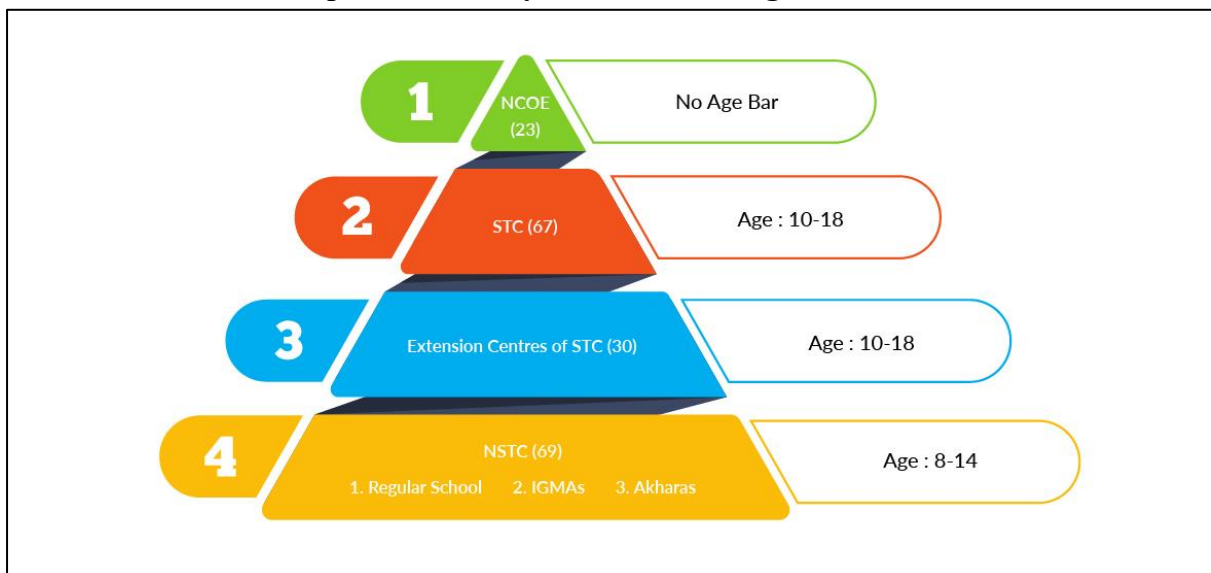
The Sai Training Centre (STC) scheme is designed to develop young athletes between the ages of 10 and 18 who have been identified through grassroots scouting. The State Governments supply all the physical facilities needed to set up and operate the SAI Centres, while SAI handles the boarding and lodging of the chosen trainees, scientific training and equipment support, and infrastructure maintenance.

Intending to establish sports standards in institutions that have the necessary fundamental sports facilities and have demonstrated successful athletic performance, the STC extension centre program was initiated to reach schools and colleges for better and broader coverage. Trainees between the ages of 10 and 18 are chosen for regular training on a non-residential basis. A total of 17 Sports were featured including archery, athletics, badminton, basketball,

boxing, canoeing, football, gymnastics, handball, hockey, judo, kabaddi, kho-kho, table tennis, taekwondo, weightlifting, and wrestling.

The National Sports Talent Contest (NSTC) Scheme aims to identify and nurture 8-14-year-old sports talent through scientific training. Currently, trainees are admitted on a non-residential basis, but in exceptional cases, they can be admitted to residential schools with boarding and lodging facilities. The scheme has over 1000 trainees, including 10 regular schools, 10 schools promoting indigenous games/martial arts, and 49 Akharas.

Figure 1.3.
Sports Authority of India Training Centres.



Source: Sports Authority of India Website.

NCOE: National Centre of Excellence

STC: SAI Training Centre

NSTC: National Sports Talent Contest

1.3.9. LAKSHMIBAI NATIONAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION (LNCPE)

Another initiative implemented by the Ministry of Sports towards achieving the Sports Policy and Sports Development in the country is the establishment of Lakshmibai National College of Physical Education. LNCPE was founded in Thiruvananthapuram on August 17, 1985, by the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports, Ministry of Human Resource Development,

Government of India. The college aims to promote excellence in physical education and sports through various academic programs and training initiatives. The major objectives of this institution are:

- To produce highly qualified and professional administrators, coaches, teachers, athletics, and leaders in the fields of physical education, games, and related fields.
- To establish a Centre of Excellence for research in physical education, Sports Science and related fields.
- To provide technical, professional, and academic leadership to other physical education institutions both inside and outside of India.
- Offer vocational assistance and placement services to individuals in the field.
- To provide infrastructure and accommodation facilities for coaching camps, as well as to establish a reputable location for ongoing SAI projects.

1.3.10. NATIONAL SPORTS POLICY 2001

India has a twin set of goals in its 2001 national sports policy which is ‘to encourage broad basing in sports’ and ‘to attain excellence at the national and international levels’ (i.e., elite sport). India is not the only country with a dual focus on sports policies; other countries have also prioritized mass participation and excellent performance. Australia, for instance, has established a twin goals policy centered on improving mass participation in sports and achieving excellence in top athletic performance. In contrast, Canada's government action was mostly focused on elite sports, leaving provinces, territories, and municipalities to handle public participation and recreation (Green and Houlihan 2005). India had a comparable system under the 2001 policy. The Ministry reformulated the National Sports Policy in 2001 to make it more concrete and to specify the measures to be taken by the agencies (such as state governments, the Indian Olympic Association, and the national sports federations) (Chelladurai

et al. 2011). This was done in response to criticism that the National Sports Policy of 1984 was not properly implemented and that its goals were not realized.

The national sports policy is mainly focused on:

1. The promotion of sports in rural regions through the involvement of rural youth and sports groups, as well as Village Panchayats and Gaon Sabhas.
2. To integrate sports and physical education into the educational curriculum, making it compulsory up to the secondary school level and incorporating it into student evaluations.
3. Prioritizing sports disciplines based on their potential, popularity, and international performance. This is reviewed periodically, with higher priority given to these disciplines by the IOA and State Governments.
4. The policy also aims to strengthen its scientific support to the athletes following international standards. Experts are associated with each discipline to provide support in nutrition, psychology, medicine, pharmacology, physiology, biomechanics, anthropometry, and other sports sciences. Coordination between the laboratory and the field has been introduced, ensuring nutritional support for talented athletes and sustaining their mental health and competitive spirit.
5. To ensure access to high-quality sports equipment, allowing the import of raw materials and finished goods of international quality under an Open General License
6. The policy acknowledges the need for upgrading coaching and scientific support in the country, particularly for umpires, judges, and referees. It encourages the training of coaches, sports scientists, judges, referees, and umpires to international standards.
7. Providing Incentives offers recognition and financial security to sportspeople, motivating youth to pursue sports as well as insurance coverage medical treatment, and job reservation for sportspersons in prescribed categories.

8. Prioritize social recognition, awards, honours, cash awards, and employment opportunities for sports personnel, coaches, judges, and referees, fostering skill development and enriching their experiences.
9. The policy also acknowledges the interconnectedness of the sports and tourism sectors, which can generate substantial revenue and boost tourist traffic. It emphasizes the potential of adventure sports in promoting tourism.
10. Pursuing Sports Exchange Programmes with other countries which mainly focus on advanced training for sports people and coaches, scientific support, research aids, infrastructure development, and earning laurels in sports and games.

