

Principles of Good Governance in National Sports Federations

Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

Background:

Good Governance is considered an important element for any organization to achieve its desired goals. Even limited resources can contribute significantly if principles of Good Governance are followed in letter and spirit. The scope of GG is quite vast and principles are applied broadly in varied situations. The 'NSFs are unique private entity enjoy legitimate authority governed through their Constitutions, laws, regulation and policies of the country as well as policies and guidelines of the respective International/Continental Federations. The powers are exercised by its General Body and elected Executive Boards. Such organizations have to keep a balanced approach towards Government Authorities, Asian and International Sports Federations, National Olympic Committee, donors and sponsors. Indeed, these Federations/Associations seem to comply with the requirements of their Apex Bodies, yet it has been observed that most of such Bodies do not attract NSF's to follow GG principles except a few, like IOC provides very broad guidelines, particularly for IFs and NoCs which are usually required to be adapted according to local conditions in which they exist.

Therefore, acknowledging autonomy of NSF's, need of co-operation and support from the Government authorities; considering perceptions about the need of GG; stressing the continuous application of principles of GG would be effective to improve sports management conditions; concern of the **deteriorating state of performance of sportspersons**; safeguarding stakes of sportspersons.

PSB may like to introduce **Principles GG** and self-assessment which would be used as a tool to help identify "best practices" and areas of "improvement".

These principles are based on the working of NSF's and aim at addressing the generic issues common to all NSF's. It invites the attention of the Management of the Federations towards some challenges being faced and present solutions in the shape of guidelines to be adopted to improve governance through following an effective strategy & communication, resource mobilization, democratic values, openness, monitoring & evaluation, introduction code of conduct and policies can well improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the NSF's ultimately improving standards of sports in the country nurturing and grooming sportspersons resulting into the improvement of the performance of athletes, ultimately bearing multiple benefits not only to regain the lost glory of sports at international events but will bear fruits in the shape of positive and healthy impact on masses as well.

PRINCIPLE: 1

Setting of Vision, Objectives & Strategy

The functions and objectives are usually a basic element in the Constitution of Sports Federations. But these functions are required to be put in practical shape in a more systematic way of setting Vision, Objectives, Goals and Targets. In other words, more details should be worked out to bring more clarity and practical approach to translate the vision into reality for which long, mid and short term strategies can be formulated, keeping in view, the available resources, conditions, the capacity of the Federation; after consultation with the stakeholders, carefully identified and engaged in this process.

Therefore, following steps may be taken:

- i. Define Vision, setting objectives, goals and targets (activities). These should primarily focus on the development of national athletes for achieving a better position in international sports events like Olympics, Asian Games, South Asian Games, World/Asian Championships.
- ii. Workout strategy with affiliated units to develop and promote sport at grass root level establishing linkages from bottom to top for athlete development.
- iii. Draw Action Plan (athlete development, technical officials, training camps, competitions etc.) and allocate resources, and implement with timelines focusing on the outcome.
- iv. Focus on youth, women, special athletes.
- v. Define measurable targets with performance indicators.
- vi. Use feedback from the stakeholders for improvement.

PRINCIPLE: 2

Ensure Democratic Process/Values

The decision-making powers are usually vested in the General Body and Executive Board to be elected in a transparent democratic manner. The Committees should be constituted with defined ToRs, through the democratic process, as envisaged in the Constitution. Their powers of decision-making about Administrative, Financial and Technical matters should be clearly defined/delegated to avoid any confusion. The decisions should be made in the best interest of elite sportspersons and not guided by the personal interests of the Board Members. Women and athletes and technical officials are given due representation in the decision-making. An office of EB should not serve as an honor, rather such officeholders should possess relevant skills, knowledge and attitude to shape the future of their respective sport. An internal compliance and scrutiny system can ensure democratic values such as checks & balances, solidarity, merit and transparency.

In order to improve spirit of democratic values following steps are proposed

- i) Clearly define the membership criteria.
- ii) Election process may be handled by an independent committee to be constituted to hold the elections.
- iii) Ensure powers are not concentrated in one or few hands.
- iv) Clearly defined the roles of President and Secretary, Treasurer etc.
- v) Efforts should be made to make a decision with consensus, in case of difference of opinion; the decision of the majority should be accepted wholeheartedly.
- vi) Carefully, incorporate the voice of stakeholders in decision-making.
- vii) Ensure persons of relevant knowledge, skills, and willingness to work, are included in Committees.
- viii) Experts may be co-opted in such Committees.
- ix) Show solidarity not only to athletes, technical officials but also affiliated units and towards the general public as well.
- x) Formulate criteria for election in Board or Committees so that competent persons could be elected.
- xi) Ensure participation of women, athletes and technical officials in decision making.
- xii) Build capacity of the Executive Board and other decision-making forums/ members.
- xiii) Ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the Boards/Committees by defining some indicators.

