



SPORTS-BASED PUBLIC POLICIES IN INDIA: EVOLUTION, TRENDS, GENDER, AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

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Public Policy: An Overview

Public policy results from a political process. The government often formulates long-term policy choices that articulate overarching objectives, guiding the development of programs and initiatives, with annual budget allocations determined accordingly. Public policy is not just comprised of goals and ideas; it must be supported by suitable legal and administrative frameworks. However, public policy is not just defined by documented actions; it may also include actions that governments choose to refrain from doing. Furthermore, public policy addresses challenges characterized by public goods in which all individuals have a vested interest and are involved, such as health and the environment. Public policy formation and execution include a well-organised sequence of activities. It necessitates a closely integrated relationship and interaction among the key governmental entities, including the political executive, legislature, bureaucracy, and judiciary. In recent years, public policy has increasingly been seen as a sphere in which nongovernmental organisations play a substantial role.

Definitions of Public Policy

David Easton defines public policy as “the authoritative allocation of values for the whole society.” Furthermore, “the nature of policy is that some things are owned by some people but not by others.” This viewpoint points out the values allocation function of public policy, which is favored by many scholars. First, what are the values? According to Easton, values involve not only tangible matters, such as capital, but also intangible matters (e.g., power, reputation, and service). As a philosophical concept, “values” are the function and utility of objects for the subject. At the same time, “values” can be understood as all objects having utility for subjects. Public policy is the outcome of the struggle in government over who gets what.

Woodrow Wilson, who is arguably the father of modern public administration, contends, “public policy is the laws and regulations which are made by legislative statesmen and implemented by public administration personnel.” The above definition is obviously characterized by “the dichotomy between politics and administration,” which narrows the scope and limits the range of public policy makers. First, public policy includes not only laws and regulations, but also government plans, instructions, decisions, and other symbolic systems. Secondly, those who participate in the making of public policy include not only statesmen, but also representatives of citizens, experts, and scholars. Participation in making public policy has increased steadily.

Public Policy: Changing Trends

Public policy involves political decisions aimed at implementing programs to attain societal objectives. These decisions are anticipated to reflect a consensus of values. Public policy, when analyzed, consists of a plan of action or program alongside a statement of objectives; it serves as both a map and a destination. Public policy pertains to individuals, their values, and needs, as well as their options and choices. The fundamental issue facing public policy is the reality of scarcity. It is not feasible to attain all desired outcomes. Available resources are limited, whereas human wants are virtually limitless for practical purposes. Scarcity is a fundamental characteristic of human experience.

Public Policy emerged in the early 1950s and has since developed new dimensions in various ways. The discipline is expanding rapidly, making its management a formidable challenge. Public policy is a concept currently prevalent in discourse. Societies have evolved, and the public policy-making system has also transformed. Contemporary public policy is characterized by a goal-oriented approach that emphasizes measurable outcomes and a decision-centric focus, prioritizing immediate decision-making. New technologies and communication have led to the interconnection and increased complexity of public policy systems.

Public Policy in Sports: India

India's diverse landscape contributes significantly to its prominence in various fields, including sports, where it is increasingly gaining recognition on the international stage. Sports play a significant role in Indian entertainment, culture, and tradition. Various sports are played in India. Indeed, the advancement of sports in any country necessitates comprehensive policies that address all facets of player development, thereby enhancing the country's reputation on the international stage. Therefore, the proper meaning of policy refers to initiatives aimed at promoting increased participation in sport, which serves to enhance both intellectual and physical health while facilitating the pursuit of excellence. India has implemented various public policies aimed at improving the nation's sports sector. The MYAS and Sports serves as the apex body responsible for formulating sports policies (Sports G. O., 2011). The Sports Authority of India (SAI) undertakes a series of activities, including player training, management, and tournament organisation. It is exclusively accountable for developing proficient athletes from grassroots to professional levels throughout India. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) is another principal sports organisation in India, operating under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. It's an autonomous entity that collaborates directly with its corresponding international federations and organisations, operating concurrently with other departments within this ministry. The Indian Olympic Association serves as the principal governing body for Olympic sports in India, overseeing the National Sports Federations and State Olympic Associations. It serves as a conduit between the Government, National Sports Federations (NSFs), and State Olympic Associations (SOAs) for multiple sports, while also promoting the Olympic spirit across these disciplines. State-level sports associations are affiliated with their corresponding SOAs and NSFs. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) serves as the principal sports organisation for Olympic sports in India, overseeing the participation of the Indian contingent in the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games (including outdoor, indoor, and beach events), and South Asian Games. Every Olympic and non-Olympic sport is governed by a national federation and is affiliated with or recognised by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). A comparable framework exists for non-Olympic sports; however, the relevant National Sports Federations are not affiliated through the Indian Olympic Association (Mondal, 2022).

