



The Timeline of Physical Fitness

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1. Introduction

Health and physical fitness have a vital role in the life of men from time immemorial. The progress of the Nation lies in the hands of the people, who are healthy and physically fit. Every individual should develop physical fitness for a happy and effective living. In order to get physical fitness, one has to involve in physical activities.

Physical activity is essential for the development of wholesome personality of a child which would depend upon the opportunities provided for wholesome development of the mental, physical, social and spiritual aspects.

It also provided youthful exuberance and the elderly care. Physical activity and movements are as old as human existence. It played numerous roles from struggle for existence to struggle for excellence. A sport is an activity in our lives where pursuits of different movement achieved through the total investigation of Neuro – muscular co-ordination. In this modern era, we can see that each and every individual directly or indirectly related to sports. Modern Physical Education commonly known as there is sports where pursuit of discipline freely formed such as biological, social and physical sciences. Over decades, the society in general has realized the need for keeping fit and health through organized physical activity programmed. Scientific evidence has made with a clear and that unless man engages himself in organized vigorous physical activity programmed. The real benefits would not come.

Many researchers strongly support the regular exercises helps one to keep a strong and healthy and to prevent cardio vascular diseases. Physically fit person, heart beats at a lower rate and pumps more blood per beat at rest. As a result of regular exercises and individual's capacity to use oxygen is increased systematically energy production depends on internal chemical or metabolic change. Health, Fitness and performance are poorly correlated phenomena. Health is generally defined as the freedom from disease, fitness strictly relates to a man's ability to meet the demands of his environment and excellence in performance.

2. Meaning of Physical Fitness

Most authors define 'physical fitness's the capacity to carry out every day activities without excessive fatigue and with enough energy in reserve for emergencies. Emphatically this definition is inadequate for a modern way of life. By such a definition almost anyone can classify himself as physically fit.

Physical fitness is the ability to carry out daily task with vigor and alertness without undue fatigue and ample energy to enjoy leisure time pursuits and to meet unforeseen emergencies.

3. Importance of physical fitness

Every individual must know the importance of physical fitness. In other words, one must have a fundamental knowledge of anatomy and physiology. This fundamental knowledge enables person to understand physical fitness. Physical fitness is the capacity of a person to function steadily and

smoothly when a situation arises. Physical fitness makes you feel mentally sharper, physically comfortable and more with your body and better able to cope with the demands that everyday life makes upon you. Increased physical fitness not only improves health but improves your performance at work. Hundreds of American companies have backed with idea financially by employing full time directors of fitness for their work. The benefits of physical fitness are numerous. The person who is physically fit has greater amount of strength, energy and stamina an improved sense of well being better protection from injury because strong well developed muscles safeguard bones, internal organs and joints and keep moving parts limbers and improved cardio respiratory function.

It is necessary for every individual to be physically fit to perform their daily work with ease and to take part in various activities effectively. Everyone should be fit enough through participation in physical activities to develop the different physical fitness components.

3.1 Physical Education and Physical Fitness

The primary aim of physical education is not to develop star athletes, winning team of expert performance but a national vitality with character values and physical fitness. It aims to develop youth into citizen who have the capacity to enjoy vigour and interesting life.

3.2 Physical Exercise and Physical Fitness

Exercise is the means to an art, vigorous and lengthy life, inactivity will kill you. Many people say that exercise makes them feel better and more relaxed number of studies has shown that people improve psychologically as well as physically as a result of running programmes. There is a lot of circumstantial evidence to suggest that this relaxing effect is caused by the release of endorphin – morphine – like substances which occur naturally in the brain. “If you make an investment in exercise, it makes you conscious of other reasonable health habits. You are not about to waste your investments.

Exercise means using or exerting body play” refers to the resultant action or what the participants do during physical exertion. “Games” range from amusements or diversions to competition with significant outcomes governed by rules. Freedom from work or duties describes “Leisure” which may or may not be used for physical activity similarly “Recreation” refers or renews one’s strength and spirits after toil again with or without activity. “Sport” encompasses all these diversions and physical activities that are doing for pleasure and success”.

3.3 Health related Physical Fitness

According to current thinking in the physical education profession, physical fitness is either health related or performance related. In keeping with wellness trend today and an emphasis on all aspects of healthful living in addition to stressing performance or motor skill related to fitness. This aspect of physical fitness concerns the development of qualities necessary to function efficiently and maintain a healthy life style. Each of the components of health-related fitness cardio respiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and body composition According to “Health related physical fitness is concerned with the development of those qualities that often protect against disease and frequently are associated with physical activity. Then health related physical fitness is important to everyone and should be stressed by physical educators”. Spiralling health care costs and realization of benefit to be gained from participation in health and fitness activities have prompted many colleges, corporation and other organization to establish programmes for their students and client able. They have found that such programmes promote good health and also make economic sense since poor health is cost by in terms of illness, primitive death, development productivity and absenteeism.

3.4 Components of Physical Fitness

There is no single measure of physical fitness and no single way of achieving it. However, these are three major qualities which contribute to overall fitness; they are strength, stamina and flexibility. “The

achievement of total fitness depends upon combining these three main strands, strength, stamina and flexibility”

4. Physical Fitness in Ancient India

The profound tradition of physical fitness in India could be traced back to thousands of years. It has been closely associated with the religious practices, traditions and culture of India. The then Indian Physical. Education was nothing but contributing to physical fitness. The physical fitness programmed was in the form of physical activities like Yogasanas, Pranayama, Dands, Baithalls, Malkhamb, Lezium, Lathi, Calisthenics, Combatives, Dumb-bells and so forth and the games like, Khabaddi, Kho-kho and Atyapatya have been in vogue from time immemorial, but the names of the inventor and the dates of their origin are not clearly known. Yet we are aware of the fact that a scientific system of Physical fitness programmed was in existence in India and it was practiced by the people from time of yore. These physical fitness programmes were organized and practiced in parnashtalas, ashramas, hermitages and the temples.

