



**Sports and Society
Accelerator**

Mapping Sports and Physical Activity Integration in State-Level Sports Policies in India

Report
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Foreword

This report evaluates the sports policies of Indian states and union territories through a lens of Sports and Physical Activity (SAPA) and inclusivity. A SAPA-led approach to state sports policies centers on promoting broad-based participation in sports and physical activities, focusing on health, social inclusion, and economic benefits for all community segments.

A SAPA-led approach does not mean compromising on sports excellence and performance; rather, it can be holistic and complementary, creating a strong foundation for mass participation that supports the development of elite athletes by expanding the talent pool and fostering a culture of physical activity from the grassroots level.

This report provides an initial assessment of how the foundational elements SAPA engagement are integrated within their governance frameworks.

The aim of this effort is to gauge how these policies harness SAPA's potential for significant socio-economic benefits at individual, community, and state levels. The insights from this analysis help states, union territories, and districts to develop and refine policies that maximize SAPA's benefits and support socio-economic goals.

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Why is SAPA important?

Sport and Physical Activity (SAPA) has the potential to be a pivotal element in the narrative of India's national development and priorities. Amidst its rapid economic growth and demographic transitions, India faces unique challenges and opportunities that initiatives in SAPA can significantly mitigate and enhance, respectively. At its core, SAPA intersects with health, economic growth, and social impact, which are each integral to India's growth and development.

The health benefits of SAPA are widely recognized globally. With a growing, and eventually rapidly ageing population, India will be challenged by the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes and heart conditions, alongside traditional public health challenges. Regular SAPA is a proven deterrent to NCDs, reducing the occurrence of obesity, improving cardiovascular health, and enhancing overall life expectancy. There is also a strong positive correlation between SAPA and improved mental health, as several studies have shown.

A proactive SAPA-led approach to preventative health measures can alleviate the pressure on India's healthcare system in a sustainable manner. Economically, the vitality of an active populace often translates into increased productivity. A workforce in good physical health is less prone to absenteeism and more capable of contributing positively to the economy. The potential of reducing inactivity and boosting India's GDP by significant margins, as studies suggest, underscores the role of physical activity in economic resilience and growth. For example,

a 2023 study by the Sports and Society Accelerator and Dalberg Advisors estimated that the elimination of adult inactivity in India by 2047 could increase the GDP by \$50 billion annually. Of this, about \$17 billion would be attributed to improved health and about \$28 billion annually from increased workforce productivity.¹

The concept of SAPA as a catalyst for social inclusivity and cohesion holds resonance in India's diverse societal fabric. SAPA offers a unique platform for bridging these divides, fostering a sense of unity and collective identity among individuals from varied cultural, economic, and regional backgrounds. The shared experiences and goals inherent in SAPA create a common language of teamwork, respect, friendship, and mutual encouragement. This, in turn, cultivates an environment where differences are set aside in favour of collaboration and shared joy in each other's achievements.

SAPA initiatives can also play a crucial role in empowering underrepresented groups. For instance, sports programs targeted at women and girls not only promote gender equality but also boost their confidence and social status within their communities. Similarly, integrating people with disabilities into SAPA activities emphasizes their abilities rather than limitations, creates opportunities for active participation and fosters an informed and inclusive society.

Finally, as India aims to position itself as a global leader, the holistic development of its citizens through SAPA aligns with these ambitions. Investing in public infrastructure

¹ https://dalberg.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/The-State-of-Play-in-India_discussion-brief.pdf Sports and Society Accelerator and Dalberg Advisors (2023).

that encourages being physically active, integrating sports into educational curriculums, and fostering a culture that values physical health are strategic musts that can help India meet its national priorities and

developmental goals. Embracing SAPA is not just a lifestyle choice but a national imperative.



Why State Governments should care about SAPA

State governments stand to gain significantly from fostering a physically and mentally healthier population. A more active population not only contributes to public health but also enhances workforce confidence, teamwork skills, and employability, potentially increasing employees' earning capacity by 5-7%.² Furthermore, there's a clear public demand for more health-oriented sports programs, with 66% of individuals aged 18-64 expressing a desire for such initiatives.³ This can also enable economic growth, entrepreneurial, and livelihood opportunities. For instance, more states can tap into India's burgeoning sports equipment market, which, despite its annual growth rate of 7.7% and current valuation of \$17.3 billion, remains largely concentrated in just seven major cities.⁴ Additionally, the expanding sports tourism sector, valued at \$10.9 billion and growing at 17.1% annually, represents another area ripe for growth.⁵ SAPA programs that teach entrepreneurship skills to youth through participation have shown positive results in fostering entrepreneurial tendencies and connecting these skills to future job opportunities.⁶ Beyond the economic opportunities, state-level policy intervention is crucial for the

governance of competitive sports and the cultivation of indigenous talent. The correlation between widespread participation at the grassroots level and success in elite sports, as evidenced by Haryana's and, more recently, Odisha's achievements in national competitions, further underscores the importance of mass engagement in SAPA.

A SAPA-led approach to state sports policies, therefore, centres on promoting broad-based participation in sports and physical activities, focusing on health, social inclusion, and economic benefits for all community segments. Unlike a sports-excellence-focused model (that is the default in many Indian states today), which prioritizes high-performance and competitive sports, the SAPA-led approach integrates physical activity into daily life through inclusive policies that address marginalized groups, incorporate sports into educational curriculums, and create economic opportunities through sports-related industries. It emphasizes a consultative and collaborative approach that proactively incorporates the voice and capacity of local actors and decision-makers to ensure that local needs are met and fosters private sector partnerships to enhance capacity and resources. By aligning sports

² PwC (2019). India Active Building a Sports bridge with Education, Health and Tourism, <https://www.pwc.in/assets/pdfs/research-insights/2019/india-active.pdf>, 20.

³ India Active Building a Sports bridge with Education, Health and Tourism,.

