Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Kerala has a unique place in the educational map of India. Educational initiatives spearheaded by various agencies for the last one century made Kerala the most literate state in India. The educational efforts during this period sought to make education mass-based social good; in the new economic paradigm, it is being commodified. Under some form of planning, one would require data on the various aspects of the educational sector and on the relationship this sector has with the rest of the economy. However, educational sector has not trodden a well planned path. It has all along been "a drift with a current". (Panthy, 2008) Education has been a matter of concern for a lot of people in our country for the past several decades. There have been several efforts to make education more effective and less tedious especially at the school level. The state of Kerala has been going through a series of educational reforms over the last decade or so, with the same objective. This includes the adoption of a constructivist paradigm along with comprehensive and continuous evaluation. The state introduced IT education at the high school level five years back and is now planning to introduce IT Enabled Education (Sasikumar, 2008).

The Physical Education Activity manual is really beneficial and a must for the co-ordination of activities and exercises which help the all-round development of a child’s personality. It is actually the stepping stone to the development of the cognitive, affective and the psychomotor skills of a child. The activities and exercises put forwarded by the manual, if followed, they can create a new young generation with awful mental functioning and marvelous physical as well as emotional perfection. As a sound body can produce magnificent mental, emotional outcomes, there is the importance of the one and only provider and the life blood of all these three skills, ie, Physical Education. Regular physical exercises have the magical power of eradicating mental stress and strains from the doer, and naturally led to the full-fledged cognitive development in his personality. As sports and games can provide strength to the muscles and can balance the fat and cholesterol level, it also produces physically strong citizens. As a remedy and
medicine to the emotional imbalance suffered by the lot in this fast moving world, we can suggest the regular physical activities and games for they not only impart physical fitness but act as a fun creator and stress reducer also. If the Physical Education activity Manual is implemented in its full fledged form, as per the age and caliber of the children, surely it will become the backbone in the process of Nation building, because only a group of well educated physically fit and mentally gifted citizens can sustain and fulfill the responsibilities and competencies of a country.

Physical education plays a critical role in educating the whole student. Research supports the importance of movement in educating both mind and body. Physical education contributes directly to development of physical competence and fitness. It also helps students to make informed choices and understand the value of leading a physically active lifestyle. The benefits of physical education can affect both academic learning and physical activity patterns of students. The healthy, physically active student is more likely to be academically motivated, alert, and successful. In the preschool and primary years, active play may be positively related to motor abilities and cognitive development. As children grow older and enter adolescence, physical activity may enhance the development of a positive self-concept as well as the ability to pursue intellectual, social and emotional challenges. Throughout the school years, quality physical education can promote social, cooperative and problem solving competencies. Quality physical education programs in our nation’s schools are essential in developing motor skills, physical fitness and understanding of concepts that foster lifelong healthy lifestyles (NASPE, 2001).

Physical Education including games and sports plays a tremendous role in the development of our youth. It enables an individual to live a healthy life in an ever-changing world. Physical Education makes the children psychologically, physically and physiologically active. It helps in the development of character building, reduction of rowdiness, and serves on the basis of group unity and solidarity. It introduces team work, self discipline, sportsmanship, leadership and socialization among the youth. Regular physical activity provides numerous health and cognitive functioning. The surgeon general recommends daily participation in physical activity for taking maximum health
benefits because inactivity has been found to be significantly related to coronary artery disease, obesity, hypertension and diabetes mellitus. It also helps the people to improve their physical fitness. Five basic components of fitness are important for good health: cardio-respiratory endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility in joints and body composition. It is clear from the literature that the development of an acceptable level of physical fitness helps to attain healthy personality and psychological characteristics. Hence, a better healthy living is universally accepted as a goal of a physical education programme. As quoted by Swami Vivekananda, a great saint of India: “you will be nearer to heaven through physical activities” (Ajai, 2011).

