

**STRESS AMONG ADOLESCENTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
KAMRUP (METRO) DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

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ABSTRACT

Stress is simply the body's non-specific response to any demand made on it. Stress is not by definition synonymous with nervous tension or anxiety. Stress provides the means to express talents and energies as well as pursue happiness. It can also cause exhaustion and illness, either physical or psychological; heart attacks and accidents. The important thing to remember about stress is that certain forms are normal and essential. This paper attempts to assess the stress among adolescents of Kamrup (Metro) and to provide some remedial measures to deal with stress.

Key words: stress, synonymous, nervous tension, exhaustion.

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Psychologically, adolescence is the age when the individual becomes integrated into the society of adults, the age when the child no longer feels that he is below the level of his elders but equal, at least in rights. ---- Piaget

The term adolescence comes from the Latin word *adolescere*, meaning to grow or to grow to maturity. The term adolescence has a wider meaning; it includes mental, emotional, and social maturity as well as physical maturity.

It is generally regarded that adolescence stage begins when the child become sexually mature and ending when they reach the age of legal maturity. However studies of changes in behavior, attitude ,and values throughout adolescence have revealed not only that these changes are more rapid in the early than in the later part of adolescence but also that the behavior, attitudes, and values in the early part of the period are markedly different from those in the later part. As a result it has become a widespread practice to divide adolescence into two subdivisions, early and late adolescence. The dividing line between early and late adolescence is somewhat arbitrarily placed at around seventeen years the age when the average adolescent enters the senior year of high school.

Stress is a concept that cannot be explained using a static definition thus it is important to be aware that different descriptions exist in both recent and seminal literature. Delahaij, Dam,

Gaillard and Soeters (2011) explain stress using a bio psychosocial approach, suggesting that stressful reactions affect the emotional, physiological and cognitive state of an individual. This definition describes stress as a reaction. Alternatively, Caltabiano, Sarafino and Byrne (2008) view stress as a discrepancy. They state that stress occurs when there is a perceived discrepancy between the demands of a situation and an individual's parents as nearly grown up and on the verge of entering the adult world of work, of going to college, or of receiving vocational training of some kind. Their status in school likewise makes them conscious of the responsibilities they have never before been expected to assume as they take their place as seniors in school. Awareness of this new and formally recognized status, both at home and in school, motivates most adolescents to behave in a more mature manner. Boys mature, on the average, later than girls; they have a shorter period of early adolescence, although they are regarded as adults when they reach eighteen, just as girls are. As a result they frequently seem more immature for their age than girls. Adolescence is usually referred to as the "teens", sometimes even the "terrible teens" until they reach twenty years of age. During this phase of development, a child is often perceived under stress due to various reasons according to their unique needs and aspirations. Stress can show itself in many ways. Physical problems can include unusual fatigue, sleeping problems, frequent colds, and even chest pains and nausea. People under stress may behave differently too: pacing, eating too much, crying a lot, started smoking and drinking, physically striking out at others by hitting or throwing things. Emotionally, a child under stress experience anxiety, depression, fear and irritability as well as anger and frustration. Mental symptoms of stress include problems in concentration, memory and decision making. The presence of conditions like depression, anxiety, and stress at this stage of life is a matter of concern. Depression in this population has been shown to be associated with increased risk of suicidal behavior, homicidal ideation, tobacco use and other substance abuse into adulthood. It has been noted that the majority of suicides in India are by those below the age of 30 years and also that around 90 % of those who die by suicide have a mental disorder.

The biological, psychological and social effects of stress on an individual have been researched extensively over time. Only recently has literature begun to focus on the influence stress has on young people during the vulnerable stage of adolescence. Cognitive and

emotional attributes play a critical role in the types of coping strategies one chooses to adopt, thus how adolescents cope cannot be limited to one sole strategy, but is a combination of many. This paper will specifically focus on the types of life stressors young people encounter and the coping strategies they implement. Also to be examined is how adolescent stressors and coping strategies differ to that of adults. Through review of relevant coping literature, the notion of coping as a dynamic process will be emphasised.

