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Survey of winter sports in Jammu & Kashmir

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Abstract

The Present study has been done on the stock verification and facilities available for different types of winter sports events mostly performed in the famous ski resort Gulmarg in Kashmir. In this study the researcher with a prior aim of having a deep and first hand verification of facilities and equipments for the purpose of adventurous winter sports during winter sports lovers from every corner of the world throng to Kashmir to enjoy and exploit the mesmerizing beauty of Kashmir. After visiting different sports resorts of Kashmir the researcher himself realizes that there is a need of developing and maintaining the winter sports infrastructure and different types of coaching and trainings should be imparted to the youth of Kashmir to train the athletes and make use of this talent and develop in them the quality of competition and winning at the international level. Most people visit the valley to see the Kashmir valley in the white blanket of snow despite having the talent and interest in adventurous sports they remain unaware about this after completing this study it contributed to the awakening of the general awareness about the existing facilities of winter sports in J&K among people in general and professional people of physical education in particular.

Keywords: Survey, winter sports, Jammu & Kashmir etc.

Introduction

India is a vast country with varying climatic and geographical conditions. One can perceive great contrast from icy frozen wastes of Himalayas to the sandy showers of Kanya Kumari washed by the Indian Oceans. We are indeed fortunate in that we possess all kinds of weather conditions ranging from tropical to the arctic. In the north of this vast country lies a small state of Jammu and Kashmir, giving a unique opportunity for winter Sports, a fact which our people have not yet realized.

Winter Sports are little or completely unknown to the majority of population of our country. However, a few winter sports resorts such as

Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Pahalgam and Ladakh are the exciting in India. Which have been created and developed by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports Government of India and Winter Sports Federation of India. Such patronage is seen in the efforts of the Government of India and Government of Jammu and Kashmir. Which is trying to commercialize these Winter Resorts for tourism and hoteleering, mainly for foreign tourists. The kind and type of facilities in India may not be of International standards, but with such an abundant scope for the development of these facilities on line of the International standards is quite feasible. European socialist countries and many of the Scandinavian countries have recognized the importance of fullest utilizations of the Winter Sports facilities for the active participation or involvement of their population in such activities had opened the new avenues for winning Gold Medals in Winter Olympic Games.

Purpose of the study

The Purpose, of the present study was to survey the facilities available for Winter Sports in Jammu and Kashmir State.

Significance of the Study

India with its diversity in geography, climate conditions and weather had not realized the importance of active involvement of its population living in extreme northern region in Winter Sports. This can be an effective means for recreation of the people in the region and for the visitors as well it may not only result in bringing name and fame to the country through participating in Winter Olympic and excelling in competitive Sports.

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But it will minimize the militancy and terrorism in the Kashmir Ghati of the Jammu and Kashmir State. Jammu and Kashmir has got many such winter Sports places in the Kashmir Ghatis. This attracts number of tourist from all over the world during the snowing winter days. Who just come to see what snow fall is? But almost none of them come to learn, participate and practice Winter Sports like Ice-Skating, Ice-Skiing, Ice-Hockey and Sledding etc.

This study when completed had contributed to the awakening of the general awareness about the existing facilities of Winter Sports in Jammu and Kashmir among the people in general and Professional Personnel of Physical Education in Particular.

Winter Sports in India

Winter Sports in India⁵ are very recent. During the early 1930 British Troops were skiing in the Triune in Dharmshala Region and in Gulmarg of Kashmir. Later in 1960 the Punjab Government explored the possibilities of Skiing in Dharmshala but nothing substantial was done.

Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering⁶ was founded by the Government of India, Ministry of Tourist. Initially it was started as a Project named Gulmarg Winter Sport Project (GWSP) in order to develop Gulmarg as Ski Resort of International Standard. Now it has grown into full-fledged adventure course and exciting corporate activities. The Institute had been attracting a large number of trainees as well as tourists not only from within the country but throughout the world. The snow conditions terrain and length of skiing season at Gulmarg occupied with a dependable Air service have been major factors in selection of this place as the Ski Centre in the country.