In the evolutionary history, among the accepted modes of communication, or education, physical movements have been the universal mode of communication from the very first day of existence of life itself. Speech/Language, writing and the other accepted modes of communication have emerged at a later stage. Even in the life cycle of man, physical activities appear first and speech and writing appear later. In the earlier stages of human race, much of the learning took place as a result of simple imitation of various activities. The physical nature and physical activities of primitive man like hunting, running, jumping and fighting were to secure the means of existence and to match the environment. In fact, it would not be strong to say that primitive learning or education was through physical activities. Changes in social order, the process of civilization and technological advancements, have led to change in the process and techniques of education. Today human beings, in the comfort of modern technological era, have become highly sedentary and have diverted a great deal from his natural tendency to be physically active. Naturalists like Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel, remind us that our educational efforts should take note of learned instinctive behaviour of the child, i.e. his tendency to be physically active, to be curious, to explore, to seek excitement, to play and to become social. All of them emphasized on Education as being determined by child nature and through play activities of children. Froebel, the father of Kindergarten advocated play as being highly beneficial for children, which makes education pleasant effective. Considering the belief that the primary basis of play is found in man’s nature and that playful activities are important agencies and basis of Education. Therefore Education Through physical activities is a vital instrument of
Education. Highlighting the importance of Physical Education Process, it has been said that “Physical Education process, it has been said that “Physical Education process”, which is divine given, should be motherly fed and fatherly nourished in the young age of child” (Ramachandran, 2011).

Physical Education: Its presence and importance in India through the ages

For a civilization that has been often arbitrarily and ignorantly tagged as other-worldly, it is interesting to see that contrary to perceptions the body was not always neglected but was rather assiduously cultivated often with the conscious intention of sublimating the mind and as a result actions as well. The system of Yogasanas so uniquely developed in ancient India and so sought after even today as an antidote against the side-effects of this utilitarian age of a predominantly mercantile globalization, is a testimony to the importance that ancient India placed on the development, well-being and balance of the physical body. A basic programme of yoganasanas which shall focus on the toning of the body and the tuning of the mind must thus be implemented in all schools. No elaborate equipment, no large space is required for the purpose, just a sustained will and the eagerness to see well-postured young bodies radiating a quiet strength, will do.

In ancient and medieval India nearly every village school had a playground or two where sporting events such as ‘wrestling, boxing, mallakhamba (pillar acrobatics), the shooting of arrows, and demonstrations of strength such as weight lifting’ took place. ‘Bigger grounds were reserved for ram-fights, buffalo fights, fencing and duelling. Various ball games, and the indigenous sports of kho-kho and kabaddi were common. Most children’ sports in medieval India ensured body-development.(Kamat, 2002) A number of common games emerge, some of which are in use even today but which were then done systematically keeping in mind their physical benefits, to name a few and in one region [i.e. Karnataka]:
‘Ifrinerike involved riding on one another; boys were lifted on shoulders in pairs, and the raised youngsters tried to knock each other down to the sand below.’

‘Haruguppe was a native form of hop-step-jump, wherein boys had to jump from one sand heap to another (arranged at equal distances), and try to be the fastest to reach the goal. It is interesting to note that young women played this game as well.’

Dānd (also Sāmu) involve[d] stretching the body while lying flat on one’s stomach, and raising it slowly on the strength of one’s arms while simultaneously controlling the breathing. It was a difficult exercise, but the whole body received the toning it required.’

Chinikolu (also called gillidāndu) consisted of hitting a wooden ball with a wooden stick. A collection of these games and techniques show that they emphasized on techniques of building strength, flexibility, endurance and concentration, providing ample fun and requiring minimum of equipments. ‘A garadimone or gymnasium was a must in every village, to which youngsters thronged every morning. There they played with lōdu, dumbbells, clubs, metal balls, discs and javelins. Wrestling pit was mandatory too and in ancient India wrestling clubs received state patronage, but since maintaining a proper wrestling pit may require a certain amount of resources and effort I do not suggest it as necessary in all schools. But a revival and systematic implementation of all ancient games/physical education techniques found region wise in India can be initiated. This way the ancient knowledge and its direct benefit shall not be lost to present generations. An un-monitored, irregular approach to physical education is what is found in most schools, both urban and rural.

