



## Sports Governance and Issues

**For Prelims:** [SC](#), [WFI](#), [FIR](#), [Code of Criminal Procedure](#), [Fundamental Rights](#), [CVC](#), [IOA](#).

**For Mains:** Sports Governance and Issues.

### Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#) has decided to examine the sexual harassment allegations against [Wrestling Federation of India's \(WFI\) President by women wrestlers](#), raising concerns over **Sports Governance in India**.

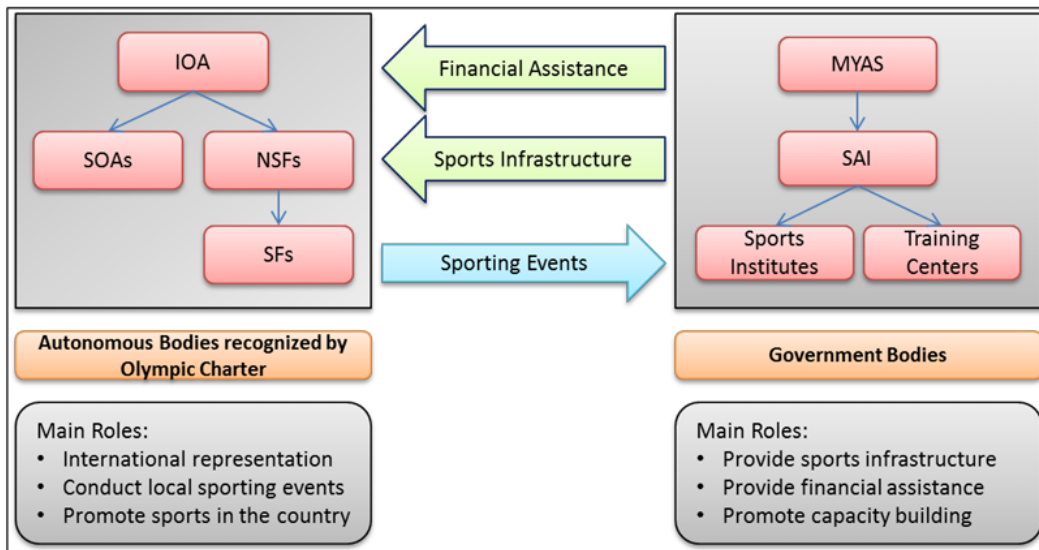
### What is the SC's Observation?

- The court has decided to examine the petition filed by the wrestlers regarding the non-registration of [First Information Report \(FIR\)](#) and has listed the case for hearing further.
  - The court pointed out that the petitioners have a remedy under **Section 156 of the Code of Criminal Procedure** under which a Magistrate could order an investigation.
- The court observed that, there are serious allegations contained in the petition at the behest of wrestlers **who have represented India** with regard to sexual harassment, adding that the SC is conscious of its duty to protect [fundamental rights](#) under the Constitution's [Article 32](#), which allows **individuals to move to the top court to seek justice**.

### What is the Current Model of Sports Governance in India?

- The existing model of governance of sports in India has two wings:
  - One - controlled by **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS)** and has institutions like the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and other institutions working towards promoting sports training under SAI.
  - Other - headed by the **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** having under it, State Olympic Associations (SOAs) and national and state Sports Federations (NSFs and SFs).
- **MYAS provides financial and infrastructural support** to the NSF and SFs and indirectly controls these federations through political representations.
  - IOA is the umbrella body under which the **NSF, SFs and SOAs conduct various sporting events in the country**
- A broad level graphical representation of the arrangements amongst them is as follows:

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## What Rules and Regulations are there for Good Governance in Sports?

### ▪ Sports Code 2011:

- The Code was notified by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2011, with an aim of bringing together **all notifications and instructions pertaining to good governance** of National Sports Federations.
- It is a set of regulations, which enunciate the **‘basic universal principles of good governance, ethics and fair play.’**
- It seeks to put restrictions **on the age and tenure of the office-bearers of federations** apart from envisaging transparent functioning along with free and fair elections.
  - The Code says that the **Non-compliance with the regime of the law is against public interest.**

### ▪ Draft National Code for Good Governance:

- The draft **National Code for Good Governance in Sports 2017** is a proposed set of guidelines for the **management and administration of sports bodies in India.**
- It includes **measures such as age and tenure restrictions** for office-bearers, the **presence of independent directors** on the governing board, **transparent and fair elections**, and other measures aimed at improving transparency and **accountability in sports bodies.**

## What are the Issues Related to Sports Governance in India?

### ▪ Unclear Rights and Responsibility:

- In Indian sports, **management and governance are often not clearly separated.** The executive committee, which is supposed to focus on governance, **ends up doing management work.**
- This creates a **lack of checks and balances**, as they are allowed to operate without oversight or accountability.

