CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

Fitness for all in 2000 A.D. is the aspiration of the people all over the Globe. In a few years from now, the world is stepping into the 21st century and in that there will be unprecedented demand of fitness from all sections of the people, irrespective of male and female, teacher and taught, industrialist and farmer, working women and housewives, doctor or engineer and so on.

In this nuclear age, men are to prepare to face the problems of nuclear holocaust. For this also more and more fitness is called for the growing generation.

At the same time, the political, social and economic changes taking place in the world, have necessitated new adjustments in the patterns of living for the people specially in the developing countries.

People have to make unusual adjustments to increase physical demands through accelerated academic programmes, new types of employment, volunteer services including manual labour in farms, factory or office, new types of works encountered in industry, agriculture, civic service
as taxi or truck driver, climbing hills, flying in space
or diving in the ocean, demand more fitness from all the
individuals. Demands for increasing physical, mental and
moral stamina upon the boys and girls have been universal
regardless of the particular status. New strengths and
greater endurance are essential for effectiveness in
their living.

The level of happy, effective living in the years
ahead will depend, in large measure, upon the fitness of
the people.

Moreover, the ultimate strength, welfare, survival
and progress of the country rest on the fitness of its
citizens.

There are many factors which are non-conducive to
the promotion of health of the people. It is very un-
fortunate to note that the society today suffers from
health hazards due to environmental pollution and lack of
personal health care. Many people lead sedentary lives
in this modern age. They live on foods which are not
only costly but also adulterated. They spend their
leisure time on television, cinema, cocktail parties and so on. They indulge in bad habits like using alcohol and drugs which are not conducive to health. They develop negative attitude towards manual work. Due to lack of exercise and participation in physical activities like games and sports, etc., people suffer from hypertension, obesity, heart and lungs diseases, etc.

Majority of the people are involved in the mental work rather than the physical work. Labour saving devices are plenty. So, people are taking advantage of such devices and they take more care of their automobile than their health. Most of the people remain as spectators when there is need for their physical participation. If this state of affairs continues, than the health and fitness of the citizens are sure to be deteriorated day by day.

So, it is the responsibility of every country to promote physical fitness of its citizens because a fit person is an assest and a weak person is a liability to the nation.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also set a target for every person to become health conscious by 2000 A.D. It is very encouraging that the International
Olympic Committee has signed an agreement with IOC for furthering the cause of health for all by 2000 A.D. This is a right step directed towards obtaining total fitness of persons by 2000 A.D.

The term 'fitness' has broader implications than the more limited concept of physical fitness, because in this, there is the concept of the organism as a whole. In the term physical fitness is a illusory. If there is fitness, there is the fitness of the whole. Very often we hear the term physical fitness used in an attempt to describe a condition of the body as different from the fitness of the mind or of emotional or psychological fitness.

When we talk of physical fitness, we refer to the organic capacity of the individual to perform the usual tasks of daily living without undue tiredness or, fatigue. In other words, physical fitness is the ability to carry out daily tasks with vigour and alertness without undue fatigue but with abundant energy to enjoy leisure time activities and face the unforeseen emergencies.
Physical fitness also applies the ability of the individual to bear strenuous conditions which an unfit person would not bear so. It would mean the state which characterises the degree to which a person is able to put the body organs in harmonious order and able to discharge the respective functions effectively. It would also include several qualities important to the individual's health and well being in general, as opposed to characteristics that relate the performance of specific skill. Physical fitness is thus the condition of the body's ability to withstand stress of daily life.

There are other views of educators and scholars on the concept of physical fitness of an individual. Here, it may be of interest to consider some of them.

