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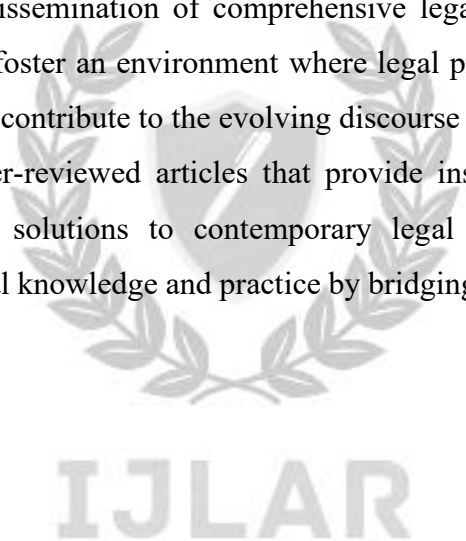
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Introduction

Welcome to the Indian Journal of Legal Affairs and Research (IJLAR), a distinguished platform dedicated to the dissemination of comprehensive legal scholarship and academic research. Our mission is to foster an environment where legal professionals, academics, and students can collaborate and contribute to the evolving discourse in the field of law. We strive to publish high-quality, peer-reviewed articles that provide insightful analysis, innovative perspectives, and practical solutions to contemporary legal challenges. The IJAR is committed to advancing legal knowledge and practice by bridging the gap between theory and practice.



Preface

The Indian Journal of Legal Affairs and Research is a testament to our unwavering commitment to excellence in legal scholarship. This volume presents a curated selection of articles that reflect the diverse and dynamic nature of legal studies today. Our contributors, ranging from esteemed legal scholars to emerging academics, bring forward a rich tapestry of insights that address critical legal issues and offer novel contributions to the field. We are grateful to our editorial board, reviewers, and authors for their dedication and hard work, which have made this publication possible. It is our hope that this journal will serve as a valuable resource for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, and will inspire further inquiry and debate within the legal community.

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Description

The Indian Journal of Legal Affairs and Research is an academic journal that publishes peer-reviewed articles on a wide range of legal topics. Each issue is designed to provide a platform for legal scholars, practitioners, and students to share their research findings, theoretical explorations, and practical insights. Our journal covers various branches of law, including but not limited to constitutional law, international law, criminal law, commercial law, human rights, and environmental law. We are dedicated to ensuring that the articles published in our journal adhere to the highest standards of academic rigor and contribute meaningfully to the understanding and development of legal theories and practices.

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STATUTORY SPORTS GOVERNANCE IN INDIA: EVALUATING THE NATIONAL SPORTS GOVERNANCE ACT, 2025 IN LIGHT OF INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

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Abstract:

The governance of sports in India has historically been regulated through executive policies, administrative guidelines, and judicial interventions rather than a comprehensive statutory framework. The National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 aimed to increase transparency and accountability in the functioning and governance of the National Sports Federations (NSFs), however, due to its non-statutory nature, it did not have a strong enforceability or compliance. The issues of political interference, governance problems, financial irregularities, unclear election procedures, poor athlete representation, and poor dispute resolution were recurring concerns, demanding legislative action. The National Sports Governance Act, 2025 is a landmark legislation towards the statutory regulation of sports governance in India. This paper also critically analyses the provisions of the Act against the backdrop of the principles of good governance recommended by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF), the Council of Europe and governance systems used by states like the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. Using the doctrinal and comparative legal research approach, the study analyzes the institutional architecture, governance mechanisms, transparency requirements, accountability requirements, athlete participation, ethical protection and the dispute resolution mechanism of the Act. The paper makes the point that the Act creates sound basis for good governance but it will be dependent on independent implementation, institutional capacity and continued adherence to the Act by sport organizations. It ends with legal and policy suggestions to further improve the transparency, institutional autonomy, democratic governance and athlete-centric administration in Indian sports.

Keywords: Sports Governance, National Sports Governance Act, 2025, Good Governance, Sports Law, Athlete Rights, Transparency, Accountability, National Sports Federations, Comparative Law.