Towards this goal, the strategy advises that sports will highly be promoted in regions that have the potential to excel at the international level. The concept also envisions state governments taking on primary responsibility for broad-based sports. The central government and the Sports Authority of India would promote the pursuit of excellence in conjunction with the Olympic Association and national sports federations. The initiative also prioritizes boosting sports participation and engagement of women and young people in rural areas. A more significant focus of the policy is to include sport in the 'concurrent list' (as a combined obligation of union and state governments) rather than leaving it to the states alone.

Success and Achievements of the National Sports Policy (NSP) 2001

1. Implementation of the *Target Olympic Podium Scheme* through SAI to identify and nurture sporting talent through financial and technical support.
2. Integration of sports and physical education into school curricula, supported by programs like Khelo India School Games and CBSE initiatives.
3. Creation and upgrading of specialized training centers, including NSNIS Patiala and SAI Regional Centres, for scientific coaching.

4. Promotion of public–private partnerships in sports infrastructure, sponsorships, and talent development programs.
5. Hosting major national and international sporting events, enhancing sports infrastructure and national visibility.
6. Establishment of the *National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)* to ensure fair play and ethical standards in sports.
7. Implementation of *Khelo India Programme* by fostering grassroots participation and talent identification.

Failures of the National Sports Policy (NSP) 2001

1. Lack of effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms for policy objectives.
2. Inadequate funding and uneven resource allocation across sports and regions.
3. Persistent regional imbalances in sports infrastructure and opportunities, especially in Northeastern and rural areas.
4. Absence of clear accountability and measurable targets to evaluate policy outcomes.
5. Limited emphasis on sports science, research, and technology for athlete development.
6. Insufficient athlete welfare programs, including post-retirement support, job security, and psychological assistance.

1.3.11. NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY 2003

To encourage young people to participate actively in national development, the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs introduced the new National Youth Policy in 2003. The old National Youth Policy, which was developed in the year 1988, is mainly focused on the objectives of discipline, self-reliance, justice, and fair play. However, due to a significant change in the socio-

economic status of the country, the NYP 2003 was introduced. In light of the global situation, this strategy seeks to inspire young people to take on new challenges and to be engaged and active contributors to the fascinating endeavour of national development. The policy enunciates that:

- a) Sports and games should be encouraged as a mass movement by incorporating them into everyday life.
- b) Physical education, including yoga, sports, and games, ought to be required at all educational institutions.
- c) Every educational institution should have enough space for sports, adventure, and leisure activities, including playgrounds.
- d) Students in an educational institution should devote at least one-fifth of their time to outside activities.
- e) Special focus would be given to rural, traditional, and Indigenous sports, and the Panchayat institutions, in collaboration with local youth organizations, would be in charge of creating and maintaining the necessary infrastructure.
- f) A National Youth Festival will be conducted regularly, beginning at the block level to the national level.
- g) Youth hostels would be built in as many historical and cultural sites as possible to boost youth tourism.
- h) Youth adventure activities should be encouraged to instill traits like discipline, leadership, bravery, resilience, and a love for the environment.

1.3.12. NATIONAL SPORTS DEVELOPMENT CODE 2011

The most significant piece of sports law in the nation is seen to be the National Sports Development Code of 2011. When the law was passed, previous sports policies and the country's evolving sports landscape were taken into account. However, the NSDC 2011 was

primarily inspired by the Commonwealth scam of 2010. It was the first time that sports governance was the subject of an Indian policy. Some of the main objectives of the code were to prevent doping in sports, establish a model of good governance, fight corruption, combat gender discrimination in sports, prevent match-fixing, ensure proper auditing of funds and limit the tenure of office-bearers.

Some of the major objectives of the Code are explained below:

1. Financial Support: Apart from cricket, all Indian sports rely on government subsidies to survive. The government will examine the needs of the sports federations and allocate cash for employing coaches, procuring better equipment, maintaining grounds and stadiums, and paying salaries to coaches, players, trainers and staff.
2. Selection process: The code attempted to assure fair player selection in sports federations, addressing previous allegations of management favouritism. A selection committee comprised of coaches, presidents, and notable players was formed to retain player faith and assure impartiality. The meetings were observed by a government observer.
3. Cultural Exchange: It was also recommended that more cultural exchange initiatives be set up to give the players greater visibility.
4. Long-term Focus: In addition to prioritizing short-term objectives, the government emphasized that all national sports federations must have long-term plans. This clause was made essential if the association wanted to get financial aid from the government.
5. Sports Marketing: The government recognized sports as commercial endeavours for the first time, and stated that it would be the duty of the governing bodies of each sport to develop appropriate marketing strategies for their activities. Additionally, it is said that the ministry would support any commercial endeavour to host national and international competitions, particularly for the senior teams.

6. **Transparency and Accountability:** The National Sports Development Code of 2011 made it mandatory for sports federations to be open and accountable for their operations, which was one of its main initiatives. Since NSFs were placed under the purview of the Right to Information Act of 2005, each one was obliged to nominate a public information officer who would be responsible for addressing inquiries from the public and ensuring transparency in their activities.
7. **Combating age fraud:** One of the main issues with Indian sports is the widespread prevalence of age fraud, which is why the government has launched this campaign to stop and fight age fraud in India.
8. **Preventing Sexual Abuse:** Since sexual harassment is one of the main issues in sports, therefore, the government has taken decisive action to guarantee safety and security and that women's involvement in the activity keeps growing.
9. **Promoting Research and Development:** One of the most important aspects of Indian sport was the promotion of research and development. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, sport has become increasingly technical and due to its robust nature, research and development must be used in a variety of areas for the continuous improvement of athletes.

1.3.13. KHELO INDIA

Sports play a vital role in our lives. Participating in sports develops a sense of teamwork, goal-setting, leadership, and risk-taking. The Indian government launched the Khelo India initiative in 2017 to encourage sports culture in the country, and it was subsequently put into action in Delhi in 2018. In addition to establishing India as a great athletic nation, this effort aims to promote sports and fitness at the grassroots level and offer a solid foundation for all sports played in the country. The program is a combination of the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan

(RGKA), the National Sports Talent Search Scheme (NSTSS), and the Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme (USIS).

Through this initiative, the High-Powered Committee identifies outstanding athletes and provides them with financial aid of Rs. 5 lakhs for eight years. This is provided to players at all levels in all sports. The figure below demonstrates the goals of the Khelo India for developing and promoting sports in the nation.

Figure 1.4
Verticals of Khelo India programs



Source: Khelo India website

Each vertical contributed significantly to sports development and the government has shown its immense attention towards revolutionizing the sports industry in India. One such important step is investment. The MYAS has taken momentous measures by allocating a massive sum of 9 billion Indian rupees for the fiscal year 2024-2025, which is one of the greatest allocations yet. Funds are used to establish and maintain sports infrastructure, support athlete residential academies, organize youth events from grassroots to university level, and enhance sports science facilities at academies. This investment aims not only to elevate the performance of

athletes on the international stage but also to develop a lifelong interest in sports among the youth.

1.3.14. NATIONAL SPORTS POLICY 2025

With a large number of youths in its population and a fast-expanding economy, India is at a turning point in its development towards achieving its global power. Given that about one-fifth of the world's youth population exists in India, the nation has enormous potential to employ athletics as a transformative tool for national development. Therefore, along with the objectives and principles of "Viksit Bharat," the National Sports Policy 2025 was introduced with a special goal aiming at advancement of economic expansion, to close the gap between the public and private sectors' contributions, and to turn sports into a mass movement. With a special focus on global excellence, economic advancement, social inclusiveness, and community well-being, its goal, "Sports for Nation Building- Harness the Power of Sports for Nation's Holistic Development," aims to establish a thriving sports ecosystem at all levels.

