

Kurukshetra

February 2026 Edition



Welcome to PadhAI

KURUKSHETRA MONTHLY COVERAGE

You are here because you understand a fundamental truth of UPSC preparation: ***it's not about reading everything – it's about reading what truly matters, in the right way, at the right time.***

Magazines like Kurukshetra offer deep insights into rural development, governance, social schemes, and grassroots policy implementation. Yet for many aspirants, the challenge lies in separating exam-relevant content from general narratives.

PadhAI's Kurukshetra coverage is designed to do exactly that - ***filter, structure, and align policy discussions with UPSC requirements.***

Why This Kurukshetra Coverage Matters

At PadhAI, we don't reproduce articles. We ***extract core themes***, map them with the syllabus, and connect them with ***Prelims and Mains PYQs***.

Every topic included here:

- carries relevance for ***GS Papers or Essay***,
- strengthens understanding of ***developmental and governance issues, and***
- builds ***analytical depth*** rather than surface-level knowledge.

Nothing is added for volume.

Everything is added for value.

Part of the PadhAI Preparation Ecosystem

This Kurukshetra coverage forms part of a larger, integrated learning system that includes:

- early and concise ***monthly magazines***,
- ***daily PIB summaries*** with exam-focused clarity,
- ***monthly compliance tracking***,
- complete ***Prelims & Mains PYQs with structured answers***,
- relevant ***news article summaries***, and
- ***personal tutor chat support*** for continuous guidance.

The aim is simple:

one trusted ecosystem instead of multiple scattered sources.

Our Guiding Philosophy

At PadhAI, everything is built around one belief:

- *Learn only what matters.*
- *Learn it the right way.*
- *Learn it at the right time.*

We don't believe in shortcuts.

We believe in clarity, consistency, and cumulative preparation.

A Final Note

UPSC preparation is demanding and often overwhelming.

PadhAI exists to ensure you prepare with ***direction, relevance, and confidence*** — never blindly, never alone.

If this **Kurukshetra** coverage helps you save time, connect policy with practice, and strengthen your answers, then it has served its purpose.

Welcome to PadhAI.

A community built to prepare — not to overwhelm.

Topic 1: Rural Sports Powering India@2047



Summary: Rural sports have transitioned from a recreational activity to a strategic driver of social transformation and national pride, aiming to position India among the world's top five sporting nations by 2047. Village fields and "akharas" are now recognized as the bedrock of India's sporting excellence, supplying the grit and resilience defined by the nation's elite athletes.

Background: Historically, sports were peripheral to rural development; however, they are now being used to address systemic challenges like substance abuse, youth distress migration, and social alienation. Policy shifts like the **Khelo Bharat Niti 2025** emphasize that excellence is not an urban monopoly, providing institutional support to raw talent at the "bottom of the pyramid."

Key Points:

- **Structured Policy Framework:** The National Sports Governance Act and Khelo Bharat Niti 2025 have created pathways from village-level play to international podiums, focusing on transparency and athlete-centric reforms.
- **Infrastructure Expansion:** Over **1,000 Khelo India Centres (KICs)** have been established across 750 districts to upgrade rural facilities like schools and panchayat grounds into high-performance training hubs.
- **Scientific Talent Identification:** The **KIRTI (Khelo India Rising Talent Identification)** program assesses children aged 9-18 in rural and tribal areas using parameters like speed, agility, and power to ensure talent is not lost due to geography.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- India is bidding to host the **2036 Olympic Games** and has successfully bid for the **2030 Commonwealth Games** in Ahmedabad.
- The **Special Area Games (SAG) Scheme** was launched by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to find talent in remote terrains like the North-East and Ladakh.

MCQ Practice: Q. Which scientific initiative has been launched to identify and assess sporting potential among children aged 9-18, particularly in rural and tribal regions? A) TOPS B) PYKKA C) KIRTI D) ASMITA
Answer: C (KIRTI uses digital platforms and data analytics for transparent, merit-based selection of young grassroots talent.)

Topic 2: Rural Women Redefining India's Sporting Glory



Summary: Driven by discipline and perseverance, rural women are transforming India's sporting landscape, with their participation in organized sports increasing more than **threefold since 2017**. Beyond winning medals, their rise is reshaping social attitudes toward girls' education, mobility, and professional ambition.

Background: For decades, girls in rural India faced deep-rooted social conservatism and financial hardships; today, they are supported by a growing ecosystem of visionary programs like **ASMITA** and gender-responsive infrastructure.