⁴ <https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/toys-hobby/sports-equipment/india>

⁵ Future Market Insights (2022) <https://www.futuremarketinsights.com/reports/india-sports-tourism-market#:~:text=India%27s%20sports%20tourism%20market%20which,experts%20in%20Future%20Market%20Insights>

⁶ Daniel, Timothy, McCole., Leapetswe, Malete., Tshepang, Tshube., Thuso, Mphela., Cyprian, N., Maro., Clement, Adamba., Juliana, Zawadi, Machuve., Reginald, Ocansey. (2022). Sparking entrepreneurial tendencies in youth: Lessons from sport and life skills education in three African cities. Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement, 15(2) doi: 10.5130/ijcre.v15i2.8207

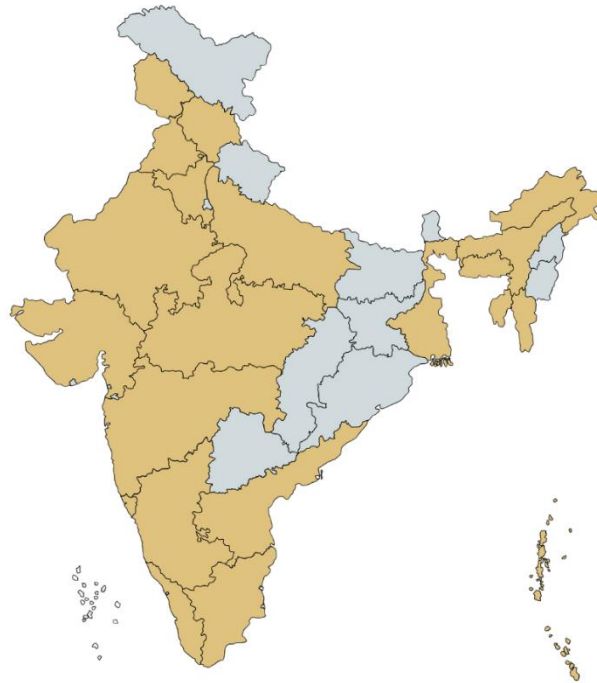
policies with health, education, and employment objectives, States can leverage SAPA to drive comprehensive socio-economic development, making it a strategic imperative for national growth and inclusivity. Importantly, a SAPA-led approach does not mean compromising on sports excellence and performance; rather, it can be holistic and complementary, creating a strong foundation for mass participation that supports the development of elite athletes by expanding the talent pool and fostering a culture of physical activity from the grassroots level.

Keeping this in mind, this report underscores the importance of implementing state-specific policies to promote SAPA, given its diverse benefits which include improving public

health, boosting economic opportunities, and enhancing sports performance. India's national sports policy primarily addresses competitive sports and focuses on broad structural issues such as the roles and responsibilities of relevant authorities, the categorization of sports, funding, recognition processes, and athlete selection procedures. However, as sports fall under List II of the Indian Constitution, States have exclusive jurisdiction over sports policies within their territories.

This presents a unique opportunity for states to champion the universal adoption of SAPA by designing tailored policies and ensuring their effective implementation on the ground.

19 States **3** Union Territories



What is our methodology?



Strategic

- Emphasis on SAPA for all
- Emphasis on inclusivity
- Degree of integration into other sectors and development priorities

Governance & implementation

- Degree of decentralization
- Ownership and monitoring
- Incentives for SAPA

Partnerships & collaborations

- Private sector engagement
- Relationship with sports authorities and associations

Figure 1: SAPA mapping framework for Indian states - an initial view

Drawing from the existing literature on SAPA, associated governance frameworks, and foundational principles of policymaking, we have crafted an initial framework. It consists of three primary levers and eight dimensions. Our methodology considers the unique socio-political and economic landscapes that shape sports policy in India. It accounts for the different roles of stakeholders, including governmental bodies, sports federations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Civil Sector Organizations (CSOs), the private sector, and voluntary organizations, in promoting and developing sports. It aims to reflect the diverse objectives that sports policies hope to achieve in developing countries, from fostering national identity and pride to promoting health and education and facilitating social inclusion.

Our hope is that our insights serve as a foundation to not only enhance the understanding of current sports policies in India, but also contribute to a more equitable

and comprehensive global discourse on SAPA policy, and being more reflective of the context and needs in fast emerging economies such as India's.

Strategic levers

Performance versus participation: This assesses whether the policy focuses only on competitive sports (including high performance and elite sports) or if it also extends to SAPA initiatives related to broad-based participation. The degree of focus on recreational SAPA is evaluated based on factors like education, fitness/health, indigenization, and awareness campaigns. Only if a policy focuses on recreational SAPA can it provide the foundation and strength for increasing mass participation in overall SAPA.

Emphasis on including marginalized segments: This considers whether the policy focuses on marginalized communities, specifically women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and socio-economically vulnerable communities. For SAPA to be truly universal,

these segments of society require focused attention.

Degree of integration into other sectors' plans and priorities: This studies the degree to which associated subjects like education, employment, health, and others have been integrated into the policy. This provides an assessment of the depth and breadth that states have gone to increase mass participation in SAPA. For education, factors such as curriculum, mandatory nature, options, and teaching support are considered. For employment, it considers whether the policy envisages SAPA as a tool for generating employment through metrics like sports tourism, sports manufacturing, and hiring of personnel. For health, it considers whether the policy goes beyond acknowledging a positive correlation between SAPA and health, to taking concrete action. Concrete actions are further divided based on the quality of awareness and salience plans, focus on sports science, and whether the intervention is incidental through mandatory sports in education or employment, or systemic in terms of infrastructural changes.

Governance and implementation levers

Degree of decentralization: This assesses the degree to which power has been decentralized to local levels. While the delegation of powers to the village and block level through institutions like panchayats indicates high decentralization, delegation up to only district officers or association shows lower decentralization. The degree of decentralization can further be divided based on the level of support and power that local authorities have. On the other hand, the concentration of power within a state authority or official indicates no

decentralization. This is important to understand since local areas have specific concerns and needs of their own, which must be accommodated. Moreover, the factors driving SAPA like access and norms are often based on decisions made at the local level.

Ownership and monitoring: This evaluates the policy at two levels. Firstly, if there is an institution taking ownership over the framing and enforcement of the policy, and secondly if there is a mechanism for monitoring the enforcement of the policy. This highlights if there is a structural mechanism for ensuring continued and proper implementation of the policy.