Martial arts had a place of prominence in ancient India. They may have been then confined to the kshatrima class but a selective implementation of Indian martial arts can be introduced again in a systematic manner in the physical education curriculum as techniques meant for self-defence, building confidence, strength and stamina. Each region had their martial arts, the intricate silambam as called in the south and lathi-khela (stick-game) as popularly called in Bengal can be - to take one example of the same genre - included in the curriculum for both boys and girls. The basic exercises of the
Kaḷaṟi-payattu, a once popular form of martial art in the western coast of south India, can be also be included focusing on the physical exercise techniques to built strength and endurance using the short and long sticks and the southern empty-hands methods rather than swords. Archery too was another popular martial-art practised in ancient India and occupied an important place in the physical training of youngsters. Visual concentration and the coordination of hands, eyes, and feet were basic essentials in military training and were developed in general by these disciplines.

Physical Education as a support to Indian Nationalism

It would be interesting to mention here that about a century ago martial arts and physical education were widely used to develop a spirit of masculine nationalism among revolutionaries in Bengal. Swami Vivekananda, himself practised physical exercise regularly, excelled in wrestling, sword fighting, riding, gymnastic, dumbbell and body building and was one of the earliest advocates of physical education as ‘a means of national emancipation.’ He encouraged a number of firebrand revolutionaries to build up their bodies through regular physical culture and proved by his own example his saying that ‘you will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles a little stronger.’ The pioneering physical culture club movement of Sarala Devi Chaudhurani (1872-1945) around 1905-08 in Bengal is worth mentioning because of its success in strengthening the physique of a large number of Bengali youth and in supporting the revolutionary movement that the province spearheaded. She initiated the Pratapaditya Utsav (festival) - to commemorate a valiant Hindu prince - where events like boxing, wrestling and lathi (bamboo stick) play figured prominently. It may also be mentioned that the physical training of youth for withstanding the rigours of revolution was a major point in Sri Aurobindo’s revolutionary programme for Bengal and the country. Much later, in one of his last writings, in 1949, Sri Aurobindo spoke of the utility of physical education for inculcating a cohesive national spirit. Subhash Chandra Bose during his incarceration in Mandalay, Burma wrote in his prison diary that ‘Efforts should be made to rouse in the whole nation the desire to excel in every kind of sport’ and that more attention should be
paid to the 'national games like wrestling, lathi play, dagger play, etc. But why should we not try to excel in every kind of sport and physical exercise', he signed off on a rhetorical note (Mukherji, 1987).

Issue of Physical Education and Health in Independent India

The Bhore Committee, which was set up around the time of independence in India and which provided the 'blueprint for health services development in independent India devoted a substantial section on the need and importance of school health programme for school going children' A look at the recommendations of the committee shows that it dwelt on the necessity of creating a school health services which would focus on health with physical education. It is necessary to look at some of its points which remain strikingly relevant even today after six decades of independence. (1) Health measures, preventive and curative, which include (a) the detection and treatment of defects, (b) creation and maintenance of hygienic environment in and around the school, (2) measures for promoting positive health which should include: (a) the provision of supplementary food to improve nutritional state of the child, (b) Physical culture through games, sports and gymnastic exercises and (c) health education through formal instruction and practice of the hygienic mode of life. Even a simple programme of physical education should and can in fact include all of these, that they have not been paid adequate attention in the post-independent Indian state points to the fact of the early and irrational neglect of education in the scheme of national development. The crux of the problem is that the 'subject of Health and Physical Education has never received its due even after independence' and that 'An overall revamping is necessary starting from the ministry to the classroom situation if the health of the future of the country is to be improved (NCERT, 2006).

An Alternative: Some Suggestions

The physical education model, if there is anything of the kind, usually followed half-heartedly in schools focus on games and sports without adequately focusing on the
life-style aspect and as the seniority increases, the pressures of examinations and syllabuses relegate even sports and games to the background. Our contention is that physical education must be redefined to mean ‘physical culture’ and must aim at a harmonious development of all parts of the body and its capacities and also pay attention to aspects such as nutrition, rest, posture and mental well-being which shall emerge when a basic physical harmony is maintained. Such a programme should broadly pay attention to the body's posture, balance and coordination in its daily activities, should ensure daily elementary physical activities for energy and fitness should give elementary instruction-keeping in mind the learners socio-economic context and the institutions setting - on nutrition, rest and it should also include a programme of yoga (NCERT, 2006).