J.P. Kennedy (1974) has said that physical fitness is one of the important ways to healthy body and it forms the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity. He has observed that tough minds usually inhabit sound bodies and that intelligence and skill can only function at the peak of their capacity when the body is healthy and strong. He believes that ability to function depends upon one's physical, emotional, social and spiritual components of fitness.
R.V. Hockey (1973) stated that physical fitness is a positive and a dynamic quality on a continuum from abundant life to death. It is related to the ability to meet the demands of the environment, specially to preserve to withstand stress and strain, to resist fatigue. Physical fitness is minimal in the seriously ill and is maximal in the highly conditioned person. While energy demands of daily tasks vary among individuals, some position between these minimal and maximal roles is satisfactory for most people. Since the individual is totally non-divisible into discrete parts, physical fitness affects all phases of human existence. It is vital for the whole person to maintain proper functioning of neuromuscular and other organ systems by training; improvement of physical fitness through exercise.

Rogers (1955) has said that physically untrained boys and girls, at all levels of intelligence, have greater difficulty in continuing mental effort and remain mentally alert. He believes that the potential for learning depends upon both intelligence and physical fitness. According to Rogers, physical fitness is a human quality, basic to the meeting of life's problems.
It is true that a person looks, feels and works effectively or efficiently depending upon his physical fitness in life situations.

A fit person possesses rare qualities of life which enable him or her to function efficiently and joyfully as a dynamic member of the society. In general, a fit person exhibits the highest type of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual characteristics. Physically, the person possesses endurance, strength and stamina. He or she has personal attributes such as courage, perseverance, self control, initiatives, integrity, reliability, judgment, stability. Above all, physically fit persons are manifested with high degree of sociable qualities like co-operation, loyalty, generosity, tolerance, justice, fair play, respect for authority and discipline.

A physically fit person thus possesses wonderfully good qualities of life. On the other hand, an individual with low physical fitness lacks good attributes of life, and such persons face numerous problems in life either in social adjustment or in performing bodily functions.
Heinz (1984) has compared physical fitness with the trunk of a tree that supports the many branches which represent all the activities that make life worth living: intellectual life, spiritual life, occupation, love-life and social activities.

According to Baruch Committee on Physical Medicine (1948), physical fitness connotes the functional capacity of the individual for a task. The Committee is of view that physical fitness has no real meaning unless the task or job for which fitness is to be judged is specified. This is because the fit individual can perform the task repeatedly without undue fatigue as he has reserve capacity to meet and sustain unexpected stress which may arise. In account of the complexity of the concept and the wide variety of tasks carried on by different persons, universal standards for its evaluation are not feasible.

Physical fitness for a task depends on the physical equipment and physiological competence of the subject for the stress which the task demands together with the complex psychologic factors grouped under the term "motivation". The physical and psychological factors cannot be fully
dissociated even in test procedures. Since physical fitness involves more particularly a functional concept rather than an anatomic one, it is necessary that physician be able to evaluate the functional capacity of his patient whenever possible by appropriate tests of working capacity and vasomotor response.

As physical fitness is often governed by psychologic factors which overshadow the physical competence of the body, it is imperative for the physician to evaluate the total individual with the help of psychiatrists when necessity arises.

P.V. Harpovich (1953) holds a different view about physical fitness. According to him, physical fitness denotes adaptability or suitability to some specified muscular stress. Since normal suitability to stress pre-supposes normal physiological functions, the term physical fitness has been used to mean physiological normalcy of the body and, by implication, to indicate the state of health. It is an integral component of total fitness. A fit person has considerable advantages over that of an unfit one.
Certain experimental studies on the adjustment problems of low physical fitness have indicated that students who have low scores on tests that measure factors of physical fitness have more social adjustment problems due to lack of physical skills; those children withdraw from play and sports activities, as such they do not have social contacts with friends and others.

Again, a weak person cannot perform the regular skills of his work and play. As for example, when he wants to play hockey, he cannot hold the stick firmly because he is too weak to do so. He cannot play the game without undue fatigue. Lack of endurance contributes as a factor to his lack of interest in the academic work as well as in his vigorous activities. Because of lack of stamina, speed and power, he is hindered in performing specific types of movements and in developing skills in running, jumping and throwing.