Introduction:

Sport has gone beyond being a pastime and is now a powerful social, economic, political and legal force impacting on national development, public health, foreign relations and economic growth. Sports governance has become an area of significant public policy and legal regulation due to the commercialization of sport, expansion of sport broadcasting rights, the professionalization of sport and the growth of public investment in sport. In consequence, legislative and institutional tools have been increasingly embraced by governments around the world to promote transparency, accountability, integrity and democratic governance in sports organizations (Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2013). The sports governance in India, till now, had been governed by executive policies, government policies, judicial interventions, and the National Sports Development Code of India, 2011. These instruments have brought in concepts of governance like age-limit, tenure restrictions, public elections, financial accountability, but they are not statutory instruments. Consequently, there have been persistent allegations of political involvement, over-saturation of power, failures in governance, financial mismanagement, conflict of interest and poor athlete representation against many National Sports Federations (National Sports Federations [NSF] Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports [MYAS], 2011). The Supreme Court of India, in its various judgments, has stressed on the need for institutional reforms in the sports administration. The institutional governance issues in sports, particularly cricket administration, drew attention to the need for transparency, accountability, and ethical governance in sports organizations. These efforts, however, were not sufficiently supported by a comprehensive statutory framework, which meant that governance reforms were not effectively implemented. To address these challenges, the Government of India introduced the National Sports Governance Act, 2025, which aims to outline a legally binding framework for the administration of sports. The Act aims to establish good governance through the establishment of statutory guidelines on issues of democratic elections, athlete representation, ethics, transparency, financial accountability, regulation of conflicts of interest, grievance redressal, and dispute resolution. It also seeks to strike a balance between the autonomy of sports organisations and adequate governance by the State, in accordance with internationally agreed governance standards. International sport has made a

significant shift towards sport governance built on transparency, accountability, institutional independence, participation and integrity. There are principles of governance developed by various organisations that have the objective of responsible sports governance, such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Council of Europe and the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF). There are a number of countries that have embraced governance codes, such as in the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada, which focus on the following principles: independence of the Board, financial transparency, athlete wellness and ethical compliance (Geeraert, 2018; IOC, 2021). In this context, the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 is a watershed moment that could help modernize Indian sports governance and bring in international best practices in the field. But there are concerns about the effectiveness of the Act in tackling entrenched governance issues, safeguarding institutional autonomy, guaranteeing opportunities for athletes and improving accountability frameworks. The study examines, in a critical fashion, the National Sports Governance Act 2025 from a legal perspective, an institutional perspective, a governance perspective and an implementation perspective. The paper explores and contrasts the Act with some of the universally recognised principles of good governance and evaluates its ability to meet the requirements of good governance including transparency, accountability, democratic governance and athlete-centred administration, whilst maintaining autonomy of sports organisations.

Research Objectives

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the evolution of sports governance in India leading to the enactment of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025.
2. To analyze the legal and institutional framework established under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the Act in promoting transparency, accountability, ethical governance, and athlete representation within sports organizations.
4. To compare India's statutory sports governance framework with international best practices adopted by the IOC, ASOIF, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada.
5. To identify the legal and administrative challenges associated with implementing the National Sports Governance Act, 2025.
6. To propose legal and policy recommendations for strengthening sports governance in India.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What governance challenges necessitated the enactment of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025?
2. To what extent does the Act strengthen transparency, accountability, and democratic governance in Indian sports?
3. Does the Act adequately safeguard athlete participation and institutional autonomy while ensuring regulatory oversight?
4. How does India's statutory sports governance framework compare with internationally accepted governance standards?
5. What legal and institutional challenges may affect the effective implementation of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025?
6. What reforms are necessary to further improve sports governance in India?

Review of Literature:

The commercialization, professionalization and globalisation of sport has led to the concept of governance becoming a major issue in modern sporting administration. Today, sport organisations are not only responsible for the organisation of sports events, but they also operate large budgets, negotiate broadcasting and sponsorship contracts, take care of the athletes' welfare, monitor the disciplinary system and communicate with governments and international organisations. As a result, it has been suggested that the principles of public administration, corporate governance and administrative law should be used to critically examine sports governance in addition to the organizational management approach (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007).

Concept of Sports Governance

The term sports governance is used to describe the organizational, institutional, policy and system setting through which sports organizations are managed, regulated and accountable. Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) state that governance is concerned with the processes in which sporting organisations establish policy, allocate resources, track performance and provide accountability to stakeholders. They have focussed on the different aspects of governance, which go beyond administration and involve transparency, democratic participation, ethical behavior, representation of stakeholders and institutional legitimacy.