The policy outlines a collaborative approach between the central and state governments, where the central government is responsible for setting national policies, funding, and regulatory standards, and state governments is responsible for managing infrastructure and promoting sports at the local level. This synergy ensures effective and adaptable policies, enabling India to build a sustainable sports culture and achieve developmental goals.

The following are some of the main goals the policy aims to achieve to fulfill this vision.

- Develop sports programs for all levels of participation, that is from grassroots to elite.
- Organize sports events and leagues at different levels, establishing a strong competitive system.
- Encourage a culture of sports and physical activity by implementing physical literacy programs.

- Create a strong framework for identifying and nurturing talent in order to produce future elite champions.
- Ensure a fair accessibility of sports infrastructure for athletes across the country.
- Establish support networks focused on athletes to aid in their overall growth and development as sportspersons.
- Encourage innovation, sports science, and medicine to improve the health and performance of the athletes.
- Redesign sources of funding to guarantee sports' long-term growth.
- Encourage growth in the economy through sports-related businesses and activities.
- Using sports as a tool to promote community development and inclusivity.
- Create an effective mechanism for recognizing and rewarding both retiring and champion athletes.
- Establish a structure and rules that allow educational establishments to act as stepping stones for the inculcation of athletic culture.

Under the National Sports Policy 2024, the Ministry of Sports is constructing five major pillars to change the sporting landscape of India. In the next paragraphs, each contour is described.

1. Nation's Excellence on the Global Stage: The National Sports Policy 2024 aims to strengthen the sporting culture and ecosystem in Indian society, starting at the block level. Its main goal is to ensure that everyone has access to and opportunities for participation in sports by incorporating them into Indian society. This strategy involves a variety of activities targeted at increasing awareness, outreach, and physical literacy in addition to providing funds for sports programs, leagues, and contests.

2. Economic Development through Sports: Sports significantly influence economic development. Several strategies are being used to promote economic growth through sports, such as global sports destinations, manufacturing, tourism, entrepreneurship, and financial sustainability. These strategies not only create job opportunities but also stimulate local businesses and enhance community engagement.

3. Sports for Social Development: Promoting global peace and mutual understanding through sports can be achieved through inclusivity, ensuring equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of background. This approach, combined with sports careers and educational pathways, empowers youth to reach their full potential and contributes to societal positivity.

4. Sports -A People's Movement: Sports can significantly improve physical and mental well-being, reduce healthcare costs, and promote a healthier lifestyle. Regular physical activity reduces stress, anxiety, and depression, fostering community and belonging. To support this movement, a National Fitness Ranking & Indexing system will be implemented, along with robust Personnel Training & Certification programs. To promote their disciplines and provide frameworks for mental and physical well-being, the National Sports Federations will collaborate with educational institutions as well as Physical education and sports programs will be subject for standard operating procedures.

5. Harmonize NSP 2024 with NEP 2020: By incorporating sports and physical education into the curriculum, the National Sports Policy 2024 and the National Education Policy 2020 will work together for a common goal, that is, to promote sports, health and fitness at the grassroots level. This will promote balanced student development, combining academic learning with physical fitness. A framework for active sports engagement in educational institutions will be formulated, involving partnerships with local sports organizations and structured programs for participation and talent development.

The National Sports Policy 2024 draft is a comprehensive strategy aimed at revolutionizing sports development in India. Achieving these goals requires a unified effort from all stakeholders, including government agencies, sports federations, private sector entities, and the public. This collaborative approach will ensure that the allocation of resources, infrastructure development, and advanced training programs for athletes is improved at all levels. Hence, to enhance these objectives, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has called for public opinion and suggestions on how this policy can be implemented and revolutionized.

1.3.15. NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE BILL, 2024 DRAFT

India has set its sights on hosting the Summer Olympics in 2036, a goal that will require significant investment in top-notch facilities and superiority in important sports. However, this dream is far yet too good to be true since the country's sports governance lacks clarity and transparency. By releasing the draft version of the National Sports Governance Bill, 2024, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has taken the initiative to solve this issue and is seeking for suggestions and comments from the public. The objectives of the Bill are to:

- Prioritize athlete care, sports development and promotion, and ethical conduct through effective governance.
- Develop governance standards for sports federations based on the basic universal principles of good governance, ethics and fair play, of the Olympic Charter, Paralympic Charter, international best practices, and legal standards.
- Develop procedures for resolving sports issues and conflicts fairly and effectively.

The major characteristics of the Bill are as follows.

1. The Sports Regulatory Board of India will be the primary regulator responsible for recognizing National Sports Federations (NSFs) and ensuring compliance with ethical, financial and governance criteria. It will have the freedom and flexibility to control how sports are run in the country. There is no set formula for how NSFs should be identified.

2. By restricting the Executive Committee to 15 members and enabling citizens to assume leadership roles, the Bill creates a governance framework for the National Olympic Association, the National Paralympic Committee, and the National Sports Federation. It encourages professional management and sound governance methods that are in line with the Olympic and Paralympic charters.
3. The bill stated that binding ethics and governance standards should be in place in all sports federations by establishing uniform ethics and dispute resolution committees at various levels. This will guarantee honesty, openness, and equity in the administrative and decision-making procedures.
4. The bill mandates the establishment of Athletes' Commissions in the IOA, NPC and NSF to ensure that athletes are represented on the Board by allowing them to participate in decision-making and policy formulation processes. The bill also stated that 10% of the votes on the Executive Committee will go to athletes.
5. The "Safe Sport Policy" aims to protect athletes, especially minors and women, from harassment and abuse while complying with the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act of 2013. This is an important step in creating a safe atmosphere for athletes.
6. The bill provides criteria for recognizing and regulating National Sports Promotion Organizations (NSPOs), which promote sports governance, athlete support, and development. This increases institutional capacity and expands the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private organisations.
7. A specialized Sports Tribunal will be created to handle sports-related issues in India, decreasing reliance on civil courts and facilitating the faster resolution of claims. This will help in minimizing the number of court proceedings and provide a single window system, allowing for faster, cheaper, and easier dispute resolution.

8. To ensure continuity in sports governance, the Bill permits the Sports Regulatory Board to establish ad hoc normalization committees to temporarily administer sports federations in the event of non-compliance or suspension, in conjunction with international federations.
9. The Bill emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct in sports, including anti-doping measures, rigorous respect for international laws, and severe consequences for violators. It is stated that all sporting bodies should develop their own Code of Ethics under the IOC Code of Ethics and national legislation, reaffirming India's commitment to hosting a fair and transparent Olympics.
10. The Bill promotes openness and accountability in sports governance by mandating the IOA, NPC, and NSFs to follow the Right to Information (RTI) Act, with the exception of performance and medical data.
11. In line with international trends for gender equality and inclusivity in sports, the Bill requires that at least 30% of the members of Executive Committees and other governing bodies be female.
12. The IOA, PCI, and NSFs will collaborate with electoral officers from a Sports Election Panel to hold free and fair elections. Members of this panel will have extensive experience running the nation's elections.
13. Only approved sporting organizations will be permitted to use the Indian flag or national names. Penalties and fines of Rs 10 lakhs, one year, or both will be imposed for violations.

