

## **A STUDY ON THE CURRENT SCENARIO OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS IN NORTH EASTERN INDIA**

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**Abstract:** This study examines the current state of physical education and sports in North Eastern India, focusing on opportunities, challenges, and potential areas for development. By analyzing existing literature, conducting surveys and evaluating policy frameworks, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of the region's sports ecosystem. The findings reveal a growing interest in sports among the youth but highlight significant infrastructural limitations, policy gaps, and funding issues. Based on the analysis, the study offers recommendations to improve sports education and infrastructure in the region.

**Keywords:** Physical Education, Current Scenario and Sports in North East India

### **Introduction**

Physical education and sports are fundamental aspects of a well-rounded education system, contributing to the physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of individuals. They play a crucial role in personality development, discipline, teamwork, and overall health. Across the world, sports have been recognized as a medium for youth development, fostering unity, and promoting national and international recognition. In India, sports and physical education have gradually gained importance, with government initiatives, educational policies, and private sector participation working towards their development.

The North Eastern region of India, comprising eight states **Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura** holds a unique position in the Indian sports landscape. Despite having a relatively small population compared to other regions of India, the North East has produced some of the finest athletes who have represented the country at national and international levels. The region is known for its natural sporting talent, particularly in sports such as **boxing, weightlifting, football, athletics, archery and martial arts**. However, despite this immense potential, there are significant challenges that hinder the systematic development of physical education and sports in the region.

### **Significance of Physical Education and Sports in North East India**

Physical education and sports are essential for fostering a culture of fitness, discipline, and social well-being. In North Eastern India, sports have always been deeply rooted in traditional and cultural practices. Indigenous sports such as **Thang-Ta (a Manipuri martial**

**art), archery (popular in Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh) and wrestling** have been practiced for generations. Moreover, modern sports such as football, boxing, and weightlifting have gained massive popularity among the youth.

The North Eastern states have consistently contributed to India's sporting achievements, with renowned athletes like:

9. Mary Kom (Manipur, Boxing): Six-time World Champion and Olympic medalist
10. Mirabai Chanu (Manipur, Weightlifting): Olympic Silver Medalist
11. Bhaichung Bhutia (Sikkim, Football): Former Captain of the Indian Football Team
12. Dipa Karmakar (Tripura, Gymnastics): First Indian Female Gymnast in the Olympics
13. Jayanta Talukdar (Assam, Archery): International Medalist

Despite such talent, the region struggles with issues such as lack of proper infrastructure, insufficient funding, limited professional training facilities and inadequate government support in some areas. Many athletes, despite their potential, face difficulties in accessing world-class training and resources, which affects their performance at higher levels.

### **Current Challenges and Opportunities**

The North East region has demonstrated great enthusiasm for sports, but the development of physical education and sports remains hindered by several factors:

#### **Challenges**

1. **Lack of Adequate Sports Infrastructure:**
2. Many schools and colleges in the region do not have proper playgrounds, gymnasiums, or specialized training facilities.
3. The number of sports academies and high-performance centers is limited compared to other regions of India.
4. **Shortage of Qualified Coaches and Trainers:**
5. The availability of trained and certified coaches in various disciplines is inadequate.
6. There is limited access to sports psychologists, physiotherapists, and nutritionists, which are essential for the professional growth of athletes.
7. **Limited Government and Private Sector Investment:**
8. Though the government has launched several initiatives, funding for sports development remains insufficient.
9. Private investment and sponsorships for North Eastern athletes are not as widespread as in other parts of the country.
10. **Geographical and Socio-Economic Constraints:**

8. Many parts of the North East have difficult terrain, which limits connectivity and accessibility to sports facilities.
9. Economic challenges force many young athletes to prioritize earning a livelihood over pursuing sports professionally.
11. **Lack of Awareness and Promotion:**
  10. Awareness about career opportunities in sports and physical education is relatively low among students and parents.
  11. Many promising athletes discontinue their training due to lack of encouragement and resources.