Sports Policies/ Schemes in India

Each nation possesses a governing body for sports, and endeavours to establish effective policies and programs to enhance athletic development. India also has effective policies and schemes aimed at the advancement of its national sports. The Government of India has periodically implemented various measures and initiatives to enhance good governance practices in the management of sports at the national level, in accordance with successive National Sports Policies. The policies adhere to the two fundamental universal principles of good governance within the Olympic and sports movement, ensuring that they don't contradict or hinder the autonomy of national sports bodies in fulfilling their functions and responsibilities as drawn in the International Olympic Committee Charter. (Sports G. O., 2011).

The National Sport Policy acknowledges the distinct opportunities created by hosting and participating in international sports competitions. The National Sports Policy's main goals are to promote participation and enhance global competitiveness across a growing range of sporting disciplines. The Sports Authority of India is advancing sports development through its various programs, such as the National Sports Talent Contest (NSTC). Initiated in 1985, this program seeks to categorize gifted schoolchildren aged nine to twelve years. Kids are selected in ten Olympic categories, namely Volleyball, Basketball, Athletics, Badminton, Table Tennis, Wrestling, Football, Gymnastics, Hockey, and Boxing, with a series of trials and competitions conducted at various levels. After getting selected, these children are enrolled in SAI-affiliated schools, currently numbering 58, where their stay, food, and education are covered by SAI. SAI gives coaches and specialised sports infrastructure facilities and regular grants for maintenance and equipment to these schools. Special Area Games. This initiative, initiated in 1985, seeks to identify population groups and regions exhibiting natural talent and aptitude for specific sports. The scheme encompasses the identification and survey

of areas and regions, special competitions to evaluate potential, selection of promising young individuals, and intensive training at SAG centres, which also offer educational and vocational training facilities. Development Area for Sports Projects. This initiative, initiated in 1988, seeks to establish basic sports facilities at 78 locations nationwide, offering a wide-ranging and cohesive coaching and training system for talented young athletes aged 9 to 14 years. This initiative seeks to offer local facilities to skilled youth within their respective states. Training includes a maximum of 3 Olympic categories alongside one indigenous game. Each centre usually includes a minimum one of the three core disciplines: athletics, gymnastics, or swimming, across three Olympic disciplines. Thirty-four SPDA Centres are operational, accommodating a total of 679 sportspersons. Rs. 1.00 crore budget is allocated for the construction of these Centres, with equal contributions from the Centre and the respective State, while all operational expenses are covered by SAI. The Sports Hostel Scheme was established to offer fundamental amenities at both state and national level championships. Every operational expense, encompassing equipment, training, and related items, are covered by SAI. All hostel is authorised to accommodate fifty boys and thirty girls. A total of eighteen hostels have been established, accommodating 895 children. The Army Boys Sports Companies scheme was launched in 1991-92 as an extension of the N.S.T.C. scheme and was accepted for implementation from that period. SAI and Army authorities have collaboratively initiated this Scheme to find talented boys aged 14 years and below from rural, semi-urban, and tribal regions and provide them with sports training. Seventeen boys' sports companies for 2000 boys will be established during the VIII Plan at designated regimental centres. The boys will be enrolled in Regimental Schools affiliated with the CBSE. Upon reaching seventeen and completing the 10th standard, boys may choose to enlist in the Army. Consequently, employment is assured for them. The operational expenses are covered by SAI. The program offers a one-time amount of grant is given to the Army for the establishment and development of sports infrastructure, acquisition of important sports equipment maximum of Rs. 3.00 lakhs, and training for 13 kits/aids up to Rs. 1.00 lakh. Rs. 50,000 provided annually is subsequently allocated. Seventeen boys' sports companies are operational, with a total participation of 859 athletes. The National Coaching Program, the National Coaching Scheme, initiated in 1955, aims to promote participation in coaching activities. The Scheme has undergone numerous changes over the years and now serves as a significant resource for fulfilling the need for coaches among various user agencies. The Scheme provides coaches to States and UTs for coaching at the state, district, university, and national federation levels. Instructors are assigned to SAI regional centres, academic wings, and in-house training centres (Rana, 2007)