Incentives for SAPA: This assesses the incentive and reward system in place for competitive and recreational sports and/or physical activity. For competitive sports, it considers the incentives in education and employment as well as rewards to high-performing athletes. For recreational sports, it considers whether there are any structures or schemes that incentivize or reward mass participation in SAPA.

Partnerships and collaboration levers

Private sector engagement: This considers whether the private sector is involved, and if so, the degree to which it is engaged. A lower level of involvement entails only funding, while higher levels include functions like organizing competitions, identifying, and training talent, or developing and managing sports infrastructure. The extent of engagement can further be assessed based on the role envisaged (merely for competitive sport, or for recreational sport and/or physical activity as well) and degree and type of financial dependence. This understanding of how involved the private sector is may help to

strategically leverage them where there are capacity and resource issues.

Relationship with sports authorities: This assesses the relationship between the government and sports associations and sports authorities. This helps to highlight how accountability and autonomy contribute to mass participation in SAPA. Specifically, the assessment considers the following: (1) Whether there is a specific sports code for the state, either within the policy or as a separate law. (2) The extensiveness of the eligibility conditions for recognizing sports associations. (3) Whether there is a recognizing authority for sports federations in the state, and the degree of autonomy they possess. (4) Whether there is a formal funding mechanism.

The following states have been analyzed (19 in total): Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. The following UTs have been analyzed (3 in total): Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, and Jammu and Kashmir. Six states (Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha) did not have documented state sports policy documents publicly available. Several of these states may, as of the date of this report, be in the process of developing their sports policies.

There are a few important limitations in this study:

- This assessment is focused exclusively on the sports policies themselves, rather than supplementary documents such as youth policies, which may also have an impact on SAPA.
- The scope of this analysis is confined to the written content of the policies, rather than

an examination of their implementation and efficacy in practice. As such, it serves as a review of stated intentions and prescribed frameworks rather than a measure of on-ground action.

- Accessibility issues exist, as some sports policies were unattainable due to technical difficulties with relevant websites. Wherever possible, this has been partially compensated for by using archived versions of the policies to maintain the integrity and continuity of the analysis.
- Language barriers present another limitation. Policies originating from some states have been written in the local/ state language and have been translated into English for the purpose of this exercise. It is acknowledged that during the translation process, certain nuances or specificities of policy language may not be fully captured.
- The data collection and analysis for this report concluded in December 2023. Therefore, any updates or new sports policies introduced by states after this date are not covered in this document.

It is important to note that this exercise is not in any way intended to be a performance evaluation or a 'report card' for the states. Instead, it hopes to serve the purpose of being an objective assessment that identifies each state's opportunity to optimize SAPA to the extent available and feasible to it. This report is, therefore, a panoramic scan of the current policy landscape, aiming to understand the diverse strategies and measures that states are employing. The intent is to illuminate the choices being made, to identify areas of focus, and to uncover opportunities for mutual learning and cooperation in the realm of sports policy formulation, design, and development.

How have States approached SAPA?

1) Performance versus participation

With 20 out of 22 states and UTs emphasizing at least some level of mass participation, there is an emerging national trend toward making sports accessible to the wider population. This approach, as noted above, is often aimed at fostering a culture of physical fitness, community engagement, and inclusivity through sports.

States that focus on SAPA can enhance public health, community cohesion, and potentially spot talents that can be nurtured for competitive sport. Assam, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh have focused on extensive mass participation. These four states showcase a relatively more robust commitment to SAPA-for-all and exhibit the use of diverse strategies tailored to the unique socio-economic contexts and overarching objectives of their respective regions.

This customized approach not only underlines the adaptability and creativity inherent in sports development but also provides valuable lessons for other states looking to enhance their own initiatives that aim to broad-base SAPA.

States that have not yet adopted a mass participation framework are primarily concentrating on competitive sports. These states aim to improve the performance of athletes at higher levels, possibly striving for excellence in national and international arenas. This focus might lead to the development of high-quality training facilities, coaching, and support for elite athletes and serve as a beacon to excite and attract communities and citizens to engage in SAPA. There are opportunities for SAPA in expanding grassroots participation and thereby capturing a wider base of talent that could be honed for competitive success and could also contribute to wider social gains for the state.

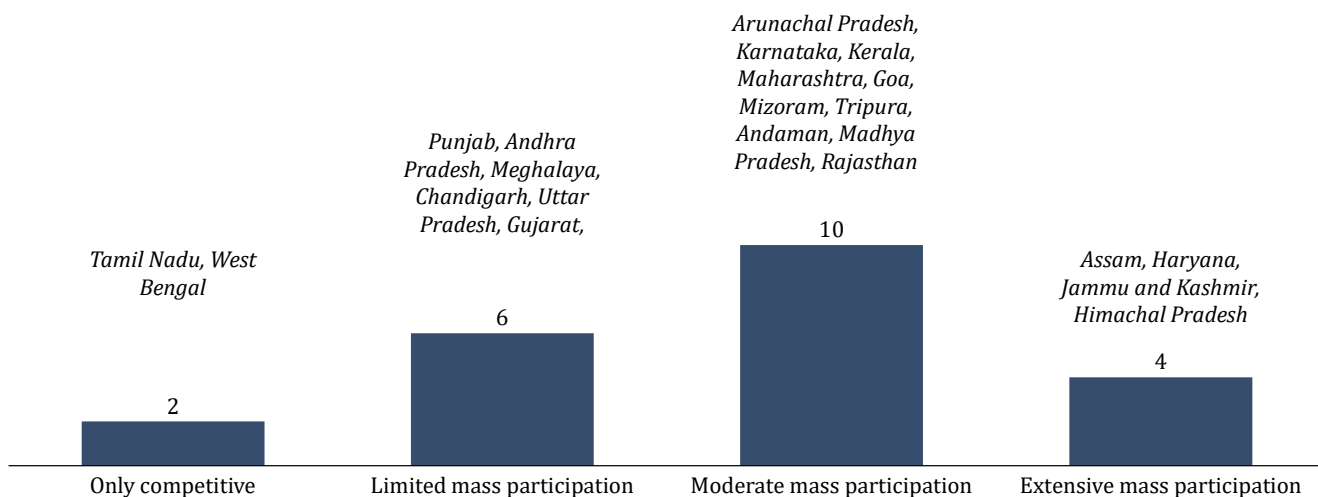


Figure 2: Emphasis on SAPA-for-all among state-level sports policies (Number of States)