Henry and Lee (2004) present another multi-dimensional understanding of sports governance, as it comprises public institutions, sport federations, sports participants, commercial interests and civil society institutions. They believe that good governance is a balance between accountability and autonomy, especially in the case of sports bodies where they are receiving government funding or have regulatory powers. The analysis they have done has been of great impact on subsequent scholarship because it has emphasised the hybrid nature of sports governance, in which private associations are required to undertake public functions.

A similar definition of sports governance is provided by Geeraert (2018), who defines it as the governance in sports organizations that is guided by the principles of accountability, participation, transparency, integrity and effectiveness. He believes governance shortcomings have not only an impact on the credibility of institutions, but also have a direct influence on athlete welfare, public confidence and competitiveness.

Taken together, these studies have resolved that governance has become more than a managerial topic; it is a legal and institutional issue that must be accompanied by enforceable standards and regulatory mechanisms.

Good Governance in Sports

In the past 20 years, the body of literature on good governance has grown significantly. Theories of public administration and corporate governance have suggested that good governance in sport consists of the following six elements: transparency, accountability, democracy, participation, effectiveness, ethical behavior, and respect for the rule of law.

Chappelet and Mrkonjic (2013) created one of the first systematic frameworks for evaluating the quality of governance in sport organizations – Basic Indicators for Better Governance in International Sport (BIBGIS). The framework sets out seven key aspects of governance:

- Transparency
- Democracy
- Internal accountability
- External accountability
- Societal responsibility
- Control mechanisms
- Integrity

The BIBGIS model has since been adopted as a standard to assess the governance of international sports federations and national sports bodies. Significantly, the authors insist on

measuring the quality of the governance not only on the basis of outputs of an organization, but by the presence of institutional safeguards to limit corruption, conflicts of interest, and misuse of power.

On this basis, Geeraert (2015; 2018) developed a tool for assessing governance, which is specifically focused on national sports federations (NSF), known as the National Sports Governance Observer (NSGO). The NSGO evaluates the level of governance on four main areas:

- Transparency
- Democratic processes
- Checks and balances
- Social responsibility

The NSGO is different from previous descriptive studies because it offers objective measures of governance indicators that allow comparison of sports organisations. Geeraert's research indicates that above-average governance structures tend to lead to more institutional stability, financial accountability, and trust from the public. They have come to be used as models for governments in the process of reforming sports administration legislation.

International Standards of Sports Governance

International organizations have been instrumental in fostering governance reforms within the sporting world. Throughout the years, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has always stressed upon that good governance is a fundamental condition for the credibility and legitimacy of sport. The IOC's Basic Universal Principles of Good Governance present several guiding principles, such as:

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Democratic elections
- Athlete participation
- Integrity
- Ethical leadership
- Financial responsibility
- Institutional independence

Good governance builds public trust and decreases corruption and administrative inefficiency (IOC, 2021).

In the same way, the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) carries out Governance Review Reports every so often, which assess international sports federations in line with governance indicators. The 2024 Governance Review also notes that there are several areas of concern, including the lack of athlete representation, lack of diversity, ethics and independent oversight (ASOIF, 2024).

The Council of Europe has also played a role in the promotion of governance changes as part of its recommendations on integrity and ethical administration in sport. The Council stresses that in order to be considered democratic, governance should be based on the active involvement of stakeholders, it should be open and transparent, institutional accountability mechanisms should be in place and mechanisms for the fight against corruption, and there should be effective, independent and robust disciplinary systems (Council of Europe, 2021).

Together, these international standards have influenced governance changes in many jurisdictions and are valuable comparators for assessing sports legislation at the national level.

Comparative Perspectives on Sports Governance

Comparative scholarship shows that the informal governance arrangements have been replaced by legally binding governance arrangements in many countries, over time.

The Code for Sports Governance, set out by UK Sport and Sport England, sets out mandatory governance requirements for organisations receiving public funding in the United Kingdom. These include the independence of the board, periodic audit on governance, risk management, financial disclosure and gender diversity. The government compliance system's association with public funding has significantly enhanced institutional accountability, according to scholars (UK Sport, 2021).

Sport Governance Australia, along with the Australian Sports Commission, have the Sport Governance Principles adopted by Australia. The principles focus on athlete protection, integrity, competency of the board, transparency of the organisation and safeguarding. Governance environment in national sporting organisations has improved significantly, as a result of research that has shown that Australia's governance framework has played a major role in reducing governance failure.