Sports as Public Policy: Evolving Concept

Sports have become an essential component of daily life. It plays a pivotal role in the growth and progress of a young individual. Sports promote a healthy lifestyle and foster teamwork and competitiveness among individuals. Sports have emerged as a legitimate professional avenue. The Government of India set up a Separate Department of Sports in 1982, followed by the announcement of the First National Sports Policy in 1984. The Government has revised the existing policy to introduce a new policy in sports, aligning with contemporary and future needs. The following outlines the key measures implemented by the Government of India across various Plan Periods to enhance sports development in the country. The initial Five-Year Plan highlighted the importance of linking sport and physical education with formal education. The Lakshmibai National Institute of Physical Education (LNPE) in Gwalior and the National Institute of Sports (NIS) in Patiala were founded during the Second Five-Year Plan. The National Coaching Scheme and the Rural Sports Programme were initiated in the Third Five-Year Plan and subsequently expanded in the Fourth and Fifth Five-Year Plans. The Sixth Five-Year Plan emphasised the importance of talent identification and development. The Seventh Five-Year Plan emphasised the development of sports infrastructure. The Eighth Five-Year Plan emphasised the advancement of Rural Sports via a Special Area Games Approach. The Ninth Five-Year Plan highlighted the necessity for contemporary sports infrastructure. The Tenth Plan aimed to enhance the inclusivity of sports while simultaneously fostering excellence in athletic performance. (Sports, 2007). The Eleventh and Twelfth Plan periods proposed numerous international sports events in the country. The World Military Games took place in Hyderabad in 2007, the Commonwealth Youth Games (CYG) were scheduled for Pune in 2008, and the principal Commonwealth Games (CG) occurred in Delhi in 2010. The central aim of organising such games is to encourage a sports culture and establish world-class sports facilities nationwide, while significantly enhancing the performance and medal-winning capabilities of athletes at both national and international levels (Planning Commission of India, 2008).

The National Policy of 2001 was very important in the sports world of India. It emphasized sports and brought new ideas in a true sense. The very objective of this plan was framed with the betterment of players and officials. Below is the National Policy of 2001 in detail.

National Policy, 2001

The Government introduced a new National Sports Policy in 2001 to enhance the development of sports across the country. The National Sports Policy of 2001 outlined that the Central Government, in collaboration with state governments, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), and the National Sports Federation, will jointly aim to achieve the dual goals of "Broad-basing" in sports and attaining excellence in sports at both national and international levels. (National Sports Policy 2001). Sports activities that demonstrate the country's potential strengths and competitive advantages should be strategically promoted. To achieve this goal, sports and physical education will be more effectively integrated into the school and college education curriculum.

Major features of the National Sports Policy 2001 are outlined below:

- Broad basing of sports and achievement of excellence
- Upgrading and developing infrastructure
- Support for National Sports Federations and other bodies
- Strengthening of scientific coaching and training support to sports disciplines
- Incentive for sports persons in cash or kinds
- Boosting the participation of women, tribals, and youth from rural areas
- Engagement of the corporate sector in sports promotion and
- Raising greater awareness to promote sports at the grassroots level too

Broad-basing Plan

The tenth five-year plan placed significant emphasis on the broadening of sports initiatives. This plan aimed to enhance accessibility to sports facilities and coaching in urban and rural regions. Various programs have been initiated to enhance sports facilities in India, including the Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA), which is being restructured as the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan (RGKA), the National Playing Fields Association of India (NPFAI), and the scheme for developing urban infrastructure at multiple levels. The RTE Act mandates access to playgrounds and recreational facilities in all schools. Organisations such as the Sports Authority of India (SAI) support athletes at both state and national levels by offering coaching facilities, organising competitions, identifying talented sportsmen, and facilitating their development. Various sports-based institutions, such as the National Institute of Sports (NIS) and the Lakshmibai National Institute of Physical Education (LNIPE), have been established to offer academic programs at both the graduate and post-graduate levels. Sports centres such as the Centre of Excellence (COE), Special Area Games (SAG), and SAI Training Centre (STC) offer training facilities and opportunities for promising young athletes to compete in various local, national, and international events. Furthermore, both the Central and State Governments offer incentives and awards to sportspersons who have demonstrated exceptional performance at various levels (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2014).