Box 1: State-specific insights

- Indigenous sports promotion:** Haryana and Assam aim to tap into a vibrant indigenous sporting culture and use it as a long-term lever for SAPA for all. Such initiatives can enhance state identity and pride while providing a platform for inclusive sports participation. Haryana's promotion of established local sports and Assam's grassroots events might serve as models for other states to balance cultural preservation with sports development.
- Use of media engagement:** Utilizing both traditional and new media for sports engagement campaigns, as has been the strategy in Jammu and Kashmir, can significantly boost awareness, participation rates, and support for sports initiatives. This approach could be particularly effective in reaching younger demographics and fostering a sports culture among a broader audience.
- Integration into education:** Aligning with the FIT India movement by integrating sports into the educational curriculum, as is the case for Himachal Pradesh, highlights a strategic approach to cultivating a healthy, active lifestyle from a young age. This long-term investment in youth can lead to improved physical and mental health outcomes and prepare students for lifelong sports engagement and excellence.

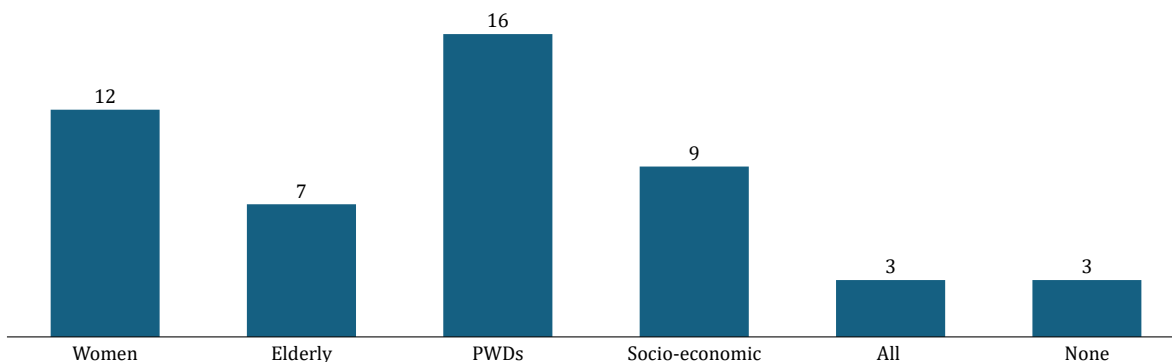


Figure 3: Inclusion of different marginalized segments in state-level sports policies (Number of states with policies for specific segments)

2) Emphasis on marginalized segments

The degree of inclusivity in sports policies across Indian states is a critical measure of their commitment to ensuring that every segment of society can engage in SAPA. The trends observed suggest a positive inclination towards embracing diversity and overcoming social barriers within the sporting ecosystem.

At the overall level, a commendable aspect is that almost all states have made strides towards including at least one minority community in their sports policies. This trend reflects a conscious effort to ensure that sports serve as a unifying factor within society.

Persons with disabilities (PwD) emerge as the most represented group in sports policies, indicative of a significant policy shift towards empowering this group through sports – which is in line with national priorities related

to PwD inclusion and performance in Paralympic sports. Other opportunities remain to make SAPA aspects actionable within sports policies across India, something which will increasingly require a policy framework with specificity and diversity within said frameworks.

The elderly are notably the least catered to, which could imply another, mostly untapped, opportunity in promoting healthy aging and social participation among senior citizens. Only two states do not have explicit and targeted efforts to include minority communities. This highlights a potential opportunity to ensure a more equitable sports policy framework.

Diving into individual state policies, two states and one UT do not call out or account for any marginalized segments within their sports policies. This may suggest a one-size-fits-all approach to sports development that might overlook the unique needs of minority groups, which might benefit from addressing sooner rather than later.

In contrast, Karnataka exemplifies the most comprehensive approach, representing a diverse array of communities including women, senior citizens, the differently abled, socio-economically vulnerable individuals, and the LGBTQ+ community. This inclusive stance sets a benchmark for other states to perhaps replicate, showcasing the importance of acknowledging and addressing the varied needs of each community.

Gujarat's specific approach to tribal communities and the elderly through targeted initiatives indicates an understanding of the cultural dimensions of SAPA and its role in enhancing the quality of life. The state's systemic focus on increasing female participation and the establishment of resources for para-athletes and the PwDs

overall signifies a structured effort to level the playing field for underrepresented groups.

Haryana's policy offers higher incentives for women athletes and a commitment to their safety. Allocating accommodation at stadiums and teaching self-defense are practical measures that could serve as a model for other states aiming to increase female participation in sports.

For policymakers, these observations underscore the importance of a multi-faceted approach to inclusivity in SAPA that is customized to the states' unique cultural and demographic contexts. At the same time some potentially cross-cutting lessons emerge that could be drawn on:

- *Targeted programs for the elderly:* Initiatives should focus on SAPA programs tailored to the abilities and health needs of the elderly, such as yoga and walking clubs. These programs not only improve physical health but also foster social interaction, addressing loneliness and promoting community integration among senior citizens.
- *Accessible sports facilities:* It is crucial to build and adapt sports facilities to be fully accessible to PwDs, incorporating features like ramps, tactile floors, and wheelchair-friendly sports equipment. This inclusivity can empower PwDs to participate actively, promoting equality and enhancing their integration into the social fabric.
- *Safety and incentives for women:* Enhancing safety measures at sports venues, such as better lighting and trained security personnel, alongside incentives like scholarships and reserved spots in training programs can significantly boost female participation. Such measures make SAPA a viable and appealing activity for

women, contributing to their empowerment and societal equality.

