

Evaluating National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) India's Anti-doping Education Awareness Interventions: A Mixed Methods Study

Tier 3

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There is a growing consensus within the scientific and sporting community that effective anti-doping policy can only partially rest on deterrence strategies alone. Implementing effective educational and awareness programs is critical to achieving the mandate of clean sports and ethical sporting practices. Even though multiple anti-doping interventions are ongoing within different sporting communities, most need to be more evidence-based or be subjected to rigorous evaluation processes to weigh their effectiveness in promoting clean sporting behaviour. Therefore, sporting organisations and decision-makers must evaluate their anti-doping programmes and subject them to sociological scientific scrutiny. The criticality of these evaluations for the ongoing anti-doping programme in India can not be stressed enough. As per a recent report launched by the World-Anti-doping Agency (WADA, 2023) based on 2020 data, India ranked second among the world's biggest Anti-doping rule violators(ADRVs), standing at 59 violations, making it a critical site for understanding the effectiveness of anti-doping educational training programmes and further needed interventions. Statistics and prevalence work can be useful for understanding the doping scale, but they cannot capture significant, non-quantifiable differences. In this context, the proposed research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Anti-Doping Agency of India's (NADA-India) Anti-doping education awareness program which NADA India launched after Operation Carousel (2023). It pushed NADA India to make efforts to overcome its strategic drawbacks of harmonisation, effectiveness and coordination concerning deterrence, detection and prevention of doping. The proposed research outlines the following research objectives:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of anti-doping educational interventions conducted by NADA-India for the educational pool of junior sportspersons in India.
2. To examine whether NADA India's anti-doping educational awareness interventions improve knowledge on doping issues and performance-enhancing drugs (PEDs) amongst junior sportspersons in India.
3. To examine if there is a difference in effectiveness contingent on online versus offline knowledge sharing under NADA India's anti-doping educational awareness campaign and evaluate which strategy is more effective and why.
4. To examine gender differences in anti-doping knowledge awareness amongst Indian sportspersons belonging to the junior category.

5. To identify gaps and suggest improvements to enhance the program's effectiveness.

The proposed objectives will be achieved through a mixed-methods approach delineating action-oriented research. The mixed methods approach will be crucial to understanding the sports person's experience with NADA's anti-doping educational awareness interventions and, thereby, the measures to improve them. The first stage employs a structured questionnaire to survey sportspersons from the NADA-identified educational pool of stakeholders who have participated in or undergone anti-doping education sessions and training in the designated period (November 2022-november 2023) to assess their anti-doping knowledge at a more macro level. In the next stage, following the WADA 2020-2024 social science research strategy, an athlete-centred approach will be followed to get more in-depth information. Under this, qualitative methods involving interviews and focus group discussions with stakeholders in NADA India's educational pool utilised to understand the on-ground and practical challenges involved in practical understanding of anti-doping knowledge to provide a more micro and context-specific understanding of how awareness programmes must be crafted.