Adolescence is the transition between childhood and young adulthood during which young people experience physiological, cognitive and social changes (Dumont & Provost, 1999; Murberg & Bru, 2004). The age bracket for adolescence varies according to different literature (de Anda et al., 2000; Spirito, Stark, Grace and Stamoulis, 1991) however this paper defines adolescents as between 12 and 19 years of age. Williams and McGillicuddy-De Lisi (1999) suggest that during this transition, young people have difficulty adjusting and often struggle with unfamiliar issues.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Many people experience stress as they combine busy lives and the demands of study and work while trying to also save time for friends and family. In this process people sometimes unable to manage stress and this may affect in their physical as well as mental health. This paper attempts to analyze the major stressors of life and to suggest some remedial measures to deal with stress so that everyone is able to lead an effective life.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Knowledge is a pre- requisite to any action, including the actions that are necessary for the prevention of substance abuse.

1. **P. Jayanthi, M. Thirunavukarasu and Rajamanickam Rajkumar** in their research paper Academic Stress and Depression among Adolescents: A Cross-sectional Study stressed that adolescents with severe academic stress need to be identified early as

interventions to reduce academic stress is likely to affect the occurrence and severity of depression.

2. **John Smith in his study Stress and Adolescents** found that adolescence is a transitional period of major physical and emotional change that can result in significant psychological stress for young people.
3. **Dr. Satvinderpal Kaur in his research paper Impact of Academic stress on Mental Health: A Study of School going Adolescents** stressed that academic stress put negative impact on the mental health of the adolescents irrespective of their gender and level of stress.
4. **National Health Ministries PC (USA) is of the opinion that** college students are feeling more overwhelmed and stressed than fifteen years ago.
5. **Cheng Kai- Wen in his journal A study of Stress Sources among College Students in Taiwan** found that male students feel stronger stress from family factor than female ones; students in higher grades feel more stress from physical/mental, school, and emotional factor; students who take a student loan also feel more stress from physical/mental, school, and emotional factors than those who do not.

OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the stress among adolescents.
2. To provide the remedial measures to cope with their stress.

METHODS

Descriptive survey method is applied for the collection of the data. The data is collected from the students of post graduate level among Kamrup District. A total of 100 students were interviewed. The study is aimed at finding out the stress level among adolescents and to provide remedial measures to deal with their stress.

TOOLS

A structured questionnaire is used for data collection containing items like stress among adolescents due to financial responsibility, family relationship, academic demands and future prospects of students. Students responded by marking (i) yes and (ii) no.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Data are collected and systematically arranged in tabular form. Data are presented in percentage.

Table: 1 Stress among adolescents due to financial matters.

Questions	Responses	
	YES	NO
Loss of financial support from college	54%	46%
Increasing college fee structure	82%	18%
Increasing tuition fees	87%	13%
Hostel/ PG rent	64%	36%

Table: 1 reveals that 54% of the total populations agree that due to loss of financial support from college is a factor of causing stress among them.

Ever increasing fees structure in the time of admission as well as examination is also causing stress among them. 82% agree that unable to manage the fees in the time of admission as well as examination causes stress.

87% of the total populations are of the opinion that due to increasing tuition fees is one of the main causes of stress among them.

64% of the total populations agree that hostel/ PG rent causes stress among them.

Table: 2 Stress among adolescents due to family relationship.

Questions	Responses	
	YES	NO
Death of a parent	27%	73%
Divorce between parents	52%	48%
Death of a close friend	15%	85%
Marriage	9%	91%

Table: 2 reveals that, 27% of the total population is under stress because they loss one as well as both parent at a tender age.

52% agree that due to divorce between their parents they are under stress.

15% agree that due to death of a close friend they are under stress.

9% of the total populations are of the opinion that due to tensions regarding their future partner they are under stress.

Table: 3 Stress among adolescents due to academic demands.

Questions	Responses	
	YES	NO
Sessional examinations	52%	48%
Seminar presentations	43%	57%
Project/ dissertations	15%	85%
Final examination	67%	33%

Table: 3 reveals that, 52% of the total populations are of the opinion that in per semester they have to appear in two sessional examinations which is a cause o stress among them.