2003, New National Policy

The New National Policy, 2003, emphasises the overall development of Indian youth while specifically addressing sports in section 8.5 under the heading "Sports and Recreation". The draft states that the Policy's primary objective is the comprehensive development of youth personality. It emphasises that Sports, Physical Education, Adventure, Recreation, and related activities are frequently neglected, thus asserting strong support for these areas as vital components of human resource development. An effective educational system must address the creative urges and aspirations of youth, fostering an appreciation for the diverse aspects of nature and social life (MYAS, 2003).

The important focus points of the sport policy:

- Encouraging sports as a mass movement should be integrated into daily life.
- All educational institutions must incorporate Sports, Games, and Physical Education into their curricula.
- Each educational institution should provide sufficient facilities for recreation, adventure, and sports activities, including playgrounds.
- Master plans for all civic and municipal areas should include provisions for common playgrounds.
- A minimum of one-fifth of the time allocated to students in educational institutions should be dedicated to outdoor activities.

- Additional support should be provided to geographically disadvantaged areas for the promotion of Sports and Games.
- Special attention should be given to rural, traditional, and indigenous sports. Infrastructure development responsibility is managed by Panchayat Institutions and local youth organisations. The participation of organised youth entities, including youth clubs affiliated with the NYKS, NSS volunteers, and Scouts & Guides, in the development and upkeep of sports infrastructure will significantly mitigate the associated costs. A National Youth Festival will occur annually, beginning at the Block level and concluding at the National level. Youth Hostels will be established in numerous locations of historical and cultural significance to foster youth tourism. Youth Organisations affianced in these initiatives will be supported. Additionally, adventure activities will be promoted among the youth to cultivate leadership, resilience, courage, discipline, and an appreciation for nature and the environment(MYAS, 2003).

2007, The Comprehensive National Sports Policy

The policy expands on prior sports plans to complete unfinished business and tackle India's mounting problems in the 21st century, including becoming a global, inclusive economic force. The 2007 Policy recognises the benefits of physical education and sport for youth development, community development, health and well-being, education, economic progress, entertainment, and Olympic spirit of global peace and fraternity. Thus, it recognises the need for sport to penetrate society and become a lifestyle. The Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sports (CABOS) noted that research in several countries shows that increased sports activity improves academic performance, reduces crime, improves leadership and teamwork, and promotes social cohesion. These findings apply to India. Sport and other physical exercise reduce the risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and stroke, which are major challenges for India's urban middle class. The relevance of sports performance to national pride (and its collapse when excellence is not achieved) is obvious. Finally, there is rising awareness that sports expansion and quality boost the economy.(MYAS, 2007).

Key policy goals are:

- Sports for all, giving access to sports and physical education, regardless of all age groups.
- To provide sports facilities in all educational institutions.
- To establish sports facilities in both rural and urban areas.
- To encourage Mass participation in sports culture and competitions by encouraging sports right from the ground level.
- To introduce physical education and sports as a core activity in all youth development programs undertaken by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), National Service Scheme (NSS), Bharat Scouts and Guides (BS&G), and NGOs.
- To advocate the advantages of sports.
- To promote indigenous sports and games.
- Promoting sports participation among young girls and women.
- To promote sports for persons with disabilities.
- To promote sports and physical education for senior citizens.
- A National Physical Fitness campaign using various youth networks such as NSS, NCC, NYKA, and BS&G.
- To promote sports as economic spin-offs and form a base for development impact(MYAS, 2007).

2014, National Youth Policy

MYAS and the Indian government created the 2014 National Youth Policy. The policy focused on Indian youth development. Sports were priority no. 5 under the policy. Broad sports base and quality were the policy's main goals(MYAS, 2014).

The policy includes future imperatives like:

- Expanding more opportunities to use sports facilities and training.
- Encourage youth and support talented athletes(MYAS, 2014).

National Sports Development Code

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Department of Sports, Government of India, has additional National Code for Sports Development policies. Originally called the National Sports Development Code 2011, it was amended in 2017 as the National Code for Good Governance in Sports 2017. The Committee of Administrators (CoA) runs sports federations that breach the Sports Code (MYAS, 2011).

The Code's main goals are:

- National sports administration should follow proper governance procedures without compromising national sports bodies' sovereignty.
- Indian sports federations should be sovereign, as many have become political fiefdoms.
- Restrict age and tenure restrictions for sports administrators.

