CHAPTER – 1
INTRODUCTION

Ever since this world came into existence, man has proved himself to be the most ambitious and resourceful species. In his struggle for survival, he has outsmarted all other inhabitants of this earth. This unique trait has even made him to fight wars with other fellow beings to assert his supremacy. Sports and games have always provided him a legitimate outlet for amicably exhibiting his superiority over the others. Unlike the wars, sports is the only arena where he can assert his combative instincts, defeat the others and still expect to be applauded and rewarded even by the opponents. It is but natural that sports has attracted significant attention, more so in the present day world when scientific advancements have made the man to look beyond horizon.

Sports performance, like any other type of human performance, is a highly complex process and is a product of several internal and external factors encompassing all the aspects of human personality. It is highly erroneous to even think that sports performance is determined exclusively by the physique and physical abilities. Sports performance is a psychomotor performance and for its improvement an athlete depends heavily on his own psychological make-up. It is becoming more and more significant to identify and utilize the psychological factors that are particularly important in sport settings, specially those related to athletic performance. Various interpersonal variables that influence the performance of athletes are being examined and employed extensively to enhance their performance.
The increased concern of the society and the psychologists for the performance of athletes at the National and Inter-National levels has transformed sports competition into a highly exciting enterprise. Regional and National prestige is frequently at stake. Society takes pride in the performance of athletes who represent a specific region or country. Perhaps this is the reason why athletes are under pressure to win and to create records at all costs. The whole process induces stress, anxiety, requires mental stimulation and allied responses in the athletes, the degree of which depends on his inner dispositions, self-esteem and the situational factors that surround him.

It happens quite frequently that individual as well as team athletes do not produce their optimum performance in a competition, which would normally be expected of them, despite having the abilities, both technically and tactically, and their excellent physical condition. Indeed, an athlete’s actual ability depends not merely on his physical, technical and tactical qualities but also on his psychological profile. Therefore, the psychological considerations have assumed very significant global interest in the domain of athletics, sports and games.

Athletes must understand that it is impossible to be courageous if at first you are not afraid. Anxiety and fear are natural and healthy human emotions, experienced at times by all competitors. These emotions and their dispositions do separate athletes from one another. Self-esteem and courage, which is the willingness and the ability to feel the fear, face it, and enjoy the challenge of attacking fear and busting through it in important competitions, is what separates champions from others who just compete.
ANXIETY

Sports Psychology is playing an important role which has made us realize the relationship of different psychological factors with competitive performance. The study of the effect of anxiety on motor performance has become a major topic of interest to sports psychologist. The problem of anxiety has been considered important in all areas of human activity including sports. To the one and same stimulus individuals respond differently and their anxiety level also varies. The relationship between anxiety and athletic performance has already been widely investigated in the field of sports psychology. In fact, anxiety might deter learning of all sorts or might stimulate it. According to Bugelski (1962), attention is a primary factor in any type of learning. Attention may result because of desire for reward, desire to escape punishment, curiosity etc. but basic to attention is anxiety. Bugelski considers that the task of the teacher is of creating the necessary degree of anxiety. It is a difficult question to answer as to how much anxiety is to be created, for if the anxiety is too much, it would create a need to avoid the learning situation and too little anxiety would result in a lack of attention. Bugelski suggests that by arousing student’s curiosity the anxiety is created because curiosity is a disguised form of anxiety. Thus, the person’s curiosity must be aroused and he should be given initial task in which he is successful.

In recent years, the psychologists, coaches and athletes have become increasingly aware of the role that anxiety plays in an athlete’s performance in competitions. This awareness has been followed by an increased interest in assessing anxiety responses and analyzing their source. In athletic performance nearby every concern of human endeavour is thought to be effected somehow by anxiety.
Anxiety as an emotion that is difficult to define and even more
difficult to reliably detect in performance but the importance of anxiety
as a powerful influence in contemporary life is increasingly recognised
and manifestations of current concern with anxiety phenomena are
obliquely reflected in sports, literature, arts, science, and all other
facets of our culture.

Anxiety is an exceedingly complex concept with a variety of
overtones and nuances of meaning from ordinary usage, as well as
from psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis. The word anxiety
means to designate a strongly personal, phenomenally experienced
feeling of distress and anguish.

Over the years, coaches and athletes have often used other less
technical terms to describe anxiety in competitive athletic situations.
Expressions such as “choking”, “psyched up”, “psyched out”, “having
butterflies”, “four O’clock player”, and “feeling high” vividly describe the
various effects anxiety can have on athletes. A close examination of
the meanings of these expressions reveals an interesting
phenomenon: Although anxiety has a negative effect on the
performance of some athletes, it enhances the performance of others.

Psychologically, anxiety is a very important phenomenon. Freud
(1936) was the first to define anxiety within the context of
psychological theory. According to him, “Anxiety is something felt, an
unpleasant effects of state or condition”. This state is characterized by
all that is covered by the word nervous apprehension or anxious
expectation and different discharge phenomena. Spielberger (1966)
defined anxiety as a state of arousal caused by threat to well being.
Here ‘state’ refers to the condition involving the entire organism and ‘arousal’ refers to a condition of tension, unrest or uneasyness or a readiness to act in response, whereby ‘threat’ refers to anticipation of pain or danger or serious inferences with goal seeking activities.