43% of the populations are of the opinion that in semester system, seminar presentation is compulsory as a part of their course which is one of the causes of stress among them.

Along with seminar presentation, project/ dissertations is also a part of their course which is one of the main causes of stress among 15% of the total population.

67% of the total population is under stress at the time of their final examination.

Table: 4 Stress among adolescents due to their future plan of action after graduation.

Questions	Responses	
	YES	NO
Entrance exam after graduation	64%	36%
Selection of institutions after graduation	27%	73%
Future course of study after graduation	58%	42%
Job opportunities after graduation	12%	88%

Table: 4 reveals that, 64% of the total population is under stress as they have to appear for entrance exam after graduation.

27% agree that due to confusions regarding selection of institutions after graduation they are under stress.

58% of the total populations are of the opinion that due to uncertainty regarding the future course of study they are under stress.

12% of the total populations are of the opinion that due to uncertainty due to future job opportunity they are under stress.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The study has revealed stress level among adolescents.
2. Adolescents are under stress due to academic demands, financial responsibility, family relationship as well as stress due to their future course of action.

3. Loss of financial support from the college and the ever increasing admission fees causes stress among adolescents.
4. In today's education system, most of the students take the additional help from the coaching centers and other private tuition. The tuition fees are also one of the factors causing stress.
5. Now-a-days, each and every student is serious about their future prospects, regarding selection of the institutions, course of action etc. the uncertainty and lack of proper knowledge about various educational institutions is one of the main factor causes stress among them.
6. Semester system introduced seminar presentation, project/ dissertation etc in every session as a part of their course. Students are under stress due to these co-curricular activities.
7. Hostel/PG rent is one of the factors causing stress among adolescents.
8. Family relationship sometimes may a remarkable factor causing stress among adolescents. Single parent, divorce between parents may also create stress among adolescents.
9. A few girls are under stress because their parents think of their marriage right after they have completed their graduation.
10. Due to uncertain job opportunities some of the youths are under stress.

SUGGESTIONS

Stress among adolescents regarding future uncertainties, job prospects etc is common. A desired amount of stress, anxiety as well as tension is always rewarding as stress and anxiety encourages and create awareness among people and this ultimately help them to gain success in their respective fields. But when this stress exceeds the normal range; when people becomes unable to control their stress level it creates problem. It hampers their physical as well as mental health.

SOME WAYS TO OVERCOME STRESS

1. **Exercise:** Physical exercises help to maintain body weight, raise good cholesterol and lower bad cholesterol, improve sleep quality, reduce fatigue and are a great way to reduce the effects of stress.
2. **Get involved with others:** Make some new friends or join a social organization. Make it a point to do things with other people.
3. **Get some sleep:** Try to get at least seven to eight hours of sleep each night, including weekends.
4. **Have some fun:** Playing is important! Schedule some time to just relax, play a game with a friend, read a book, or do something fun. Playing helps in prevent burnout.
5. **Take a deep breath:** When feeling stressed, take a moment to cope. Take a deep breath to help calm you and relax tension. If you are so stressed that you feel like crying, find a quiet, private place and cry, crying can relieve stress.
6. **Manage your time:** Time management helps in reduction of stress. Make a list of the tasks you need to accomplish, putting the most important and urgent ones first.
7. **Involve family members:** If you are unable to deal with your stress condition, consult the matter with elder members of the family. It helps you to know their perspective on your problem.
8. **Give knowledge:** Students are under stress as they are unable to know the proper knowledge regarding various job opportunities so parents as well as educational authorities must create awareness among them about various job and other related aspects of job opportunities.
9. **Manage family relationship:** Single parent as well as divorced parent must take step that because of their problematic relationship; their ward doesn't face any trouble. Parents must make time for their children and take appropriate step to handle their problems for the welfare of their child.

10. Modification of course: Educational authorities must introduce their course in such a manner so that students are able to enjoy rather than feel stress. Each and every program should not be based on marking system. Because marking systems develops the competition tendency among students which ultimately create tension among some of the students.

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