

Career Opportunities and Professionalization of Mallakhamb: An Analysis of Economic Viability, Government Support, and Institutional Recognition

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Abstract

Mallakhamb, a century's ancient Indian physical discipline combining fundamentals of strength, balance, and yogic artistry, signifies both a cultural heritage and a modern physical exercise. Even with its profound historical importance and physical benefits, Mallakhamb remains under recognized in India's formal sports structure, limiting professional and economic opportunities for its experts. This study examines the present status, games, and forthcoming guesses for the professionalization of Mallakhamb, highlighting financial feasibility, government funding, and institutional recognition. Using a mixed-methods design, information were collected from 180 participants including players, coaches, and sports administrators across five main states Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka through designed questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS (v.25), while qualitative insights were inspected over thematic analysis. Results reveal that less than half of practitioners receive institutional or financial support, and only a small amount bear stable incomes from Mallakhamb related activities. Regardless of appreciation by the School Games Federation of India (SGFI) and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), the sport lacks representation in universal multi-sport events, confining expert improvement. However, improved youth participation, female presence, and digital media visibility indicate emerging potential for revitalisation. The study concludes that systematic policy intervention, curriculum addition, and structured certification outlines are essential to alter Mallakhamb into a maintainable profession. Recommendations comprise establishing a National Mallakhamb Development Fund, introduction a National Mallakhamb League, integrating the sport into educational programmes, and pursuing UNESCO Imperceptible Cultural Heritage recognition. Founding institutional funding and economic incentives can ensure Mallakhamb's development since a traditional exercise to a globally recognised specialised sport.

Keywords: Mallakhamb, indigenous sports, professionalization, economic viability, institutional recognition, government policy, cultural heritage.

1. Introduction

Mallakhamb, exactly meaning “wrestler of the pole,” is one of India’s most ancient physical culture, tracing its roots back over two millennia. Traditionally practiced as an additional training method for wrestlers, Mallakhamb fit in fundamentals of strength, agility, balance, flexibility, and concentration through acrobatic and yogic movements performed on a vertical wooden pole, hanging and rope Mallakhamb. This exclusive combination of athleticism and artistry makes it both a physical discipline and a cultural heritage form (Sarkar, 2015). Although it’s deep chronological and ethnic importance, Mallakhamb is often ignored in today’s sports world because of limited support from associations, abandonment in policies, and insufficient financial support.

It used to be a key part of traditional martial arts and yoga, but now its experts frequently face challenges with credit, possessions, and job progress (Ghosh, 2020). In recent eras, however, there has been transformed attention in indigenous knowledge systems and wellness-based physical practices. The universal shift to holistic health, mindfulness, and traditional fitness approaches has opened new chances for disciplines such as Mallakhamb. Yet, trials continue in regulating training practises, starting guarantee paths, and ensuring maintainable livelihoods for practitioners. This study aim to explore the job budding and professionalization of Mallakhamb, absorbed on its official outlines, government support, and economic possibility.

Mallakhamb bids valuable benefits for developing physical fitness level, while also portion as both a competitive sport and relaxing exercise; yet it relics underrepresented in policy discussions, educational programs, and funding associated to more widely familiar sports like gymnastics and wrestling. Old-style Indian sports, with Mallakhamb, skilled regular demotion during colonial and early post-colonial ages due to the supremacy of Western physical culture in educational and policy frameworks (Majumdar, 2006). Though national agendas such as the Khelo India ingenuity and the Fit India Movement have tinted indigenous sports revival, their request and perceptibility vary far.

Affording to the Mallakhamb Federation of India (MFI), the game is formally recognized by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and the School Games Federation of India (SGFI). However, it lacks image in bigger multi-sport events such as the Olympic Games, World Cup, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. This inadequate exposure obliges career pathways for athletes, coaches, and administrators. Singh et al. (2020) further highpoint that, despite its physical benefits, Mallakhamb is still inattentive from most state-level physical education syllabi, curtailing its reach between youth and ambitious athletes.

Financial sustainability also remains a pressing issue. A survey-based study by Sharma (2018) on indigenous sports experts exposed that less than 25% of traditional sport trainers secure constant income, with most trusting on part-time or unpaid roles. Mallakhamb coaches, in specific, often face financial insecurity due to the absence of identical certification schemes, inadequate recognized employ, and limited support opportunities. These limitations jointly hinder the professionalization and extensive embracing of Mallakhamb as a viable career path.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the present status, challenges, and potential strategies for emerging Mallakhamb as a recognized and economically supportable profession within India's growing sports framework. By analyzing government policies, institutional initiatives, and community-level contribution, it pursues to suggest a roadmap for the proper presence of Mallakhamb into typical sporting and educational schemes.