During competitive situations, the athletes are by and large fearful to some extant which eventually affects their performance under these stressful settings. It is usual to observe a player who either is unable to act because of fear or whose fears atleast interfere with his effective performance. The word ‘fear’ here refers to a rational appraisal of a real threatening situation and the term anxiety denotes an abnormal apprehension of such a situation. According to Frost (1971) “Anxiety is an uneasiness and feeling of forbidding often found when a person is about to embark on a hazardous venture; it is often accompanied by a strong desire to excel”. Hence, anxiety state arises from faulty adaptations to the stress and strains of life and is caused by over actions in an attempt to meet these difficulties. Many anxiety ridden persons often complain of a general loss of interest and inability to concentrate or think.

The more important the competition, the more likely the athlete will experience the anxiety symptoms. Spielberger (1966) had brought about two types of anxiety: state anxiety and trait anxiety. He defined state anxiety as an existing or immediate emotional state characterized by apprehension and tension. Trait anxiety was defined by him as a predisposition to perceive certain situations as threatening and to respond to the same with varying levels of state anxiety. Both state and trait anxiety have been further subdivided into cognitive and somatic anxiety.
Before any appropriate intervention strategy could be implemented, it might be useful for the athletes to keep a log or record of the various activities in which they would indicate how they perceive various situations and how they react to them. Therefore, before one can investigate such differential effectiveness, an appropriate diagnosis of source and response manifestation is required.

The athlete's emotional state before competition may very well determine his performance level. Many athletes report concern before the contest; such worry is natural but serves no constructive purpose. Too much worry often results in anxiety or fear, and the outcome will certainly be harmful to athletic productivity. However, a certain amount of anxiety enables the athlete to prepare for the competition.

Anxiety has a temporal relationship with performance. The level of anxiety evidenced prior to performance may be different from arousal during performance. Following a stressful situation, abrupt changes in reportable anxiety are often recorded. In general, anxiety level increases prior to a dangerous situation until they become relatively high, just before it is encountered. During performance anxiety is often lessened as the individual must concentrate on his own action rather than on his internalized fears. A number of theories exist concerning the effects of anxiety on performance, and all the theories seem to agree that maximum performance is reduced by too much anxiety (Dufty, 1962; Hull, 1943; and Wenier, 1965).

In the field of sports and motor behaviour several psychological studies have demonstrated that certain optimal levels of pre-competitive anxiety and arousal are instrumental in mobilizing psychological resources and facilitating athletic performance.
Research makes it plain that a moderate amount of anxiety in athletes is often an aid to superior performance. Ford (1968) for example, found no positive correlation between measures of anxiety and performance. However, he did find that some competitors did better when their anxiety levels were high, and that moderate levels of anxiety seemed to elicit increases in performance. Missiuro (1965) has also shown evidence that anxiety through the activation of phosphorylase and better utilization of liver glycogen, is instrumental in improving glycogen processing. This subsequently allows for a more profitable mobilization of energy resources in the tissues and organs.

A most useful new direction in stress research has been recently adopted that suggest an important principle for coaches to keep in mind is that the athletes may have their anxiety well under control, within the stress presented by athletics competition, however, with the addition of new life stresses (a death in the family, a break up with loved one, financial problems etc.) may increase the stress.

Hooch and Zubin (1950) states “Although it is widely recognised that anxiety is the most pervasive psychological phenomenon of our time and that it is the chief symptom in the neuroses and in the functional psychoses, there has been little or no agreement on its definition and very little if any, progress in its measurement. Over the past few years, it has been demonstrated (Gill, 1980; Weinberg & Genuchi, 1980) that state anxiety increases in athletes just prior to competition. The degree to which this occurs seems to be a function of competitive trait anxiety. However, there is some conflict among these studies over initial levels of state anxiety at various stages of competition.
According to Martens and Gill (1976) "the arousal manifested by stressful or threatening situation is called state anxiety". The findings of Faulkner (1980), Gruber and Beauchamp (1979) reveal that men were more anxious prior to the crucial game than they were to the easy game. Research of Scanlan (1977) and Gaudry & Pool (1972) indicates that state anxiety increases with failure and decreases with success. Singer (1980) states that relationship between anxiety and performance can be illustrated by the invested U-hypothesis which states that "performance improves with increasing level of arousal (anxiety) to an optimum point, while upon further increase in arousal (anxiety) cause performance impairment.

Anxiety is produced in sports mainly by what Spielberger calls the fear of failure in athletic competition. Athletes are not only afraid of losing a contest or scoring fewer points than usual, but of not performing as well as they had expected to. Tutko (1977) suggested that the athlete who could maintain a moderate level of anxiety would be most efficient performer.

MENTAL IMAGERY

The imagination is a faculty in humans and most other animals which produces, stores, and recalls the image used in a variety of cognitive activities, including those which motivate and guide action.

Imagination is what makes our sensory experience meaningful, enabling us to interpret and make sense of it, whether from a conventional perspective or from a fresh, original, individual one. It is what makes perception more than the mere physical stimulation of
sense organs. It also produces mental imagery, visual and otherwise, which is what makes it possible for us to think outside the confines of our present perceptual reality, to consider memories of the past and possibilities for the future, and to weigh alternatives against one another. Thus, imagination makes possible all our thinking about what is, what has been, and, perhaps most important, what might be.