**Health Education:** Any programme of P.E. must have two sides to it: a) Health Education and b) Physical Education, as pointed out earlier. A simple programme on health education must have the following objective: i) to impart general information and education on health and hygiene, to look after the sanitation and cleanliness of the place. This must include giving proper attention to sanitation facilities drinking water and maintaining of water bodies if any around the school, especially in rural India and encourage of water harvesting plants in urban areas. The concepts of health may be given- physical health-mental health-relationship of the body and mind. An analysis of the health scenario in India may be simply made- causes of low health levels can be enumerated. The practice of health habits may be imparted such as: the need for cleanliness of the body, home, surrounding, nutritional facts and requirements - the afternoon snack scheme before exercise may be useful where P.E. is to be done after school hours - guidance on avoidance of common infections (unclean water, contamination from food etc), necessity to avoid unhygienic habits and addictions, regularity and moderation in activities and life may be stressed. An introduction to common disease and their prevention may also be given under this. Every high school ought to have a functional health centre with regular visits by the physician who must also be aware of the importance of yoga. In the rural context where the infrastructural support is often minimal or non-existent at least one school health centre must provide coordinated service to a group of schools. (UNICEF, 2003)
Physical Education system in Kerala

The physical fitness status of school children in Kerala was not known till 1995. The sample survey conducted by the Directorate of Sports & YA, Govt. of Kerala in Thrissur district shows that the physical fitness standards of the school children is very low and do significantly differ with their age and sex when compared to American Alliance Health Physical Education Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) Health Related Physical Fitness Test (HRPFT) standards. Moreover, the abdominal strength/ endurance of high school girl students show a decreasing trend when compared with lower classes (Manoj, 1995).

The Need for Physical Activity

During the past decade, the interest in the benefits derived from an active lifestyle has spawned a wide assortment of health clubs, a vast array of books and magazines concerning exercises and fitness, a weekly smorgasbord of distance runs and triathlons, streamlined exercise equipment, and apparel for virtually any type of physical activity. Unfortunately, most of this interest and lifestyle change has occurred among middle-and upper-class Americans. Little change in activity patterns has occurred among middle and lower class families. The need for activity as an integral part of children’s life styles is strong. Rather than encouraging increased activity among children, schools have focused on physical fitness levels of children, and physical fitness testing. This excessive concern about the fitness levels of children has resulted in a need to train children to pass fitness tests “on meet district standards. When fitness results become more important than participation in regular activity, children focus on short term goals rather than a on a long term lifestyle. Health goals for the nation for the year 2000 (U.S. Public Health service, 1990) are based on increasing daily levels of physical activity, not on fitness levels. Many of the goals directly target schools, or programme that can take place within the school setting. These goals place emphasis on reducing inactivity and increasing light to moderate physical activity. Physical education programs that teach lifestyle changes in physical activity can lead to improved health lifestyles for youngsters (Simons et.al, 1991) Programs that focus on activity give all youngsters the opportunity for success
and long term health. Children should be recognized for their willingness to be active rather than for their reluctance to be tested. The need is clear: design physical education programs to teach youngsters how to live an active and healthy lifestyle. (Pangrazi, 1998)

The Growing child

Growth patterns are generally controlled by genetic makeup at birth. Although an unhealthy environment can have a negative impact on proper growth and development, this section examines maturation patterns that are common to the majority of youngsters. All youngsters follow a general growth pattern; however, each child's timing is unique. Some children are advance physically for their chronological age, whereas others are slow matures. Only when aberration from the norm is excessive is there cause for concern (Pangrazi, 1998).

Physical Education plays a critical role in educating the whole student. Research supports the importance of movement in educating both mind and body. Physical education contributes directly to development of physical competence and fitness. It also helps students to make informed choices and understand the value of leading a physically active lifestyle. The benefits of physical education can affect both academic learning and physical activity patterns of students. The healthy, physically active student is more likely to be academically motivated, alert, and successful. In the preschool and primary years, active play may be positively related to motor abilities and cognitive development. As children grow older and enter adolescence, physical activity may enhance the development of a positive self-concept as well as the ability to pursue intellectual, social and emotional challenges. Throughout the school years, quality physical education can promote social, cooperative and problem solving competencies. Quality physical education programs in our nation’s schools are essential in developing motor skills, physical fitness and understanding of concepts that foster lifelong healthy lifestyles (NASPE, 2001).

