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Union Budget for Indian Sports: A 10-Year Analysis

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Introduction

Sports are a huge part of India's culture and can unite people. They can also keep young people active, bring honor to our country, and showcase India's talent to the world. The Indian government understands the contributions of sports to the culture and to the health of the nation, and gives money every year through the union budget to build sports facilities, train athletes, support provincial sports programs, and host major sporting events.

The purpose of this report is to analyze how much money was allocated from the Indian government to sports from 2015 to 2025. It will also describe how this funding was used, the challenges facing sports in India, and how it could be done better. It aims to make understandable the volume of resources allocated to sports and its significance from a sports budget perspective.

Sports Budget Trends: 2015-2025

1. Each year Record:

Over the past decade, the sports budget in India has shown a substantial rise, growing from ₹1,541.13 crore in 2015–16 to approximately ₹3,442.32 crore in 2024–25, representing a more than 120% increase. Despite this consistent growth, the allocation still hovers around 0.07% of GDP, well below the recommended target of 1–2% for sports development.

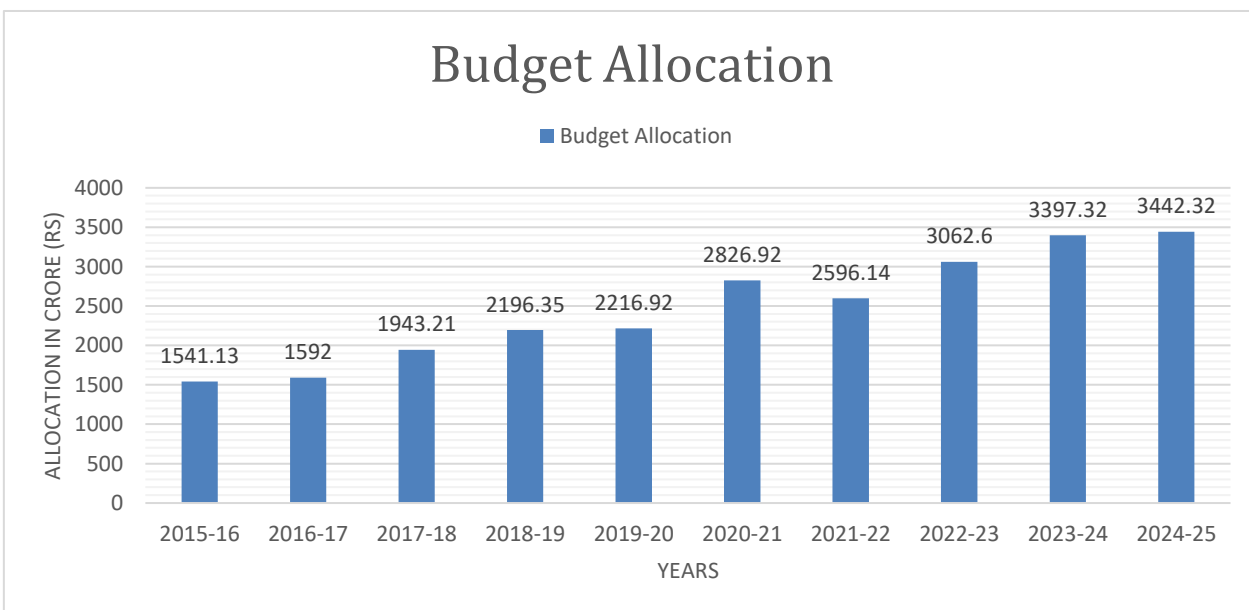
- **2015-2016: Approx 1541.13 crore Rs.**
 - Key allocations supported Sports Authority of India (₹369.39 crore), National Sports Federations (₹185 crore), and youth programs like Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (₹154.67 crore).
- **2016-2017: Approx 1592.00 crore Rs.**
 - Major funding supported Sports Authority of India (₹416.3 crore), Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram (₹397.1 crore), and Khelo India (₹215.7 crore) for sports infrastructure and youth programs.
- **2017-2018: Approx 1943.21 crore Rs.**