Human mental activity may also be divided into thoughts and feelings that arise depicting “special states” of unreality and thoughts that occur during various levels of consciousness. The most important context in which to consider individual differences of mental life is one that reflects different modes of representation. Our thoughts vary in the ways we represent them to ourself. At time we may engage in internal self-talk. Socrates described thinking as “a discourse that the mind carries on with itself”. At other times, our thoughts may be represented by visual images. Moreover, the type of imagery may vary markedly between people or within a single person from time to time. Finally our thoughts may be constituted of both visual images and simultaneously occurring self-talk.

Sensation, perception and learning function together in a dynamic way for evolving the thought process. This takes place only in humans, because it needs the development of complex nervous system, and man alone has it. The thought process appears in the form of mental images. The seeing of an object in the outside world forms the image of the object in the mind and when a name in the form of a word is associated with the object the very mention of the word makes an image of the object in the mind. Thus, the ideas relating to the objects or events may appear in the form of images. All our mental
images are the reproduction of elements of the past sensation, perception, learning and experiences.

While we are seeing an object, sometimes, we fix our eyes on the object or person or on the event for few seconds or even few minutes. We are doing like this if the object or person or event has something to do with us personally, or if we are more interested in the object. The object puts strong impressions in our senses and these impressions do not fade away from our eyes for few seconds even after its disappearance. This is because while we fix our eyes on the object for long time the sensory nerves stimulate the brain centre and it takes few seconds for the brain centre to dissolve the impressions, which means the impressions fade away gradually and finally disappear. The sensory impressions take few seconds to stimulate the brain centre and therefore, it takes few seconds to the brain centre to leave away the impressions. As result of this, the image remains in the brain centre for few seconds even after the object is disappeared and retains the object in our eyes. This development sometimes is called as after-image. Everyone might have had such experience in the everyday life. We sometimes say that "it still stands before my eyes".

According to Murphy (1964), it is the 'Mind's eye'. This is taking place without any effort on the part of the individual. This type of after images are also stated as memory images. This type of images are sometimes stated as sensory impressions and they may be differentiated from memory images. In the first stage the images are called sensory impressions and in the second stage they are called memory images. If the sensory impressions are rearoused or made again to appear, then they are called memory images. The
impressions of the object are rearoused and the object is seen again, if this process takes place, it may be also called mental image.

Generally, image means a representation, or likeness of a person or object especially in sculpture or in painting. For example, the statue, effigy, the sculptured figure, portrait, picture, a carving and the like may be called as image. Image may also mean a visually formed reproduction of an object such as one formed in a mirror. Image also refers to a person or a thing that resembles closely another. It is exactly a copy of the other object or person. Psychologically, image means a mental representation of an object, an idea or a picture produced by a person from his past experience in his imagination. It is the personality characteristics presented to others by a person.

There were individual variations in reporting the sensory after-images. The painters and sculptors are supposed to be having very vivid visual after-images than others. So also the musicians and the instrumentalists have vivid auditory after-images than others. It is generally observed that children have better vivid after-images than the adults. Concrete objects and strange objects may produce better after-images than the normal objects and abstract ideas. The main reason for the painters, sculptors, musicians, and the instrumentalists to have better vivid sensory after-images is that they are put into vigorous training in the respective fields for years and also they develop more interest in their areas with strong motivation accepting them as their professional fields. These factors have much influence upon their sensory after-images.
Mental imagery (sometimes colloquially called visualization, or “seeing in the mind’s eye”) is experience that resembles perceptual experience, but which occurs in the absence of the appropriate stimuli for the relevant perception (Finke, 1989; McKellar, 1957).

Mental Imagery can be defined as a form of experience, but of course, evidence for the occurrence of any experience is necessarily subjective. Because of this, some authors, most notably the arch-behaviourist J.P. Watson (1913), have cast doubt out the scientific status and even the existence of imagery. Kosslyn (1983), who is probably the most influential contemporary imagery theorist prefer an alternative definition of ‘imagery’ to that given by J.B. Watson. Instead of understanding it primarily as a sort of experience, they prefer to view the term as referring to the particular type of cognitive process or “underlying representation” that is involved in these functions. These representations are consciously experienced as imagery in our original sense.

Visual imagery has numerous dimensions, including vividness, controllability, flexibility and what stimuli are present in the person’s image. Many visual images do not stand alone but are paired with internal speech, or self-talk. Thus, verbal “images” and visual images interact in complex ways to form total impressions of the world. The qualities which help in evaluating imagery include the following aspects.

**Vividness:** People vary as to how clearly they can bring up an image. Some produce, internal pictures that are fuzzy, while others produce very clear pictures.
**Controllability:** Some may easily call up an image based on past experience, while others have difficulty in recalling and recreating an image depicting past experiences.

**Flexibility:** Some players have the ability to function like a flexible camera lens; they can zoom in, scan and even rotate images. Others seems to lack this flexibility.