Physical Benefits
Physical education is unique to the school curriculum as the only program that provides students with opportunities to learn motor skills, develop fitness and gain understanding about physical activity. Physical benefits gained from physical activity include: disease prevention, safety and injury avoidance, decreased morbidity and premature mortality, and increased mental health. The physical education program is the place where students learn about all of the benefits gained from being physically active as well as the skills and knowledge to incorporate safe, satisfying physical activity into their lives. In the elementary grades, the physical education program emphasizes the development of fundamental locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative skills through the main content areas of educational games, dance, and gymnastics. The movement framework, (i.e., body, space, effort, and relationship) is also a part of the core content and is the basis for developing, expanding, and refining children’s range of motor skills and awareness. Quality instruction by physical education professionals is critical if children are to develop fundamental motor patterns (e.g. jump, throw, skip, hop, catch, and kick). The motor skill foundations established during the elementary grades may enhance children’s social, cognitive and physical development and increase the likelihood of continued interest and participation in physical activity. Fitness at elementary grades is supported by a rich experience in many basic movement forms (NASPE, 2001).

**Cognitive Benefits**

Research suggests that young children learn through active engagement with the “stuff” of their world. Children in elementary school acquire knowledge through physical exploration of their environment. Physical education may provide children with learning experiences essential to the formation of mental schemes. Children form more effective schemes by physically interacting with their environment. Quality physical education programs facilitate exploration of movement in various contexts that enhance acquisition of knowledge. Children learn through a variety of modalities (e.g., visual,
auditory, tactile, physical). Teaching academic concepts through the physical modality may nurture children’s kinesthetic intelligence. Academic constructs have greater meaning for children when they are taught across the three realms of learning, including the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Greater depth and relevance can be achieved when the subject matter constructs are related to each domain of learning. Research has demonstrated that children engaged in daily physical education show superior motor fitness, academic performance, and attitude towards school versus their counterparts who did not participate in daily physical education. Physical education learning experiences also offer a unique opportunity for problem solving, self-expression, socialization, and conflict resolution (NASPE, 2001).

**Affective Benefits**

Quality physical education programs can contribute to the development of self esteem among children. Children who are more active may have greater social success and positive relations with peers. Children need many opportunities to experience personal feelings of success and achievement in physical activity settings. Explorations of various movement capabilities contribute to feelings of joy and accomplishment. Physical competence builds self-esteem. Quality physical education programs enhance the development of both competence and confidence in performing motor skills. Attitudes, habits, and perceptions are critical prerequisites for persistent participation in physical activity. Appropriate levels of health-related fitness enhance feelings of well being and efficacy (NASPE, 2001).

**Different Health problems of Children**

Exercise should be an important part of child’s day. Children need up to 60 minutes of moderate physical activity per day in order to be healthy. If your child does not get enough exercise on a regular basis, he could be at an increased risk for certain health problems. Establishing good physical fitness habits from a young age will promote a healthy lifestyle for the rest of his life.
**Childhood Obesity**

The less you exercise, the greater the risk you may become overweight. Obesity is on the rise -- especially among children. According to the World Health Organization, obesity affects more than 42 million children. There are several reasons why your child may be obese. Making poor food choices and not following a heart-healthy diet can contribute to obesity. Eating foods that are processed or high in sugar can also cause childhood obesity. When your child eats foods that are unhealthy on a consistent basis in conjunction with a lack of exercise, she will gain weight (Boehlke, 2011).

Childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century. The problem is global and is steadily affecting many low- and middle-income countries, particularly in urban settings. The prevalence has increased at an alarming rate. Globally, in 2010 the number of overweight children under the age of five is estimated to be over 42 million. Close to 35 million of these are living in developing countries. Overweight and obese children are likely to stay obese into adulthood and more likely to develop non-communicable diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases at a younger age. Overweight and obesity, as well as their related diseases, are largely preventable. Prevention of childhood obesity therefore needs high priority. The fundamental causes behind the rising levels of childhood obesity are a shift in diet towards increased intake of energy-dense foods that are high in fat and sugars but low in vitamins, minerals and other healthy micronutrients, and a trend towards decreased levels of physical activity (WHO, 2013).