### **Opportunities for Growth**

Despite these challenges, the North East has immense potential to emerge as a powerhouse for sports and physical education in India. Some of the key opportunities include:

12. **Government Initiatives and Schemes:**
  12. The **Khelo India Program**, launched by the Government of India, aims to promote grassroots sports development and improve infrastructure.
  13. The **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** supports elite athletes, many of whom hail from North East India.
  14. The **North East Sports Development Scheme** focuses on upgrading sports facilities and training centers in the region.
13. **Emerging Sports Infrastructure:**
  1. New sports academies, stadiums, and training centers are being developed in states like Manipur, Assam, and Mizoram.
  2. The rise of sports leagues, such as the **Indian Super League (ISL)** and **I-League** in football, has provided opportunities for North Eastern players.
3. **Cultural and Traditional Strength in Sports:**
  4. Indigenous sports like archery, wrestling, and martial arts have the potential to be further developed and promoted at a national level.
  5. The natural agility, stamina, and fitness of people in the region make them well-suited for endurance sports and combat sports.
6. **Growing Interest from Private Sector and NGOs:**
  7. Corporate sponsorships and collaborations with international sports organizations are gradually increasing.

8. NGOs and sports foundations are working towards identifying and nurturing young talents.

The North Eastern region of India has immense potential to become a leading hub for sports and physical education in the country. However, this potential remains underutilized due to infrastructural, financial and logistical challenges. By addressing these issues through government intervention, private investment and grassroots initiatives, the region can emerge as a sports powerhouse. This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current scenario and suggest practical recommendations for the development of physical education and sports in North Eastern India.

### **Review of Related Literature**

**Bandyopadhyay (2016):** This study explored the impact of government policies on sports development in India. It highlighted various initiatives taken by the government to promote sports at grassroots levels, including financial assistance, training programs, and infrastructural support. However, it also pointed out the inefficiencies in policy implementation and the gap between urban and rural sports development.

**Das & Roy (2018):** This research analyzed the role of physical education in promoting youth engagement in sports. It emphasized the importance of integrating physical education into school curriculums and the positive impact it has on students' physical and mental well-being. The study also examined barriers such as lack of trained educators, inadequate facilities, and societal attitudes toward sports as a career option.

**Sharma (2020):** This investigation focused on the challenges faced by North Eastern athletes in accessing adequate training facilities. The research identified key obstacles such as lack of infrastructure, limited access to professional coaching, and financial constraints. The study also highlighted cases where talented athletes struggled to gain recognition and support despite their potential, suggesting the need for policy reforms and better financial aid programs.

**Government of India Sports Policy Report (2021):** This report provided an overview of national sports policies and their regional implications. It assessed the effectiveness of existing policies in fostering sports development in different states, including the North Eastern region. The report acknowledged progress in terms of investment in sports infrastructure and talent identification programs but also pointed out disparities in resource allocation and the need for better coordination among stakeholders.

### **Importance of the Study**

The study on the current scenario of physical education and sports in North Eastern India is crucial for understanding the region's unique geographical, cultural, and socio-economic challenges that impact sports development. It will assess the availability and quality of sports infrastructure, training facilities, and equipment to identify gaps and suggest improvements. By examining the integration of physical education into academic curricula, the study aims to promote grassroots development and systematic talent scouting. Given that the region has produced outstanding athletes, this research will help in formulating effective strategies for talent identification and development. Additionally, it will evaluate the effectiveness of government policies, schemes, and funding while emphasizing the importance of preserving and promoting indigenous sports. The study highlights the role of physical education in fostering health, fitness, and mental well-being while also exploring the economic potential of sports in creating employment opportunities. Furthermore, it will assess gender inclusivity in sports participation and propose measures for equal opportunities. By addressing these factors, the study aims to enhance North Eastern India's representation at national and international sports events, ultimately guiding policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in making informed decisions for the region's sports development.

### **Objectives**

9. To examine the current state of physical education in North Eastern India.
10. To analyze government initiatives and policies related to sports.
11. To identify major challenges in the sports sector.
12. To assess the level of participation and interest among students.

### **Methodology**

This study is based entirely on secondary data to analyze the current scenario of physical education and sports in North Eastern India. The research methodology involves a comprehensive review of existing literature, government reports, academic studies, and statistical data from various sources. The data sources include government reports and policies such as those from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, policies and programs under the Sports Authority of India (SAI), and state government initiatives related to physical education and sports. Academic and research studies include research papers, journal articles and conference proceedings from reputed institutions, along with studies conducted by universities in North Eastern India. Statistical data and surveys are gathered from reports by the National Statistical Office (NSO), census data on sports infrastructure and participation, and

surveys conducted by NGOs and research agencies. Media and online resources include articles from newspapers, magazines, and sports journals covering North Eastern India, information from government and sports organizations' official websites, and reports from international sports bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) relevant to the region. The study employs an in-depth content analysis of collected secondary data, using a comparative approach to examine trends and developments in physical education and sports across different states in North Eastern India. Key themes such as infrastructure, government initiatives, participation levels, and challenges are identified and analyzed. However, since the study relies solely on secondary data, its findings are dependent on the availability and accuracy of existing reports and literature, with potential gaps and regional disparities in documentation influencing the comprehensiveness of the analysis. This methodology ensures a systematic and objective assessment of the current scenario of physical education and sports in North Eastern India using credible secondary sources.