Imagery is generally stated as imageries in plural form in literary works for symbolic representations. Imagery means images in groups. When we want to state images collectively we state it by the concept imagery. Therefore, a group of collective images is called imagery. Imageries are the materials involved in the general processes of imagination. Imagery is the distinctive type of mental images formed by a particular individual. Psychologically, imagery also refers to the mental experience of something that is not immediately present to our senses. The objects of past sensory experiences exist in the memory. A series of mental images may be also called as imagery. Therefore, we have various kinds of mental images through our sensor experiences, such as visual images, auditory images, olfactory images, gustatory images, tactual images, kinesthetic images and so on. Certain images are more dominant over other images. However, certain images are dominant over other images, it depends upon the individual’s nature of experience.

Mental imagery is essentially a process of making connections. Whether one is forming connections between previously unassociated concepts or cognitive elements (neurological), making connections between one’s sense of self and one’s “idealized self” (Psychological),
finding new ways to connect with other people (sociological), or exploring and integrating new possibilities for personal growth (pedagogical), it all involves a certain degree of “creation of meaning”. It’s as though we are constantly connecting the dots within a great connect-the-dots drawing book, or discovering the patterns within patterns of an infinite cosmic mandela.

The nature of human thought and imagery has many dimensions. Thoughts may be highly structured and focused on solving a specific problem, or may be random, consisting of unstructured day dreams. Problem solving thoughts may be further subdivided into those that seek one best solution versus those that are divergent in nature, ranging over a long list of possibilities, all of which are useful. These some dimensions interact with sports performance and, at the same time, try to remain flexible and able to respond to the unexpected strategies of their opponents.

Galton’s (1883) achievements in the study of imagery and the individual differences in imagery were unique and also innovative. His studies were mainly on memory images. Galton has stated that memory images were the individual’s voluntary recall. Galton asked his subjects to recall the appearance of ‘this morning breakfast table’ to find out the type of picture of the ‘Mind’s eye’. His nature of work was to collect information about the frequencies and the vividness of the individual’s imagery. Galton was very much surprised on seeing the results of his study. Because some of his subjects had no imagery at all. But some had very vivid imagery. There were both memory images and after images involved in Galton’s study.
The movements of the hands and arms have been found better imagined visually when they are engaged in with the person’s eyes closed, or while blindfolded. Various kinds of blindfolded deed or eye-closed mental practice of physical skills have been used in attempts to improve sports performance. It has been also found that the self talk and the self-monitoring of images by internally talking increases the number of images produced as well as prolonging the time devoted to day dreaming. Imagery and images enhancement tend to rest on more than one sense, and images often include, sounds, touch, smells, and words. The adjustment of internal self-talk generally has two major goals: enabling the individual to cope better with potentially stressful situations; and helping the person to restructure reality in terms that are more amendable to good emotional health and effective physical or mental performance.

Lang (1979) has proposed a “Live-informational theory of emotional imagery”. This view maintains that the image in the brain is an organized, finite set of propositions about relationships, descriptions, and so on, which function as a preparatory set to respond. An emotional image contains two fundamental categories of statements; stimulus proportions and response propositions – the pattern of effector activity is determined by the response pattern that are included in the image structure.

The random mental activity and imagery of players moulded their emotional states and the way they approach physical effort. To varying degrees, players attempt to manage their mental lives in order to better control both their emotions and performance qualities on which these emotions rest. What a player thinks at any given time is a
combination of activity that just comes and activity modifications that the athlete imposes on himself or herself with varying degrees of success.

Among sports persons, mental imagery is an important term which reflect upon their whole performance in the game. How they think, how they react, how they adjust themselves according to the game situation, their attitude towards their opponent and their teammates, their personality view, how they attend and perceive, their vision, psychological stress and their personal and social factors which effect their performance are the main components of their mental imagery. Imagery based techniques have been used quite extensively in clinical psychology and psychotherapy, psychological and even spiritual "self-help", sports training, pain control, etc.

Mental imagery involves the athletes imagining themselves in a specific environment or performing a specific activity. The images should have the athlete performing these items very well and successfully. They should see themselves enjoying the activity and feeling satisfied with their performance. They should attempt to enter fully into the image with all their senses. Sight, hear, feel, touch, smell and perform as they would like to perform in real life.

Mental imagery can be useful in helping one to you re-focus when the need arises. For examples imagery of a previous best performance or previous best event focus can help get things back on track. One can also use imagery as a mean of re-focusing within the event, by imaging what he should focus on and feeling that focus. Mental imagery should not focus on the outcome but on the actions to achieve the desired outcome. When an athlete is in a fully relaxed
state, he/she is particularly receptive to mental imagery. The next stage is then to learn how to develop and apply mental imagery skills.

Mental imagery can be used; **To see success:** Many athletes “see” themselves achieving their goals on a regular basis, both performing skills at a high level and seeing the desired performance outcomes. **To motivate:** Before or during training sessions, calling up images of your goals for that session, or of a past or future competition or competitor can serve a motivational purpose. It can vividly remind you of your objective, which can result in increased intensity in training. **To perfect skills.** Mental imagery is often used to facilitate the learning and refinement of skills or skill sequences. The best athletes “see” and “feel” themselves performing perfect skills programs, routines, or plays on a very regular basis. **To familiarise.** Mental imagery can be effectively used to familiarize yourself with all kinds of things, such as a competition site, a race course, a complex play pattern or routine, a pre-competition plan, an event focus plan, a media interview plan, a refocusing plan, or the strategy you plan to follow. **To set the stage for performance:** Mental imagery is often an integral part of the pre-competition plan, which helps set the mental stage for a good performance. Athletes do a complete mental run through of the key elements of their performance. This helps draw out their desired pre-competition feelings and focus. It also helps keep negative thoughts from interfering with a positive pre-game focus.

