CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

CONTENTS

1.1 Significance of the Study
1.2 The Purpose of the Study
1.3 The Background of the Study
1.1 Significance of the Study

1.1.0 What is important, the Mind or the Body?

The well-known doctrine of "a sound mind in a sound body" was never successfully accepted in India, either in theory or in practice, during and before the British regime. It was neglected either under the artificial conditions of wealth and luxury or under the delusion that the mind and spirit are superior to physical conditions.

The proponents of the developments of mind and spirit argue that most of the people earn their living wholly or partly by the activity of their brains and not by the strength of their muscles. In developing countries where 80% of the people live below the line of poverty it is said that the people earn their living through muscular strength and not by the activity of mind only. Hence, naturally one would find a controversy between these two. There are people who have conceived the idea that muscular development is opposed to mental or spiritual development and the way to develop the mind or the soul is to neglect or suppress the development of the body because it is a man's brain that makes him a man and not mere an animal. But, whatever belief one may have of the mystery of mind and spirit the fact remains that the life one lives on this earth has a
physical basis. When the laws of physical health and bodily development are neglected, the mind decays, and where the neglect is great, pain, disease and death quickly follows.

The idea of neglecting the body, to improve the mind works just as well as that of killing the goose to get the golden egg. It is the physical life force, built up by muscular development and activity that creates the golden egg of mental power. Therefore, one cannot afford to devote one’s whole time to the development of the brain and neglect the development of muscles. Without vigorous bodily health—well developed muscles—the brain health is not possible. Further, developing the brains will not make the people physically weak, unless they wholly neglect their bodily developments, and developing their muscles will not make them mentally stupid unless they wholly neglect their mental education. Thus, the development of the mind and the development of the physique are not the two opposite poles but, they supplement each other. Reasonable development of muscular strength and bodily beauty provides a more vigorous and effective brain. The only needed thing is the harmonious co-ordination between the two. This idea of bringing in co-ordination between the development of physique and mind gave rise to a new concept of physical education.
1.1.1 The growing concept of physical education

The old concept of physical education used by human communities all over the world in ancient time was to develop fitness for survival in their struggle for existence including the capacity to protect against enemies.

The review of the past history of humanity shows that the two small groups of people - the early Greeks and Romans had influenced the world greatly before the dawn of the Christian era. The Greeks attempted to interpret the philosophy of physical education. They encouraged it for the development of an individual as well as good social order. The Olympic games were started by them for better understanding between the participants and to develop sportsmanship. The Romans used physical education for military ends. At the later stage Sweden and Denmark developed gymnastic systems for better health and fitness of the people. The English contributed team games and developed play-spirit. In U.S.A. physical education found a place to give expression to the democratic way of life of the people. Russian movement in the past decades emphasized stamina and endurance through physical education, to improve the health of the masses. India too used physical education for physical development, defence and recreation.
Physical education has thus been used by society for many ages to safeguard its welfare, and ensure the development of the individual. Physical education was also emphasized to prepare the youth for the defence of the country and for nurturing a sense of loyalty to the group.

With the advent of science, interest in the development of health and the efficient functioning of the body led to their inclusion as objectives of physical education. Neuromuscular skills, mental alertness, worthy use of leisure and social adjustment were considered as desirable outcomes of physical education.

In recent years, mass participation programmes, recreative activities, adaptive physical education and keep-fit movement have found a place in physical education. All these indicate that physical education has never remained static; it has always remained a dynamic aspect of education.

The modern concept of physical education does not restrict itself to an emphasis on imparting instruction in physical activities only. Through the use of physical activities, physical education aims at ensuring the whole-hearted participation of the child as a total inseparable unit of body, mind and spirit so that the activities may prove to be real life experience, that is capable of educating the child physically, mentally and morally. Charles Bucher (1967)
has rightly said that "physical education is an integral part of the total education process and has as its aim the development of physically, mentally, emotionally and socially fit citizens through the medium of physical activities".

1.1.2 The aims and objectives of physical education

As stated in the National Plan of Physical Education in India (1956) the aim of physical education must be to make every child physically, mentally, and emotionally fit and also to develop in him such personal and social qualities as will help the child to live happily with others and to be a good citizen. In brief, it can be stated that the following general objectives of physical education are laid down in the National Plan:

i. The development of organic fitness

ii. The development of neuro-muscular skills, and

iii. The development of character and personality.

From the concepts and general objectives discussed so far, it is obvious that the main concern of physical education is to help the child to grow and develop physically along with learning to fit in with one's social environment and adjust to life around.