2. Institutional Recognition and Policy Support

The Institutional credit of Mallakhamb has grown slowly but remnants disjointed. The Mallakhamb Federation of India (MFI), initiated in 1981, has played a vital role in regulating rules and regulation, organizing national competitions, and hopeful for presence in school and university championships. However, despite credit by the SGFI and the AIU, Mallakhamb lacks formal response by foremost international sports governing bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) or the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) (MFI, 2021).

Government ingenuities like Khelo India, Fit India Movement, and the Indigenous Sports Development Scheme below the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) have formed partial outlines for encouraging traditional sports. Yet, the absence of reliable finance, substructure, and media representation bounds their long-term effect (Patel & Singh, 2019). As Ghosh (2020) notes, policy forms often rejoice traditional games emblematically but fail to interpret recognition into palpable career openings or institutional support structures.

2.1 Economic Viability and Professional Challenges

Economic variability leftovers one of the utmost important barriers to Mallakhamb's professionalization. A study by Sharma (2018) exposed that less than one-fourth of traditional sports experts earn an even revenue, with many coaches contingent on informal coaching or secondary employment. Mallakhamb trainers and athletes often lack proper bonds, salaries, or recognised appointments, important to professional insecurity (Kumar & Das, 2021).

Also, unlike sports such as gymnastics or yoga, Mallakhamb has imperfect international experience, reducing opportunities for support, brand endorsement, or professional leagues. Absence of certification and authorisation ways also depresses new athletes from inspecting Mallakhamb as a feasible job choice (Banerjee, 2020). This contest is compounded by insufficient study funding, lack of expert training organisations, and poor admission to first-class equipment or safety infrastructure.

2.2 Educational Integration and Curriculum Representation

Despite its possible as a general physical discipline, Mallakhamb is lightly signified in formal physical education curricula. Singh et al. (2020) found that only a few Indian states especially Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamilnadu and Gujarat have integrated Mallakhamb into school or college level programs. The common of schools still prioritize Western sports such as cricket, basketball, and athletics due to their higher visibility and modest appeal.

Educational incorporation of Mallakhamb can play a transformative role in together physical fitness and cultural protection. Trainings have demonstrated that Mallakhamb increases flexibility, grip strength, motor coordination, and postural stability (Patel et al., 2022). Announcing Mallakhamb in educational systems can also contribute to national heritage

awareness and adoptive gender-inclusive contribution, as increasing numbers of female sportspersons are now rival at national and international Mallakhamb events (MFI, 2021).

2.3 Global Parallels and Comparative Insights

A comparative study with international disciplines such as artistic gymnastics, pole acrobatics, and aerial yoga highlights the unused possible of Mallakhamb in world-wide fitness and performance circuits. Like gymnastics, Mallakhamb demands exact body control, flexibility, and strength, yet it remains rooted in indigenous philosophy and yoga-based principles. As Chatterjee (2019) perceives, this mixture nature positions Mallakhamb exclusively at the connexion of sport, art, and holiness — an attractive triad for global wellness industries.

In countries like Japan, Korea, and China, traditional sporting such as Sumo, Taekkyeon, and Wushu have been effectively integrated into modern competitive frameworks complete state funding, international promotion, and programme inclusion. Knowledge from such mock-ups can leader Indian policymakers to reinforce recognised constructions and create supportable expert ecosystems for Mallakhamb (Raj & Singh, 2021).

2.4 Summary of Literature Gaps

The current literature sustains Mallakhamb's physical, cultural, and educational consequence but exposes critical research and policy gaps:

- Inadequate documentation of financial data on Mallakhamb experts and institutions.
- Lack of consistent coaching certification and specialised progress frameworks.
- Limited studies relating Mallakhamb training to measurable physical, physiological, psychological and biomechanics analysis outcomes.
- Insignificant cross-cultural or comparative studies discovering Mallakhamb's likely in global wellness and sports tourism contexts.