Positive Mental Imagery (PMI) is a consulting service that provides mental training to help golfers improve their golf games by discovering how to use their abilities that they know they have. PMI products and services are designed to coach golfers in enhancing their
visualization, hearing and feel skills to gain a greater sense of their physical, mental and emotional bodies. Through learning to apply new mental skills, golfers can achieve sharp focus and concentration which results in better shot making, lower scores, and more enjoyment.

This unique ability of imagination bestowed upon us, the human beings, is perhaps the most neglected quality in the arena of sports. Stereo typed repetitions have failed to produce any significant results. This study is being, therefore, directed to explore the imaginative dimension of a segment of track and field athletes.

**SELF-ESTEEM**

The term self-esteem comes from a Greek word meaning “reverence for self”. The “self” part of self-esteem pertains to the values, beliefs and attitudes that we hold about ourselves. The “esteem” part of self-esteem describes the value and worth that one gives oneself. Simplistically self-esteem is the acceptance of ourselves for who and what we are at any given time in our lives.

Even though self-esteem has been studied for more than 100 years, specialists and educators continue to debate its precise nature and development. Nevertheless, they generally agree that parents and other adults who are important to children play a major role in laying a solid foundation for a child’s development.

Self-esteem is an academic and popular phenomenon, vigorously researched and debated, sometimes imbued with magical qualities, other times vilified as the bane of the West’s preoccupation with self. Though thousands of articles have been devoted to the topic,
and bookstores work to feed the public's appetite for advice on revealing, enhancing, and maintaining self-esteem. Conflicting claims and findings have placed the field in disarray. In a very real sense, self-esteem is a victim of its own popularity.

This concept of self-esteem is founded on the premise that it is strongly connected to actual competence and worthiness and the relationship between the two as one lives life. The most important component of self-esteem is often misunderstood as simply feeling good about oneself. Self-esteem stems from the experiences consciously and might be viewed as a person's overall judgement of himself or herself to self-competence and self-worth based on reality.

To understand self-esteem, it helps to break the term into two words. Esteem is a fancy word for thinking that someone or something is important or valuing that person or thing. For example, if you really admire your friend's dad because he volunteers at the fire department, it means you hold him in high esteem. And the special trophy for the most valuable player on a team is often called an esteemed trophy. This means the trophy stands for an important accomplishment.

And self means, yourself! When we put the two words together, it's easier to see what self-esteem is. It's how much you value yourself and how important you think you are. It's how you see yourself and how you feel about your achievements. Self-esteem isn't bragging about how great you are. It's more like quietly knowing that you're worth a lot (priceless, in fact). It's not about thinking you're perfect—because nobody is—but knowing that you're worthy of being loved and accepted.
Self-esteem may be defined as the total appraisal of the person and his appearance, background and origin. What man thinks of himself and what he deserves that others should think about him, is known as self-esteem. The assessment of self-esteem determines the nature of attitude of an individual towards himself.

Having good self-esteem is also the ticket to making good choices about your mind and body. If you think you’re important, you’ll be less likely to follow the crowd if your friends are doing something dumb or dangerous. If you have good self-esteem, you know that you’re smart enough to make your own decisions. You value your safety, your feelings, your health – your whole self! Good self-esteem helps you know that every part of you is worth caring for and protecting.

The pattern of perception developed by the individual as he grows from infancy to childhood and maturity is what is called self-structure. A new born infant finds the world a confused mass. As he grows up he begins to make differentiation out of the blurred impressions that is his world. The child begins to see himself as a person somehow separate from the rest of the world and from other people. He slowly begins to learn that certain things belong to him and those have become a part of him. As he reaches the adolescence and adulthood he learns to distinguish between what belongs to him and what is actually part of him. This individual's perception of himself is known as self-esteem. The part of environment in which he involved himself is known a phenomenal self and the rest of the environment of
which he is aware or to which he responds, his phenomenal environment or perceived environment.

Thus self-esteem is what the individual thinks of as his actual self. It is 'me' the phenomenal or perceived self which includes the self-esteem and those aspects of the environment that an individual identifies with himself as 'my family', 'my school', 'my home' etc. Both the self esteem and perceived or phenomenal self are included within the phenomenal or perceived environment. This is also referred to as his personal field, the other psychological field as his life space. It may thus be said that the confused blur or sensations experienced by the infant becomes differentiated during the childhood years, in a private-world (self-structure) which consists of himself described here as self-esteem, the things, events and people with which he is personally involved, described as phenomenal or perceived self, and the world as he sees it described as perceived or phenomenal environment.

Allport (1961) writes that “Self is some thing which we are immediately aware of. We think it as warm central private region of our life. As such it plays a crucial part in our consciousness, in our personality, and in our organism. Thus, it is considered as a core of our being.”