1.4. SPORTS IN NORTHEAST INDIA

Figure 1.5
Northeast India Map



North-East region, known for its rich flora and fauna and a unique geographical landscape, is well known as India's easternmost frontier. Accounting for approximately 3.76 percent of the population and home to a vast culture of eight states, i.e., Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim, is an area with its own unique cultural identity, traditions, and historical importance. The region's population ratio is 159/km², with Assam having a higher density of 397/km². On the other hand, the average population density of Arunachal Pradesh, which is situated in the foothills of the Himalayas, is 17 persons per square kilometer. The demographic distribution is very erratic, reflecting the land's accessibility and harshness, the state's agricultural potential, and the order of occupancy. The region's most populous areas include the Brahmaputra and Barak plains, the Imphal plain in Manipur, and the western part of Tripura.

With more than 220 ethnic groups coexisting and speaking a wide variety of dialects, including Assamese, Nagamese, Khasi, Jaintia, Lotha, Mizo, Chakma Tancee, Ahom, and Khamti, among others, this area is extremely diverse. The Northeast's rich cultural legacy is also evident in its state-by-state variations in traditional dress, music, dance, and food. Despite its geographical isolation and frequent underrepresentation in popular narratives, the North-East has made significant contributions to India's sociocultural and sporting landscapes.

Sports hold a special place in the lives of the people of this region. Indigenous sports include Manipur's Thang-Ta (traditional martial art), Assam's Dhopakhel (traditional ball game), Mizoram's Insuknawr (a rod-push game), Assam's Karbi community's Armu Kpathu (traditional game), Pcheda (an Indigenous game of Nagaland), and Meghalaya 'Ka Siat Khnam' (local and traditional archery) have been practiced for ages and are profoundly integrated into the community's way of life. Such types of traditional games inspire the youth of the region to connect with their cultural heritage while promoting physical fitness and teamwork. These activities help young people acquire skills, but at the same time, they build a sense of pride and identity in their communities.

Northeast India also has some of the elite athletes who representing the country at the national and international events. These players have greatly influenced the country's sports culture in addition to bringing honour to their home states. The table below lists some of the top athletes from northeast India across all categories.

Table 1.1
Major achievements of Northeast India athletes

ATHLETE	STATE	SPORT	MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS
Mary Kom	Manipur	Boxing	Six-time World Champion, Olympic Bronze Medalist (2012), multiple Asian and Commonwealth Games medals.
Lovlina Borgohain	Assam	Boxing	Olympic Bronze Medalist (2020), World Championship medalist.
Mirabai Chanu	Manipur	Weightlifting	Olympic Silver Medalist (2020), World Champion (2017), multiple Commonwealth Games Golds.
Sanjita Chanu	Manipur	Weightlifting	Two-time Commonwealth Games Gold Medalist.
Dipa Karmakar	Tripura	Gymnastic	Gold - FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup at Mersin, Turkey Bronze - FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Cup at Cottbus, Germany, Padma Shri (2017)
Hima Das	Assam	Athletics	First Indian sprinter to win Gold at U20 World Championships (2018), Asian Games medalist.
Baichung Bhutia	Sikkim	Football	Former Indian Captain, multiple SAFF Championship wins.
Renedy Singh	Manipur	Football	Former Indian Captain, played in AFC and SAFF Championships.
Jeje Lalpekhlua	Mizoram	Football	Multiple I-League & ISL Champion, Indian National Team Player.
Eugeneson Lyngdoh	Meghalaya	Football	Multiple I-League & ISL Champion, Indian National Team Player
Jayanta Talukdar	Assam	Archery	Asian Games & World Cup Medalist.
Bombayla Devi Laishram	Manipur	Archery	Three-time Olympian, Commonwealth & Asian Championship Medalist.
Jeremy Lalrinnunga	Mizoram	Weightlifting	Gold Medalist at 2022 Commonwealth Games, Youth Olympic Gold Medalist (2018).
Lalremsiami	Mizoram	Hockey	First from her state to represent India in Hockey at the Olympics (2020), part of the team that reached the semi-finals.

Tarundeep Rai	Sikkim	Archery	Two-time Olympian (2004, 2012), Asian Games Silver Medalist (2010).
Sushila Likmabam	Manipur	Judo	Silver Medalist at 2014 Commonwealth Games, Olympian (2020).
Nayanmoni Saikia	Assam	Lawn Bowls	Gold Medalist at 2022 Commonwealth Games.
Dharambir Ngangom	Manipur	Para Athletics	Gold Medalist at Asian Para Games.
Rakhal Bhuyan	Assam	Para Powerlifting	National and International Powerlifting Champion.
Bhogeswar Baruah	Assam	Athletics	Gold Medalist in 800m at 1966 Asian Games, first Arjuna Awardee from Assam.
Hokato Hotozhe Sema	Nagaland	Para-Athletics	First medal-winning para-athlete from Nagaland; conferred the prestigious Arjuna Award in 2024 for exceptional achievements in para-athletics.
Rupa Bayor	Arunachal Pradesh	Taekwondo	Bronze medal at the 8 th Croatia Open International Taekwondo Championship

Northeast India has a distinctive love for sports, where communities across the entire region uphold athleticism as a way of life. With a strong sporting culture, this region nurtures great athletes and promotes diversity and inclusivity. The Northeast Olympic Association along with the support from the state governments regularly conducts regional to bring together players from all over the region. These competitions give young talent a platform to showcase their talent and give room for the preservation of traditional games while competing in modern sports.

Some of the biggest tournaments organized in the Northeastern region are;

1. Northeast Games: The North East Games, previously referred to as the North East Olympic Games, is a multi-sport event that congregates athletes from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura, thereby promoting regional integration as well as the development of sports. The establishment came into

existence in 2018 and it soon turned into a gigantic sporting festival with the 2024 edition held in Nagaland on March 18 to 23, where almost 3000 athletes contest in 15 disciplines such as archery, football, boxing, and taekwondo. The Games transcend mere competition; they act as a forum for talent identification, promotion of sports culture, and strengthening of bonds among the northeastern states, thus becoming a significant contributor to the national sports perspective of India.

2. North East Zone Inter-State Badminton Championship: The North East Zone Inter-State Badminton Championship is an event that brings together players from all eight northeastern states. This event is conducted annually to strengthen the bond between northeastern states through sports.

3. 1st Northeast Para Sports Meet: The 1st Northeast Para Sports Meet took place at Guwahati, Assam, on November 27 to 29, 2024. This historic event celebrated the spirit and oneness of para-athletes throughout Northeast India. Five sports disciplines were part of the Meet: athletics, boccia, badminton, swimming, and table tennis. The event aimed at giving a platform to differently abled sportspeople to prove their devotion to sports excellence, and to inspire young athletes to develop a culture of sports centric in the region.

The geographical map of each Northeastern state below is depicted with distinct colours and symbolic icons representing key aspects of the state's vibrant culture, heritage, and identity. These icons are included to visually communicate the cultural uniqueness of each region. Rather than being literal features of the physical map, these elements serve as illustrative markers that help viewers understand the socio-cultural characteristics of the states at a glance. The use of these symbols makes the map both informative and visually engaging, highlighting cultural identity alongside geographic boundaries.

1.4.1. ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Figure 1.6
Geographical map of Arunachal Pradesh



Known as the "land of dawn-lit mountains'," this state is the most remote state in India and the first region to welcome the sunrise. Located at the northeastern tip of India, bordering Tibet, Bhutan, and Burma, this region teems with flora and fauna that attracts even the world's greatest travellers. Arunachal Pradesh is home to over 500 rare species of orchids amidst its dense forests, and the beauty of this region is enhanced by the snow mountains, gushing waterfalls, shining rivers, mist-shrouded hill ranges, and various traditional and cultural features of the state.