**Disease Predisposition**

Not getting enough day-to-day exercise can make you feel bogged down and tired, and it can also set you up for future health risks. Type 2 diabetes affects endocrine system and how your body uses insulin. When you are diabetic, blood sugar levels rise in the blood -- especially after a meal. This triggers the release of insulin. If you have Type 2 diabetes, your body may ignore the insulin or not use it properly. Diabetes can result from leading a sedentary lifestyle. Other medical conditions that result from being physically inactive include heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and stroke. Lack of exercise
leaves children at higher risk for disease than children who exercise daily (Boehlke, 2011).

**Emotional Health**

Lack of exercise also affects your child's emotional health. Children who do not exercise regularly are at a greater risk for self-esteem problems and depression. Exercise helps you look your best; if your child is overweight he faces the risk of being ridiculed by his peers. Low self-esteem can hold your child back from sports, making new friends and engaging in extracurricular activities. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins that help you feel good and deal with stress easier. When exercise is missing, depression has a chance to take over (Boehlke, 2011).

**High Risk Youth**

Exercising regularly and reaching personal fitness goals is attainable by most children. These help him/her stay healthy, feel good about herself and have a positive outlet for her time and energy. Too much idle time can lead to developing lifestyle habits that are harmful, including experimentation with drugs or alcohol, joining a gang, teen sex, vandalism and truancy. If you feel your child is at high risk for making poor choices, encourage her to join an after-school sports program that will help keep her active and out of trouble (Boehlke, 2011).

**School Health Programme in other Countries: A Brief Review**

In the United Kingdom school health services are provided through the Local Education Authorities with grants from the Ministry of Education. The National Health Service provides free medical care to all school children. In the former Soviet Union, it was a part of the comprehensive scheme for children from birth until the child completes elementary education. Almost all schools with more than eight hundred children had full time doctors and nurses. In France there is a comprehensive programme for providing school health services until the university level with the required compliment of staff. After the World War II, as a part of its post war reconstruction effort, Japan regarded
school health services as an integral part of school education. The school health programme included regular medical checkups, school lunch programme and health education inputs. This programme was a co-operative effort between the school, Ministry of Education, Health Centres and other medical agencies. These countries represent examples where health input is an important constituent of the subject area of health and physical education (NCERT, 2006).

**School Health Services in India: An Overview**

A framework for school health services was put forward in the Report on Post-War Educational Development in India, which was issued by the Central Advisory Board in 1944. This report recommended that school health service should be under the administrative control of the education department. The Bhore Committee that provided the blueprint for health services development in independent India devoted a substantial section on the need and importance of school health programme for school going children. They recommended that the school health programme must be a part of the general health services and should not have dual administrative control viz. between the education and health departments, but should be under the control of the latter. They were of the opinion that a dual administration will result in the duplication of personnel and infrastructure (GOI: 1946; p.111). The Bhore Committee, which was set up around the time of independence, clearly spelt out the duties of a school health service and even today it represents the most comprehensive view of this programme. According to the committee, the duties of a school health service are:“ (1) Health measures, preventive and curative, which include (a) the detection and treatment of defects and (b) the creation and maintenance of a hygienic environment in and around the school, and (2) measures for promoting positive health which should include: (a) the provision of supplementary food to improve the nutritional state of the child, (b) Physical culture through games, sports and gymnastic exercises and through corporate recreational activities and (c) health education through formal instruction and practice of the hygienic mode of life (GOI: 1946; p112) This comprehensive definition is valid even in the present context and therefore the group recommends that it be adopted as a working definition for this subject.
area. Thus the major components that have to be included in the school health programme are medical care, hygienic school environment, and school lunch, health, yoga and physical education. This committee had recommended that the school health service must be introduced in phases whereby primary schools are covered first and then extended to secondary and high schools and colleges. Two teachers were to be identified in each school and trained to carry out health duties. At the same time the committee recognized the importance of orienting other teachers to identify signs of ill health and liaise with the school and doctors (GOI: 1946; p.112).