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There are a variety of ways to think about the self. Two of the most widely used terms are self-esteem and self-concept. Self-esteem generally refers to how we feel about or how we value ourselves. Self-concept can also refer to the general idea we have of ourselves and self-esteem can refer to particular measures about components of self-concept. Some authors even use the two terms interchangeably.

James (1890) states that the intervening variable is personal expectations. His formula is:

$$\text{Self-esteem} = \frac{\text{Success}}{\text{Pretensions}}$$

That is, increasing self-esteem results when success is improved relative to expectations. An interesting corollary to this equation is that success is limited by expectations and self-esteem.

$$\text{Success} = \frac{\text{Pretensions}}{\text{Self-esteem}}$$

This equation states that success, especially the limits of one's success, can be improved by increasing expectations and / or self-esteem. However, the research on the relationship between self-esteem / self-concept suggests that success in a particular subject area is not really changing one's self-concept (knowledge of one's self) or even self-esteem (one's subjective evaluation of one's value or worth), but rather is impacting one's expectation about future success based on one's past experience.

Because people's outcomes in life depend heavily on how others perceive and evaluate them, they are motivated to convey
certain impressions of themselves to others and to refrain from conveying other undesired impressions. Thus, no matter what else they may be doing, people typically monitor and control their public impression – a process known as self-presentation or impression management. A great deal of human behaviour is, in part, determined or constrained by people's concerns with other's impressions and evaluations of them.

The sociometer theory suggests that the self-esteem system is an internal, psychological gauge that monitors the degree to which the individual is being included versus excluded by other people. Self-esteem, then, is an internal representation of social acceptance and rejection. The sociometer perspective provides a framework for understanding the extensive literature on self-esteem, as well as the link between self-esteem and emotional and behavioural problems.

There is a direct relationship between the perception of social success and self-esteem. This success may include confidence in appearance, academic ability, athletic ability, or social relationship. Self-esteem might be viewed then, as a barometer of how well one is doing socially. People seek a certain amount of social acceptance and belongings in order to view themselves as successful and have positive feelings about themselves.

Bednar et al (1989) define self-esteem “as a subjective and realistic self-approval”. They point out that “self-esteem reflects how the individual views and values the self at the most fundamental levels of psychological experiencing” and that different aspects of the self create a “profile of emotions associated with the various roles in which the person operates.. and (that self-esteem) is an enduring and
affective sense of personal value based on accurate self-perceptions”. According to this definition, low self-esteem would be characterized by negative emotions associated with the various roles in which a person operates and by either low personal value or inaccurate self-perceptions. Furthermore, describe paradoxical examples of individuals of substantial achievement who report deep feelings of low self-esteem. The authors suggest that a theory of self-esteem must take into account the important role of an individual’s “self-talk and self-thoughts” as well as the perceived appraisal of others. They conclude that “high or low levels of self-esteem... are the result and the reflection of the internal, affective feedback the organism most commonly experience”. They point out that all individuals must experience some negative feedback from their social environment, some of which is bound to be valid. Thus a significant aspect of the development and maintenance of self-esteem must address how individuals cope with negative feedback.

It is reasonable to assume that self-esteem does not exist in a vacuum, but is the product of evaluating oneself against one or more criteria and reaching expected standards on these criteria. These evaluations are unlikely to be made consciously or deliberately, but by means of preconscious or intuitive thought processes. It is likely that these criteria vary not only between cultures and sub cultures, but also within them. The criteria may also vary by gender. Furthermore, the standards within a family, subculture, or culture that have to be met on these criteria may also vary by gender. For example, higher standards on a criterion of assertiveness may be required for self-esteem in males than in females. In addition, the criteria against which the worth and acceptability of an individual are estimated may carry different
weights across cultures, subcultures, and families, and for the sexes. Criteria may have different weighting for different families, some giving more weight in their total self-esteem to physical appearance, and others to personal traits.

Criteria for self-esteem frequently employed in American self-concept research include physical appearance, physical ability, achievement, peer acceptance, and a variety of personal traits (Harter, 1983). Western and Eastern cultures vary in how the self is defined and the criteria against which the self is estimated. These sources of variation imply that some children are likely to have acquired criteria of self-esteem at home and in their immediate community that differ from those assumed valuable in the classroom and in the school.

The matter of what constitute appropriate criteria of self-esteem cannot be settled empirically by research or even theory. These criteria are deeply imbedded within a culture, promoted and safeguarded by the culture's religious, moral, and philosophical institutions.

Although, it is important to value an infant simply for the fact that he or she has been born, if criteria for self-esteem that are applied later in the child's life include characteristics that are present at birth – such as one's nationality, race, or gender, then the ability of all citizens to achieve self-esteem in a society of diverse groups, especially when one group is culturally or otherwise dominant, is problematic. Furthermore, if children are taught to base their self-appraisals on favourable comparisons of themselves with others, then the identification of inferior others, whether individuals or groups, may
become endemic in a society. When the two tendencies to base self-esteem on characteristics that are present at birth and to elevate one's self-appraisal by identifying others who are inferior on any given criterion occur together in a society, conditions develop which are likely to support prejudice and oppression.