Likewise, the Sport Governance Code in Canada advocates the use of independent boards, ethical leadership, athlete-centred governance and robust dispute resolution processes. Canadian experts stress that governance reforms have provided greater confidence for stakeholders, while maintaining organizational independence.

The comparative experiences show that the statutory governance frameworks are increasingly supplanting voluntary governance codes, more specifically when governments give financial support to sports organisations.

Challenges in governance of Indian sport

Sports governance studies in India tend to remain narrowly channelled on the one hand towards the weaknesses in National Sports Federations (NSFs) and on the other hand towards the failures of the sport development system. Experts find that there are some common governance issues that repeatedly occur:

- Political interference
- Concentration of power
- Insufficient transparency in elections.
- Financial irregularities
- Weak accountability mechanisms
- Conflict of interest
- Inadequate athlete representation
- Ineffective grievance redressal

The Government's major step in enhancing governance was with the introduction of the National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 through executive guidelines. The Code made governance norms on:

- Age limits
- Tenure restrictions
- Democratic elections
- Financial accountability

The members of the National Sports Federations (NSFs) were recognized. The NSFs were recognized as members.

But, researchers claim that the Sports Code was not in a statutory format, so there were inconsistent enforcement issues. Disputes between sports organisations and governmental authorities were common, as many federations did not cooperate (MYAS, 2011).

Academic critique also argues that the Sports Code was more about discretion and judicial action than about independent regulatory bodies.

Judging's contribution to sports governance is explored.

The judicial judgements have played important roles in sports governance reforms in India.

The Supreme Court's involvement in sports administration is often referred to as a milestone in the process of governance reform. The Court repeatedly emphasized transparency, institutional accountability, democratic governance and ethical administration.

The recommendations made after the Lodha Committee looked into the administration of cricket led to a wide discussion on the governance standards to be followed in all sports federations. Some scholars suggest that judicial supervision has revealed structural governance gaps but was not able to replace a more extensive legislative change.

There were therefore several commentators who called for the passage of statutory legislation that would create enforceable standards of governance that would apply to all recognised sporting organisations.

Athlete-Centered Governance

Participation of athletes in governance is increasingly recognized as a key pillar of democratic sports governance in recent governance literature.

The IOC (2021) strongly recommends that athletes play a meaningful role in sports decision making, asserting that athletes are the sport's main stakeholders.

But Geeraert (2018) states in a similar manner that the representation of athletes would enhance the quality of governance by increasing its legitimacy, transparency and responsiveness to policy.

Organisations with athlete commissions have been found to have greater governance performance than organisations that have no athlete commission and solely rely on administrative decision making (ASOIF, 2024).

But the researchers find that within India, people who are athletes have limited participation in governance and the decision-making is dominated by administrators and elected office bearers in general. This governance gap has led to a growing call for change from the athlete's perspective.

Transparency, Ethics, and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are still among the most widely-studied areas in sports governance.

Parent and Hoye (2018) suggested that transparency is the basis for organizational legitimacy

as it allows stakeholders to assess the governance objectively.

The key governance mechanisms identified are always financial disclosure, conflict-of-interest policies, ethical codes, independent auditing and public reporting.

Likewise, ethics literature highlights that the lack of rules is a common cause of ethical failures in governance, but so is the failure to implement the rules effectively and the lack of institutional independence.

Legal enforceable ethics frameworks with independent disciplinary institutions are more and more being advocated by scholars in place of voluntary codes of conduct.

Rising Trends in Sports Governance

The literature has shown that sports governance is developing in ways that go beyond traditional administrative issues.

Emerging research increasingly addresses:

- AI for Sports Management
- Data security and privacy for athletes' biometric information.
- Safe Sport policies
- Gender equality
- Mental health governance
- Digital governance
- Sustainability
- Environmental responsibility
- Human rights compliance

The changes demonstrate the nature of sports organisations' roles in today's society and the importance of a broad-based statutory framework.