- *The cultural and socio-economic considerations:* SAPA policies should reflect the cultural diversity of India by promoting traditional and local sports that resonate with various communities. Additionally, offering subsidies or financial assistance for sports training in economically disadvantaged areas can remove barriers to participation, ensuring a more inclusive approach to sports development.

3) Degree of integration

As mentioned above, the integration of SAPA policies and priorities into broader socio-economic policies is indicative of the depth and extent to which Indian states are committed to leveraging sports as a tool for holistic development.

Looking across states, nearly all - at least broadly - recognize the multi-faceted benefits of sports, incorporating them into education and employment strategies. Educationally, the move towards making SAPA mandatory and providing a structured curriculum with qualified teaching support underscores an investment in the physical well-being and development of students, which is also in line with guidelines at the national level. Economically, the emphasis on sports tourism, manufacturing, and sports science demonstrates an understanding of sports as a growth sector capable of generating significant employment opportunities.

Noticeably, our scan suggests that the incorporation of health-related objectives and targets through SAPA interventions merits special attention. They are currently largely absent as independent themes within sports policies and could point to the potential

under-utilization of SAPA as a standalone vehicle for health. It is possible that health-centric strategies are more thoroughly outlined in separate health policies, which were not the focus of this analysis. Therefore, while the current sports policies may not explicitly highlight independent health initiatives, the relationship between sports and health benefits is acknowledged but might not be extensively detailed in this context. Our initial understanding is, however, that they are mostly not acknowledged in other sector policies.

The integration of sports within the education and employment sectors is more widely observed, most notably in Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir, signifying an appreciation of the role sports play in nurturing development and generating economic opportunities. The embedding of SAPA in school curricula and the alignment with employment through avenues such as sports tourism and industry is a testament to this understanding. For health, Kerala's school-level health promotion test and Jammu and Kashmir's holistic advocacy and impact assessment illustrate different approaches to integrating physical wellness with sports.

Andhra Pradesh and Assam's efforts to weave sports science into their curriculum and workplace, respectively, are also notable for their scope and emphasis on systemic health benefits. Kerala and Maharashtra's infrastructural interventions, such as cycling and walking tracks, show an understanding of the importance of creating environments conducive to SAPA. In the current landscape where India is poised to have hundreds of new cities and towns, this kind of a planning and urban design framework is critical. Assam's approach, which includes community centres and employer mandates for physical activity, points to a policy that reaches beyond

traditional sports venues into the broader community.

While their mapping of policies suggests that the degree of SAPA integration varies considerably in breadth and depth across states, the commitment to leveraging SAPA for broader societal benefits is clear to nearly all. By focusing on education, employment, and health, states can create a more inclusive and comprehensive sports policy that aligns with socio-economic development goals, setting the stage for sustainable growth and enhanced community well-being.

4) Decentralized decision-making

The degree of decentralization of decision-making and execution authority of sports policies across Indian states is a multifaceted issue with dimensions ranging from the level of community engagement to the strategic allocation of responsibilities and resources.

models to learn and adapt from the degree of decentralization in setting and implementing the policy agenda across state sports policies.

Typically, authority and decision-making powers are, for a majority of states, seen to be concentrated at the district level, with limited devolution of power to sub-district structures such as blocks, talukas, or villages. Furthermore, the predominant focus of sports in most states is on infrastructure development. Our current assessment does not immediately reveal whether greater decentralization (or centralization) is associated with enhanced participation and community engagement in SAPA. This relationship is complex and is influenced by multiple variables – and is an important area of future research.

A closer look at state-specific policies reveals diverse degrees of policy decentralization.



Figure 4: Degree of centralized and decentralized decision making in state-level sports policies

The policy approaches among various states, as highlighted in Figure 4, showcase a spectrum of decentralization and community involvement in sports, providing a rich base of

Andhra Pradesh exhibits a high degree of decentralization, with the involvement of village panchayats in both elite and recreational SAPA interventions. By allocating

funds for playfields in every *Gram Panchayat* and employing Village Service Volunteers, Andhra Pradesh intends that the responsibilities and benefits of sports policies reach the most local levels. This model highlights the advantages of local governance structures in delivering sports initiatives, fostering community ownership, and ensuring diverse representation.

Haryana favors a more decentralized approach at the local level, with authorities primarily focused on mass participation through capacity and resource building. The use of local youth clubs and village sports councils for organization and management responsibilities, supported by regular financial aid and special infrastructure schemes, represents a balanced model that combines local involvement with central support. Mizoram follows a similar balanced approach, relying on local bodies for organizing and managing sports activities, thus endorsing the benefits of local community engagement. Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh display a contrasting model where the focus on sports is present at the local level, and the implementation and monitoring of policies is controlled by the state government or appointed officials.

From these varied approaches, several implications can be drawn for the sports policy ecosystem. Three are called out below:

- **Empowerment of local bodies:** Andhra Pradesh's model illustrates the potential impact of empowering local bodies to be critical stakeholders in the design and planning of sports policies. Such decentralization can lead to more tailored programs that reflect local needs and increase community engagement.
- **Balanced decentralization:** The experiences of Haryana and Mizoram suggest that a balance between local involvement and central support can be effective, particularly when local bodies are empowered both organizationally and financially.
- **Infrastructure plus:** While infrastructure development is essential, the broader trends indicate a need for complementary strategies focused on participation and culture building to achieve inclusive sports development.

5) Incentives

National policy documents reveal a base level of support for competitive sports, especially at the school level. The commitment is evident in the concerted efforts to organize school-level competitions, ensure the availability of skilled coaches, and create pathways for athlete development. Moreover, well-performing athletes are often beneficiaries of employment reservations within government sectors and financial rewards, reinforcing the value placed on sports excellence.

State-level policies provide more granularity on the types of incentives offered to athletes. Andhra Pradesh demonstrates a multi-tiered approach by integrating educational reservations, talent identification, and collaboration programs into their sports policy. The establishment of specialized sports institutions and administrative authorities underscores a systemic dedication to nurturing high-performing athletes. Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir offer academic accommodations, such as relaxed attendance requirements and many scholarships, acknowledging the academics-sports balance athletes must maintain. Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka extend their support beyond the athletic career, providing career counselling and welfare services. This approach indicates

a long-term view of athlete development, recognizing the need for life beyond competitive sports. Unique to Andhra Pradesh is the incentivization of mass participation in sports. By rewarding *Kreeda Vikas Kendras* who exhibit maximum participation and performance, the state promotes widespread engagement in physical activities.