### Analysis of the Study

#### Objective 1: To examine the current state of physical education in North Eastern India.

Physical Education (PE) plays a crucial role in the holistic development of students by promoting physical fitness, discipline, teamwork and overall well-being. In North Eastern India, which comprises eight states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura), the state of physical education is influenced by various socio-economic, cultural and geographical factors. This objective aims to analyze the current status, challenges and prospects of PE in the region.

#### Areas of Examination

Aspect	Current Status	Challenges	Opportunities
<b>Curriculum &amp; Implementation</b>	PE is included in school curriculums, but its implementation varies by state and institution.	Lack of standardized curriculum across states.	National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 promotes sports and PE integration.
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Facilities</b>	Urban schools have better access to PE facilities, while rural areas lack proper infrastructure.	Limited sports equipment and playgrounds in rural schools.	Government schemes like Khelo India can enhance infrastructure.
<b>Teacher Availability &amp; Training</b>	Some states have qualified PE teachers, but many schools rely on general teachers for PE.	Shortage of trained PE teachers and lack of professional development programs.	Introducing PE teacher training programs and incentives for educators.

Aspect	Current Status	Challenges	Opportunities
<b>Student Participation</b>	Interest in sports is high, especially in indigenous and traditional games.	Academic pressure and lack of awareness reduce student participation.	Encouraging inter-school competitions and traditional sports can boost participation.
<b>Government Policies &amp; Initiatives</b>	Various state and central government programs support sports development.	Ineffective implementation and lack of monitoring.	Strengthening policy execution and funding for PE programs.
<b>Cultural &amp; Geographical Factors</b>	Rich sports culture with indigenous games like Thang-Ta, Mukna, and Archery.	Hilly terrain and poor connectivity hinder accessibility to sports facilities.	Leveraging traditional sports for community-based PE programs.

The current state of physical education in North Eastern India reflects both progress and challenges. While there is enthusiasm for sports and fitness, issues such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of trained teachers and regional disparities need to be addressed. Strengthening policy implementation, investing in facilities and promoting traditional sports can significantly improve PE in the region.

### **Objective 2: To analyze government initiatives and policies related to sports.**

The Indian government has implemented various initiatives and policies to promote sports and physical education at national and regional levels. These policies aim to enhance sports infrastructure, provide financial support, nurture talent and integrate physical education into the education system. In North Eastern India, specific programs have been launched to harness the region's rich sporting potential and produce world-class athletes.

### **Government Initiatives and Policies**

Policy/Initiative	Year of Launch	Objectives	Impact in North East India
<b>Khelo India Programme</b>	2018	Promote grassroots sports, develop infrastructure, and support young athletes.	Special focus on North East, with regional sports centers and financial aid.
<b>Fit India Movement</b>	2019	Encourage a healthy and active lifestyle through fitness awareness.	Schools and colleges in the North East conduct fitness programs and assessments.
<b>National Sports Policy</b>	2001 (Updated periodically)	Strengthen sports governance, athlete development and infrastructure.	Funding for regional training centers and support for traditional sports.

<b>Policy/Initiative</b>	<b>Year of Launch</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Impact in North East India</b>
<b>Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)</b>	2014	Identify and support elite athletes for international competitions.	Athletes from Manipur, Assam and other NE states benefit from financial assistance.
<b>North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS)</b>	2017	Develop infrastructure, including sports facilities, in the North East.	New stadiums, training academies and improved access to sports resources.
<b>Rural Sports Programme</b>	1970s (Ongoing)	Promote sports culture in rural areas, particularly among youth.	Encourages indigenous sports like Thang-Ta, Mukna and Archery.
<b>Sports Quota in Government Jobs</b>	Ongoing	Provide government jobs to athletes excelling in national and international sports.	Many North Eastern sportspersons secure employment through this scheme.
<b>SAI (Sports Authority of India) Training Centers</b>	Various years	Provide high-quality training and coaching to athletes.	SAI centers in Guwahati, Imphal and other cities offer world-class training.

