

ACHIEVING SPORTS EXCELLENCE THROUGH 'KHELO INDIA' SCHEME, CHURU. (RAJASTHAN)

In a nutshell: Churu has carved out a place for itself as the nursery of sports in Rajasthan. In the past few years, the district has grown by leaps and bounds, both in terms of the availability of sports facilities as well as achievements earned by its sportspersons.

Nodal agency: Sports Department and District Sports Council, Government of Rajasthan

In the past few years, Churu district in Rajasthan has grown by leaps and bounds, both in terms of the availability of sports facilities as well as achievements earned by its sportspersons. The district administration has undertaken several efforts to build and augment sports infrastructure across multiple disciplines. As part of a three - tiered development effort, the focus has been to set up sports facilities at district, block and gram panchayat level.

- Firstly, a centre of excellence for multiple disciplines at the district level has been created.
- Secondly, multiple sporting centres have been operationalized at different blocks, which are being run both in government as well as private facilities, so there is comprehensive convergence of efforts of various stakeholders.
- Thirdly, the district has consistently improved its infrastructure, not just at the elite centres level, but also at the grassroots. This has been done using funds in convergence from various schemes such as NREGA, MPLAD, MLA LAD, SFC/FFC and through public contribution.

It has been a focus area of Khelo India to promote rural and tribal games such as kabaddi, archery etc. to enable a far greater segment of population to attain fitness by engaging themselves in their traditional sports.

Under this scheme, athletes are provided accommodation within the stadium at a nominal fee per month. This comes with the obvious advantage of letting the athlete focus exclusively on their sport by allowing them to stay on site and being in continuous touch with the coach. The efficacy of the scheme can be judged from the fact that it has not just attracted talent from within the district, but from other districts and even from outside the State as well. The initiative receives regular funding from the Khelo India scheme, private academies, and the district sports council.

Impact

- Sporting achievements – The achievements in terms of medals and participation in national level competitions are proof of the fact that Churu is punching above its weight.
- Sport for peace and development – It is a truism that sport is an antidote for a lot of societal evils such as substance abuse. Churu lies in a vulnerable pocket as its neighbouring districts of Ganganagar and Hanumangarh are battling the menace of drugs. Significantly, while the number of cases in Hanumangarh and Ganganagar have continued to rise and have reached 230 and 309 respectively in 2021; the number of cases in Churu has stabilized and shows a declining trend at 76 cases in 2021.
- The sporting culture has also led to the emergence of Churu as a cradle for the armed forces as every village boasts of sending multiple youth to the armed forces every year.

Awards and recognition

The initiative received the PM Award, 2021 in Promoting excellence in Sports and Wellness through “Khelo India” scheme.

Scale-up

The district organized 11 Aakashwani programmes with important personalities. To serve as inspiration for the youth, sports personalities like, Khel Ratna awardee Sh. Devendra Jhajharia, CWG Gold medalist Smt. Krishna Poonia as well as two Dronacharya Awardees (Sh. Virender Poonia and Sh. Anoop Kumar) from the district are sources of encouragement to the youth of the district. With this aim to increase the reach of sports, an idea of rural Olympics was conceived. Even though it could not be held due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the initiative garnered attention and witnessed the registration of over 65,000 participants for the same.



Sports facilities at Churu