Survey by the foreign experts have also shown that Gulmarg is one of the best area for development of Winter Sports. Tourism as well as Winter Sports lovers are coming to Gulmarg in large numbers.

Gulmarg is located 53 Kms from Srinagar in north Kashmir at

a height of 2730 mts above the sea level. It is a legendary beauty spot called paradise on earth. It is most beautiful place frequented by tourists both in winter for skiing and in summer for its healthy climate and scenic beauty. Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering conducts various courses here both in summer and winter. The cable Car and Chair – Lifts are the main attractions of this hill resorts. It has the highest cable care in the world which goes to 14000 fts. Above the sea level. A snow festival is organized around Christmas every year during with different activities of Sports and Culture are conducted on the fresh snow.

Winter Games

A. Ice Skating

Ice-Skating has been dated to about the year 200 A.D. When ice-skating of iron have been used but it is certain that bone skates were used long before that in the Scandinavian countries and quite likely in other countries of Northern Europe. It is also possible that wooden Skates were invented, because bone itself is slippery.

B. Ice Hockey

Ice Hockey was first played by Royal Canadian Rifles at Kingston, Ontario in 1855, but is supposed that the Sport was enjoyed much earlier by others. In the same year McGill University students became enthusiastic about the Sport. They adopted some rules from rugby and started taking part.

C. Skiing

Man has used various methods of sliding over the Snow for over 5000 Years. History shows that until more recent times, such as hunting, Military Vancouver's or transportation. As common in the development of most Sport, basic skills and Vancouver are refined until they became rather complicated moves and strategy. Skiing⁴ the original Practice and survival techniques led to stop stern, stem Christies and linked stem turns starting in the early part of the twentieth Century.



Fig 1: Ice Skating at Gulmarg Kashmir



Fig 2: ice hockey in Gulmarg Kashmir



Fig 3: Skiing at Gulmarg, Kashmir



Fig 4: Skiing in Gulmarg, Kashmir

Procedure

The procedure followed for collecting the relevant data is described in this Chapter. The investigator visited Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering and stayed there for a fortnight to investigate and collect necessary information personally from the original sources, from the Library and Gulmarg Winter Sports Project etc. Investigator had also visited different places of such interest and collected first hand information regarding the facilities.

The Investigator met the Director of the Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering at Gulmarg and explained his objectives of the study and requested for his assistance. The investigator also met the President of the Chief Executive Officer of the Gulmarg Winter Sports Project and requested him for assistance.

The Methods used for collecting relevant and precise data for the Study were as follows

1. On – the – Spot Observation;
2. Interview;
3. Questioners.

Analysis of Data

Winter Sports facilities and the Programs included the organizational structure and finances or budgeting of the existing facilities in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the opinion expressed in personal interview and through Questionnaires by selected authorities and trainees of the Indian Institute of Skiing and Winter Sports under the Gulmarg Winter Sports Project.

The details and facilities available are discussed henceforth:

Kashmir Valley Proper

Situation in the Kashmir Valley the Paradise on the earth during the pre-independence era has worsened at present due to the militancy and terrorism activities. Kashmir remained isolated for a long time after independence. The commutation to the iced terrine of the Gulmarg and above this place was very difficult and the Government of India as well as Government of Jammu and Kashmir had not taken much interest to explore and develop the natural opportunity of the Winter Sports much prior to these days.

Later on in 1980 the Army Officers and the then of Maharajas of the Princely States started exploring the natural places of Gulmarg and Khilanmarge for the Winter Sports. Very recently the Government of India after 2014 under the patronage of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports in cooperation of the Ministry of Tourism and Development of the Jammu and Kashmir find a striking panorama of the Plains and the surrounding snow bastions sentinels of the eternal snow – line. Good Skiing Slopes are situated all around the five kilometers.

