



A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS AND SPORTS

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Abstract: Correlation between Environment and Man is studied in the subject of Geography. On the other hand Sports and Games are the physical activities of human being. Types of sports were highly influenced by the history and culture of the place but the history and culture of the place is influenced by the geographical conditions of that place. In this paper an attempt has been made to study various geographical factors that has directly or indirectly related to the sports. This interdisciplinary study is based on the secondary literature and data source. From the study it is concluded that there is a strong relationship between geographical conditions and sports. Types of sports, energy level of players, performance, ground types, results etc. are affected by various geographical factors like location, physiography, elements of weather, soil moisture etc.

Keywords: Location, Altitude, Weather, Pitch, Adaptation, Stamina, Performance, DuckworthLewis

Introduction:

Interrelation between environment and human being is the mainstay of Geography. On the other hand sport is one of the physical activities of man. Sports are important and beneficial to the mankind in many ways such as recreation, physical fitness, increase in social abilities, mental health, increase in patriotism, sports boost self-esteem and decrease stress, helps in academics etc. Sports geography is one of the different branches of Geography introduced in the decade of 1960-1970, studies diffusion of sports in the world, sports and environment, geographical locations of sports etc. In this respect varied sport types in the world provoked to undertake this study.

Objectives:

The main objectives of this paper are:

1. To identify various geographical factors influencing sports.
2. To study the effect of geographical factors on various sports.

Methodology:

The present study is entirely depends on the secondary literature and past evidences from the field of sports.

Discussion:

Geography is a unique subject, as it acts as a bridge between basic sciences on one hand and social sciences on other.

Geography examines the spatial relationship between physical and cultural phenomenon. Sports and games played in any region reflect the history and philosophy of that region but the development of culture of any region is dependent on the geography of that place. Following geographical factors are identified in this study that has influenced sports in many ways.

1. Location:

Location is an important term in geography. There are two types of location that is absolute and relative. The absolute location denotes co-ordinates of latitudes and longitudes, while the relative location of a place is in association with other factor, whether it may be physical or cultural.

The earth is divided into three basic climatic zones viz. Torrid, Temperate and Frigid based on latitudes and longitude indicates the time zones. Thus the absolute location of a place decides what type of climatic condition it has and it directly affects the physical activities of the people residing in that place.

Distance from sea is an important factor in the selection of sport type. For instance coastal areas encourage activities like rowing, boat racing (Nehru boat racing in Kerala, India), scuba diving, snorkeling (Goa, Andaman and Nicobar Islands). Many coasts and beaches are tourist destinations,

so leisure games like beach volleyball, swimming, golf are popular. Such areas are famous for surf clubs and surf carnivals. Adventure sports like Mountaineering, Trekking and Rappelling are restricted to the mountainous areas (Rocky, Andes, Alps and Himalaya Mountains)

2. Altitude:

The term altitude means height of a place from mean sea level. A plain is a low-lying and gently sloping flat land with the elevation up to 300 mts above MSL. Plateau is a flat topped hilly area ranging between 300-1000 mts of height. While mountains are the areas having more than 1000 mts. of height from MSL.

Altitude controls the climatic conditions of a region. It also restricts the development of sport fields. It is noted that number of stadiums are less in the hilly areas while they are more in number in the plain and plateau region on earth. Cricket is the most popular game in India; the statistical data reveals that only few cricket stadiums are constructed in the hilly tracts of the country such as Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamshala adaptation to high altitude is important for players.

3. Elements of Weather:

Weather conditions not only affect the competitions and performance of players but also became problematic for the spectators. Thus prediction and forecasting of local weather conditions is an important aspect in outdoor sports.

a) Temperature-Extremely high and low temperature conditions are not suitable for sport activities. It is seen that when players from cold climate are playing in comparatively hot climate their performance decreases. For having best performance they are shifted to such areas many days before to acclimatize themselves with the different climatic conditions. Heat affects performance of players, so they are having sufficient amount of water and electrolytes while playing.

b) Precipitation- It is noted that rainfall is the deciding factor for many cricket matches. Damp and wet grounds have canceled many matches. Duckworth Lewis

method is applied in cricket during rainy conditions. It is to be noted that in 1992 cricket world cup, in the match between South Africa and England twelve minutes of rain has changed the match seen into twenty two runs of one ball.

c) Wind-Direction of wind and Speed of wind both are the important factors in some sports. Heavy winds, thunderstorm is not suitable for scuba diving, strong winds are problematic in sailing competitions.

d) Humidity- Humidity is the condition of air with the water vapour content. Humidity is high in the coastal areas (Mumbai, Chennai) while it is low in dry weather areas which are away from sea shore (Nagpur, Hyderabad). Dehydration in players is controlled by proper hydration while playing in high humidity.

e) Atmospheric Pressure- Air pressure change with the changing altitude and temperature. In high altitudes, the pressure is low which cause the problems like insufficiency of oxygen leads to decrease the amount of RBCs in blood. Dizziness, breathing problems, headache are common amongst the players.

f) Season- Amount of snow increases in winter therefore ice sports like Ice hockey (National Game of Canada) Skating, curling, Skiing are played. Heavy fog in winter causes the visibility problem in many games. In Summer Olympics sports like archery, basketball, boxing, diving, and badminton are played. Hail and lightning can cancel the matches in rainy season.

4. Direction:

North, South, East, West are the major directions that describe where one place is located with respect to the other. Position of the sun is important for the players. As the East West directions are not suitable for players to play cricket in sunshine, cricket pitches are made in the North-South directions. Many times it is seen that the position of sun seems to be disadvantageous to some players.

5. Slope: Slope or gradient is considered in games like golf, cycling, motor biking, skiing etc.

6. Soil: Soil may be clay, loamy, sandy depending on the size of soil particles. The moisture holding capacity of soil, grass

cover varies from one another. It is a deciding factor in cricket as the pitches are prepared accordingly. Bouncing and turning of ball depends on the pitch which turns the entire match. Thus pitch report is taken in the beginning of match. Soil texture is also important for horse racing, football and field hockey.

7. Landforms:

Rapids-River bed having high velocity of water due to relatively steep gradient is called as rapids. Rapids are formed due to the erosional work of river and are restricted mainly in the youthful stage of river. White water rafting is associated with these features. Sites of river rafting in India are seen in the rivers like Chenab, Ravi, Beas (Himachal Pradesh), and Tista (Sikkim) in their youthful phase where rapids are more in number.

Ridges- Continuous chain of hills is called as ridge in geography. These are the well suited places for Paragliding. Most paragliding spots in India are associated with long distance mountain ridges as they favor the wind conditions. Dalhousie, Manali, Satpuda hills are the main paragliding destinations in India.

Lagoons- shallow water body separated from larger water body is lagoon. Water is quiet in such region. Back water sports, Boat race, sea sailing are common in such areas. Kerala(India),Dubai are popular destinations for lagoon sports.

Conclusion:

Above evidences and analysis reveals that there is a strong relationship between various geographical factors and sport factors. Selection of site for sports, stamina and performance of players, field types, Results of many sports, types of sports, popularity of games are highly controlled by local geographical conditions. However nowadays with the increase in modern technology, increase in the number of indoor stadiums many factors are under control.

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