Henceforward, this investigation goals to bridge these gaps by analyzing the professionalization likely of Mallakhamb through socio-economic, institutional, and policy lenses.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study assumed a mixed-methods research design, joining both qualitative and quantitative tactics to comprehensively analyze the professionalization and career potential of Mallakhamb. The basis behind this design lies in taking the multidimensional aspects of the sport with institutional structures, economic circumstances, and stakeholder acuties that cannot be entirely understood through a single methodological lens (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative component focused on collecting data regarding participation levels, income stability, official support, and mindfulness plans, while the qualitative component explored the experiences, challenges, and goals of Mallakhamb practitioners, coaches, and administrators. This addition safeguarded both experiential thoroughness and contextual depth in the findings.

3.2 Study Area and Population

The research was conducted across five Indian states Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Tamilnadu and Karnataka where Mallakhamb is most actively practiced and institutionally supported. These areas were selected due to their historical connection to the sport, availability of training centres, and organized federations.

The target population included:

- a. Mallakhamb athletes (both male and female) rival at district, state, national and world levels.
- b. Coaches and trainers associated with recognized clubs or federations.
- c. Sports officers and policymakers involved in indigenous sport promotion.
- d. Physical education professionals from schools, universities and sports academies.

A total of 180 members were selected over stratified purposive sampling, ensuring representation from multiple categories and competitive levels.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

3.3.1 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data were collected by a structured questionnaire, advanced based on prior studies on traditional sports professionalization (Sharma, 2018; Patel & Singh, 2019). The questionnaire included both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions, cover the succeeding domains:

- a. Demographic and specialised background.
- b. Nature of contribution (amateur/professional).
- c. Institutional support and funding convenience.
- d. Income levels and economic sustainability.
- e. Acuties of career feasibility and credit.

3.3.2 Qualitative Data

To addition statistical results, semi-structured interviews and focus collection discussions (FGDs) were led with 30 followers, with senior trainers, athletes, and federation officials. These meetings explored:

- Experiences of chasing Mallakhamb as a job.
- Official barriers and managerial challenges.
- Perceptions of policy provision and credit.
- Suggestions for professionalization and world-wide promotion.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

The samples were analyzed expending SPSS version 25.0. Descriptive statistics were used to review participant profiles and styles. Inferential statistics, with Chi-square tests and correlation analysis, were applied to observe relationships between institutional support, revenue levels, and professional gratification among participants.

3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from interviews and FGDs were analysed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework: familiarization, coding, theme generation, reviewing, defining, and reporting. This process helped identify recurrent patterns such as "lack of financial stability," "institutional neglect," and "revival through educational inclusion."

A SWOT framework was also employed to assess Mallakhamb's position within India's sports ecosystem and its potential for global recognition.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study involved 180 participants including 100 players, 50 coaches, and 30 sports administrators. The gender distribution existing a gradual increase in female impact, accounting for 34% of respondent's shiny increasing inclusivity in a discipline historically subject by males. The majority (68%) of participants were among the ages of 18 and 30 years, representative a youthful demographic actively involved in Mallakhamb at the competitive or instructional level.

Concerning educational experience, 72% of accused had at least a graduate-level qualification in physical education or sports science, while 28% had overall academic degrees but pursued Mallakhamb as a passion or part-time occupation. This educational circulation suggests a strong overlap amid academic sports training and the traditional discipline of Mallakhamb, reflecting its emerging presence in institutional curricula.

4.2 Institutional and Policy Support

Only 41% of defendants stated receiving any form of institutional or governmental support such as salaries, equipment grants, or travel budgets. Among these, most support was derived from state-level association, particularly in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, where Mallakhamb likes partial inclusion under Khelo India and Fit India schemes.

However, 59% of experts indicated no reliable institutional support, emphasizing a lack of organised support from universities, sports authorities, or communal sponsorships. Coaches reported difficulties in retrieving funding for infrastructure increase and in obtaining credit for coaching certifications. This aligns with earlier results by Ghosh (2020) and Patel & Singh (2019), who acknowledged fragmented policy implementation as a core barrier to the growth of indigenous sports.

Participants also highlighted the absence of a national governing framework equal to federations in internationally recognized sports such as gymnastics or wrestling. Despite Mallakhamb's official recognition by the School Games Federation of India (SGFI) and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), it remains excluded from international multi-sport events like the Olympics or Asian Games, limiting opportunities for elite-level exposure and funding.