The current incentive structures highlight a strong support system for competitive sports, potentially overshadowing the importance of recreational activities that are crucial for public health and social cohesion. For policymakers, this scenario underscores the need for a more balanced approach that values both competitive success and community participation in SAPA.

Three main implications are highlighted below.

- **Holistic athlete development:** States like Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Karnataka illustrate the benefits of a comprehensive support system that addresses education, career, and welfare, suggesting a model for holistic athlete development.
- **Mass participation:** The unique strategy of Andhra Pradesh in promoting mass participation through incentives could be a viable blueprint for other states to encourage a culture of physical activity at the grassroots level.
- **Sustainable athletic careers:** Career counselling and welfare support reflect an understanding of the athlete's life cycle and the importance of sustainable career paths, both within and outside the realm of competitive sports.

6) Ownership and monitoring

At a foundational level, each state recognizes the need for at least one governmental authority, typically under the aegis of the sports ministry or its departments, to shepherd the implementation of sports policies. This ensures that there is a central point of responsibility for driving policy objectives. However, the establishment of mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of these policies is not universally adopted. Only a subset of states has taken steps to envision and create formalized structures for this purpose.

Haryana's policy indicates a proactive approach by constituting a dedicated group for the tracking and evaluation of policy implementation. By utilizing specific indicators and metrics, and involving other relevant organizations in this evaluative process, Haryana showcases a commitment to not just policy enactment but also to accountability and results-oriented governance. Meghalaya adopts an inter-ministerial approach, establishing a committee that brings together various government departments to ensure coordinated and non-duplicative efforts. This committee's inclusion of members from sports organizations and sportspersons indicates a participatory approach. Regular quarterly meetings and the authority to recommend policy modifications or propose new ones imbue this committee with both oversight and dynamic policy-shaping capabilities. Himachal Pradesh establishes a bifurcated structure with a working committee and a high-level coordination committee. The working committee, which meets bi-annually, includes government representatives with the Sports Department as the nodal agency. The high-level coordination committee, meeting

annually, is more expansive, drawing members from sports federations, the private sector, public promoters, and eminent sportspersons, reflecting a comprehensive stakeholder engagement model. Karnataka assigns the monitoring responsibility to its sports authority, which acts as a coordinator between relevant agencies, providing them with support and ensuring that policy directives are carried out effectively.

7) Private sector engagement

Across most Indian states and UTs, there is an acknowledged role for the private sector in SAPA interventions. This role, while never extending to the full authority over sports administration, spans a spectrum from funding contributions to the direct development and management of sports initiatives. The engagement of private entities is thus recognized as a complement to public efforts, enriching the sports ecosystem with diverse resources and expertise.

The state-specific view shows that Andhra Pradesh adopts a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, engaging the private sector in infrastructure development, from sports schools to High-Performance Centres (HPCs).

The state also harnesses corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives for athlete and coaching development, along with promoting sports more broadly. Karnataka extends the model by involving the private sector in a broader sports industry context, encompassing manufacturing to sports tourism. This state leverages private expertise for the development of a sports hub that integrates medicine and technology, as well as for providing vocational training to former sportspersons, thereby ensuring their smooth transition post-retirement.

Jammu & Kashmir and Haryana move towards universalizing SAPA by engaging the private sector in the creation of sports entertainment and recreational centres. Haryana's model of fostering a sports club culture through private sector schemes such as 'come and play' exemplifies an approach to incentivize mass participation in sports.

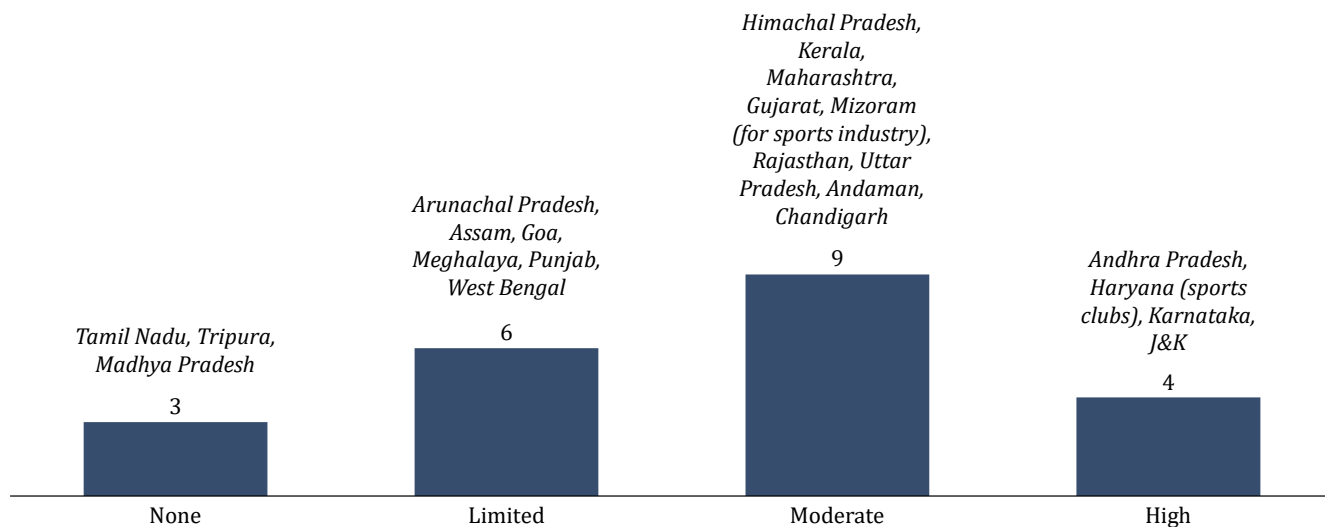


Figure 5: Degree of private sector engagement across Indian states in their sports policies

8) Relationship with sports authorities

In the governance landscape of Indian sports, a prevailing trend across most states is the absence of a distinctive sports code or sports law tailored for state sports federations, indicating a potential dependency on national guidelines or ad hoc regulatory practices. Alongside this, the eligibility requirements for sports associations to qualify for government assistance are characteristically minimal, lacking extensive preconditions, with financial support being the primary form of contact and interaction facilitated through formally established mechanisms within policy documents. Furthermore, apart from two states, the presence of a designated body tasked with the recognition of sports federations is widely prevalent; however, such bodies are often constrained in their influence, in contrast to UTs, which are typically granted greater independence in their governance structures for sports federations, in part due to their special status.

