Childhood and adolescence are crucial periods of life, since dramatic physiological and psychological changes take place at these ages. Physical fitness is an important marker of the health of children and adolescents and also a good predictor of health in later life. Despite the known benefits of physical activity and fitness, physical activity levels tend to decrease with age. Reduced physical activity and/or physical fitness is associated with the etiology and prevalence of several non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and their risk factors. The regional imbalances within a state are more important than those of inter-state. To reduce the regional imbalances Karnataka Government has taken various steps. Regular monitoring of the level of physical activity and physical fitness of the entire population should be considered a public health priority. Subjects for the study were high school attending boys and girls between the age group 14 to 16 years and studying in eighth and ninth standard within Karnataka. All together one thousand six hundred subjects from various schools representing different divisions of Karnataka viz Gulbarga, Belgaum, Mysore and Bangalore were selected for this study. All the subjects selected for this study were tested for physical fitness components by using AAHPERD Youth Fitness test battery. A self structured questionnaire duly constructed and standardized was administered for inquiring health awareness of the subjects. In order to test the hypothesis of the study ‘analysis of variance’ (ANOVA) was used. There were significant differences in all the physical fitness variables selected for the present investigation between boys and girls of different regions of Karnataka. Significant differences were also observed in total physical fitness and health awareness among high school boys and girls of different regions. Results are elaborately discussed and recommendations are given.

Key words: physical fitness, health awareness, inactivity, regional diversity, Karnataka state.