Research Gap

An analysis of the existing literature indicates that there is a considerable amount of scholarly research on the definition of good governance, governance assessment tools, transparency, accountability, and institutional changes in sports governance. International research has resulted in widely accepted governance indicators and comparative frameworks across sports law and governance scholarship that are now well established. Likewise, the issues with governance in National Sports Federations and the constraints of the National Sports Development Code, 2011 have been extensively explored in Indian literature. Yet, there is a

huge disparity on the issue of National Sports Governance Act, 2025. The recent adoption of this statute has been accompanied by a relatively small amount of scholarship and has been descriptive, rather than critical, in nature, focusing on summarizing the statutory provisions and not on discerning their legal effectiveness. The Act lacks in-depth research to assess its effectiveness in solving long-standing governance issues like institutional accountability, democratic governance, athlete representation, transparency, and the regulation of conflicts of interest, as well as independent dispute resolution. Moreover, there has been a lack of research on the comparison of the Act to the internationally recognised governance principles and practices of the IOC, the ASOIF and the Council of Europe, as well as the governance models of other jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. This study aims at filling these gaps by engaging in a doctrinal and comparative legal analysis of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025. It compares the Act with international good practices and examines its potential to promote transparency, accountability, ethical governance and administration focused on athletes in India. The study also adds to the growing literature around statutory sports governance and suggests evidence-based recommendations to enhance the implementation of India's sports governance system and its future development.

Suggestions

- Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are put forward:
- Implement an independent Sports Governance Commission to oversee adherence to Sports Governance standards.
- Increase athlete representation and ensure that the athlete commissions are elected at all recognised National Sports Federations.
- Consider mandating annual governance audits and transparency of governance audits.
- Improve conflict-of-interest provisions with the help of independent ethics committees and asset declarations by office bearers.
- Establish a shared digital financial reporting, election and compliance monitoring hub.
- Enhance the protection of whistleblowers to promote reporting of corruption, harassment and violations of governance.
- Ensure for the National Sports Tribunal institutional independence and access to it by the simplified mechanism of solving conflicts.
- Support gender equality and diversity through minimum gender quotas for governing bodies.

- Ensure that domestic governance rules are consistent with the changing international standards and not restrict the autonomy of sports organisations.
- Set up regular statutory audits of the Act to deal with new governance issues and adopt international best practices.

The National Sports Governance Act, 2025 (NSGA 2025) is one of the most significant steps taken in the journey of sports law and governance in India. The governance of Indian sport was largely governed by executive policies, administrative guidelines, and judicial interventions, most recently the National Sports Development Code of India, 2011. Although these measures incorporated new governance principles (i.e. restriction on tenure of office, age limits, financial accountability, and democratic elections), they were not supported by legislation, and hence were not effectively implemented by the National Sports Federations (NSFs). Due to the lack of a comprehensive legislative framework, governance issues often included lack of political will, lack of accountability, financial mismanagement, conflicts of interest, inadequate representation of athletes, lack of grievance redressal systems, etc. These issues not only shook the trust of the sports institutions among the people but also impacted India's capacity to then create a sports governance mechanism that is in line with international standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability.

In this background, the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 represents a paradigm shift, replacing the current uncoordinated, policy-driven regulatory framework with a holistic statutory framework for sports governance. This is a groundbreaking Executive instrument because, among other things, it gives governance standards a legal basis for enforcement, outlines institutional arrangements to ensure adherence to standards, establishes mechanisms to observe and monitor ethical behavior, introduces new rules on elections and athlete welfare, and offers a dispute resolution system. The law marks a shift from voluntary compliance to legal requirements, and reinforces the principle of the rule of law in sports governance. It aims to embed universally accepted principles of good governance, such as transparency, accountability, democratic participation, fairness, integrity, inclusiveness and professionalism. The Act seeks to further increase the credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness of sports institutions throughout the country by incorporating those principles into statutory provisions. One of the key features of the Act is its commitment to transparency and accountability as core values of sport administration. Transparent governance eases the flow of information and allows for informed participation by athletes, stakeholders, sponsors and the public on issues of financial management, governance structures, election processes, policy decisions, and

organizational performance. Likewise, mechanisms of accountability place clear responsibilities on office bearers and administrators, minimizing opportunities for corruption, abuse of authority, and arbitrary decision-making. Legally binding governance standards have the potential to help to enhance institutional discipline, foster ethical leadership and boost stakeholder trust in the governance of sports organisations.

The Act also captures a growing understanding of the role of athletes as key stakeholders in sports governance. In a typical sports federation in India, very little space is given to the athletes to participate in the governance of the institution and it is dominated by administrators. Incorporation of provisions covering athlete representation reflects a positive trend towards athlete-focused governance, which is in line with good international practice recommended by international bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF). The meaningful involvement of athletes should increase the legitimacy of the institution, increase policy responsiveness and make sure that policy decisions are in alignment with the interests and welfare of athletes.

