

# A Study on causes and Factors of Stress among College Students

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**Abstract:** Stress is an emotional pressure resulting from the challenges, problems and difficulties of life and if not handled properly, may affect the person physically as well as mentally, ultimately deteriorating his performance in daily life activities. The college students are more vulnerable to stress because of their stage of development. The causes of stress among them are umpteen. Through this study, an attempt has been made to trace out the main causes of stress among the college students. The sample for study was selected among the students of Government Degree College Dooru by using convenience sampling technique. It has been found that academics is the main cause of stress among college students. It was suggested that the burden of stress may be mitigated by guiding the students in carrying out various assignments on the part of teacher and organizing co-curricular activities. The counseling of students is also pivotal in this direction.

**Index Terms:** *Stress, Pressure, College Students, Co-curricular activities*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Stress can be defined as "Any emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological and behavioral changes". Feeling stressed in difficult and unfamiliar situations is natural. Stress is actually good for a person as it supplies energy for performing work efficiently. However, if stress level surges too high, it affects one's efficiency of performance negatively. The level of stress which energizes an individual to perform his/her activities efficiently is called "Eustress" while as the opposite of it is "Distress". Eustress has the potential of turning into distress. This level of stress is inimical to a person's psychological and physical well-being and once it takes over a person, all his activities gets seriously affected. Such a person underperforms in the daily activities of his life which leads to further complications.

College students and stress are intimately related due to the fact that they are mostly adolescents, which is the most crucial stage of human development. Emotions at this stage rise very high. They hold an underlying desire to excel in all the walks of life which puts them under the stress. The stress in college students mainly springs from academics. The other worth mentioning causes of stress among college students are health issues in family, financial status of family, career/future concerns and relationship issues. There is strong possibility that their stress may turn into distress and thereby may cause many physical, psychological and behavioral disorders among the students.

This study endeavours to find out the causes of stress among college students.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have been conducted from time to time (Schafer, 1996; Fisher, 1994; Altmaier, 1983; Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980), which have reported strong relationship between stress and college students. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984), stress is a mental or physical phenomenon formed through one's cognitive appraisal of the stimulation and is a result of one's interaction with the environment. The existence of stress depends on the existence of the stressor. Feng (1992) and Volpe (2000) defined stressor as anything that challenges an individual's adaptability or stimulates an individual's body or mentality. Study conducted by Remya & Parthasarathy (2009) on the coping patterns of the junior college student's found that time concerns, fear of failure, classroom interactions, and economic issues are some of the academic factors for stress in students. Moreover these factors, unlimited expectation of parents upon their children also make stress to the students. The impact of this stress will result in emotional problems, anxiety, stress, and other neurotic problems, frightening, abusive, depressing, threatening, competitive, unpredictable, and confusing situations. The suicide percentage of the college is also high when compared to others. According to Sinha et al. (2000) the Canadian students are more irritable than the Indian students. Study concluded that the Indian students are using emotional focused coping strategies and the Canadian students are not using the coping strategies more effectively. The Indian students have low self esteem compare to Canadian students. Indian students are taking more support and confrontation to deal with the stress. Another study conducted on Stress coping strategies of students at universities and colleges of technology by Lin Ying Ming, Wang and Ming. (2010) found that in the level of education, the educators force on acquisition of knowledge, neglecting the emotional calibre. The study concluded that if the teachers do not give an attention towards over stressed students then these students might show some unusual behavior. To maintain a healthy body and mind one needs to be cared for his or her stressful events of life. A study conducted by Misra & Renjitha (2000) on the College student's academic stress and its relation to their anxiety, time management and leisure satisfaction. A study conducted by Ji, Hong & Zhang, (2011) tried to understand the mental stress of the college students and the coping methods to overcome the stress. The study showed a positive correlation

between mental stress of the college students and employment situations and study conditions and mental stress. The various coping strategies given by the authors are Adapt to college life as soon as possible and improve the effect of study, Improve college students' ability of starting a career and establish a correct concept of career, Ease the mental stress caused by family conditions etc.