Arunachal Pradesh, one of India's emerging states, is also a major player in the sports sector. Although the state is not a centre of mainstream sports, it has produced talented footballers and martial artists who have competed at national and international levels. Sports business in Arunachal Pradesh has tremendous potential, with the right support and facilities, it can flourish and contribute significantly to the state's economy. The MMA, Wushu, and Karate-Do teams of Arunachal Pradesh have excelled and won awards both at home and abroad. Other sports in Arunachal Pradesh, like badminton, weightlifting, and outdoor sports like mountaineering, are also doing well and have the potential to grow with proper government support.

Despite the state's immense potential, building of sports infrastructure and facilities has only recently begun. With numerous projects now underway, the state government has made an effort for sports development and has also taken several actions to offer athletes the financial support and training they need. To increase the state's visibility in the sports world, the government of Arunachal Pradesh, along with the Department of Sports and other state sports organizations, has also launched smart marketing and branding efforts to develop the potential of athletic talent in the state. Some of the initiatives are explained below.

- 1. Arunachal Pradesh State Sports Policy, 2017:** The Arunachal Pradesh Sports Policy 2017 strives to enhance sporting excellence through a systematic framework of talent identification, grassroots development, and high-performance training. The policy concentrates on the development of sports infrastructure in all districts, making sports facilities accessible to sportspersons at all levels. It focuses on financial support, scholarships, and cash rewards to facilitate participation and honor achievements at national and international competitions. In addition, the policy aims to create employment avenues for sports persons by offering job reservations—5% in all government departments and 10% in the police force. It also encourages cooperation with private organizations to improve sports administration, coaching, and sponsorship avenues and foster people's participation in sporting activities.
- 2. Grassroots Football Development Scheme:** Intending to develop football at the grassroots level, the All-India Football Federation (AIFF), in collaboration with the Arunachal Pradesh government, launched this initiative to locate and develop players who have the potential to excel in football from 6 to 12 years of age. The program includes training, assisting, and nurturing the players as well as educating physical education instructors to ensure long-term grassroots development.

3. **Free Sports Equipment Bank:** This initiative, launched in Miao's Changlang district, allows children and youth to borrow sports equipment for free, boosting participation in a variety of sports. The bank ensures accessibility for impoverished groups by operating on a borrow-and-return strategy. The primary goals of this program are to keep young people occupied and away from drugs, as well as to encourage them to participate in sports and discover their skills.
4. **Arunachal Olympic Sports Mission:** This mission, announced by Chief Minister Pema Khandu, aims to create a complete sports development plan by providing youngsters with skills and resources to compete fearlessly in national and international tournaments. The primary focus is getting athletes ready for the 2028 and 2032 Olympic Games.

1.4.2. ASSAM

Figure 1.7
Geographical map of Assam

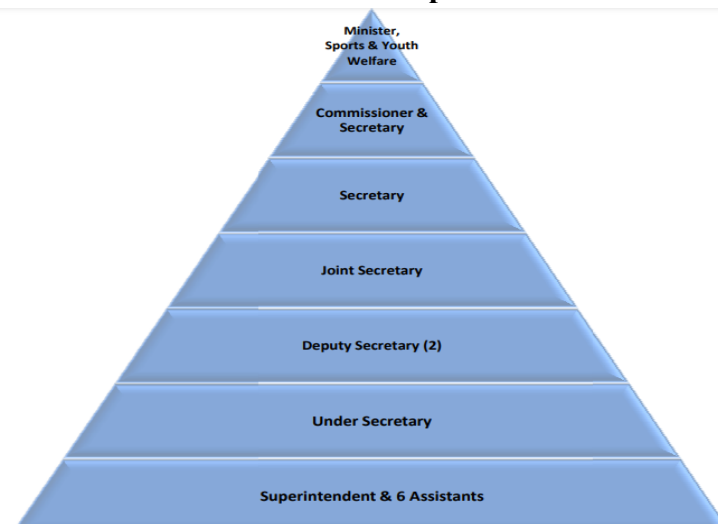


Assam is a region where sports are deeply rooted in the culture. Its plethora of sporting talent is a result of the state's encouragement of participation in both traditional and modern sports. The various geographical elements offered by the mighty Brahmaputra, the Subansiri and its numerous hills and mountains make for different sporting opportunities. Among sports enthusiasts, adventure activities such as river rafting, boat racing, fishing, parasailing and

mountaineering are very popular. Moreover, traditional wrestling, buffalo fighting and tekeli bhonga are among the indigenous sports that are highly appreciated in Assam.

The Government of Assam has undertaken several projects for sports development and youth empowerment in the state. The Department of Sports & Youth Welfare, established in 1988-89, looks after the development of sports activities by providing incentive schemes, conducting state-level tournaments and spade works like talent identification, and financial assistance to promising athletes. It is also responsible for developing sports infrastructure, building human resources for sports and physical education and conducting structured activities to ensure that the youth develop holistically through sports and youth welfare policies. The administrative organization consists of the Commissioner and Secretary who control the entire administration, and the Directorate of Sports and Youth Welfare, which helps translate government initiatives into grassroots activity. To guarantee that laws and regulations are correctly applied, it also collaborates with the Assam Olympic Association, other state sports associations, and regional associations.

Figure. 1.8
Organisation Structure of the Directorate of Sports and Youth Welfare, Assam



Source: Ministry of youth affair and sports, Govt of Assam

With 34 state-level sports associations functioning under the auspices of the Assam Olympic Associations (AOA), Assam boasts a well-organized sports ecosystem. These State sports association oversee the creation, promotion, and regulation of specific disciplines, which only offer structured training programs and participation in national and international competitions.

The government of Assam has implemented various sports strategies and several initiatives to improve sports development in the state, such as:

- **Assam State Sports Policy 2017-18:** The objectives of this policy are to promote sports for all, organize national/international competitions, identify and scout talents at the grassroots level, provide grants to SSA, establish a Sports Science Centre, coach and establish an academy/sports school, hold a Women's Sports Festival, organize specially-abled competitive sporting events, focus on sports academies, schools, and educational institutions, develop sports infrastructure, set up the Assam Sports Development Fund, integrate sports with other departments, make special provisions for sportspersons, and so on.
- **Sports Pension Scheme:** Providing regular sports pension and one-time financial assistance for sportspersons who secured medals in the Olympic Games, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and National Games.
- **Mission Talent Hunt:** To identify and nurture sporting talents from grassroots levels, to provide coaching, equipment, and financial assistance and to help athletes compete at national and international levels.
- **The Chief Minister's Sports Development Scheme:** This initiative intends to build new state-of-the-art stadiums, upgrade existing sporting facilities, and provide training equipment to the athletes.
- **The Khel Maharan program:** The Khel Maharan is an initiative that recognizes and supports local athletic potential. The program allows athletes to participate at the state and

national levels while also assisting them in developing their talents, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

1.4.3. MANIPUR

Figure 1.9
Geographical map of Manipur



DUUS

Manipur is a state in northeastern India, bordering the state of Assam to the west, Nagaland to the north, Mizoram to the southwest, and Myanmar to the south and east. The literal meaning of Manipur is a "land of gems," which conveys the natural beauty and rich cultural legacy of the state. Known for its famous floating lake 'the Loktak Lake' this place is also rich in its culture and biodiversity. Imphal, the state's capital, is located in the heart of this region, and sectors such as commerce, forestry, agriculture, and cottage industries serve as a core foundation for the state's economy.

