Chapter VI

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

As hypothesized the participants practicing Mallakhamb were found to be significantly better in Emotional Intelligence, Executive Function and Explanatory Style after one year practice of competitive Mallakhamb than the participants not involved in any competitive sport activity.

Overall, for Emotional Intelligence, significant difference was found in Emotional quotient, Adaptability, Positive Impression and Inconsistency Index, but significant difference was not found in the Intrapersonal Scale, Interpersonal Scale, Stress Management Scale and Mood Scale of the Emotional Intelligence in EG and CG.

For Executive Functions, significant difference was obtained for Sustained Attention (time), Response Inhibition, Goal setting and Planning, but not for Focused Attention, Sustained Attention (errors) and Speed in EG and CG.

For Explanatory Style, the research showed that Optimism and Hope of the group practicing Mallakhamb was significantly higher than group not practicing Mallakhamb.

In the materialistic world of today, with steady increase in nuclear families, with declining parental supervision and easy availability of money, handling emotions has become a challenging task. Thus, it has become much more important to have children and youth, with high emotional intelligence which will further help to facilitate cognitive activities and adaptive actions; and the ability to regulate emotion in oneself and others.

Recent experimental research has shown that aerobic exercise at a moderate to vigorous intensity appears to promote children’s effortful and goal-directed cognition and behavior, impacts the complex cognitive abilities that permit humans to behave in an adaptive and goal-directed fashion. It is thus important that Executive Functions develop, as it is critical to nearly all forms of behavior and is a cornerstone of development. Executive Functions are important to classroom behavior and to regulate emotions, which are particularly important for school readiness and success and appear to be closely linked to success during kindergarten than the acquisition of specific academic skills. Physical activity and aerobic exercise more specifically, have the potential to promote multiple facets of
development through its direct impact on Executive Functions. Regular exercise has the potential to boost both physical as well as cognitive health and may be effective in clinical interventions.

In today’s very stressful and demanding world, with stiff competition it is important that children and parents learn and value optimism. Research studies have shown optimistic explanatory style to be correlated with vigor, incompatible with depression and help to see world as less filled with hassles; this tendency, in turn, is linked to better health. People with pessimistic explanatory style often are socially isolated and social isolation predicts poor adaptation in a wide variety of realms. Conversely, people with an optimistic explanatory style may reap the benefits of rich social networks and appropriate social support. It is also found that an optimistic explanatory style is associated with a variety of health practices, such as exercising, drinking in moderation and avoiding fatty foods. It is speculated that optimistic individuals may be more likely than pessimists to enter settings in which good things can and do happen.

To date, much research has focused on sport developmental paths that lead to expertise, while less focus has been placed on understanding the training and psychosocial factors that lead to other positive outcomes such as healthy psychosocial development. It is known that there are potential psychosocial benefits of youth sport participation. The results of this research has shown, that sport participation has benefits for development of invaluable aspects of a person’s life and indicate that it is important to have masses of children and youth getting involved in sport programs rather than the few who enter sport.

6.2 Recommendations from the research

Modern environment and conditions dismiss opportunities for suspending, lifting and swinging the body, but the biological need for doing the same remains. Play activities are natural experiences for children and offer many opportunities for learning in social environment. Sport helps in the development of human potential and develop broad base of understanding in life skills. The concept of total development of a person can be fulfilled through physical activities. Sport is able to reach masses, including disadvantaged and ‘specially abled’ children.

Physical fitness level is getting compromised today, due to variety of influences. Knowing the benefits of participation in physical activity, which get highlighted through research studies, the Government, Educators and all the concerned agencies can
make physical education compulsory part of school and college curriculum and Youth development programs. With the motto ‘Education for All’, with special focus on children, the motto of ‘Physical activity for All’ can be spread effectively.

Exercise is accessible to nearly everyone, it has variety of forms and it is low cost and low tech activity, thereby allowing for potentially widespread participation. Children love physical activity and excellent psycho social development is possible through this very effective medium. In Indian context, lot of emphasis is placed on academic achievement, at the cost of play and hobbies, so reaching out to parents with the psychological benefits of sport activity can help in better participation of a child in this activity.

Mallakhamb is a sport which is said to give maximum exercise to each and every part of body in minimum time, with variety of psychological benefits too. It requires very meager apparatus and space, and with the limited space to play both in schools and residential areas, Mallakhamb could become one excellent alternative for forms of physical activity which may require big grounds and costly equipment, to obtain benefits both physically and psychologically.

6.3 Limitations of Research

1. The participants of this research study were not randomly assigned to 2 groups. Those participants who volunteered to learn Mallakhamb were put into EG. An attempt was made to overcome this limitation by having a CG, which did not differ in the aspects measured in the research significantly from this EG, yet there could be differences in motivation, persistence and other skills.

2. The intervention period was one year. In such long-term studies, it is more difficult than in short-term interventions to control for confounding variables that may influence neurobiological processes and executive functioning (e.g., diet, motivation, or cognitive stimulation).

3. Although no known major traumatic or unusual event was faced by any participant in the research during the intervention period, influence of healthy social interaction, engagement in constructive activity etc. cannot be ruled out.

4. The research focuses on a very specific sport, so generalizability is limited.