Navigating the diverse landscape of state-level sports governance in India shows a variety of policy approaches, with each state crafting its

unique relationship with sports authorities and establishing various mechanisms to bolster athletic development and administration.

Maharashtra is in the process of creating a bespoke sports code, while Haryana adheres to the standards in the National Sports Development Code of 2011 (as stated in their policy); concurrently, Kerala, Rajasthan, and Tripura have taken legislative action by passing state sports laws to give effect to their respective sports codes. Himachal Pradesh has instituted rigorous eligibility criteria for receiving government support, demanding legal recognition, organizational integrity, financial and managerial competence, and a commitment to athlete welfare, criteria that are mirrored in Arunachal Pradesh with the addition of ensuring geographical inclusivity. In contrast, Andhra Pradesh and Goa eschew establishing independent eligibility conditions, choosing instead to align with international and national sports guidelines, as they reference relevant international (the IOC charter) and national (NSDC) guidelines and endeavor to formulate policies and regulations that align with them.

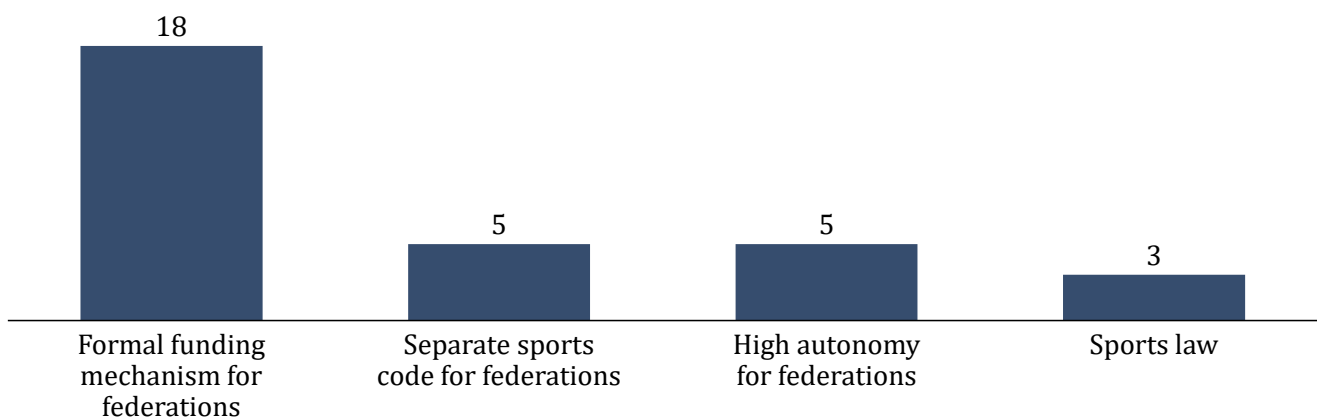


Figure 6: Landscape of state-level engagement with federations as stated in their sports policies (Number of states with...)

Kerala's sports council is distinguished by its statutory status, incorporating a diverse membership, and vested with oversight powers, including supervision of an athlete commission. The Sports Council of Jammu and Kashmir boasts a wide array of functions, from infrastructural to societal integration roles, supported by a specialized engineering division to facilitate development projects. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have opted for an organizational separation, creating a sports council distinct from the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs, thus ensuring a clear division of responsibilities.

Conversely, Punjab and Tamil Nadu present an absence of any formal body charged with the recognition of sports federations, which may indicate a lacuna within their sports governance frameworks.

Some emerging lessons are highlighted below:

- *Comprehensive policy design*: States could benefit from designing comprehensive sports policies with clear codes, recognition mechanisms, and support criteria that are in line with both national standards and local needs.
- *Structured autonomy*: Ensuring a balanced level of autonomy for sports authorities can lead to more dynamic and responsive governance, as seen in the broader functional remit of UTs' sports councils.
- *Inclusivity and accountability*: Policies that incorporate statutory recognition, inclusive membership, and clear terms, as in Kerala, set a benchmark for accountability and inclusivity in sports governance.

What are the main cross-cutting takeaways for Indian states?

Based on our high-level mapping exercise, eleven lessons have been identified to help provide states insights into strategic choices on offer to optimize the impact of their sports policies.

Enhancing local involvement in sports policy execution. Organizations like the WHO have highlighted that “local governments have a crucial role to play in creating environments and opportunities for physical activity and active living.”⁷ States might consider empowering local bodies such as village panchayats or community councils with greater responsibilities and resources. This could lead to more responsive and culturally relevant sports initiatives, enhancing grassroots engagement and participation.

Balanced focus on competitive and recreational sports. Focusing predominantly on competitive sports can restrict broader community engagement in sports activities. States are likely to be better served if they adopt a balanced approach in their sports policies by supporting both competitive and recreational sports. This strategy could help in promoting public health, social cohesion, and ensuring that sports benefits reach a wider segment of the population, not just elite athletes.

The use of structured incentives for widespread participation. Incentives and rewards specifically designed to encourage mass participation in sports can lead to higher engagement levels across diverse community segments. Developing comprehensive,

structured incentives for both competitive and recreational sports participants can drive greater community involvement. States could explore establishing rewards or recognition programs that encourage regular participation at all levels. Examples include provision of academic scholarships, free and/or subsidized access to SAPA infrastructure and coaching, public/private sector jobs for athletes and coaches, pension schemes, grants to local institutions to promote and establish a SAPA culture in their areas, and rewards to SAPA organizations and institutions that successfully demonstrate increase participation in programs and initiatives.