When the range of movements is limited, the distance over which power can be exerted is cut down and less power is generated. Due to lack of co-ordination, a weak person cannot learn motion skills within a reasonable length of time. So it is always disadvantageous for an unfit person to lead a competitive and successful life.
To achieve physical fitness and maintain a good health is not an easy thing. There are different factors which contribute to the development of physical fitness. Adequate nutrition, proper rest, regular exercises are some such factors which promote health and physical fitness of an individual.

It is desirable for everybody to develop physical fitness by avoiding faulty nutrition, poor health practices such as insufficient sleep and rest, psychological weaknesses such as the lack of ability to get optimum performance from muscles involved, and perform regular exercises.

Prof. Lc Cloy in his studies on factors which contribute physical fitness had isolated 36 different factors which were involved in motor performance. It was found that lack of any one of these factors might lead some one to become susceptible to diseases which affect the individual's strength, stamina, and so on.
Educationists like Rogers (1955) and Station et al (1972) have also suggested for participation in regular exercises preferably sports and other enjoyable physical activities which help the person to develop knowledge, attitudes, skills necessary for keeping the person's fitness at a higher level.

There are various ways of evaluating fitness. To measure the fitness of a person, it will be pertinent here to deal with some of the more important components of fitness.

The different components of fitness include strength, endurance, speed of movement, power and flexibility and co-ordination.

Factors such as balance, agility and kinesthetic control are also considered as additional factors in physical fitness. Some people, however, would like to include them as a phase of muscular co-ordination.
**Strength:**

Muscular strength is the amount of force which can be exerted by a single muscular contraction. Strength is increased or diminished through the use and disuse of the muscles. Exercises involving muscular efforts increase strength, and at the same time, contribute to the proper development and functioning of the vital organs such as heart, lungs and abdominal viscera. Exercise is indispensable for the development of the skills used in daily activities of walking, running, jumping, lifting, climbing, etc., which are important for efficiency, safety and recreation.

**Endurance:**

It is the capacity to do with vigorous physical activities for a long time without lessening efficiency. Endurance is important to perform strenuous work for short duration and also for the mild work to continue for a long period. Endurance may be developed through selective exercises and activities such as walking quickly, running, jumping, skipping, etc.
**Speed:**

It is the ability to perform quick movements of the same type in the shortest possible time. Factors that may influence the speed of muscular contraction are inheritance, maturation, training and practice. Speed is a factor in efficiency only if the activity requires maximum speed. Because of its importance to successful performance in sports, speed is generally included as a factor in physical fitness.

**Power:**

It is the capacity to release force at a specific moment. To get power, both speed and strength must be co-ordinated. Fitness for throwing, jumping, sprinting requires power.

**Flexibility:**

It is the functional capacity of a joint through which the range of movement is extended in any given point. The effectiveness of performance in any physical activity is influenced by the degree of the flexibility
of the body or specific joints. The proper range of flexibility is essential for the development of correct postures. Flexibility is also a controlling factor in the development of agility which means the ability of the human body to change direction quickly and effectively.

**Co-ordination:**

Good motor co-ordination results from a complete co-ordination of mind and various muscles, ligaments, joints and other parts of the body. Good co-ordinations are essential for beauty and grace of the body movement. Exercises which contribute to the development of agility, balance and co-ordination contribute to the improvement of body control which in turn contributes to self confidence through enhanced physical attractiveness and improved moral. An individual's expressions, gestures, basic daily skills of walking, running, climbing stairs, picking up objects from the ground, taking part in sports, dance, etc., and postures in sitting and standing all reflect a degree of co-ordination and integration of impulse in movement.
Physical Fitness Programmes:

Every nation is endeavouring to make the people health conscious and encourage them to participate in physical fitness programmes so that the people excel in the field of games and sports thereby enhancing the fame of the country.

Now-a-days many physical educators, educationists and planners are actively involved in finding out various means of improving the physical fitness of the people in the country.