Manipur is one of the leading states in Indian sports and has sent many elite athletes to national and international tournaments such as Mary Kom and Mirabai Chanu. This glorious sporting legacy has resulted in numerous awards and accolades, especially in the disciplines of cycling, boxing, football, weightlifting, and field hockey. However, behind this glory lies another story, that of the historical disregard and lack of support for the athletes in all the early years of their struggle. To counter this, the government and society as a whole have made

various efforts to help potential athletes achieve their goals and bring honour to the state and the country as a whole.

Government efforts have a significant impact on the growth of sports in Manipur. Various programs and schemes are available for the promotion of sports in the state, but their implementation has been inconsistent. The most significant issue is the lack of an adequate budget for sports development, which hampers the growth and sustainability of programs. Popular sports seem to dominate and overshadow traditional and indigenous games, which constitute an integral and vital part of the cultural experience. To bring about real change, the government of Manipur has taken several initiatives by investing more in infrastructural facilities, coaching facilities, and training so that facilities reach every athlete regardless of background, especially in rural areas, where much-unused talent lies.

1.4.4. MEGHALAYA

Figure 1.10
Geographical map of Meghalaya



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Meghalaya is a northeastern Indian state often called the "Scotland of the East" and "Abode of Clouds," famed for its picturesque terrain, rolling green hills, contoured waterfalls and more. It occupies a total area of 22,429 square kilometers and shares its boundaries with Assam and Bangladesh. Different indigenous tribes have made the state their dwelling, like the Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo tribes, whose presence further adds to the rich cultural heritage of this land.

Climatically, the place remains pleasant throughout the year; thus, the scenic beauty, the living-root bridges, and the deep-rooted traditions bring in tourists from all over the world.

The state achieved its statehood on 21 January 1972, and since then Meghalaya has been a sports-oriented state, particularly for ‘football.’. The state has also produced various national and international athletes representing the state at prominent stages throughout the years. With such a rich sporting heritage and enormous potential, Meghalaya can produce and develop elite athletes in various ranges of sports, and with the right support from the government, Meghalaya can also be one of the mainstream hubs for sports in India.

Since its formation, the Government of Meghalaya has consistently supported the growth of a rich culture of sports participation to contribute towards fitness, health, and social mobilization. Sport, traditionally, is always part of the state's social fabric, as cultural games such as archery have continued to play an integral role in many people's lives, especially in rural areas. As part of the efforts towards attaining the ideal of sporting excellence, the Department of Sports under the Government of Meghalaya has started various ambitious programs aimed at turning the state into a sports powerhouse of India. Such as:

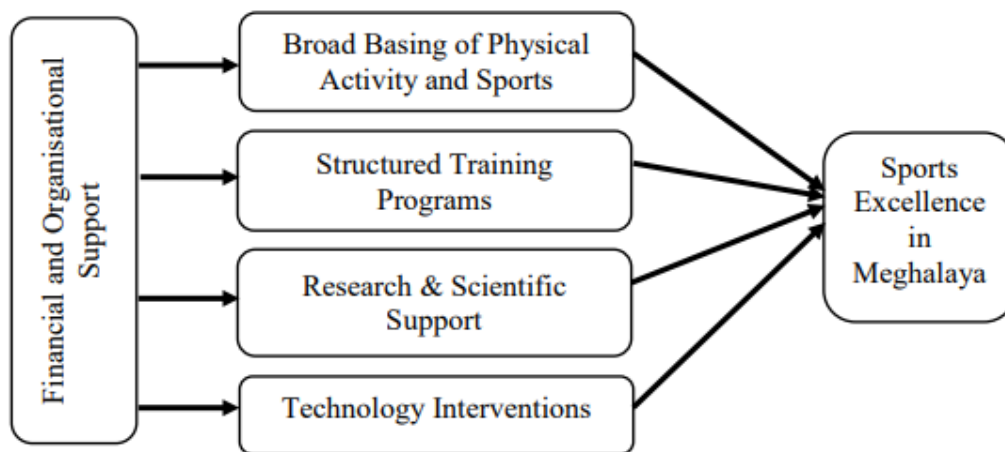
1. Meghalaya State Sports Policy for 2018: The Meghalaya State Sports Policy is an extension of promoting physical activity and sports participation that form an integral part of the culture, values, and way of life of the people of the state. Sports and games, enhance people's quality of life and well-being, promote social peace, and boost the economy. As a result, the major objective of sports policy is:

- To create a culture of sports, a healthy lifestyle, and values.
- Promoting Fitness for all or Sports for all
- Encouraging mass participation in sports

- Providing Structured Training Programs
- Providing Research & Scientific Support
- Hosting sports competitions
- Coaches' development
- Providing Sports scholarship
- Sports quota for state government jobs

Figure 1.11

Meghalaya sports policy framework



Source: Meghalaya state sports policy 2019

2. **Fitness and Wellness Scheme:** This project, which is a component of the Chief Minister's ELEVATE program, aims to give sports entrepreneurs financial support to open sports and wellness facilities around the state. The initiative's goal is to establish 20 such facilities across the state, providing areas for youth participation, training, and hosting of sporting events.
3. **Mission Football 2.0:** The state government is planning to launch 'Mission Football 2.0,' building on the success of the first Mission Football program. It will promote the game

further with better infrastructure and talent development. For that, the government of Meghalaya will provide a sum up to ₹3 crore in grants to all elite clubs that participate in I-League 2 and above, while grassroots, as well as intermediate-level clubs, will be granted a sum up to ₹15 lakh."

4. **Super Elite Program for Athlete Development:** The Government of Meghalaya announced the STAR Program project, aiming to develop Olympic athletes by 2032. The Department plans to groom high-potential athletes through infrastructure development and initiatives. The Super Elite Program will train high-potential athletes with international coaches, aiming to compete at national and international levels.

1.4.5. MIZORAM

Figure 1.12
Geographical map of Mizoram



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Mizoram, also known as the "Land of Mountains," is a state in the northeastern region of India. It is one of the most famous tourist destinations due to various cultural festivals, waterfalls, lakes, dance forms, and national parks located there. Mizoram shares a border with Myanmar, Bangladesh, Tripura, Assam, and Manipur to the east and south, west, northwest, north, and northeast. Mizoram was once known as the Lushai Hills District of Assam..

However, in 1954, the Lushai Hills were renamed as a Mizo Hills District; subsequently, in 1972, it became a Union territory, obtaining its current state name as 'Mizoram.'

With a long history of generating remarkable talent, notably in football, and a strong interest in sports, Mizoram is gradually becoming one of India's popular sports hubs. Mizoram has had a substantial impact on the national and international level despite having a small population, laying a solid basis for the future. Due to a strong sporting culture and innate athleticism, young people in the state actively participate in a variety of sports, such as football, basketball, boxing, weightlifting, and athletics. Additionally, the state government has also prioritized sports development by offering potential athletes financial assistance such as scholarships as well as training facilities and well-equipped infrastructure.