Government initiatives and policies have significantly contributed to the development of sports in India, particularly in the North East, which has produced exceptional athletes in disciplines like boxing, weightlifting and football. However, challenges such as inadequate implementation, lack of awareness and infrastructure gaps remain. Strengthening execution, increasing funding and promoting regional sports can further enhance the impact of these policies.

### **Objective: 3 To identify major challenges in the sports sector.**

Despite significant progress in sports development, India, including the North Eastern region, faces multiple challenges that hinder the growth of athletes and sports infrastructure. Addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing sports performance at national and international levels.

### **Major Challenges in the Sports Sector**

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Impact on Sports Development</b>	<b>Possible Solutions</b>
<b>Lack of Infrastructure</b>	Inadequate sports facilities, training centers, and stadiums, especially in rural areas.	Limits access to proper training and competition venues.	Increased investment in sports infrastructure, especially in remote regions.



<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Impact on Sports Development</b>	<b>Possible Solutions</b>
<b>Shortage of Qualified Coaches</b>	Insufficient certified coaches and trainers, particularly in emerging sports.	Affects athlete development and performance at professional levels.	Establishing more coaching institutes and incentivizing training programs.
<b>Financial Constraints</b>	Limited funding for athletes, grassroots sports, and state-level programs.	Many talented athletes quit sports due to lack of financial support.	Enhancing government and private sector sponsorship programs.
<b>Lack of Awareness and Promotion</b>	Insufficient promotion of non-cricket sports and indigenous games.	Lesser-known sports struggle to gain recognition and participation.	Conducting awareness campaigns and integrating sports education in schools.
<b>Political &amp; Bureaucratic Hurdles</b>	Corruption and mismanagement in sports administration.	Funds and resources often do not reach deserving athletes.	Implementing transparent policies and independent sports governance bodies.
<b>Gender Disparity in Sports</b>	Fewer opportunities, facilities and sponsorships for female athletes.	Women athletes face societal and institutional barriers.	Encouraging women's participation through exclusive sports programs and scholarships.
<b>Injury Management &amp; Sports Science</b>	Lack of medical and rehabilitation support for athletes.	Injuries force many athletes to retire early.	Setting up specialized sports medicine and physiotherapy centers.
<b>Limited Career Opportunities Post-Retirement</b>	Athletes struggle with career options after their playing years.	Fear of an uncertain future discourages sports participation.	Expanding government job quotas and alternative career training for retired athletes.

Overcoming these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach involving government support, private investment and societal awareness. Strengthening infrastructure, improving governance and promoting sports at grassroots levels can help India achieve greater success in global sporting events.

#### **Objective 4: To assess the level of participation and interest among students.**

The objective is to evaluate the extent to which students engage in academic and extracurricular activities, as well as their interest levels in various subjects, events or initiatives. Understanding student participation and interest helps educators and administrators identify areas for improvement, enhance learning experiences and introduce new strategies to foster engagement.

**Aspects to Assess:**

1. **Classroom Engagement:** Participation in discussions, responsiveness to questions and attentiveness.
2. **Extracurricular Involvement:** Participation in clubs, sports, cultural programs and competitions.
3. **Academic Interest:** Preferences for subjects, motivation in studies and enthusiasm for projects.
4. **Attendance & Consistency:** Regularity in attending classes and extracurricular events.
5. **Peer Interaction:** Collaboration in group activities, willingness to help others and teamwork skills.
6. **Feedback & Suggestions:** Student opinions on teaching methods, learning resources and campus activities.

**Assessment Methods:**

7. Surveys and questionnaires
8. Observation by teachers and mentors
9. Student feedback forms
10. Participation records in events and activities

**Sample Assessment Table**

Category	Criteria	Low (1-2)	Moderate (3-4)	High (5-6)
<b>Classroom Engagement</b>	Answers questions, participates in discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Extracurricular Involvement</b>	Joins clubs, attends events, takes part in competitions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Academic Interest</b>	Shows enthusiasm for learning and subjects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Attendance &amp; Consistency</b>	Regular in classes and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Peer Interaction</b>	Works well in groups, helps others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Feedback &amp; Suggestions</b>	Provides ideas and opinions for improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The above table can be used as a checklist or rating system for assessing student participation and interest levels.