In 1959 the Government of India has introduced the scheme of Physical fitness for all Indian citizens. This scheme has become very popular throughout the country. At the initial stage of its introduction, the scheme covered nearly 25 lakh youths. As a follow-up action of the programme, the Government of India has started providing infrastructural facilities to the schools and colleges to promote physical fitness of the boys and girls in the country. Besides, the Government of India has launched a number of innovative programmes for the health and the well-being of the country's youths.
The New Education Policy (NEP), 1986, of the Government of India also envisages a number of physical fitness programmes for our youths so that they can face the challenges of the society. The NEP gives considerable importance for the preparation of physically fit youths to make progress in the field of sports by strengthening physical education programmes in the schools and colleges and by taking up fitness activities for all.

As a part of spreading the concepts of mass sports and physical fitness for all, the India Government sponsored a Programme of Mass Gymnastics known as Bharatiyam for the first time in 1987 at Trivandrum. About 7000 school children participated in it.

With the setting up of the Sports Authority of India (SAI), by the Government of India, the earlier national fitness schemes like Jogging clubs, Sponsored Races, Neighbourhood Community Centres, National Physical Fitness Festival and Gymnastic Programmes (Bharatiyam) have been amalgameted with one National Programme to make it more interesting and broad based.
SAI and LNCPE, Gwalior also had made concerted efforts for bringing mass fitness. For this, about 2000 teachers from different States and Union Territories had been given training and about 8 lakh school children of 8 to 14 years had been made involved in different mass fitness activities.

The Government of India also organized a National level massive display of gymnastics in 1989 in order to create fitness awareness among the mass. At least 40,000 youths of the country participated in the programme.

Very recently in 1994-95 an International Conference on 'Health, Sports and Physical Fitness' - Need for an integrated Approach' was organised by CCS Haryana Agricultural University. The Conference recommended strengthening of physical fitness programmes to produce physical fitness norms at all levels on regional basis by involving suitable institutes of physical education and sport sciences. Further, the conference recommended that physical education and sports being a vital and important subject should be included as an elective subject in I.A.S., I.P.S., examinations and in other such competitive examinations conducted by UPSC.
Physical Fitness and Physical Education:

Physical fitness and physical education go hand in hand. But physical education has a wider concept which has physical fitness as one of its goals.

Physical education ranges a wide area of activities. It extends from hunting for food including activities for survival against natural catastrophies, to leisure-time activities, sorts, games and exercises of various sports. Thus, physical education is to be known as education of the whole-man, imparted and learnt through physical activities. It should not be considered as a mere waste of time in games, sports, outings and leisure-time pursuits.

In order to have a fuller understanding of the ways by which physical education influences physical fitness, it would be worthwhile to consider first, the views of some eminent scholars on physical education vis-a-vis physical fitness.
Cassidy (1954) says that physical education is the sum of the changes in the individual caused by experiences centering in the basic movement patterns. It serves as a medicine for the total education of the being, intellectually, emotionally, developmentally, by the use of experiences having their centre in movement. Real education is possible through movement not learning lesson setting within the four walls of the class room.

Bucher Charles put emphasis on the achievement of perfection in physical skills, in body, mind and spirit when they define physical education.

According to Williams (1994), "Physical education, is the sum total of man's physical experience selected as to kind and conducted as to outcome".

Bucher (1960) stated that physical education, is an integral part of the total process, field of endeavour which has its aim the development of physically, mentally, emotionally and socially fit citizens through the medium of physical activities which have been selected with a view to realising these outcomes.
According to Barrow (1983), physical education will have a meaningful individual's purpose when it is related to the totality of the individual.

In this context, J.F. Williams stated that physical education is education through physical activities for the development of total personality of the child and its fulfilment and perfection in body, mind and spirit.

While endorsing the view of Barrow, J.F. Thomas stated that physical education should aim at the development of total personality of the child and achieving perfection in body, mind and spirit.