The Indian Institute of Skiing and Winter Sports conducts the courses for Skiing and other Winter Sports for both learners and advance Skiers. The Slopes are recent ones and the courses were started only two years back in collaboration of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India by Sports Authority of India.

Adventure Training is very important aspect of our education to develop those traits of personality in our youth which are not possible in the protected environments of schools & colleges. The Institute conducts various adventure courses in different fields as follows:

1. Snow Skiing.
2. Water Skiing.
3. Para-gladding/Para Motors.

4. Parasailing.
5. Hot Ballooning,
6. White Water Rafting/Canoeing.
7. Mountaineering etc.

These courses and activities not only train our youth but also entertain the tourists who come to Gulmarg and makes Kashmiras exciting adventure destination in the world. The schedule of courses is given separately in this brochure Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering has also diversified into hospitality. It has guest rooms for tourists in a state of the art centrally heated building at Gulmarg which are better than the best hotels in Gulmarg. Its centrally heated Restaurant provides all varieties of food in a cozy environment. The Institute is planning to have a pool table, TT and fully equipped Gym with a Sauna bath. Many other recreational facilities are being set up in guest rooms which have the best view of Gulmarg. (Tariff is given separately)

Summary

Jammu and Kashmir is reputed to be one of the beautiful State of the World. It is said Paradise on Earth. “Gar firdaus bar-rue zamin ast, hami asto, hamin asto, hamin ast.” “If there is a heaven on earth, it's here, it's here, it's here.” Mughal Emperor Jehangir said it all when he visited Kashmir in the 17th century. The scenic beauties provided by white snow mountains, lakes and rivers is ideal for the Winger Sports. It forms northern part of the India, which is much more beautiful than Switzerland. There is a vast field for geologists and magnificent place for the lovers of Winter Sports. It is an ideal place for recreation and competitive Winter Sports during winter as well as summer.

Srinagar, being the summer capital of the Jammu and Kashmir became the second holidays centre in the World after the Switzerland. The investigator personally visited the Head Office of the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation and High Altitudes Sports Promotion Centre of the Sports Authority of India and collected the information. The investigator also visited various places of the State and interviewed the authorities and trainees.

Conclusion

After evaluating the data collected, it is quite evident that the facilities and the program provided by the Tourist Department and other agencies in the State of Jammu and Kashmir for Winter Sports are far from satisfaction. Despite the fact that the State has been blessed with an abundance natural beauty scenic places and snow for long periods. The attitudes of the concerned authorities is quite apathetic. In spite of the existence of a full-fledged Department of Youth Affairs & Sports and Sports Authority of India only one Winter Sports facility is directly run by them in Gulmarg. Practically, none of the existing facilities have been expanded or improved since the time of their origin. For instance, the Gulmarg Winter Sports Project facility had remained unchanged ever since it was started. Over and above everything, a very significant finding of this study was that there is an absence of professionally trained instructors at all the resorts. Further the Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering at Gulmarg is running orientation type of courses for interested Sports Persons and Individuals. There is no provision for producing trained and skilled instructors for any of the Public Resorts.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the State of Tourism Department

may develop an attractive Winter Sports Complex in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, in which a variety of Winter Sports and other facilities are provided to the people in order to make their stay alluring, interesting, longer and comfortable.

2. The Facilities should be provided to people for indoor and outdoor Winter Sports in Speed Skating, Figure Skating, Ice-Hockey, Ice-dance, Alpine Skiing, Nordic Skiing, Tobogganing and Bob Sledging.
3. It is recommended that facilities may be developed and improved in collaboration with experts from United States, European Countries and Australia participating in the Winter Olympic Games.
4. It is strongly recommended that a similar study may be undertaken to survey the facilities available for Winter Sports in India and the contents of their utilization as well as scope for further expansion and development.

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