If, on the other hand, the criteria address personal attributes that are susceptible to individual effort and intention, such as contributing to one's community, then all citizens have the potential to achieve feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and dignity. Thus, while a person's nationality might not be an appropriate basis of self-esteem, accepting responsibility for the conduct of one's nation in the world and contributing to the welfare of one's nation might be appropriate bases for positive self-appraisal. In any case, the designation of appropriate criteria is not primarily the responsibility of educators, but of the moral institutions of the community and culture at large that educators are duty-bound to support. This view that nationality in and of itself may be a faulty basis for self-esteem is not to deny the value and desirability of love of country or patriotism, both of which contribute to involvement in the country's welfare. Nor should this view be interpreted as belittling civic and national pride, which can motivate and mobilize efforts to work on behalf of one's community and country.

A related issue is the role of reflected glory in self-esteem, which has both apparently inappropriate and potentially beneficial effects. Should individuals' self-esteem be influenced by the performance of their hometown football team or their country's Olympic teams? According to research on “basking in reflected glory” reported by Cialdini et al (1976), the tendency to strengthen
one's association with those who are visibly successful and to distance oneself from those who have experienced obvious failures as means of self-enhancement is a common phenomenon. In as much as a sports fan makes no real contribution to the team's performance, that performance would seem to be an inappropriate source of either pride or shame and of fluctuations in the fan's self-esteem. On the other hand, the capacity to experience reflected glory and reflected shame might provide powerful motivation for community action. Action on behalf of one's community would seem to be legitimate basis for self-esteem.

Shifts in self-estimation based on the assessments of significant others may be developmentally appropriate for young children. In an adult, however, revision of self-estimation based on the perceived or imagined assessments of another adult that are at variance with one's own requires placing oneself in the role of child with respect to the other adult. The essence of self-esteem for mature adults is to take seriously the assessments of others, but not take them more seriously than they take their own self-assessments.

While adults can seek contexts and interpersonal situations that maximize their self-esteem and can strive to avoid those that minimize it, children are at the mercy of the situations in which adults place them. In as much as young children vary in background, abilities, culture, and so forth, a wide rather than narrow range of interpersonal situations should be provided for them. In other words, an early childhood program is most likely to enhance children's self-esteem and their capacities to deal with inevitable fluctuations in self-esteem when a variety of types of interpersonal situations is available to them.
Although self-esteem is forming it is not measurable before the age of five or six because up until this time the two functions of self-esteem, competence and worthiness, operate independently of each other (Mruk: 1995). Between the ages of five and eight self-esteem becomes increasingly defined. Children begin to make judgments about their self worth and competence in five areas: physical appearance, social acceptance, scholastic ability, athletic and artistic skills and behaviour (Joseph, 1994). These areas make up the child's global view of his / her self. Self-esteem emerges at this point in childhood because the child is able to initiate behaviour with competence, evaluate his or her accomplishments in terms of their worthiness and experience a process or attitude between the two (Mruk: 1995). As a child's age increases so do their social contacts, life experiences and the expectations placed upon them. The child develops an increasing awareness of those things they are good at and those they are not good at. Inevitably self-esteem begins to effect behaviour as the individual attempts to maintain and protect their sense of self worth against the challenges, problems and experiences of life. Self-esteem acts as a filter through which we judge our performances. In this way it determines how we approach future tasks.

By adulthood self-esteem has changed from a mostly reactive phenomenon to one that can be consciously acted upon to either increase or decrease feelings of self worth. As adults we are confronted by many situations that affect our levels of self-esteem. Epstein (1979) has extensively researched those situations that most typically affect self-esteem in adulthood. These are success-failure experiences where individuals either deal successfully or
unsuccessfully with a situation and acceptance rejection situations which are interpersonal in nature. Romantic relationships, peer relationships, and relationships with family members are typical contexts which can effect self-esteem.

In sum, healthy self-esteem refers to realistic and accurate positive appraisals of the self on significant criteria across a variety of interpersonal situations. It also includes the ability to cope with the inevitability of some negative feedback. By contrast, unhealthy self-esteem, as in narcissism, refers to insensitivity to others, with excessive preoccupation with the self and one’s own image and appearance in the eyes of others.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

This study was focused on the selected psychological variables i.e. anxiety, mental imagery and self-esteem among sprinters, jumpers and throwers who had participated in the All India Inter-University Athletics Championship. Attempt was made to find out the differences among athletes from northern and southern regions, successful and unsuccessful athletes and among the two gender groups with regard to the selected psychological parameters.

The study was titled as “Study of Psychological Variables Among Athletes”

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following were the objectives of the study:
1. To find out the differences between athletes from northern and southern regions on the variables anxiety, mental imagery and self-esteem.

2. To find out the differences between successful and unsuccessful athletes on the variables anxiety, mental imagery and self-esteem.

3. To find out the differences between male and female athletes on the variables anxiety, mental imagery and self-esteem.

4. To find out the interaction between region, performances and gender with respect to the selected psychological variables.

5. To find out the differences between sprinters, jumpers and throwers on the variables anxiety, mental imagery and self-esteem.

6. To find out the implications of this research and to make consequent suggestions.

**HYPOTHESES**

The following were the hypotheses of this study:

1. There would be significant differences between northern and southern region athletes on the variable state and trait anxiety as well as on sports competition anxiety.