Mizoram has produced exceptional athletes in a variety of sports, making a substantial contribution to Indian sporting culture. The state has produced football legends such as Lalrindika Ralte, a talented midfielder; Jeje Lalpekhlua, a key player of the Indian national team; and Lalbiakhlua Jongte, a young goalkeeper with tremendous potential. While C Lalremsanga has represented India in archery, Jeremy Lalrinnunga's gold at the Youth Olympic Games in weightlifting gave honour to the nation. Perhaps, the best example of Mizoram's football hegemony is in the form of the Mizoram Premier League, which has also been a place for developing young talent and is a springboard to national-level competitions such as the ISL and I-League. Besides football, Mizoram has also become a powerhouse in combat sports, especially in boxing and MMA where new emerging combatants are leaving their imprints on the national as well as the international levels. The reasons that have carved Mizoram into a sporting hub are the investments made by the government in building sports infrastructure, training centres, and grassroots development. Therefore, because of their dedication, structured training schedules, and great sporting culture, Mizoram continues to solidify its position as one of the top contributors to Indian sporting achievement.

To develop sports in the state, the government of Mizoram has also introduced several initiatives, such as:

1. Mizoram Sports Policy, 2019: Under the theme of "Fit people make fit nations," the goal is to create a strong culture that will lead to widespread participation and excellence at the highest level of sports. The policy has suggested many approaches and areas of emphasis, including

- Infrastructure development
- Public-private partnership
- Integration of sports with another department.
- Integration with the education system
- Prioritizing of sports disciplines
- Coach upgradation and skill development
- Providing incentives scheme
- Promoting sports tourism
- Sports talent identification and development:
- Promoting and preserving Indigenous games
- Sports for differently-abled, old persons and women
- Integrating sports science in sports research and training.

2. Empowering Mizoram Sports (EMS) program: The goal of the EMS Program is to identify and develop talent, even in the most remote locations. This program not only provides trainings, but also logistics, food, and lodging for athletes throughout their training sessions.

1.4.6. NAGALAND

Figure 1.13
Geographical map of Nagaland



On December 1, 1963, Nagaland, also referred to as "The Land of Festivals," was legally constituted as the 16th state of the Indian Union. This state is divided into 16 Administrative Districts, which are home to 17 main tribes and several sub-tribes each with their traditions, languages, and attire. Nagaland shares its border with Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Myanmar.

Nagaland is the land of rich folklore and traditions. From stories passed down to generations to folk songs honoring ancestors and warriors, culture plays a huge role in the everyday lives of people. It is also a land where one of the biggest international festivals, called "The Hornbill Festival," is organized by the state every year. This festival showcases the rich culture and traditions of Nagaland, where people from all over the world take part and experience the beauty of this particular state. Traditional and modern sports are also something both cultures hold deep within themselves to promote sporting culture. Whether it's traditional games like wrestling and archery or contemporary sports, the state actively supports and celebrates athletic talent.

In Nagaland, sports play an important role in the social and cultural fabric of the state. The state has a strong history of traditional sports such as Naga wrestling, archery, and indigenous games, which are frequently honored at festivals and social gatherings. In recent years, the efforts of modernization of sporting infrastructure have been quite notable, with multi-purpose stadiums being constructed and specialized training centres for various sports being developed. Dr. Talimeren Ao, the famous footballer who led the Indian national team as a team captain during the first ever match after independence, and Chekrovolü Swüro, the archer who represented India at the international platforms, have won recognition not only in the country but also worldwide, motivating the youth. Therefore, to promote sports in the state, the government of Nagaland has come up with a plan to develop a holistic sports policy as well as to collaborate with another sports organization. This plan has led to a collaborative effort between the Nagaland Olympic Association and Sports for All to establish a strong sports ecosystem and to facilitate the growth of talents at the grassroots level.

1.4.7. SIKKIM

Figure 1.14
Geographical map of Sikkim



DUUS
DAILY UPDATES

Sikkim, also known as ‘The Land of Peace and Tranquilly’, is India's least populous state and the second smallest in the country. It is located in the northeastern part of India and borders

West Bengal, Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal. The state is known for its natural biodiversity, subtropical temperatures and high mountain climate. It is also home to India's highest peak and the third most in the world called as Kangchenjunga. The state is home to different tribes, classes and clans, and each community speaks its own language. Some of the official languages of Sikkim are Sikkimese, English, Nepali and Lepcha.

Sikkim has an impressive sporting culture both in the traditional and modern games. The state has produced some illustrious sporting figures who have attained national and international fame. Baichung Bhutia, popularly called the "Sikkimese Sniper," is a highly revered footballer who captained the Indian national team and became the first Indian to play professionally in Europe. Tarundeep Rai of Namchi put on Indian colours at several international competitions and Mountaineer Sonam Gyatso who is the first Sikkimese to climb Mount Everest. These athletes are the pride of Sikkim, an example of their commitment to sports, and were worshipped heavily by the youth of the region.

The Sikkim State Government has prioritized sports and youth activities through various initiatives to promote fitness, mental health and social cohesion. The Sports and Youth Affairs Department is working to bridge the essential gap in sports infrastructure and support young talent through training and encouragement. The grassroots sports development initiatives "Sports for Peace and Development" under the Khelo India program have been activated from the ground up and implemented in all districts. In addition, grants are being provided to revamp the state sports federations, while performance-based incentives are being issued to encourage participation and attainment of excellence in various disciplines. All these are just a few initiatives through which Sikkim is nurturing its sports culture and channeling its youth through structured interventions and support. One of the major initiatives taken by the Government of Sikkim is;

- **STAIRS initiatives:** The Society for Transformation, Inclusion, and Recognition through Sports (STAIRS) is a state initiative of Sikkim that aims to establish grassroots sports academies and provide quality coaching and training to children coming from diverse backgrounds. The foundation organizes sporting tournaments and events to instill healthy competition and life skills like teamwork, leadership and discipline among school children in the state.

1.4.8. TRIPURA

Figure 1.15
Geographical map of Tripura



Tripura is a small and isolated state in northeast India. It has borders with Bangladesh, Mizoram, and Assam to the north, south, and west. The state provides ideal weather conditions for cultivating a variety of fruit and horticulture crops. It has plenty of natural resources, including tea, rubber, medicinal plants, hard rock, glass sands, limestone, plastic clay, and natural gas resources.

Being the smallest state in the Northeast by area, and the second smallest by population, sports-wise, Tripura has charted newer interventions. The state produced many talented athletes known and unknown that have made their journey through sports and rendered honours for their country at the international level in gymnastics, athletics, swimming and football, despite

the utter lack of support; this factor has greatly hindered the growth and development of sports in the region. However, the state remains committed to sports by investing in athletes and helping them achieve great success. One of the most prominent names in this regard is Dipa Karmakar, a famous Indian gymnast who has gained global recognition and brought fame to the state and the country. Her success sends an important message about the potential that lies in this part of the country and how the world of sports will change with better access to resources.

To promote sports and nurture talent in the state, the Tripura government has implemented various schemes and programs for the growth and development of the state. These schemes were created to cater to the needs of the athletes and provide better training facilities considering the woes of poor infrastructure. A few of the main and popular schemes in the state include:

1. **SPORTS AND YOUTH AFFAIRS POLICY -1977:** Sports and Youth Affairs Policy of 1977 was one of the earlier exponents of the Government of Tripura that recognized the importance of sports and youth development long before many other states in India. This policy focused on sports participation, infrastructure development, youth talent identification, mass participation, incentive schemes, coaching development, Welfare Schemes for destitute sportspersons, and structured support for athletes. Though the policy could not be implemented fruitfully because of financial and logistical hiccups, it exhibited the early vision of the government towards sports development. Tripura was way ahead in time, in recognizing the role of sports as an effective tool of socio-economic development, as even the National Sports Policy came out much later in 1984; seven years after Tripura's formulation. The early policy became the bedrock for sports initiatives in the state, even though much would remain unfulfilled, and highlighted the need for constant government intervention in nurturing sports talent.