4.3 Economic Viability and Career Perception

The study exposed thoughtful tests in economic sustainability among Mallakhamb practitioners. Only **22%** of trainers and **15%** of sportspersons reported stable monthly incomes exceeding ₹15,000 from Mallakhamb allied activities. The common depended on additional employment as physical education teachers, gym instructors, or government sports officers.

Respondents cited several reasons for low economic returns:

- a. Absence of expert associations or televised events.
- b. Imperfect sponsorship and media coverage.
- c. Inconsistent prize money and uneven competition calendars.
- d. Lack of consistent coaching accreditation, which reduces employability.

These findings support Sharma's (2018) conclusion that less than one-fourth of indigenous sport experts in India achieve financial stability. Also, qualitative interviews bare that passion and cultural self-importance were the key motivators for continuing practice, rather than economic incentives.

Enchantingly, younger athletes stated optimism about digital media's possible for visibility, with numerous citing YouTube performances and social media showcases as emergent avenues for credit and income generation. This recommends that new-age digital stages could play a transformative role in encouraging traditional sports in the absence of proper institutional support.

4.4 Educational Integration and Curriculum Representation

Survey results showed that 56% of participants had been introduced to Mallakhamb through school or college-level programs, mainly in states where it is part of the physical education curriculum. However, only 18% of respondents reported that Mallakhamb was part of their proper academic curriculum with organised evaluation or credit systems.

This highpoints an important gap in syllabus addition at the national level. Despite the sport's sure benefits enhancing flexibility, core strength, balance, and coordination (Singh et al., 2020) its symbol in National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) or University Grants Commission (UGC) physical education frameworks remnants minimal.

Focus group thoughts bare that coaches often lack training in Mallakhamb techniques, resulting in insufficient employment even where inclusion policies exist. The creation of a regular certificate or diploma course in sports coaching, duly recognized by the Ministry of Education and the Sports Authority of India, could play an essential role in mainstreaming the sport and improving its qualified legality.

4.5 Gender Participation and Inclusion

Though historically male dominated, Mallakhamb has observed a growing number of female athletes in the last era. Among surveyed participants, 34% were women, with numerous reporting participation in national and international demonstrations. Respondents cited changing social insights and the rise of women's sports empowerment programs as key motivators for entry into the discipline.

Still, female sportspersons also stated unique challenges such as:

- Lack of gender sensitive coaching infrastructure (e.g., attires, privacy spaces).
- Social bias against physically difficult indigenous sports.
- Limited female person replicas in leadership or federation positions.

These conclusions echo the comments of Raj & Singh (2021), who said that gender equity policies in traditional sports are still underdeveloped compared to normal disciplines. Addressing these holes could inspire greater inclusivity and contribute to the sport's professional growth.

4.6 SWOT Analysis of Mallakhamb Professionalization

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| Profound cultural roots and tradition recognition. | Lack of organised economic support and funding. |
| High physical and inventive value; position with yoga and fitness. | Absence of uniform training and certification paths. |
| Growing numerical and world-wide wellness appeal. | Limited image in global sporting events. |
| Opportunities | Threats |
| Combination into school curricula and wellness programs. | Western sports governance and institutional neglect. |
| Tourism, media, and performance relationships. | Hazard of cultural weakening through commercialization. |
| Possible for international recognition through united structure. | Inadequate funding and policy regularity. |

The SWOT analysis exposes that while Mallakhamb has large strengths rooted in its cultural and physical individuality, universal faintness and institutional neglect hinder its development. The growing wellness trade and global hunger for indigenous fitness offer significant chances if strategic involvements in training, media, and policy arrangement are applied.

4.7 Discussion

The findings emphasise that Mallakhamb's revival demands institutional formalization, economic sustainability, and academic integration. Despite its standard value in physical fitness and tradition preservation, the sport relics relegated within India's sports economy.

The results corroborate previous research (Majumdar, 2006; Sharma, 2018; Ghosh, 2020), signifying that traditional sports often suffer from symbolic credit without structural

speculation. The connection of policy negligence and economic instability continues to discourage young athletes from pursuing Mallakhamb jobwise.