As far as health education was concerned the Bhore Committee opined that: "Formal classroom instruction in health matters should, in respect of the primary school children, be reduced to the minimum. What is essential is that hygienic habits be inculcated" (GOI: 1946; p.112). This recommendation is valid even today and therefore should be a guideline for evolving syllabus. In 1958, the school health division was established in the Ministry of Health Welfare in order to strengthen health education programmes for young people. This division served as a resource center for the NCERT, the Department of Education and the Directorate of Adult Education. There have been efforts to integrate health education into school curricula with the Central Bureau of Health Education playing an important role in collaboration with the NCERT. This integrated perspective to school health provided a synergistic approach between health and education, rather than seen as separate programmes. This integrated vision was subsequently lost both conceptually and in practice. Instead of the school health programme being integrated with the curriculum of health and physical education it became a 'vertical' programme of the Health Ministry while teachers in schools dealt with health education and physical education separately (NCERT, 2006).

A review of the policy and curricular documents of the Ministry of Education shows that up to the late 1960s there was a comprehensive approach to the subject than during the later years where it gets fragmented into physical education and health education with little or no reference to the necessity of school lunch or medical checkups. An intensive pilot project was undertaken by the National Institute of Health
and Family Welfare (NIHFW) and it came up with a number of suggestions. It stressed on the need for school health education to be intensified, sanitation in schools to be improved, nutritional programmes for the children and medical services to be provided. The school health programme was probably performing poorly because it was administratively under the control of the Ministry of Health with little interaction with the education departments at all levels. In this curriculum we would like to emphasise that the various components of the school health programme must be an integral part of ‘Health and Physical Education’. In fact health and nutrition programmes should form the basis for health and nutrition education rather than just focusing on ‘creating awareness’ in children about what they should eat, especially when a large percentage of children do not have access to adequate food (NCERT, 2006).

Controversy in making Physical Education a compulsory subject

We have been hearing the cry for making Physical Education a compulsory subject in schools and colleges for many decades. But no necessary steps have been taken on this basis yet. While the other subjects like Science, Mathematics and languages get ample emphasis and importance in the academic level, Physical Education is considered to be secondary. Such a marginalization should not be allowed. Government, educationists and policy makers should understand the fact that, Physical exercises and games will foster and enhance the students concentration and study skills rather than making them lazy and idle. It will also inculcate in them a good social sense. Students from their elementary stage itself get enough exposure to enrich their physical as well as mental health through physical activities. Now days In Schools in many states, there are not enough teachers appointed for Physical Education, because of the wrong policy taken by the Govt. regarding the strength of students. The concept of being a ‘special subject’ is to be changed. Instead P.E. must be made a part and parcel of the curriculum. Those who excel in sports and games should be awarded with grace marks, so that it will encourage healthy competition among the students and impart the feeling that P.E. is a real gate way to the zenith of progress and prosperity. As a whole, P.E. must be made a compulsory subject in the curriculum from elementary to the graduation levels irrespective the other specialization, sports schools and training centers should be
implemented even in the villages, so that we can produce a good output which will enable us to go in par with the other developed countries in the international levels and world meets.

Children need to be nurtured in a way that will enhance their cognitive development and physical development as well. This means providing everything possible to support development. One of the most important components is play. Play is a critical activity which enhances children’s development. Play allows children to consolidate other elements of life together in their own way and according to their simple experience. This is when creativity explodes to the fullest making it a very critical part of life. Since cognitive development has everything to do with learning, it’s very important that cognition is developed and in turn improve retaining of learned information from school. The children’s zeal to learn is intimately associated with the zeal to play; the role of adults is to provide the conducive environment. Considering the belief that, the primary basis of play is found in man’s nature and that playful activities are important agencies and basis of education. Therefore education through playful activities or education through physical activities is a vital instrument of education. Highlighting the importance of physical education process, it has been said that “Physical education process which is divine given, should be motherly fed and fatherly nourished in the young age of child” (Ramachandran, 2011).