2. There would be significant differences with regard to mental imagery variables between athletes from northern region and southern region.
3. The athletes from northern region would differ significantly from the southern region athletes on the self esteem variables.

4. The better performance group (i.e. successful athletes) would differ significantly from unsuccessful group on state-trait anxiety, and sport competition anxiety.

5. There would be significant differences on mental imagery variables between successful and unsuccessful athletes.

6. There would be significant differences between successful and unsuccessful athletes with regard to variable self-esteem.

7. The two gender groups would differ significantly from each other with regard to state-trait and sports competition anxiety.

8. The male athletes would be significantly different from female athletes with regard to mental imagery variables.

9. The male and female athletes would differ significantly from each other on the variable self-esteem.

10. There would be significant interaction effect between region, performance and gender on all the studied variables i.e. (a) anxiety (b) mental imagery and (c) self-esteem.

11. There would be significant differences between sprinters, jumpers and throwers with regard to the variables (a) anxiety, (b) mental imagery, and (c) self-esteem.
DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATION OF THE TERMS USED

1. **Athlete**: A sportsperson competing in the athletic meet at Inter-University level and participating in sprints, jumps and throws.


3. **Mental Imagery**: It is the process whereby an individual sees and feels the pictures or images in the mind.

4. **Northern Region**: The term Northern Region has been used in the present study to include the states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and U.T. Chandigarh.

5. **Performance Groups**: This term has been used in the study to denote successful and unsuccessful athletes.

6. **Self-Esteem**: A picture of his own person – a picture of himself as a combination of conviction and estimations concerning himself and what he can do and how he is estimated by others.

7. **Southern Region**: The term Southern Region has been used in the present study to include the states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

8. **Sports Competition Anxiety**: Sports competition anxiety refers to the feelings of fear and apprehension that are experienced by the athletes before and during competition.
9. **Sprinters:** Athletes taking part in 100m, 200m, 400m, races and 4x100m and 4x400m relay races.

10. **State Anxiety:** A transitory emotional state or condition of the human organism that is characterized by subjective, consciously perceived feelings of tension and apprehension, and highlighted autonomic nervous system activity.

11. **Successful:** Athletes securing 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place in their respective events.

12. **Throwers:** Athletes participating in Shot-put, Discus throw, Javelin throw and Hammer throw.

13. **Trait Anxiety:** As defined by Spielberger (1996), it is relatively stable individual differences in anxiety proneness, that is, the tendency to respond to situations perceived as threatening within a state intensity.

14. **Unsuccessful:** Athletes who could not secure any position in their events.

**LIMITATIONS**

1. The subjects of the present study belonged to the different socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds which might have influenced the data. This was one of the imitations of this study.

2. Other variables such as home environment, daily routine and the coaching and training scheme could not be controlled, which was the limitation of the study.
3. No specific motivational techniques were used during the administration of the tests.

4. No special apparatus or equipment was used to obtain data for the present study.

5. The limitation of time and economic constrains were considered a limitation of the study.

DELIMITATIONS

1. The study was delimited to the athletes who participate at All India Inter-University level.

2. The study was delimited to the sprinters, jumpers and throwers.

3. The study was delimited to the athletes from Northern and Southern region only.

4. The study had been delimited to the variables (i) Anxiety (ii) Mental Imagery and (iii) Self-Esteem.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Performance in sports is not the outcome of skill and physiological fitness alone, but psychological parameters also plays a vital role in improving and refining performance of athletes. This study focused on psychological variables which are significant from the theoretical as well as practical point of view. In this study a multi-dimensional approach has been adopted to understand the psychological make-up of the athletes.
Anxiety has been found related to the performance of the athletes. It happens to be the cause of stress and if left uncontrolled leads to chronic stress which is harmful not only to the physical and psychological well-being of the athlete but also to his sports performance. Anxiety levels are undoubtedly relative to the sports events and the individual. Research needs to be carried forward specifically in the context of different athletic events to acquire a fuller knowledge as to how the different dimensions of anxiety influence and determine competitive performance. This knowledge may help in developing and employing the techniques to control and regulate anxiety levels. A significant feature of the present study is that it may project the phenomenon of Anxiety (state-trait and sports competition anxiety) as it prevails among the males and females from different and distinct regions. This insight into the regional, performance and gender differences will be very useful for coaches and sports psychologists who interact with the athletes.

Elite athletes world over do employ imagery in many ways to improve concentration, build confidence, control emotional responses, for visualizing sports skills and practice strategies. Through mental imagery they can facilitate their recovery after injury. The role of mental imagery in improving the performance in team games has been well established by several researchers. This study with its focus on tracks and field athletes will enable the teachers of physical education, coaches and the athletes themselves to design and formulate mental imagery training schedule for still better results.

An attempt has been made in the present study to explore the area of self-esteem among the athletes. Self-esteem is a particular
kind of attitudinal structure, it is the cluster of the most personal meaning a person contributes to the self. It plays a very crucial role in psychological make-up of the athletes. Unfolding the concept of self-esteem would go a long way to help in improving the athletic performance. The findings of the present study will contribute a great deal to the existing literature regarding self esteem and its role in enhancement of athletic performance.