Sports Governance in India

Why in news?

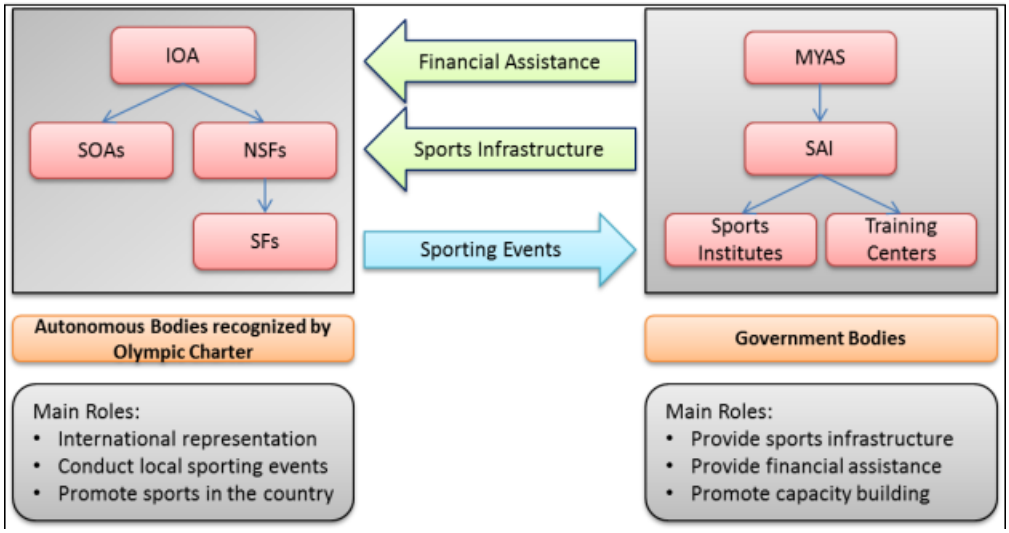
Dismal performance of India in the Paris Olympic 2024 has turned the focus on the nature and role of sports administration in India.

How Sports are governed in India?

- The evolution of sports in India reflects the nation's rich history, culture, and societal changes.
- **Early governance** – They were marked by *local community organization* and regulation of sports activities, especially during pre-colonial times.
- It evolved into formal governing bodies and organizations introduced by colonial administrators for Western sports.
- **Post-Independence governance** - India invested in sports development through institutions like the Sports Authority of India (SAI) that contributes to the development of modern sports governance structures.

Key Organisation in Sports Governance
• It encompasses several pivotal organizations tasked with overseeing the administration, regulation, and promotion of diverse sports • **MYAS** - Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the central government body steering sports policies, funding, and infrastructure development. • **IOA** - Indian Olympic Association oversees India's participation in international multi-sport events. • **SOA** - State Olympic Association • **NSF** - National Sports Federation, govern specific sports disciplines, collaborating with governmental and international bodies. • **BCCI**- Board of Control for Cricket in India governs Cricket. • **AIFF** - All India Football Federation manages football • **NADA** - National Anti-Doping Agency oversees anti-doping efforts • **NIS** - National Institute of Sports offers coaching and training. • **SAI** - Sports Authority of India, the apex national sports organization, manages training centres, talent identification, and financial support for athletes.

- **Current governance model**



- **Good Governance in Sports** – ***National Sports Development Code of India*** was enacted in 2011 to promote good governance practices in the management of sports at the national level.
- This code aims to bring transparency and accountability to the functioning of national sports federations (NSFs).

National Sports Development Code of India

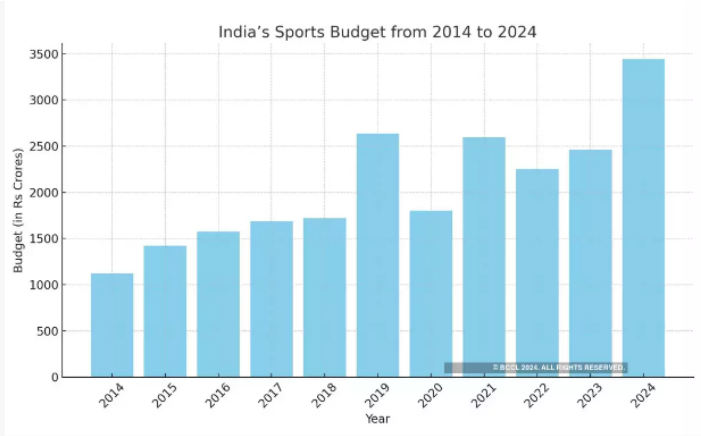
- Preventing racism in sports
- Eradicating doping
- Preventing age fraud
- Protecting athletes rights
- Preventing child abuse and sexual harassment in sports
- Protecting gender equality
- Preventing betting and gambling in sports

What are the key issues in sports management?