The active intent of 1977 went on to strengthen Tripura's commitment to sports, which later gave rise to a plethora of policies and programs to support its sports ecosystem.

2. Mukhyamantri Sports Development Scheme: The Mukhyamantri Sports Development Scheme-Unemployed Young Professional Sportspersons was introduced on February 9, 2024, by the Directorate of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of Tripura. It strives to hire young, seasoned professional athletes as Junior Coaches, paying them Rs. 20,000 per month.

1.5. RESEARCH PROBLEM RATIONALE

Northeast India, renowned for its breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural diversity, has historically been considered one of India's prominent sports hubs, producing athletes who have excelled at national and international levels. Despite this potential, the region continues to face significant barriers in sports development, including inadequate infrastructure, limited athlete support, and challenges in the effective implementation of sports policies (Lyngdoh, D., & Kumar, V. R. 2023). The distinctive socio-economic, cultural, and geographical context of Northeast India characterized by hilly terrains, remote locations, and varying levels of economic development creates unique challenges that differentiate it from other regions in India.

A review of existing literature indicates that while several studies have analyzed national sports policy implementation in mainland India, there is a notable lack of research that focuses specifically on how these policies are implemented, administered, and their impact on sports development in Northeast India (Bora, N., et al., 2025). The region's particular cultural and institutional context means that policies designed for the mainland may not translate effectively here without tailored strategies. Traditional sports practices, local community dynamics, and regional governance structures influence how policy is interpreted and applied, making

Northeast India a critical case for understanding the real-world effectiveness of national sports policy.

Studying Northeast India provides a unique opportunity to examine the intersection of national policy with local realities, offering insights that can inform policy adaptation across other underrepresented and geographically diverse regions of India. By critically assessing current sports regulations, governance mechanisms, and implementation challenges, this research aims to identify gaps and propose evidence-based strategies for improvement. The study seeks to establish a policy guidance framework, which can serve as a benchmark for minimum standards in the national sports policy.

Ultimately, this research is expected to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, sports administrators, and other stakeholders—not only strengthening sports governance in Northeast India but also contributing to a more effective, inclusive, and context-sensitive national sports policy that can enhance athlete development and sports participation across the country.

1.6. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the sports policy implementation in Northeast India and to determine its impact on sports development. This study is based on the National sports policy 2001 using the Sports Policy Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) as a framework.

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. The study will provide insights into the current status of sports policy implementation and development in Northeast India.
2. It will help determine whether the current initiatives and strategies taken by the state governments of Northeast India are adequate for promoting sports in the region.

3. Through an in-depth analysis of infrastructure, finance, participation rate, and athlete support, the study will offer valuable insights on how to improve regional sports performance and participation.
4. The study will help identify the challenges of sports development in Northeast India and suggest potential strategies to address these barriers and cultivate a stronger sports culture in the region.
5. Finally, the study will be helpful to policymakers and sports administrators of various Northeast states by recommending effective sports development strategies and encouraging investment in the regional sports ecosystem.

1.8. OBJECTIVES

1. To gain a deeper understanding into the demographic profiles of stakeholders involved in sports across different Northeast states.
2. To Examine the extent to which Sports policies have been effectively implemented in various states of Northeast India.
3. To examine the impact of Sports Policy implementation through various sports development initiatives in Northeast India.
4. To identify barriers and challenges in implementing Sports Policies in Northeast India.
5. Propose strategic recommendations to overcome the identified challenges and improve the effectiveness of sports policies in the region.

1.9. LIMITATION

This study is restricted to the following features.

1. The framework of Sports Policy Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) has been used to assess the implementation of sports policy in North East India. While SPLISS is an excellent tool for evaluating sports policy, it does not

fully capture the socio-cultural aspects of the informal sports systems prevalent in Northeast India.

2. The conclusions of the study are based solely on the comments of the respondents and the secondary data. Responses may be limited and influenced by bias or reluctance to make unflattering comments.
3. The study is limited to three months of data collection, which may not have data on long-term policy implications.
4. The study focused exclusively on players who represented their states at the Northeast games, national and international levels in 2021-25.
5. The study focused only on the officials and coaches currently working in various SAI centers and sports associations within the state.
6. While sports administrators are included, other stakeholders such as policymakers and private sponsors are not involved, which may lead to a gap in the understanding of policymaking.
7. The study focuses only on athletes, coaches, officials and sports administrators currently represented and employed in SAI centres, KISCE centres and state sports federations.

1.10. CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter One (Introduction): This chapter provides a fundamental overview of Indian sports policy and development. The chapter gives a concise summary of the various government initiatives and the evolution of Indian sports policy. It also offers a brief synopsis of Northeast India's sports policy implementation.

Furthermore, this chapter presents the research's goals and objectives, discusses the research questions, and emphasizes the significance of the study from both an academic and practical standpoint.

Chapter Two (Review of Literature): This chapter offers a critical review of existing literature on the subject. It gives an overall understanding of how vital a well-formulated sports policy is to the growth and development of sports in the country. It also acts as the base for the overall structure of the research, explaining several theoretical aspects of financial support, governance structure, talent identification, sports infrastructure development, sports education and participation, athlete post-career support, coach development, and scientific support.

Chapter Three (Research Methodology): The research methodology presented in this chapter comprises the following: research design, data collection process, questionnaire design, statistical tool used, pre-testing, methods, strategy, sampling and study hypothesis.

Chapter Four (Data Analysis): This chapter has two sections. Part I presents the quantitative evaluation of primary data using various statistical analysis. Part II presents the qualitative data gathered through various sources to provide evident based implementation. To enhance the evaluations of the outcome, the chapter also includes figures and graphs for graphical representation of the results.

Chapter Five (Findings and Conclusion): The study's findings are presented in this chapter, and a discussion and summary are conducted based on the conclusions that were drawn. By offering summaries and future scopes of the existing research, this chapter concludes the study and also provides recommendations for future research.

1.11. TERM DEFINITION

1. Sports

"The term sport includes activities or group activities that through regular practice improve the generalized physical, mental health, social networks, or competition of the person. As a result, the activity requires physical exertion and/or skill in the form of regulations controlling participation, earning it recognition as a sport."

2. Evaluation

Evaluation is a process that uses critical analysis to determine the attributes and conditions of a program. It collects and analyzes information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of the program. The assessment can help improve program efficacy and/or make judgments regarding future programming (Patton, 1987).

3. Sports Governance

Sports governance refers to the internal workings principles of governance which is applied to organizations whether amateur or professional working at community, provincial, national, or international levels. Such principles ensure transparency of the organizations and accountability concerning ethical decision-making. Effective governance structures can establish trust in sports organizations through mutualized sustainability in programs.

4. Sports Policy

It is defined as a set of rules, guidelines, and regulations that govern the development, delivery, and organization of sports. Through sports policy, there are goals established on how sports can contribute to society by making it achievable to integrate inclusiveness, safety, and fairness in play while encouraging participation at all levels.

5. Sports Development

The promotion of sports at various levels from grassroots to elite competition through a structured and comprehensive process refers to sports development. Such development is concerned with policies, programs, and initiatives to increase accessibility, enhance the identification of talent, improve support for athletes, and ensure the sustainability of sports within a community or country.