

# India's Sports Goods Manufacturing and Export: Growth, Hubs, and Opportunities

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*India's sports goods manufacturing sector continues to strengthen its global footprint, backed by a skilled workforce, cost competitiveness, and supportive government policies. From historic hubs like Meerut and Jalandhar to emerging clusters, India supplies over 300 product categories to 150+ countries. This article explores key export trends and major destinations, as well as how global sports brands — including Decathlon, Nike, Puma, and Adidas — are expanding their investment footprint in India.*

India's **sports goods sector** produces over 300 categories of goods and exports to more than 150 countries. The industry employs around **500,000** people and contributes to India's export earnings, making it a priority under national initiatives like **Make in India**. Major production clusters include Jalandhar (Punjab) and Meerut (Uttar Pradesh), accounting for approximately 75–80 percent of domestic output.

The sector is export-intensive, with nearly. In FY 2023-24, India exported sports goods worth US\$523.24 million, with the USA, UK, and Australia among the top buyers. Despite global competition, India's competitive labor costs, skilled workforce, and increasing technology adoption have positioned it as the third-largest manufacturer of sports goods in Asia.

## India's sports goods manufacturing hubs

India's sports goods **manufacturing** base is rooted in craftsmanship and diversified across equipment types, including cricket bats, hockey sticks, tennis rackets, gym gear, and aquatic sports items. The production ecosystem is primarily driven by MSMEs operating within designated industrial clusters.

Meerut, in Uttar Pradesh, is the largest cluster, hosting over 35,200 registered sports goods manufacturing units, and accounts for **40 percent** of India's total sports goods exports. Products manufactured here include inflatable balls, cricket and football gear, gym and fitness equipment, and protective gear. The cluster benefits from pre-independence historical linkages with European and American buyers and has seen increased tech adoption in quality testing and logistics.

Jalandhar, in Punjab, is the second major hub, comprising over 3,000 units. It is known for manufacturing hand-stitched balls and protective gear. Jalandhar's manufacturers serve clients across Europe and North America and have integrated digital sourcing and order management platforms.

In addition to these legacy hubs, emerging manufacturing regions such as Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi, and Jammu are developing capabilities in niche segments. These include sportswear, indoor sports accessories, and synthetic materials.

Both major clusters are supported by common facility centers, testing labs, and tool rooms. The Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET) and the Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI) also provide skilling and design support to cluster units. Integration with Digital MSME and Udyog Aadhaar has helped these enterprises upgrade machinery and access government support schemes. Small and medium-sized businesses have also been integrated with Zero Defect, Zero Effect (ZED) certification, which is aimed at improving quality and environmental standards in small-scale manufacturing.

## Export performance over the years

India's sports goods exports have demonstrated consistent growth over recent years, reflecting a strong global demand base and manufacturing resilience. From US\$402.44 million in FY 2016-17, exports rose to US\$546 million in FY 2021-22, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13 percent. Although FY 2023-24 saw a slight dip to US\$523.24 million, the performance remained robust amid changing global trade dynamics. In the first quarter of FY 2024-25 alone, exports stood at **US\$131.66 million**, indicating stable momentum.

The product range has diversified considerably. Traditional categories such as inflatable balls, cricket and football gear, and gymnastic accessories continue to lead, while newer segments like protective wear, indoor game accessories, and recreational sports items, such as carrom boards and hammocks, are gaining traction.