

Standing Committee Report Summary

Review of functioning and performance of Sports Authority of India and Khelo India

- The Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth, and Sports (Chair: Mr. Digvijaya Singh) presented its report on 'Review of functioning and performance of Sports Authority of India (SAI) and Khelo India' on August 20, 2025. SAI is the apex body for sports promotion across the country. Khelo India is a scheme that promotes talent development, upgrading sports infrastructure, and creating sports academies. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Converting SAI into a statutory body:** The Committee observed that SAI is the leading government body which supports sports talent in the country. It recommended that the Department of Sports and SAI examine the possibility of converting it into a statutory body, with its own dedicated cadre.
 - **Revising the budget:** The Committee observed that the current financial allocation for SAI is very low. Akharas and other academies teaching Indigenous Games and Martial Arts (IGMA) do not receive regular financial assistance. Stipends for sports kits and nutritional support have also not been revised for many years. The Committee recommended revising these budgets and providing financial support for developing sports infrastructure across the country.
 - **Alternate sources of funding:** The Committee observed that private bodies received more funding through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) than government institutions. It recommended that CSR rules be revised so that government institutions may be equal beneficiaries of CSR funding. It also noted the diversion of resources from the National Sports Development Fund to civil services associations and residential colonies. It recommended stricter regulations for this Fund.
 - **Vacancies in SAI:** The Committee observed that around 45% of sanctioned posts in SAI are vacant. These shortfalls are being covered through contract appointments. The Committee recommended that the vacancies be filled within six months.
 - **Targeting specific sports:** The Committee observed that certain countries participate only in specific sports and win more medals. The Committee recommended following this approach. The Ministry must focus on identifying sports in which India has potential talent. The Committee also recommended identifying talents in sports between 10 and 15 years of age.
- **Recognising sports federations and associations:** The Committee observed that a bureaucratic approach was being followed to recognise sports federations. It recommended that the Ministry proactively recognise those sports associations which could potentially lead to medals in international events, such as mixed martial arts and ice hockey.
- **Infrastructure Development:** SAI has established 24 National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs), which provide training, lodging, education, nutrition and medical support to athletes. The Committee observed that some of these NCOEs are not operational, and others do not have operational residence facilities. They are also spread out disproportionately across the country. Some states have sporting cultures for certain disciplines but do not have adequate SAI facilities. The Committee recommended establishing NCOEs in these states. It also recommended operationalising existing NCOEs. The Committee also recommended that existing IGMA Schools in Jharkhand and Maharashtra be operationalised.
- **Integrating sports with education:** The Committee observed that NCOEs do not combine sports and education, resulting in an educational gap for athletes. It recommended that all NCOEs and regional centres must be residential-cum-educational institutions. NCOEs must have integrated sports and education facilities from the school level to higher education.
- The Committee noted that there is currently no regulatory body for sports education. It recommended that the Ministry consult with SAI on the need and feasibility of establishing such a regulator.
- **Continuing the Khelo India scheme:** The Khelo India scheme will be operational till March 2026. The Committee recommended including the scheme in the organisational structure of SAI. It recommended that SAI organise the annual National Games, which is currently organised by the Indian Olympic Association. It also recommended continuing the FIT India Mission, and creating a dedicated staff for the programme.
- **Creating a sports index:** The Committee recommended setting up a sports index to measure the performance of states in sports. This is expected to foster greater competitiveness between states.

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