### ▪ Lack of Transparency and Accountability:

- The current sports model **lacks accountability due to unlimited powers and a lack of transparency** in decision-making. There are also issues with irregular revenue management.
  - For instance, in July 2010, the **Central Vigilance Commission** released a report which showed that there were irregularities in 14 projects of the Commonwealth Games held in India.
  - The 2013 Indian Premier League spot-fixing and betting case arose when the **Delhi**

**Police arrested three cricketers**, on the charges of alleged spot-fixing.

▪ **Non-Professionalisation:**

- Indian sport organizations, especially governing bodies, have not adapted to the challenges of a professional and commercialized sector. They still **rely on volunteers instead of hiring skilled professionals** to handle the increased workload.

▪ **Lack of Sufficient Infrastructure:**

- Status of sports infrastructure in India is yet to reach the desired level. This creates an obstacle in developing a culture of sports in the country.
- According to the Constitution of India, sport is a **State subject** consequently there is no comprehensive approach for the development of sports infrastructure uniformly throughout the country.

▪ **Issues Related to Sexual Harassment:**

- There have been several high-profile cases where athletes have accused **coaches and officials of sexual harassment** and abuse.
  - However, the response from sports **organizations has been slow and inadequate.**
- One of the **key issues is the lack of a proper mechanism to address** sexual harassment complaints.
  - Many sports organizations do not have a formal policy in place for dealing with such complaints, and there is often no clear chain of command for reporting incidents.

## How can the Issues Related to Sports Governance be Addressed?

▪ **Empowering Athletes:**

- Athletes are the **primary stakeholders in sports**, and their involvement in decision-making can **bring much-needed accountability and transparency** to sports organizations.
- To empower athletes in sports administration, there must be mechanisms in place to ensure their representation at all levels of sports governance.
  - The **Olympic Charter also has a provision for the election of athlete representatives as members** of countries' National Olympic Committee (India - IOA) and their boards.

▪ **Autonomy of Sports Federations:**

- The autonomy of sports federations is crucial in addressing the challenges related to sports governance.
- It enables sports **organizations to act independently through their own democratic structures**, free from governmental and external influence, which can reduce the likelihood of corruption and nepotism.

▪ **Bottom-Up Reforms:**

- Reforms should start from the bottom of the pyramid, which means reconstituting **district and state bodies that feed into national sports governance.**
- This approach ensures that accountability and transparency are built into the sports governance structure at all levels, starting from the grassroots.

▪ **Creating Sports Awareness:**

- Incorporating sports into children's daily lives can improve their confidence, self-image, and even lead to a career in sports.
- To build a strong sporting culture in the country, the change needs to start at the primary education level. The **education system should give equal importance to sports as a part of a child's holistic** upbringing.

▪ **Greater Representation of Women:**

- Encouraging greater representation of women in sports governance positions can help **ensure that their voices are heard and that their rights** are protected. This can be achieved through several measures, such as:
  - Creating gender-sensitive policies
  - Providing equal opportunities for women to access leadership positions in sports governance.
  - Encouraging women to pursue careers in sports
  - Promoting a culture of inclusivity and diversity
  - Establishing gender quotas

- Creating safe and supportive environments for women

## Conclusion

- Addressing the issues related to sports governance requires a **multi-faceted approach**.
- It is imperative to create a more transparent and inclusive sports culture and ensure that athletes' rights are protected, and their voices are heard in sports administration.

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

#### Prelims

**Q1. Consider the following statements in respect of the Laureus World Sports Award which was instituted in the year 2000: (2021)**

1. American golfer Tiger Woods was the first winner of this award.
2. The award has been received mostly by 'Formula One' players so far.
3. Roger Federer received this award a maximum number of times compared to others.

**Which of the above statements are correct?**

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (c)**

- The Laureus World Sports Awards is the premier global sporting awards. First held in 2000, the annual event honours the greatest and most inspirational sporting triumphs of the year and showcases the work of Laureus Sport for Good.
- American golfer Tiger Woods was the first winner of this award. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- The award has been received mostly by Men's Football Team (6 times) players so far. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Roger Federer (5 times) has received this award, the maximum number of times compared to others followed by Usain Bolt (4 times) and Novak Djokovic (4 times). **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
- **Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

**Q2. Consider the following statements in respect of the 32nd Summer Olympics: (2021)**

1. The official motto for this Olympics is 'A New World'.
2. Sport Climbing, Surfing, Skateboarding, Karate and Baseball are included in this Olympics.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (b)**

- The Games of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Summer Olympiad (Tokyo 2020) were held from 23 July to 8 August 2021. The official motto for Olympics 2020 was "United by Emotion". **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
- A total of 46 Olympic Sports were contested at the Tokyo 2020 Games including Rugby, Sport Climbing, Fencing, Football, Skateboarding, Handball, Surfing, Karate, Baseball, among others.

Hence, statement 2 is correct.

- Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.

## **Mains**

**Q.** An athlete participates in the Olympics for personal triumph and nation's glory; victors are showered with cash incentives by various agencies, on their return. Discuss the merit of state sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement. **(2014)**

**Source: HT**

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