Key Points:

- **ASMITA League:** This nationwide women-only competitive ecosystem covers 27 disciplines (e.g., wrestling, kabaddi, archery) and involved over **53,000 athletes** during 2024-25.
- **Socio-Economic Impact:** Participation in sports is linked to **delayed early marriage**, improved reproductive health, and increased female labor force participation in rural areas.

- **Regional Powerhouses:** Specific rural belts have emerged as "nurseries" for excellence, such as **Sundergarh** (Odisha) for hockey and the **Rohtak-Sonipat** belt (Haryana) for wrestling and boxing.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- **Vandana Katariya** (from Roshanabad village) became the first Indian woman to score an Olympic hat-trick in hockey at Tokyo 2020.
- **Deep Grace Ekka**, an Arjuna Awardee from a tribal village in Odisha, rose from playing barefoot on mud grounds to becoming a top hockey defender.

MCQ Practice: Q. The "ASMITA" league, which is India's largest women-only sports league system, stands for: A) Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women Through Action B) Advanced Sports Mentorship and Inclusive Training Association C) Agri-Sports Management and Integrated Talent Academy D) Association for Social Movement in Tribal Athletics **Answer: A** (ASMITA ensures equal opportunity and structured progression for women from rural and under-served backgrounds.)

Topic 3: Rural India's Para-Athlete Champions



Summary: Divyang athletes, mostly hailing from rural India, are turning physical impairment into a source of global excellence through extraordinary mental toughness. In 2024, India achieved its best-ever Paralympic performance with **29 medals**, proving that institutional support can overcome social stigma.

Background: In rural settings, disability was often viewed through the lens of incapacity; however, the shift to the term "**Divyang**" (divinely empowered) reflects a new respect for their resilience. About **95% of para-athletes** currently in training come from village backgrounds.

Key Points:

- **Inspirational Success Stories:** **Arunima Sinha** (first female amputee to climb Everest), **Sheetal Devi** (world No. 1 para-archer who shoots with her feet), and **Sumit Antil** (double Paralympic gold medalist).
- **Elite Support:** Programs like the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** provide monthly stipends of ₹50,000, foreign training, and modern equipment to top para-prospects.
- **Ongoing Challenges:** Para-athletes still face significant barriers including the high cost of advanced prosthetics and a shortage of specialized coaches in rural districts.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- **Murlikant Petkar** won India's first Paralympic gold medal in swimming in 1984.
- **Deepa Malik** was the first Indian woman to win a Paralympic medal (silver in shot put at Rio 2016).

MCQ Practice: Q. What was India's total medal tally at the Paris 2024 Paralympics, marking its most successful performance to date? A) 15 medals B) 19 medals C) 25 medals D) 29 medals **Answer: D** (India won 7 gold, 9 silver, and 13 bronze medals at the Paris 2024 Games.)

Topic 4: The Sports Economy and Technology



Summary: Sports in India has evolved into a structured employment ecosystem, offering rural youth livelihoods through government quotas, coaching, and equipment manufacturing. Furthermore, **technology**—including AI-enabled coaching and wearable sensors—is democratizing elite training for athletes on rural mud tracks.

Background: Previously seen as a "gamble," sports careers are now backed by the **Sports Economy** model, where the Indian Railways, Army, and Police serve as major recruiters under the sports quota for 43 recognized disciplines.

Key Points:

- **Employment Stability:** Recruitment into government Group 'C' and 'D' positions provides rural youth with social respect, stable income, and promotions linked to field performance.
- **Technological Revolution:** Mobile platforms like Kreedon allow rural sprinters to receive biomechanical feedback via smartphones, while GPS vests track heat-related fatigue in hockey.
- **Indigenous Resilience:** Reviving traditional games like **Mallakhamb** (pole gymnastics) and **Gatka** (martial arts) preserves cultural heritage while creating new coaching and performance jobs.

Prelims Facts (One Liners):

- India's sports sector is expected to grow at a **14% compound annual growth rate (CAGR)**.
- **Jalandhar and Meerut** remain the primary hubs for India's sports goods manufacturing industry.

MCQ Practice: Q. Which organization is recognized as the largest recruiter of athletes under the sports quota in India? A) Indian Army B) Air India C) Indian Railways D) ONGC **Answer: C** (The Indian Railways is the primary recruiter, followed by the armed forces and police.)