However, the study highlights strong community resilience and transformed youth interest, mainly through digital visibility and grassroots movements. These dynamics propose that with orderly government recognition, curriculum enclosure, and development of a national coaching guarantee framework, Mallakhamb can evolve into a maintainable job while preserving its cultural ethos.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study has explored the recent status, challenges, and likely pathways for the professionalization and occupation development of Mallakhamb, one of India's most socially important and physically tough traditional sports. The conclusions reveal that, despite Mallakhamb's long historic lineage and growing acceptance at grassroots levels, its professional ecosystem remains underdeveloped due to uneven institutional provision, limited funding, and policy-level neglect.

Quantitative results exposed that fewer than half of experts receive any form of planned support from sports organisations, while qualitative insights highlighted persistent issues such as insufficient coaching infrastructure, lack of certification standards, and minimal mass media representation. These issues together restrict the sport's discernibility and sustainability. Furthermore, financial unpredictability remains an important restriction only a small quantity of coaches and players are able to sustain themselves economically through Mallakhamb-related events alone.

However, there is a growing suggestion of revival. Increased youth participation, digital visibility through social media, and cultural credit initiatives under national programs like National games, Khelo India and Fit India demonstrate renewed interest. The rise of female players, development of state level tournaments, and academic engagement by physical education departments all point toward an evolving transformation.

Ultimately, the study concludes that Mallakhamb's professionalization is not merely a sporting necessity but a cultural imperative. Its holistic nature integrating physical strength, flexibility, balance, and mindfulness positions it as an exclusive bridge between traditional heritage and modern wellness activities. For this revolution to appear, comprehensive structural improvements are essential, aligning policy outlines, institutional recognition, and financial enticements.

5.2 Recommendations

A. Policy and Institutional Frameworks

1. National Recognition and Inclusion:

The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) should recognize Mallakhamb as a importance indigenous sport under the Indigenous Sports Development Scheme and

ensure representation in National Games, Asian Games, and future Commonwealth events.

2. Federation Strengthening:

The Mallakhamb Federation of India (MFI) must be authorised to function with superior autonomy and capitals, ensuring standardization of rules, coaching methods, and safety standards. Partnership between MFI, Sports Authority of India (SAI), and Indian Olympic Association (IOA) can streamline promotion and governance.

3. Dedicated Funding Mechanism:

Found a National Mallakhamb Development Fund under MYAS to provide grants for infrastructure, player scholarships, and equipment modernization.

B. Educational and Training Reforms

1. Curriculum Integration:

Mallakhamb would be included as a recognized module in NCERT, CBSE, and UGC physical education programmes to ensure early exposure and academic continuity.

2. Coaching Certification Programs:

Develop a tiered certification system (e.g., Level I–III) for coaches through collaboration between NSNIS Patiala, SAI, and MFI. This will formalize employment paths and enhance professional legitimacy.

3. Research and Academic Promotion:

Encourage universities to start Mallakhamb Research and Training Centres, indorsing interdisciplinary studies on biomechanics, pedagogy, injury prevention, and performance science related to the sport.

C. Economic and Media Strategies

1. Professional Leagues and Tournaments:

Launch a National Mallakhamb League (NML) with state licences to enhance visibility and attract private sponsorship, modelled on other fruitful indigenous sports leagues.

2. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):

Involve fitness brands, wellness resorts, and tourism boards in collaborative initiatives to create employment for Mallakhamb coaches and players.

3. Media and Digital Outreach:

Encourage Mallakhamb through biopics, online tutorials, and competitive telecasts to enhance its world-wide appeal. The use of social media movements and YouTube partnerships can attract youth meeting and international audiences.

D. Gender and Inclusivity Measures

1. Infrastructure for Women:

Make gender subtle training environs with appropriate facilities, training support, and representation of women in association leadership roles.

2. Scholarships and Mentorship Programs:

Introduce targeted grant schemes for female players and trainers to bond participation gaps.

3. Community Awareness:

Behaviour awareness drives and school level expositions to regularise female participation and counter traditional typecasts.

E. Cultural and Global Promotion

1. Integration with Yoga and Wellness Tourism:

Position Mallakhamb as a cultural and wellness exercise within India's Yoga Tourism creativities, offering demos and workshops for national and international visitors.

2. Cultural Exchange and International Demonstrations:

Unify Mallakhamb platforms throughout International Yoga Day, World Indigenous Sports Festivals, and Indian cultural diplomacy programs to raise its international outline.

3. Intangible Heritage Recognition:

Supporter for UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage status for Mallakhamb, importance it's cultural, historical, and educational value on the world-wide stage.

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