**Findings of the Study**

11. **Disparities in Physical Education Implementation:** While physical education is included in school curriculums across North Eastern India, its implementation varies significantly. Urban schools have better infrastructure, while rural areas struggle with inadequate facilities and a shortage of trained PE teachers. Government initiatives like *Khelo India* and the *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020* provide opportunities for improvement, but execution remains inconsistent.
12. **Impact of Government Policies on Sports Development:** Various government schemes, such as *Khelo India*, *Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)*, and *North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS)*, have positively impacted the sports sector in the North East. However, ineffective policy execution, bureaucratic challenges, and financial constraints hinder the full potential of these programs, limiting benefits for aspiring athletes.
13. **Persistent Challenges in the Sports Sector:** Key obstacles include inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified coaches, financial limitations, and gender disparity in sports. Additionally, political and bureaucratic hurdles prevent efficient resource allocation. Addressing these issues through better funding, transparent governance and increased private-sector participation is crucial for long-term sports development.
14. **Varied Levels of Student Participation and Interest:** While many students show enthusiasm for sports and traditional games, academic pressure and a lack of awareness limit participation. Classroom engagement and extracurricular involvement vary, with rural schools facing more challenges in promoting sports activities. Structured assessment methods, such as surveys and participation records, can help identify gaps and improve student engagement strategies.

## Conclusion

The study highlights the current state of physical education and sports development in North Eastern India, revealing a mix of progress and persistent challenges. While there is a strong cultural inclination toward sports and fitness, infrastructural limitations, a lack of standardized PE implementation, and inadequate funding hinder growth. Government policies and initiatives such as *Khelo India* and *TOPS* have positively influenced sports in the region, but bureaucratic inefficiencies and execution gaps limit their impact. Additionally, student participation in sports varies across urban and rural areas, with academic pressure and limited resources acting as barriers. Addressing these issues through improved infrastructure, trained personnel and policy execution can significantly enhance the sports ecosystem in the North East.

## Discussion

The review of related literature provides a comprehensive background on the role of government policies, physical education and infrastructural challenges in sports development, particularly in North Eastern India. The findings of the study align with the existing research, reinforcing the idea that while government initiatives have contributed to sports development, several challenges persist that hinder their full implementation and impact.

Bandyopadhyay (2016) highlighted the inefficiencies in policy execution and the disparities between urban and rural sports development. This aligns with the study's findings that, despite the presence of policies like Khelo India and NESIDS, rural areas continue to struggle with inadequate infrastructure and financial constraints. The gap between policy formulation and execution remains a critical issue, necessitating better governance and targeted interventions to ensure equitable sports development.

Das & Roy (2018) emphasized the significance of integrating physical education into school curriculums and its benefits for youth engagement. The study's findings support this claim, demonstrating that while physical education is part of school programs, its implementation is inconsistent, particularly in rural schools. The lack of trained educators and insufficient sports facilities are major obstacles that need to be addressed to enhance student participation in sports.

Sharma (2020) focused on the challenges faced by North Eastern athletes, particularly in accessing professional coaching and financial support. The study findings corroborate this, as athletes from the region still struggle with limited infrastructure, inadequate funding, and recognition. This reinforces the need for policy reforms that ensure effective distribution of resources and support mechanisms tailored to the unique needs of athletes from underprivileged backgrounds.

The Government of India Sports Policy Report (2021) acknowledged both progress and existing gaps in sports development across different states. The study findings further emphasize this point by highlighting that while government schemes have had a positive impact, bureaucratic challenges and financial limitations continue to restrict their effectiveness. Addressing these barriers requires improved coordination among stakeholders, transparent funding mechanisms, and increased private-sector involvement.

A key issue identified in the study is the varied level of student participation in sports. While enthusiasm exists, factors such as academic pressure, lack of awareness and societal perceptions regarding sports careers hinder engagement. This is in line with previous research

that suggests the need for structured assessment methods and targeted awareness campaigns to promote sports as a viable career option.

Overall, the discussion underscores the importance of strengthening policy implementation, improving infrastructure, and fostering a culture that values sports education. By addressing these challenges through systematic interventions, transparent governance and enhanced stakeholder collaboration, sports development in North Eastern India can be significantly improved.

### **Recommendations**

13. Increase investment in rural and semi-urban areas to develop sports infrastructure, ensuring equitable access to facilities.
14. Establish more training academies and specialized sports science centers to support athlete development and injury management.
15. Improve policy execution by ensuring transparent fund allocation and regular monitoring of sports development programs.
16. Promote public-private partnerships to boost financial support for grassroots sports and athlete training.
17. Integrate structured sports education and awareness campaigns in schools to encourage participation from an early age.
18. Organize inter-school and community-level competitions, particularly in indigenous sports, to promote engagement and preserve traditional sporting culture.

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