India won only one silver and 5 bronze medals from India's contingent of 117 athletes went to Paris Olympic 2024 and got 71st spot in the ranking.

- **Misgovernance of federations** - Internal disputes, governance shortcomings and Third-party influences, not conducting elections in federations.
- Governing bodies for different sports have been suspended, warned or even banned by the international bodies including
  - All-India Football Federation (AIFF), the Indian Olympic Association and Hockey India.
- Many of the federations are now u*nder the supervision of Supreme Court*-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA), which is overseeing the body's day-to-day affairs.
- **Political dominance** – Most of the boards and selection panel is *dominated by persons from political grounds* rather than sports background.
  - Out of 63 vice presidents (average of seven in each sport) of athletics, badminton, boxing, shooting, hockey, archery, weightlifting, swimming and table tennis, only six have a sporting background.

- **Lack of Spending** - India spends *just about Rs.3000 crore* for sports which is *1.13% of China's spending*.



- **Harassments** –*Physical and Sexual harassments* against the sports persons by person within and outside the administration has not been addressed.
- **Scams and Political Controversies** - I*ndia has hosted only the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games*, which however was marred by alleged scams and political controversies.
- **Lack of sponsorship** – Games o*ther than Cricket do not have much viewership and sponsorship*.

Accountability Issues	Administrative Issues	Developmental Issues
• Unlimited Discretionary Powers • Non-transparent Decision Making • Revenue Management Irregularities	• Sponsorships & Media Rights Management • Doping and Related Drug Abuse • Discrimination based on Sex, Region, etc. • Unauthorized Betting	• Cultural Impediments • Infrastructural Impediments

What are the impacts of sportsperson in administration?

Benefits of Sportsperson in Administration

• **Domain expertise** - These players have firsthand experience and deep understanding of sports.
• **Better stakeholder management** - Sportspersons are also often *more respected by athletes and coaches*, which can foster a more positive collaborative environment within sports federations.
• It enables the players from marginalized section to overcome the bureaucratic hurdles and engage directly with administration.
• **Athlete welfare** - Players who have risen through the ranks are more in *tune with the requirements of a new player*.
• They are more likely to *understand the challenges* faced during training and competition and prioritise the welfare of athletes.
• **Superior training** - An *athlete-centered approach* would always be handier in providing better training conditions, facilities and support systems (both mental and physical).
• **Reduces favoritism** – Sports person in administration reduces the influences of politicians favoring specific people.

Drawbacks of Sportsperson in Administration

• **Administrative hurdles** - Players who are best in sports may not be good at administration.
• Managerial position requires coordination with people who do not always move ahead with the same goal in mind.
• **Skillset mismatch** - Skillsets required for being an elite sportsperson and administrator are quite different.
• **Decision making challenge** – Differences in the decision-making approach as a sport captain and an administrator.
• Material impact of the administrative decisions takes time to yield results, unlike in game decisions.
• **Lack in back-channel negotiations** – Some issues in sports require back-channel negotiations in which the elite players fail to execute in and politicians handle it better.

What are the impacts of Politicians in administration?

Benefits of Politician in Administration

• **Democratic Administration** - They ensure the checks and balance by keeping everyone in the administration very quickly.
• Politicians in top positions have vast experience in dealing with various stakeholders of any domain.
• **Resource mobilization** - Politicians tend to fare better in galvanizing people, handling media and mobilising resources in getting sponsorships for the game.
• **Better representation** – Politicians can better represent the needs and aspirations of sports in legislature and executive committees.

Drawbacks of Politician in Administration

• **Disconnected from game** - Politicians are absolutely unaware of the activities going on at the ground level.
• Politicians is national sports federations and Indian Olympic Association led to *mismanagement in the administration*.
• **Lack of player-centric approach** – *Detachment with players' life* in the ground tends to make them indifferent towards their problems and they rely on secondary feedback that often negatively impacting the careers of players.
• **Exploiting sports system** – With time, players' and sports' interests take back seat while *financial and personal interests are given priority*.
• Sports may be used for galvanising votes, rigging elections and corruption.
• **Nepotism and Favoritism** - Politicians tend to develop a red-tapism for their own sake.

What lies ahead?

- Prioritizing strategic investment, enhancing infrastructure, and fostering grassroots initiatives.
- Implementing an effective sports governance system as in China for shaping sports policies and strategies.
- Appointing sportspersons at lower level of administration and progressively enabling them to reach the top could be a good beginning.
- Mandating the presence of sportspersons at key decision-making positions.
- Effective implementation of Khelo India programme on mission mode

References

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