### 3. CAUSES AND FACTORS OF STRESS

Following are some causes of stress among college students

- Academic stress:- Every student yearns for success in academics ,wants to accomplish all the academic related activities efficiently . This creates huge amount of stress among the students.
- Relationship stress- Since the college students are mostly adolescents which is the most crucial stage of life for all the human beings .Making friendships especially with female counterparts is the most distinct feature of this age. Stress is the resultant, if a person fails in his attempt to make friends.
- Financial stress:- The stress among college students also results from financial difficulties. To look smart and own articles like mobile mobiles , bikes and cars etc., require money. The lack of which, gives rise to stress.
- Future stress- The concern about future is another chief cause of stress among the students. They want to see themselves as successful persons occupying high place in society with good job in hand.
- Health issues in family: -Health issues in family also contribute to stress among college students.

### 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the cause and factors of Stress among college students.
- To find out of the chief cause of stress among college students
- To suggest measures to cope with stress

### 5. RESEARCH DESIGN

Survey method (Descriptive Research) was employed for study. A questionnaire was designed on a five point Likert scale and used as a research tool for collecting data. The questionnaire comprised of 14 close ended questions and one open ended question covering questions on causes and factors of stress among college students was distributed among 200 students of Government Degree College Dooru by using convenience sampling technique.

### 6. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The Responses collected from the sample under study were analyzed and it came to the surface that majority(94%) of the students agreed that stress mainly springs from academics while as minority (53%) of students agreed financial status of the family accounts to stress.89.5%,81.5%,86.5%of students agreed that stress stems from health issues in the family, future/career concerns and relationship issues respectively. The same has been shown hereunder with the help of table and also represented graphically.

Table 1: Percentage of Causes of stress among the college students

Causes of stress	Number of students	Percentage of students
Academics	188	94.0
Financial status of family	106	53.0
Relationship issues	173	86.5
Health issues in the family	179	89.5
Future/career concerns	163	81.5

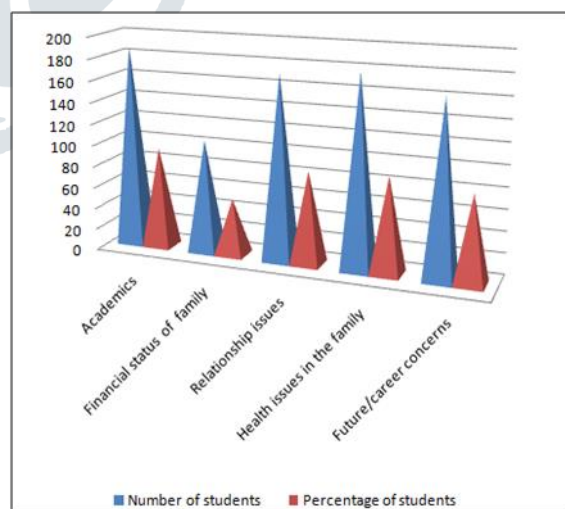


Figure 1: Graphical Representation of Table 1

### 7. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study evinced that academics is the main cause of stress among college students. The other causes are financial status of family, health issues in family, relationship stress, future/career stress. The college students are prone to be affected by the high level of stress called “distress“which may result into severe psychological and physiological problems. The college authorities should therefore, take all the necessary measures for helping the students to manage stress which may include creating awareness

through workshops about stress, its levels –eustress and distress. The academic stress may be reduced by organizing co-curricular activities.

#### 8. SUGGESTIONS TO MANAGE STRESS

- Counseling for college students on stress and stress management techniques.
- Workshops involving motivational talks by experts on stress.
- Teachers should help the students in academic related issues.
- Teacher- parent meets focusing on stress among college students and role of family therein.
- Screening movies on education at least once in week.
- Using technology in teaching- learning.

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