The effectiveness of physical education programmes can be judged from the educational outcomes. Clear realization
of the objectives of the programme and understanding of suitable testing and measurement techniques and procedures are essential to determine the results.

1.1.3 The need for the study

Since the aim of physical education is to achieve the growth of children physically, mentally, morally and emotionally and to gain the power of adjustment to environment as stated in terms of objectives in the National Plan of physical education, have to be realized, and testing or measurement programme adopted should facilitate the judgement of results in the light of these objectives. Judgement of results in turn naturally demands the clear understanding of the criterion to be measured and the existing norms to be compared with. Even for the assessment of the very first objective of development of organic fitness. It is necessary to have the clear understanding of the components underlying organic fitness. From the study of biology and from the studies related to child growth and development one can now realize that it is the wholeness that is involved in behaviour not merely a part of man. Physical education, therefore, has to meet the biological needs of the child and promote its growth and development at different age levels meeting specific needs, with a full knowledge of its body mechanism. Thus, physical education should help to improve and strengthen the body through its muscular and other organic
system, through activities involving neuro-muscular co-ordination. Good health, physical fitness, skills in movements, the development of strength, agility etc., are all now accepted as benefits one seeks through physical education. From these good health and physical fitness need to be clarified further. Physical fitness refers to the functional capacity of the individual to perform tasks requiring muscular activity. A child should possess, according to age, a certain height and weight and he must also have well developed organs. The child should be able to perform work efficiently with minimum use of energy. A certain minimum level of fitness is needed for every child. But, the concept of minimum level needs careful thinking. What is that minimum? Who is to be considered fit and who is not? Needs some bases or evidences upon which the decisions can be made.

Thousands of studies conducted in Western Countries offer huge theoretical knowledge about child growth in various aspects. Studies conducted, in the last three decades, on growth and physical development of infants and children have contributed such a bulk of knowledge that has given birth to a new subject - "child development" - which is gaining a status of specialization. These studies reveal that there is regularity of sequence and pattern of growth which makes it possible to make predictions regarding the future growth. The studies further reveal that the rates of growth of
different parts of the body differ and the rates of growth of a particular part of the body may also differ at different ages. To facilitate the comparison of a child's growth with that of other children, the norms, figures and charts pertaining to physical measurements of children have been prepared by the western researchers. In India, it is difficult to apply those norms prepared for the children of western countries to the Indian children, as they differ in their socio-cultural environment, biological inheritance and in many other respects. Hence, it becomes inevitable to prepare such norms for the Indian Children, independently and separately for each individual state, as all the states of the country are unique in nature and differ from one another in many respects. The present study would be a good beginning in the desired direction.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to collect data for different aspects of physical growth of children from age ten plus to twelve plus, residing in the district of Kheda, for setting up norms for different measures at different periods of growth and to study the growth of weight, height and other measures to a few other relevant variables, especially, sex, area of residence - urban and rural - and socio-economic levels.
The second purpose is to furnish the informations to the Teachers, Head Masters and Parents so that they may revise their views and deal with the children accordingly.

The third and the latest purpose of the present study is to open up a new direction of study for the persons working in the field of physical education as many of them think that there is a limited scope for research in the field of physical education.

1.3 The Background of the Study

The present researcher had an opportunity to work as a teacher educator in the teacher education college for physical education. He was deeply associated with the growth and development programme for students during the service in a teacher education college. Being an enlightened guardian and a teacher educator he took keen interest in the growth and development programmes under physical education. This interest encouraged him to study the literature on growth and development of the children. And such studies lead him towards the research in the field of physical education.

The present researcher was able to get a number of studies related to the physical growth of infants and a considerable number of studies related to adolescents. But, he was surprised to see that the childhood period has been left untouched.
Further, a few studies were made in the last four decades or more to utilize the data on body measurements for the evaluation of nutritional status and the general health of children in this country. But, no concentrated efforts have been made to establish the norms for other anthropometric measurements for age, rate of growth and pattern of physical development. Certain isolated observations are on record but, their significance is difficult to judge for lack of accurate background information and uniformity in the methods adopted in obtaining them. Moreover, it would be fallacious to think that the children residing in one state resemble the children residing in other states, in their anthropometric measurements since there is a wide range of differences amongst the species residing in the country.

To overcome these fallacies of inference and to establish the badly needed standards of reference of growth and development of children of Gujarat State, the need to carry out a study on an accurate and scientific basis was acutely felt. Hence, the study on hand was taken up by the present researcher.