In 1988, M.L. Kamlesh has highlighted the salient features of physical education as in the following:-

1. Physical education is essentially education, for it is a means through which the body, the soul and the intellect get moving efficiently and delligently.
2. In Physical education, the medium of education is "big muscle" or "large muscle" activity. No person can acquire wholesome experience unless he engages in activity programmes which are selective as well as elective and have values other than physical alone.

3. No worthwhile outcomes shall accrue unless the individual participates in the activity programme. No individual can learn to swim unless he gets into water.

4. Physical, mental, intellectual, spiritual and social aspects of a "wholesome" personality are interrelated and compartmentalized.

5. These aims and objectives of physical education resemble with those of education with only the difference that physical education lays stress on physical activities.
Physical education is perhaps, the only unique discipline concerned with human development which uses "physical activity" as the medium. It is more natural in its structure and function than any other education worth the name. Play way in education is incomparable.

A broad conception of physical education is given by the Central Advisory Board of Physical education and Recreation in the following way:

"Physical education is education. It is education through physical activities for the development of the total personality of the child for its fullness and perfection in body, mind and spirit. Immediately, it is concerned with the development of physical fitness. In striving for such fitness, however, physical education has necessarily to train the child's mental, moral and social qualities, arouse its awareness of environment and develop, alertness, presence of mind, resourcefulness, discipline, co-operation and the spirit of respect, sympathy and generosity towards other qualities, that are essential for a happy and well-adjusted life in a free and democratic world. Physical education can thus make a very valuable contribution to our national life".
In fact, physical education is a complete education having diverse activities and programmes for the all round development of an individual.

Clarke proposed fitness, social efficiency and culture development as the main objectives of physical education. He emphasized on the development of endurance, strength, speed, flexibility, etc., for the development of a cultured man and also laid stress on the understanding and appreciation of one's own local environment, through participation in dance, games and sports, etc. For the development of social efficiency, he expressed the need of developing the self loyalty, sportsmanship, co-operation, responsibility and initiative.
The aim, objectives and goals of physical education proposed by Book Walter is reproduced here (Wholesome Development of Human Personality):

**Objectives**

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<tr>
<th>Health (Organic fitness and neuromuscular Development)</th>
<th>Worthy use of leisure</th>
<th>Ethical Character</th>
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Cardio-Vascular endurance muscular strength, improved posture, stamina, ability to do stunts, ability to swim and ability to dance, etc. Goals (Outcomes) Good sportsmanship, knowledge of essential foundations of games and knowledge of his physical conditions. Passion Control, appreciation of attitudes, ideals to make ethical character.
According to J.B. Nash the objectives of physical education are:

Aims of Physical Education

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<th>Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organic Development (Physical)</td>
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<td>Mental power and development (power of results of training)</td>
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In summarising the objectives of physical education given above, H.L. Kanalesh has stated that the aim of physical education pertains to physical development, motor development, mental development and social development.
Physical fitness status of the youths of Manipur vis-a-vis physical education:

In ancient Manipur, the people enjoyed optimum physical fitness, and as such, at one time, it was claimed that no other nation of the world could excel the physical fitness of the Manipuris.

History goes to prove that Manipur was a land of bounty. It was a prosperous land, and so, the people from the neighbouring regions such as China, Burma, Tirurum, etc., envied it; they used to plunder the land and wage war against the Manipuri people. In their love for the motherland, the people of Manipur always remained alert and prepared to defend the external aggressors. In doing that they developed unique kind of martial arts, and such arts were handed down the generation. The male folk rendered their voluntary services to the kingdoms and when required. This practice of free service was called "Lallup", and it was for all the adult male citizens for 10(ten) days out of every 40 days. This system was introduced by the kings in the Kangla - the kings' palace where the male folk got training in the skills of warfare to enable themselves to equip for all physical activities.
There was another system of giving training to the youths of Manipur for their physical fitness. It was called "Pana system" which was introduced by King Loiyamba in 1074 A.D. This system provided scope to the youths for development of strength, agility, endurance and hardships by doing exercises like running, jumping, wrestling, swimming, etc. Every adult (youth) was also given training in the rudiments of war, love and religion. The rudiments of war included handling of 'Thang Chungoi' (sword and shield), Langsoi,* Lambu,** Arambai, arrow shooting and riding on horse-back, Satjal, etc.