Integrating sports deeply with other sectors like health and education. Integrating sports policies with health and education sectors has demonstrated strong potential for improving public health outcomes and educational achievements. States should consider more deeply integrating SAPA into school curricula and public health initiatives. This could include mandatory physical education classes, incorporating SAPA into the daily routines of schools, and public campaigns that emphasize the health benefits of regular sports participation.

Public-private partnerships to enhance sports infrastructure. Collaboration with the private sector in developing and operating sports infrastructure and programs can bring additional investment, expertise, and innovation. States could seek to form

⁷<https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/326536/9789289021814-eng.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

partnerships with private entities to leverage their resources for the development of sports facilities, organization of sports events, and management of sports programs. This approach can supplement public efforts and lead to more sustainable sports infrastructure and programs.

Decentralization of sports policy implementation. Decentralization of sports policy implementation to more local levels can lead to policies that are more adaptive and responsive to local needs. This must be combined with structured capacity building programs for local actors. States could evaluate the degree of decentralization in their sports policy implementation, considering how power and decision-making can be effectively distributed to enhance policy outcomes. Greater local control might improve the alignment of sports programs with local preferences and conditions, facilitating higher engagement and participation.

Targeted programs for under-represented groups. The inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups in SAPA initiatives has varied significantly, with some regions demonstrating more comprehensive approaches than others. There is a need for standardization across states and for states to explicitly design and implement targeted programs to increase participation among girls and women, PwDs, the elderly, and socio-economically vulnerable communities. Such programs could include specialized sports events, training camps, and accessible sports facilities, ensuring that SAPA is inclusive and equitable.

Promotion of indigenous and traditional sports. The strategic use of both traditional and new media has proven effective in raising awareness and driving participation in sports activities. States could enhance their sports

promotion efforts through comprehensive media campaigns that include digital platforms, social media, and traditional advertising. This would help reach a wider audience, especially the youth, and could include interactive applications that track SAPA and provide virtual sports training.

Inter-sectoral collaboration for sports development. The integration of sports with other sectors such as tourism, urban and rural planning, and community development has been limited but shows significant potential. States could explore inter-sectoral collaborations that integrate sports development with tourism promotion, urban public space design, and community events. This holistic approach could amplify the economic and social benefits of sports, turning sports venues into tourist attractions and community hubs, thereby enhancing the urban and rural landscapes.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for sports policies. The effectiveness of sports policies often hinges on robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which are not universally implemented in Indian states. Developing formal mechanisms to regularly assess and review sports policies and programs could provide states with critical insights into their effectiveness and areas for improvement. States could establish dedicated teams or use existing governmental bodies to conduct annual or biennial reviews of sports policies, tracking progress, and making data-driven adjustments. Inter-state collaboration in monitoring and evaluating sports policies has the potential to enhance their effectiveness by enabling the sharing of best practices, standardizing evaluation metrics, and pooling resources. In particular, standardizing metrics and indicators could facilitate comparisons that are meaningful and that accurately reflect the relative successes

and areas needing improvement in different states' sports initiatives. By working together, states can address cross-border challenges, foster continuous learning, and contribute to a national sports database, which collectively strengthens the sports infrastructure and policy outcomes nationwide. This coordinated approach not only optimizes individual state efforts but also aligns them towards a unified national objective.

Developing a model state SAPA framework.

Our assessment reveals a diverse range of understanding, prioritization, and execution of SAPA principles across the sports policies of Indian states, highlighting the need for a unified framework to guide the development of future sports policies. This could take the form of a model state SAPA framework—a comprehensive blueprint designed to assist states in formulating policies that effectively promote both competitive and recreational sports while being inclusive and beneficial at the community level. Such a framework would provide standardized best practices but also offer the flexibility for states to tailor strategies to their specific socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Given the overarching nature and potential impact of such a framework, the national government may be best placed to develop this model SAPA framework using a consultative process. This approach has been successfully implemented in other areas of Indian policy, such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, where extensive consultations with state governments, experts, and the public were conducted to create a comprehensive and inclusive policy (Government of India, Ministry of Education, 2020). Similarly, the National Health Policy 2017 was developed through a consultative process, ensuring inputs from various stakeholders to address the diverse health needs across states (Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2017). The development of a model sports code could help strengthen sports policy approaches across Indian states, potentially increasing the overall balance and impact of these policies and positioning sports as a key component of societal health and economic growth. This initiative would represent a meaningful advance towards a more unified, inclusive, and strategic state-led approaches approach to sports across the country.

Conclusion

India has the opportunity to take the lead as a lighthouse country working at the forefront of making SAPA a strategic national imperative. It is important that each state assesses closely the population-scale benefits of SAPA-specific policies that promote universal SAPA and/or update existing sport and/or health-focused policies to recognize the role of SAPA in improving physical and mental health, social impact, and active living. With a variety of low-cost, high volume, and preventive public health benefits attributed to SAPA participation, it is a major and impactful public health intervention that can lower the burden on healthcare infrastructure, save the Indian economy over USD 50 billion annually,⁸ and ensure that the population is healthier, more active, and more productive.

At the same time, greater participation in sports can boost economic growth, enhance livelihoods, uplift underserved communities, and expand the talent pool.

With India's increasing presence on the international stage, and with the ambition of India hosting the Summer Olympics and Paralympics, the opportunity to make a sustained and systemic impact on sports participation and performance could be led through policy and policy-enabled programs. When seen in this light, an effective and inclusive policy framework for each state that enables and empowers a SAPA forward plan is not only important now, but also critical.

The Sports and Society Accelerator works extensively on policy and curating impact-forward convenings and initiatives that help states work at scale on SAPA. If you would like to learn more about how to introduce or integrate SAPA at a policy level, please reach out to us and we are happy to assist state governments to draft, design, and mobilize a balanced SAPA policy.

⁸⁸ Sports and Society Accelerator and Dalberg Advisors, 2023

Appendix - Map of Indian States & UTs with Sports Policies

STATES

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 - <https://www.dtnext.in/tamilnadu/2023/03/16/puducherry-govt-to-create-separate-dept-for-sports-and-youth-affairs> (upcoming - separate department)



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