Policy on Women's Sports in India

The plans that were put in place throughout these several plan eras were not biased towards either gender, but they were also not gender specific. For example, during the first few planning periods, sportswomen were not given any facilities or reservations. The first big move was made in 2001 with the New National Youth Policy, which pushed for more women to play sports. The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports established a commission to investigate allegations of sexual harassment of women in the workplace in response to orders issued by the esteemed Supreme Court of India. Step two came in December 2003 with the introduction of the New National Youth Policy, which acknowledged four main thrusts, "Gender Justice" being one of them. Detailed information on women's athletic involvement from 1947 onwards is available in the most current National Commission for Youth (2004). It was in 1952 that the first Indian women competed in the Olympics, and in 1975, the government of India and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) hosted the National Sports Festival to highlight the achievements of women in athletics. The National Festival was preceded by competitions at both districts as well as local levels. The main aim or objective of initiating these women's sports-only competitions was to encourage more women's participation in sports at all levels. National Commission report observed that *"Sports is by and large an elite activity in the country and the adoption of a sports policy, as the government has done in 1984, is hardly likely to change the situation very much"*. It is in some ways true because out of 18 sports hostels of SAI, there is only one sports hostel for women, and there is no exclusive SDPA hostel for girls. (Shakti, 2005)

Recommendations and Future Possibilities of Sports-Based Public Policy in India

With 1.4 billion people, India is one of the world's biggest nations, and every player wants to play for their country for financial gain and dignity. Audiences and sponsors want athletes to shine at both the national level and the international level. Therefore, the government, sports organisations, and other entities must provide sponsors with top-notch facilities and complete equality. Encouraging gender equality and female athletes is proactive. Some ways to show the world which nation is superior are via sports. Every four years, the Olympics allow countries like the US, China, Australia, and others to demonstrate their abilities and claim their place as "superpower nations". Athletically, India falls behind these countries despite its economic parity. It's disheartening that India, the world's most populated and seventh-largest nation, has just 26 medals. India had one medal for every 207 million people in the 2016 Summer Olympics in London, with six medals. China grants one medal every 15.5 million people, whereas the US awards one per 3 million. India's medal haul is disappointing since it has the lowest GDP-to-population ratio and gross national product. India hardly supports sports, as these points show. Sport-unfriendly policies and objectives are to blame for these defeats. In five-year plans, sports are seldom included. Before the eleventh five-year plan, only sports camps and talent development supported athletes. Indian sports might develop in many ways. Incorporating policies from countries with strong athletic histories may change sports in India. Indian society and government put little value on female sports. Thus, gender-equal athlete policies may be created. policies may be created.

Today's women are curious, friendly, and open to new perspectives. Positivity and self-confidence are theirs. Exploring new things, they each achieve in their own manner. This may also happen in athletics. First and foremost, growing sports in India should focus on gender equality and changing both genders' mentality. Must-have early childhood education. Start athletics in first grade. Sporting professionally requires sponsorship. From the start, athletics should be part of the curriculum. Education should promote gender equality. The government

should emphasise sports for development. To encourage women to do sports, the government should provide incentives. Invite them to explain why popular knowledge is wrong. More rural areas should prioritise sports. Many good players are probable in these places. Government facilities must be sufficient for holistic development. Example: sports clubs, education financing, sponsorship, and scholarships. Offer therapy to attract female athletes. Player development depends heavily on nutrition. Incentives, a coach (ideally a female coach), and a safe setting are crucial. Government initiatives should be decent for men and women in urban and rural areas. The government should create sports groups and facilities in urban and rural areas. There should be more facilities for female athletes. Government and NGOs should launch the Olympic Gold Quest. Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu, needs more women-only institutions like Standard Fireworks Rajaratnam College, which has always encouraged sports enthusiasts to play all sorts of sports and has all the required facilities. Without media attention, finance, or facilities, non-cricket athletes struggle to gain fame. National games, Kabaddi, hockey, football, badminton, etc., get little attention. For instance, the media ignored the Indian women's hockey team's World Hockey League round 2-win owing to the Indian men's cricket team's World Cup. Their coverage will likely be for their attractiveness or non-athleticism. The media should stop being biased and cover all sports. Both public and commercial television networks should carry all athletic events, with state and federal assistance.

Finally, it may be said that sports policy, as previously mentioned, has not placed a high enough value on sports and athletes, particularly female athletes in India. One important factor is the long-standing bias against female athletes in Indian culture, which views them as weaker and less capable than their male counterparts. The government's policies and patriarchal culture are to blame, but women's inherent inferiority complexes also play a role. For the sake of the liberation of female athletes, it is necessary to foster the development of both genders' thought processes. If this target is met, we should not be surprised if we see female athletes reaching new heights and competing side by side with their male counterparts in the near future.

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