Dr. Brown described Arambai in the following lines:

"It consists of two parts, one the outer is formed of ten or twelve long quills of peacock feathers, which are bound together so as to form a narrow cylinder. At one end is fastened a heavy mounted piece of iron, into the sheath thus formed, a bamboo rod is placed, projecting outwards about five inches and forming a handle; to this handle, to give a better hold, a piece of cord is

* Langsoi = A sharp weapon for threatening, pacifying elephant.
** Lambu = Big spear for killing tiger."
attached; each horseman had two quives full of these arambai fixed on either side on his saddle behind; in using them, the handle of his rod, which fitted the sheath flung, leaving the bamboo cord in the hand, the heavy iron on the point made the arambai fly line. In pursuing, the arambai was thrown in front, and in retreating was useful in throwing behind and impeding the enemy".

Dr. Jamini Devi described Satjal as in the following lines:

"Satjal is an indigenous unique art of physical and spiritual education, dealing with defence and offence. Satjal comprises all the tricks of Japanese Judo together with the skills of personal encounter with or without weapons. Satjal training is useful for personal fitness and also for the happiness of the family and community".

The young persons learnt the rudiments of love consisting of desirable traits such as kindness, mercy, courtesy, gentleness, generosity and politeness. The rudiment of religion that a youth had to possess included taking a vow before the King or the Chief to attack the wicked, to protect the poor and to give one's blood
for the protection of the freedom of the land. In this way the young Manipuri youths were given training in all these important aspects of life in those earlier days. People from outside appreciated the capabilities of the youths of Manipur. Even the Britishers admitted the excellence of physical qualities and military skills of the Manipuris about whom E.D. Dun wrote as follows:

"The Raja of Manipur maintained a good Militia which consisted of infantry and cavalry. The men of the infantry were of good physique, capable of bearing great fatigue, patience, willingness and obedience. They are always ready to march carrying their own provision, building their own huts and if necessary entranching themselves".

History further goes to prove that in those days chivalry was a form of education and discipline. The education for chivalry influenced considerably the programmes of physical education which were formulated by the Kings in olden days. The youths were also encouraged to take part in all the indigenous games and sports.
Participation in such activities affected physical fitness of the youths. There were many notable indigenous games and sports, some of which were even spread all over the world.

It is important to note that Manipur is the homeland of world famous Polo. Other indigenous games of Manipur include: Khong Kangjei (Manipuri Hockey), Leokha (Manipuri style of Wrestling), Miyang Tanaba (Boat race), etc.

A brief description for some of the important indigenous games of Manipur will help in identifying the nature of the physical activities involved for enthusing physical fitness.

1. Polo (Sagol Kangjei):

This game of Polo was first introduced by King Kaangba who ruled in Manipur much before Christ was born. In his time the game was said to have played with two teams of seven players each. The game is played till today in Manipur. It is a vigorous game and is liked by sports lovers all over the globe. It promotes physical and mental co-ordination of the whole body.
Fig. 1: Manipuri Polo
2. **Khong - Kaangjei (Manipur Hockey)**:

This is a game of Hockey on foot. In olden days, the game was conducted among the youths belonging to different panas (Administrative Units) under royal patronage.

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**Fig. 2**: Khong Kaangjei.
3. **Mookna (Manipur Style of Wrestling):**

This has been a popular game of the youths of Manipur since ancient times. In this, two male partners are subjected to trial of strength. The game is played with or without headgears.

**Fig. 3:** Manipuri Mookna (with headgears).
Fig. 4: Manipuri Mookna (without headgears).
4. **Yubi Lakpi (Manipuri Rugby)**:

The game is played by seven players. An ointed coconut is used like a ball. It is thrown up and caught hold by one and carried it into the box against the opponent just like the Rugby game.