The age old Vedas have also sounded the strength as one of the components of the physical fitness programmed. This could be assessed in the following words “Barana Vai Prithivi Tishtati, Balan Upasura” Medical authorities of ancient India, such as Charaka and Susruta, recommended physical exercise (Vyayam), oil bath and massage for maintaining and restoring health. Susruta defined Vyayam as movements of the body that produced sufficiently vigorous circulation of the blood and quick respiration to fatigue the individual. Charaka recommended various exercises to ward off disease, reduce weight and activate digestion, present a pleasing appearance, and delay the encroachment of old age. Dance requires a great deal of physical fitness. It has a long and systematic history in India and is intimately associated with religion. The bronze figure of a dancing girl found in the ancient city of Mohenjo-Daro proves the antiquity of the art, and the early literature reveals the people’s love of dancing and the important role played in their religion. In fact, Shiva, one of the trinity of Hindu Gods, was known as ‘the Lord of Dance’. The development of physical fitness and motor skills was incorporated in the vocational aims of certain groups of people especially that of the Kshatriyas or military caste. Dancing girls were also trained to give expression to religious concepts and to provide recreation for spectators.

5. Physical Fitness in Pre-independent India

The responsibility of education in the year 1833 was in the hands of British rulers, and hence they never paid any attention to the inclusion of physical fitness system in the school education programmed. The war of Indian independence of 1857 had suppressed the physical fitness programmed of Indigenous physical activities, and it was replaced by Westernised type because the whole country was under the control of the whites. The fire of patriotism was injected into the minds of strong and stout Indians to refuse the physical fitness programmed of Westernised system of physical activities, but in vain. The then rulers themselves were lovers of gymnasium work. They patronized several wrestlers – to develop strength and Malkhamb (wrestler’s pillar) to develop flexibility as components of physical fitness.

The outstanding development of physical fitness programmed in pre independence days goes to YMCA College of physical education founded in 1920 by Mr. Harry Crow Buck at Madras. The network of physical fitness components such as strength, endurance, flexibility, speed, agility and so forth, were found a place in the games of Volleyball and Basketball introduced in India with the American influence through the YMCA.

Afterwards several institutions, namely, Government College of Physical Education, Hyderabad (1931), Christian College of Physical Education, Lucknow (1932), Training Institute of Physical Education, Kandivali (Bombay) (1938) and so forth sprang up basically to serve the cause of the physical fitness programmed in India.

The Olympic movement in India resorted to encourage participation in high level competition and also to create a sense of participation in games and sports among mass in general. It was in the year 1920 that six competitors were sent for the first time to represent India in Athletics and wrestling in the world Olympic Games held at Antwerp (Belgium) after having made them physically fit and also fit in the skills for the high-level performance. With a view to feed players and athletes for the high-level competitions, several physical fitness training programmes were launched in order to develop strength, endurance, and agility.

6. Physical Fitness in Post-independent India

The impact of World War II made to develop physical fitness in the youth of the nation. The need for the national programmes of physical fitness was felt by the then administrators of India because young people were not in sound physical condition for selective services and professional preparation programmes. Physical fitness programmed was very much necessitated for rehabilitating the war victims and it was also used in the educational and training institutions in the form of physical therapy, occupational therapy and physical re-training. After attainment of Independence, utmost importance was given by the Indian Government for the promotion of physical fitness programmes to keep the citizens fit, both in body and mind for the national security, individual welfare and efficiency in production. The Government launched various measures for the betterment of physical fitness among youths and improved performance of the Indian sportsmen at international competitions. The development of physical fitness programmes was started with the establishment of Rajkumari Sports Coaching Schemes (1953), and the All-India Council of Sports (1954) and National Discipline Scheme (1954).

Many programmes with an idea of improving the physical fitness at the grass roots level (that is, at the school level) were launched. Each student was given an opportunity to assess the physical fitness level as to develop skill and understanding that will enable him to enjoy productive presence and more meaningful existence in the school. The physical fitness programmes in schools were initially placed at the hands of retired army personnel. There were no special periods allotted for physical fitness; it was expected that students would develop a certain amount of physical fitness through participation in some physical activities.

The Central Advisory Board of Physical Education has made further progress with the existing programmes on scientific lines by introducing specific schemes like National Discipline Scheme, National Physical Efficiency Drive, Auxilliary Cadet Corps, Youth Services Camps, Scouts and Guides, National Cadet Corps and the like. A National Plan of Physical Education and Recreation sponsored by the Ministry of Education finalized in 1956 suggested norms for physical efficiency tests. Government of India, Ministry of Education (1956), One of the programmes of National Physical Efficiency Drive as specified above, was sponsored from the year 1959-60 with a specific purpose to create consciousness and enthusiasm among the people of our country for physical welfare, which would help them to attain a better healthful living and in turn, increase the efficiency of work and result in a prosperous life. The factors that normally contribute to the physical efficiency of an individual are nothing but physical fitness components namely strength, speed, agility and endurance. To assess these factors, batteries of tests in certain physical performances were framed. These are known as "Physical Efficiency Tests". These tests (100 meters run, 800 Government of India, Ministry of Education, The Central Advisory Board of Physical Education and Recreation, A National Plan of Physical Education, 1956. 100 metres run, long jump, High jump, and Shotput) were based on certain standards and homogeneity to the age group and sex.

There were three distinct standards viz., 1. One star standard, 2. Two-star standard and 3. Three-star standard. the National level awards were also given to the participants after they qualify for the requisite battery of tests in their own age group.

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