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The purpose of the study is to develop a Manual (Guide) to Physical Education Activity for school children in Kerala State.

The subordinate purposes of the study are:

1. The philosophy behind this project.
2. To find out the view of the parents, educationists, principals of schools and policy makers towards physical education activities.
3. To develop an outline for Physical activity modules for different types of activities to be carried out.

LIMITATIONS

➢ Lack of specific test will be considered as limitation of this study
➢ No sophisticated equipments and reliable test or any tools are used in this study and these too can be considered as the limitation of the study.
➢ As in India we don’t have any model to compare so far as developing resource manual is concerned, the depth may lack in getting the information in Indian context, may be considered as the limitation in the present study.

DELIMITATIONS

➢ This study was delimited to the School children of elementary level (Age 4-8 years) of Kerala state.
➢ This study was delimited to the self developed questionnaire and guidelines obtained from NCERT , CBSE schools etc.

DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION OF TERMS

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

An integral part of total education process, is a field of endeavour which has its own 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 realizing these outcomes (Bucher, 1972).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure. Physical inactivity has been identified fourth leading
risks factor for global mortality causing an estimated 3.2 million death globally. (www.who.int/topics/physical-activity/en)

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

Is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure. Physical inactivity has been identified fourth leading risk factor for global mortality causing an estimated 3.2 million death globally (WHO, 2013). Physical activity is an important part of both healthy lifestyle and a child’s daily routine says, Sallis (1993). Development of good health and fitness habits in childhood is associated with physical fitness as an adult (Harsha, 1995). Participation in physical activity is an important part of a child’s normal psychological development and self image.

**COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Is the construction of thought process, including remembering, problem solving, and decision making from childhood through adolescence to adulthood (www.healthofchildren.com/C/Cognitive Development.html).

**AFFECTION DEVELOPMENT**

Is the centered around the development of social, emotional and personality, characteristics and self concepts. The emotional area of development includes feeling such as anxiety, fear, sadness, anger, happiness, love and affection. Ethods of expressing emotions must be provided in order to maintain a healthy mental state (www.healthofchildren.com/C/Cognitive Development.html).

**PSYCHOMOTOR DEVELOPMENT**

Is progressive, acquisition of skills involving both mental and motor activities (www.freedictionary.com)
GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

Abilities usually acquired during infancy and early childhood as part of a child’s motor development (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/gross_motor_skill).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. Although India has traditionally led the Nation in educational excellence, clear statements about what students should know and be able to do are necessary to maintain this strong tradition. With this study the standard of Physical activity status of children can be uplifted. We believe that these standards will greatly assist parents and educators in preparing students for the twenty first century.

2. To promote social development and emotional control through participation in games and sports- Participation in sports and games can make the children engaged and it will result in their social development through mutual understanding and mingling. Physical exercises and games keep the people happy and they evolve in them a feeling of self respect and responsibility. Since it controls their emotional level, it can balance their mental stress and strain, so that they get a good emotional control. Since they mingle with children from various spheres, the entire physical education process becomes a microcosm of the present society and the participants’ good social sense through it.

3. To provide base for sports excellence in the country which may later help in winning medals at the international level- Physical Education programme should be started from the grass root level, with the clear determination of moulding elite athletes for the country.

4. To provide opportunities to develop life time skills and fitness- Regular physical activity provides numerous health benefits- from leaner bodies and lower blood pressure to improved mental health and cognitive functioning. The School P.E. programme promotes physical activity and can teach skills as well as form or
change behaviours, it holds an important key to influence health and well being across the life span.

5. The study helps the children to promote health and physical well being of the youth in order to function effectively. Regular Physical activity in childhood and adolescence improves strength and endurance, helps to build healthy bones and muscles, helps control weight, reduces anxiety and stress, increases self esteem and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels. School should ensure that P.E. is provided to all students in all grades and taught by qualified teachers. They must play a key role in reversing this trend by designing programs that

- Teach students motor skills necessary to participate in a wide variety of Physical Activities.
- Help the students to understand the link between physical activity and good health.
- Convince the least athletic students that the Physical activity has the immediate benefits of reducing stress building self-esteem, and controlling weight as well as being fun and inexpensive.