**Fig. 5**: Yubi Lakpi (Manipuri Rugby).
5. **Kaang**:

This is played by both the males and females on the earthen floor of a big out house. An indigenous play material called Kaang is used for the purpose. It is thrown by one player on the floor from his position to the opposite side to hit a target fixed gently on the floor. This game promotes agility of hand, stiffness of legs and accuracy in hitting a target.

*Fig. 6: Kaang Sanaba (in action).*
Fig. 7: Kaang Sanaba (male & female combined team).
6. **Hiyang Tanaba (Boat race):**

This is an interesting sport first introduced by King Bhagyachandra in 1779 A.D. Two opposite parties used the oars and boats and the competition is held on the moat of the palace and another on the moat of the Bijoy Govinda specifically on the Heikruhidongba Festival. Now-a-day, the boat race is performed at some suitable lakes and rivers of Manipur. The game is vigorous and it affects the cardio-vascular endurance, strength and power of the competitors.

![Hiyang Tanaba](image-url)
Besides, the youths of Manipur are conversant in physical activities like hoping and long jump, throwing spear and catching spear, etc. The young children of Manipur play minor games in traditional ways such as Asok - aseng, Uraobi, Phibool - habi, Tandon - Phaibok, Seboti, etc. Such plays involve physical activities and mental exercises. Besides, the youths of Manipur in general take part in traditional dances which promote physical fitness. Such dances are held on religious occasions from time to time. Different tribes in the hills and meiteis on the plane perform vigorous dances. Participation in these activities provides ample opportunities to the youths to develop agility and flexibility of their body.

Some of the more important vigorous dances of the people of Manipur which promote physical fitness include Poong Cholon, Kabui-Naga dance, and several other folk dances. Group dances help boys and girls to overcome the trouble of training in physical education, as reported by Agarkar (1947).
Fig. 9: A Manipuri Dance.

Fig. 10: A Tribal Dance.
Present position of physical fitness of the youths of Manipur:

After the annexation of Manipur in British India in 1891, great changes had taken place in the structure of the Manipur society. The olden Kings are no more. In modern times, the youths have adopted new ways of living, of work, of recreation, and of education. They have shifted their behaviour, their habits and their life-style from traditional to modern way of living. It is not encouraging to see that majority of the youths lead a sedentary life-style, and as a result of which, they are suffering from poor physical fitness, not capable of bearing much of the hardships as our forefathers could bear.

If we look at the status of physical fitness of the youths at the all India level, it has also been indicated by many scientific studies that there has been deterioration in the fitness level of many of the youths. A large number of children do not take up appropriate play activities. Consequently, many youths have gained obesity.
Further, it has also been observed that there has been a decline in the performance of the country's youth in the field of sports. The deterioration in the physical fitness of the youths is very much related to the low progress in the field of sports in the country. This has been amply illustrated by the low performance of our youths in the national games and international Olympics held in recent years.

**Improvement of Physical Fitness:**

To respond to the clarion call of the State or of the nation for more and more healthy youths, it is imperative to know and practice the principles that control the building up of different components of physical fitness. For this, all people, irrespective of young and old will need to have the fundamental knowledge of physical education and its activities, the application of which, will go a long way in promoting or influencing physical fitness nay, the physical and mental well-being of the individual(s).
Aware of the importance of physical education, the Government of India has introduced it as a subject for intensive study and research in the educational institutions.

The field of physical education is now becoming very vast and the application of each of the areas of physical education will contribute to the physical fitness of an individual. Regular participation in physical education activities will promote physical strength, endurance, resistance to disease, correct posture, well balanced body and all round fitness of the individual. Participation in vigorous physical activities like running, jumping, climbing, etc., will stimulate the organs of the body to work at the optimum level which ensures physical fitness.