- Key funding went to Khelo India (₹360 crore), Assistance to Promotion of Sports Excellence (₹320.18 crore), and Sports Authority of India (₹481 crore).
- **2018-2019: Approx 2196.35 crore Rs.**
 - Key funding supported Khelo India (₹575.59 crore), Assistance to Promotion of Sports Excellence (₹347 crore), and Sports Authority of India (₹429.56 crore).
- **2019-2020: Approx 2216.92 crore Rs.**
 - Major funding supported Khelo India (₹1,015.42 crore), Assistance to Promotion of Sports Excellence (₹250 crore), and Sports Authority of India (₹500 crore).
- **2020-2021: Approx 2826.92 crore Rs.**
 - Key allocations supported Sports Authority of India (₹369.39 crore), National Sports Federations (₹185 crore), and youth programs like Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (₹154.67 crore).
- **2021-2022: Approx 2596.14 crore Rs.**
 - Major funding supported Khelo India (₹737.71 crore), Assistance to Promotion of Sports Excellence (₹283.80 crore), and Sports Authority of India (₹660.41 crore).
- **2022-2023: Approx 3062.60 crore Rs.**
 - Major funding supported Khelo India (₹1,054 crore), Assistance to Promotion of Sports Excellence (₹284 crore), and Sports Authority of India (₹653 crore).
- **2023-2024: Approx 3397.32 crore Rs.**
 - Major funding supported Khelo India (₹1,045 crore), Assistance to National Sports Federations (₹325 crore), and Sports Authority of India (₹785.52 crore).
- **2024-2025: Approx 3442.32 crore Rs.**
 - Major funding supported Khelo India (₹900 crore), Assistance to National Sports Federations (₹340 crore), and Sports Authority of India (₹822.60 crore).

2. Key Trends:

- **Slow but Steady Growth:**
 - The sports budget has doubled in 10 years — from ₹1,541 crore in 2015-16 to ₹3,442 crore in 2024-25. It didn't grow suddenly but increased bit by bit every year.
- **Khelo India Became the Star:**
 - Khelo India got **more and more money** over the years. It started small but now gets **the biggest share** in the sports budget, showing how important the program has become.

- **More Money for Players and Events:**
 - In the early years, most money went to offices and management. Now, more is spent **on training players, hosting events, and building sports facilities.**
- **Focus on Youth and Fitness:**
 - Every year, some money goes to programs for the youth, like Nehru Yuva Kendra. This shows the government also sees **sports as a way to build confidence and discipline in young people.**
- **Budget Stayed Strong During COVID:**
 - Even when other sectors saw cuts during the pandemic, **sports funding stayed strong.** This shows the government sees it as **an important part of health and recovery.**



3. Budget Evolution in Three waves

- **Wave 1: Building the Base (2015-16 to 2019-20)**
 - Initial years focused on setting up institutional frameworks. Funding remained modest but steadily rose from ₹1,541 crore to ₹2,216 crore, signaling a foundational push via SAI and early Khelo India investments. The aim was to **build capacity and create a sports ecosystem** rather than chase medals.

YEAR	BUDGET ALLOCATION	KEY FEATURE
2015-16	1541.13 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Sports Authority of India (SAI) and youth programs like Nehru Yuva Kendra.
2016-17	1592.00 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More funds for SAI and new schemes like Khelo

		India.
2017-18	1943.21 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for sports excellence programs and better training.
2018-19	2196.35 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong focus on Khelo India, with higher budget.
2019-20	2216.92 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big push to Khelo India with over ₹1,000 crore.

- **Wave 2: Crisis and Continuity (2020-2022)**

- COVID-19 challenged the momentum, yet sports budgets didn't collapse. While healthcare dominated spending priorities, allocations stayed stable. The government ensured program stability, especially for Khelo India, reflecting its strategic value even during crises.

YEAR	BUDGET ALLOCATION	KEY FEATURES
2020-21	2826.92 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even during the pandemic, sports funding increased.
2021-22	2596.14 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More budget for Khelo India and sports training centers.

- **Wave 3: Scaling with Purpose (2022-2025)**

- Marked by sharp increases (₹3,062 crore to ₹3,442 crore), this phase reflects intentional growth. High investment in Khelo India and national federations points to a focus on both grassroots and elite development, indicating sports is now central to policy, not peripheral.

YEAR	BUDGET ALLOCATION	KEY FEATURES
2022-23	3062.60 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big rise in budget, with strong support to national federations.
2023-24	3397.32 crore Rs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding increased again for Khelo India, SAI, and athlete support.

Challenges:

Even though India is spending more money on sports than before, there are still some problems. The amount of money spent is only about 0.07% of the country's total income (GDP), which is much less than what is needed. Many rural areas still don't have good playgrounds, training centers, or proper coaches. Some sports that are not very popular don't get enough support. Also, some plans are delayed or not followed properly in different states.

Future Outlook:

In the future, India needs to spend more money on sports and use that money wisely. We should build better sports facilities in villages and towns, find young talent early, and give athletes everything they need—like good food, medical care, and mental support. Programs like Khelo India should continue strongly. Also, state governments, private companies, and international groups should work together to improve sports in India.

Conclusion:

In the last 10 years, India has shown great interest in sports by increasing the sports budget. Programs like Khelo India have helped many young athletes. But to win more medals and become a top sports country, India still needs to fix some basic problems. With the right planning and teamwork, Indian sports can achieve great success in the future.

References:

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