PRINCIPLE: 3

Introduce Culture of Openness

Usually, NSFs do not demonstrate a culture of openness. Things are kept secret. Important information is not shared with the stakeholders. It seems a proper effective communication system does not exist among the key stakeholders and public. The use modern technology is not fully utilized for communication. Culture of Openness leads to transparency which is considered as a front line of defense against corruption. Transparency should not be seen only in terms of financial transactions but the communication about decisions and grounds of decisions affecting the sportspersons directly or indirectly are much more important. The windows of opportunity must be exposed to sportspersons. The decisions along with grounds are communicated to the affected stakeholders timely. In short, the culture of openness would ensure transparency and accountability.

a) Documentation and communication in decision making

- i) Websites and other social media tools should be used for communication.
- ii) Accreditation System of national athletes/technical officials may be fully utilized.
- iii) Criteria may be set for the selection of the teams, training camps and other opportunities and shared with the units.
- iv) Window of opportunities may be shared with the relevant sportspersons.
- v) The performance of the sportspersons may be documented and feedback provided.

b) Financial control measures:

- i) Prepare an annual procurement plan.
- ii) Notify the procurement Committee.
- iii) Conduct an internal audit and prepare a report on a quarterly basis.
- iv) Clearly delegate financial powers.
- v) Ensure proper documentation of accounts and financial matters/entries.
- vi) Reconcile figures with the Banks.
- vii) Make payments through cheques.
- viii) Annual Plan and Budget may be approved by the AGM.

c) Performance and Financial, self-critical evaluation reports may be prepared and shared with the key stakeholders.

d) Performance of each Executive Member may be evaluated.

PRINCIPLE: 4

Discipline and Code of Conduct

Properly maintained discipline is one of the important factors in the creation of better conditions to interact with each other in a given space and time. In order to ensure some procedure, SoPs or Code of Conduct may be formulated in consultation with the stakeholders.

- i) Formulate Code of Conduct including expectations from Athletes, Technical officials, Parents, Media persons, etc.
- ii) Define discipline rules clearly defining misconduct and other actions accountable/punishable along with the procedure of filing appeals, Arbitration etc.
- iii) The key stakeholders should be educated on these Rules, Procedures.
- iv) Impartial disciplinary proceedings may be ensured.

PRINCIPLE: 5

Resource Mobilization and Preparing Annual Budget

Most Federations depend on grants from the Government which is considered small ones. If the available funds are properly utilized in a well-planned way, prioritized activities in transparent way efficiency and effectiveness can be noticed in the performance of Federations ultimately contributing to the development of sport and athletes for better prospects. One may understand that there are some of the basic obligations of NSFs which include holding of National Championships, development Technical Officials pool, talent hunt & grooming, fees of International and Asian Federations; obligatory participation in international events, besides bearing the cost of maintaining an office. It seems difficult to meet all these requirements in such small grants, although the Federation is expected to perform much more activities as per its strategy to compete for a better position in Asian and International Rankings.

- i) Utilize the funds allocated to NSFs in a transparent manner.
 - ii) ii) The Federations may utilize marketing strategies to generate their funds through sponsorships, donations etc.
 - iii) iii) Carefully prepare the annual budget well before the start of the financial year.
 - iv) iv) Lowest possible consistent with the desired quality and quantity, the economy may be ensured.
 - v) v) Allocate budget in the light of the targets set during the year, keeping in view the objectives and goals.
 - vi) vi) Allocate sufficient funds for activities, i.e. National Championship, Training Camps, Technical Officials Development, Research & Development etc.
 - vii) vii) Allocate a relatively small amount for office management, salaries, utilities, stationery, repair, entertainment, publicity, printing, postage, transport etc.
 - viii) viii) Get the approval of the E.C General Body for allocation of annual budget allocation.
 - ix) ix) Place internal checks and audits.
 - x) x) Engage volunteers and recognize them.
 - xi) xi) Conduct quarterly review to regulate expenditure.
- a) Ensure expenditure is made according to allocation. In case of significant variation, record justification and get the approval of EC/EB.
- b) Periodic review should be recorded.
- c) Prepare a report at the end of the year to use for feedback.

PRINCIPLE: 6

Apply Governance Monitoring System

An effective GG Monitoring System is a tool to create an enabling environment fostering transparent & self-critical culture in an organization that aligns diversified activities with the core objectives ultimately improving the value of resources and outcomes and paving the way for achieving goals.

- i) Create a congenial environment for monitoring and evaluation.
- ii) Ensure effective utilization of resources clearly establishing linkages with the objectives and vision.
- iii) Translate objectives into performance indicators.
- iv) Introduce compliance and reporting systems for activities/programs.
- v) Collect data, analyze, document and provide feedback.
- vi) Publish annual report.
- vii) Communicate effectively with the stakeholders regularly.
- viii) Develop a database sports management information system.
- ix) Set internal evaluation committee which may co-opt relevant expert.

Conclusion:

In brief, Guidelines for Good Governance stress the need for improvement in the performance of NSFs highlighting the need for effective and efficient utilization of resources and support from the Government authorities which can be a condition by following these Guidelines. Adoption of these Guidelines by NSFs can serve as a tool to help identify “best practices” and areas of “improvement”. The vision, effective strategy & communication, resource mobilization, democratic values, monitoring & evaluation, code of conduct and policies can lead to improve the performance of sports federations and may develop harmonious relations among the stakeholders.