However, taking part in the competitive sports and vigorous activities may not necessarily be suitable for all the individuals in the context of the modern changes, except the athletes or sportsmen. For the non-athletes and non-sportsmen, participation in those
activities for physical fitness may remain a dream only. No one of the best means of keeping fit is to do suitable exercise regularly, for we want to preserve and promote the health of every citizen. We must, therefore, adopt all possible means to achieve our objectives. In order to devise a suitable means for preservation and promotion of such rare qualities of life, namely physical fitness, from being deteriorated it is necessary to be fully acquainted with the fundamental knowledge of some of the exercises as embodied in physical education.

This is because, of all the factors which influence fitness of a person, physical exercise is extremely important. The effects produced in the individual in the organic fitness such as digestive, circulatory, heat regulatory, excretory, respiratory and other functions of the body tend to disappear after the cessation of exercise. By doing exercise regularly, a person can maintain a better state of health and fitness for a longer period of time.
There are various forms of exercise which would help to enhance the degree of physical fitness of an individual. The exercises may include 'free hand' exercise, or exercises which are carried out with the appliance of apparatus. A person may take up some types of exercise which would suit his or her need, purpose, depending upon the availability of facilities.

Before taking up any type of exercise, one should know something about the physiology of exercise. In doing exercise, the first and foremost thing that strikes physiological changes in the body are those relating to the functioning of cardiovascular system, the muscular system, the nervous system and the endocrine glands which secrete hormones. Exercise affects the vital organs of the body such as heart, brain, lungs, kidneys, etc. Such organs are to be activated and kept in order that they give an impact on the improvement of three major components of physical fitness, namely circulatory efficiency, muscular strength and muscular endurance.

Physical educators in particular insist on doing regular exercises for achieving the desired goals of healthy living and keeping oneself fit. The application
of the fundamental principles of physical education, namely exercise will go a long way in influencing and promoting physical fitness for all.

In the present study, it has, therefore, been proposed to elucidate all these aspects of physical education taking exercise as the most important factor of promoting physical fitness and well being of all.

There have been several reports on the culturable possibilities of human body through adoption of suitable physical education activities like the exercise. However, a perusal of the relevant literatures reveals that until now there is hardly any research study on the influence of physical education on the physical fitness of boys in Manipur.

Considering the importance and need for improving the fitness of the youths in particular, and in order that new knowledge is added in the field of physical education, an attempt is being made to study the influence of physical education, taking exercise as a basic factor on the physical fitness of the boys in the high schools of Manipur.
Apart from this aspect, the present investigation has been undertaken with a view to helping not only the parents, the physical educators and planners to educate children to become conscious of the important role played by physical education and its activities like the exercise in the promotion of physical fitness, but also motivating the minds of the young and old people towards realising the importance of human existence in a meaningful way.

The present investigation has been carried out with an aim:

1. To study the fitness status of the students in the High Schools of Manipur;

2. To study the influence of physical education on the fitness of the boys in the High Schools of Manipur;

3. To find out the effect of exercise on physical fitness;

4. To inquire into the problems of the boys who have poor physical fitness;
5. To determine the scope for improvement of the physical fitness of the boys having low physical fitness;

6. To offer suggestions regarding adequate facilities of physical education to be provided in the Schools and encourage the students for regular participation in the physical education activities, games and sports for achieving the desired physical efficiency;

7. To motivate people to do exercise for improving their fitness to live meaningfully in life; and

8. To make the study of physical education more relevant to the needs of the society.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

As the field of physical education is very vast and the resources and the time available are limited, the scope of the present study has been confined to the consideration of the samples from 7 (seven) selected High Schools of Manipur. Participation in physical education activities will mean participation in exercise.
HYPOTHESIS:

For a critical analysis and interpretation of the data, the following hypotheses were formed:

1. That, all the Schools in Manipur have adequate facilities for physical education such as infrastructural facilities including accommodation, materials for games, sports and exercises qualified teachers to teach the subject, regular time table, etc.

2. That, all the pupils in the respective Schools participate in the physical education activities.

3. That, the students in the Schools are physically fit consequential upon their participation in physical education activities.