Additionally, the introduction of a structured mechanism for oversight and specialist dispute resolution processes in the Act is a major step forward on governance dispute resolution in an efficient and impartial manner. The grievance redressal and independent adjudicatory systems are deeply intertwined with sports governance and play a pivotal role in sports, especially in elections, disciplinary enforcement, eligibility, ethical issues and administrative conflicts. The Act establishes mechanisms for resolving disputes, aiming to minimize the length of litigation and boost trust in equality and uniformity of governance procedures.

Even with these major pieces of legislation, a statutory framework cannot ensure good governance. The success of the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 will greatly rely on the competence, independence and resourcefulness of the institutions of implementation. Experience of governance reform elsewhere has shown that the most extensive legislation can be ineffective at achieving the desired targets if there are insufficient means to enforce it, inadequate institutional autonomy of the regulatory bodies, or political interference in administration. Thus, impartial implementation, regular monitoring, transparent implementation and continuous institutional capacity building are essential for the Act to be effective.

The amount of financial, technological and administrative resources is a second important criteria for the success of the Act. It takes more than laws to have effective governance: it takes well-trained staff, new digital governance systems, independent auditing processes and

efficient compliance monitoring for this to be the case. The National Sports Federations and the sports regulatory authorities need to be sufficiently resourced to implement the reforms in the governance, accurate financial reporting, transparent elections, athlete welfare and compliance with statutory obligations. Capacity building programmes, governance training, and technological upgrades will therefore be essential in bringing the law into effect.

As crucial is sports organizations' commitment to establish an ethical governance culture, not just one where it complies with the law or the rules. Institutional commitment for transparency, integrity, professionalism and accountability at all levels of the sports administration is needed for sustainable governance reforms. Ethical leadership, responsible decision making and involving stakeholders needs to be part of the culture. In this sense, continuity of education, awareness programmes on governance, codes of ethics and leadership development programmes may assist legislation to create compliance to high standards of governance in a complementary manner.

The governmental control and autonomy of sports organisations also need to be managed carefully as regards the implementation of the Act. Public accountability is required, but may conflict with the autonomy of sport organisations prescribed by international sport organisations such as the IOC and FIFA, which have generally said that it is not acceptable for governments to interfere in the internal affairs of sport federations. All the while, the lack of regulatory control over an organization might create governance failure and erode public confidence. It is therefore a challenge to develop a governance system that enables sports organisations to be independent while ensuring that statutory obligations for transparency, accountability and ethical management of sports organisations is maintained. Balancing these will be key for India's credibility in the international sporting world and the interest of players and the people. The National Sports Governance Act 2025 offers a positive legal framework for governance reform when compared with international best practices. However, ongoing policy development and regular legislative review, as well as meaningful stakeholder engagement, especially from athletes, will be required to make sustainable improvements. The Act, when implemented effectively, could shape Indian sports governance to become transparent, accountable, and athlete-centric and very much enable the development and enhancement of excellence, integrity and competitiveness in India.

Looking ahead, the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 should be viewed as the foundation rather than the culmination of governance reform in Indian sports. Sports continues to evolve with the introduction of new technologies, commercial pressures, digital governance, artificial

intelligence, athlete data protection and safeguarding and new and emerging issues of integrity that are regularly reviewed in terms of the changes to legislation and policy. For the governance system to remain relevant and responsive to new challenges, it is essential that the implementation of the Act be evaluated and international best practices be adopted and incorporated; that the Act be actively engaged by athletes, sports administrators, legal experts and civil society at large.

Lastly, the National Sports Governance Act, 2025 is poised to be a game-changer legislation in sports governance of India with the promise of modernizing the governance of sports in India in a transparent, legally binding, accountable and a modern way. It emphasizes democratic management, ethical leadership, institutional integrity, athlete participation, and effective dispute resolution, aligning with the internationally accepted standards for good governance in sports. It's concentrating on democratic governance, ethical leadership, institutional integrity, athlete engagement and effective dispute resolution, all of which are considered good governance practices in sport. However, the effect of the Act will be assessed not only by the substance of this legislation, but by the effectiveness in its implementation, the independence of its institutions and by the willingness of all stakeholders to adhere to the spirit of transparency, accountability, fairness and integrity. If implemented with institutional changes, the Act can act as a powerful tool to develop trust among the people, enhance the reputation of India in sports and create a strong governance framework to ensure sustainable excellence in sports governance.

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