

NATIONAL SPORTS POLICY

NEWS: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the **National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025**.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Historical Evolution of Sports in India: Key Timeline

- **Ancient Roots of Indian Sports:**
 - Traditional sports in India evolved from basic survival activities like **archery, wrestling, running**, and hunting skills.
 - Over time, these developed into **organized and recreational sporting practices**, with regional games like *kabaddi*, *mallakhamb*, and *kushti* gaining popularity.
- **Post-Independence Period (1947–1970s):**
 - After 1947, **national priorities** such as **poverty eradication, education, and food security** received precedence over sports.
 - Despite limited focus, India **hosted the first Asian Games in 1951** in New Delhi.
 - The **All-India Council of Sports** was established in **1954** to advise the government on sports development.
- **International Success in a Few Sports:**
 - India's **hockey team** dominated international tournaments (including Olympics) during this period.
 - Some individual athletes in **athletics and wrestling** made their mark despite low policy support and limited infrastructure.
- **Turning Point – 1982 Asian Games:**
 - Hosting the **1982 Asian Games** triggered the need for institutional sports reforms.
 - This led to the **creation of a dedicated Department of Sports** and India's **first National Sports Policy (NSP)** in 1984.
 - The policy aimed to improve **infrastructure, increase participation**, and build **elite-level performance**.
- **Institutional Development (1986–1991):**
 - The **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** was set up in **1986** to implement sports schemes and manage coaching/training infrastructure.
 - However, **slow economic growth and limited funding** hampered policy implementation during this period.
- **Post-Liberalisation Era (1991–2000):**

- Economic reforms in **1991** improved **visibility and sponsorship** for sports, with rising public interest in cricket and Olympic sports.
- A **Draft NSP in 1997** was prepared, focusing on **broadbasing at the state level and elite training at the national level**, but it was **never adopted officially**.

II. Reforms and Policy Shifts (2000–2020)

- **Creation of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports:**
 - A dedicated **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MoYAS)** was created in **2000** to streamline governance.
- **NSP 2001:**
 - A revised **National Sports Policy (2001)** was launched, aiming at mass participation, talent identification, and excellence in international events.
- **Structural Reforms:**
 - The **National Sports Development Code (2011)** sought to bring transparency and accountability in the functioning of **National Sports Federations (NSFs)**.
- **Flagship Initiatives:**
 - **TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme, 2014):** Focused on identifying and supporting elite athletes for the Olympics and other major competitions.
 - **Khelo India (2017):** Aimed at promoting sports among youth through school-level engagement, infrastructure creation, and talent spotting.
 - **Fit India Movement (2019):** Launched to promote **fitness culture and physical literacy** among all citizens.

III. National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025: Key Highlights

- **Vision and Scope:**
 - NSP 2025 **replaces the 2001 policy** and aims to **transform India into a global sporting powerhouse**, with a vision of excelling at the **2036 Olympics and beyond**.
- **Consultative Process:**
 - Developed through **extensive consultations** involving Central Ministries, NITI Aayog, State Governments, NSFs, athletes, domain experts, and public feedback.
- **Five Foundational Pillars:**
 - **Excellence on the Global Stage** – Training elite athletes to compete and win at the highest levels globally.
 - **Sports for Economic Development** – Leveraging sports for job creation, sports tourism, and the sports goods industry.

- **Sports for Social Development** – Using sports as a tool for inclusion, gender equality, empowerment, and national integration.
- **Sports as a People's Movement** – Creating a culture of mass participation and community engagement in sports.
- **Integration with Education (aligned with NEP 2020)** – Promoting sports as part of formal education and holistic development.

IV. Importance of NSP 2025

- **Nation-Building through Sports:**
 - The policy recognizes sports as a key instrument for creating **healthier, more productive, and socially cohesive citizens**.
- **Catalyst for Sporting Culture:**
 - Aims to foster a **culture where sport is seen not just as a pastime, but as a career, identity, and contributor to nation-building**.
- **Economic & Social Multiplier:**
 - Promotes **sports entrepreneurship, job creation, and local economic development**, especially in rural and Tier 2/3 cities.

V. Challenges in India's Sports Ecosystem

- **Budget and Infrastructure Constraints:**
 - **Low public investment** in sports compared to other major economies remains a key limitation.
- **Governance Issues:**
 - Many NSFs suffer from **poor governance, political interference**, and lack of professional management.
- **Scientific Coaching Deficit:**
 - Lack of access to **qualified coaches, sports science, and high-performance centers** restricts athlete development.
- **Grassroots Weakness:**
 - **Fragmented implementation** at the state level, due to sports being a **State subject**, leads to **regional disparities**.
- **Lack of Sports Culture:**
 - Social perception of sports still leans towards **recreation rather than serious pursuit**, especially in rural and lower-income areas.

VI. Suggestions and Way Forward

- **Unified National-State Coordination:**

- Develop **inter-governmental coordination mechanisms** to ensure uniform implementation of policies and schemes.
- **Boost Physical Literacy from School Age:**
 - Integrate **physical education and sports training** into school curriculums in alignment with **NEP 2020**.
- **Enhance Funding and Scientific Training:**
 - Ensure higher public-private investment in **infrastructure, sports science, nutrition, and mental conditioning**.
- **Strengthen Talent Pipeline:**
 - Focus on **early talent identification**, long-term athlete development, and support mechanisms at district/block levels.
- **Cultural Shift in Sports Perception:**
 - Promote narratives where **sports are seen as viable careers**, integral to lifestyle, and symbols of national pride.
- **Sustainability and Inclusion:**
 - Make sports inclusive for **persons with disabilities, women, and marginalized groups**, while ensuring environmental sustainability in event organization and infrastructure.

Source: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/cabinet-approves-national-sports-policy-2025-to-transform-india-into-global-sporting-power/articleshow/122184526.cms?from=mdr>