

MENTAL STRESS OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO CERTAIN VARIABLES

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Abstract

Stress is a psychological condition where a person feels tension and anxiety. An individual under stress is not able to have harmonious relations with the society. He may have also difficulty to control himself. This undue stress may also cause hyper-tension and depression. The paper discusses about mental stress and its consequences.

Key words : Mental stress, adolescence, stress

Sometime before, college or school days were considered the best years of one's life. These days used to be relaxed and tension free but now-a-days students' face depicts a different story. They are now not care free. During the time of examination, a special cell is constructed to help and counsel the students. In addition, there are reports in newspapers about suicides of students before and after the examination. There may be different reasons for increasing cases of stress. Technological development and fast life style have aggravated the condition. The researcher has in this study tried to know about various facts related with stress.

Stress at Adolescence Level/ Stage : The students of 11th and 12th standards belong to adolescent stage of human span of life. Adolescence is a transitional period and it is the bridge between childhood and adulthood. It is the time of rapid development of growing to sexual maturity, discovering one's physical self, defining personal value and finding one's vocational and social direction. Age of adolescence is the age of identity formation where occupational, educational and personal contexts develop. During this period social expectation of the individual is drastically under modification.

How to recognize Stress? The indicators of experiencing stress may be General irritability, Elevated heart rate, Increased blood pressure, Increased accident proneness, Trembling, Insomnia, Indigestion, Pain in neck and lower back, Changes in appetite or sleep pattern, Speaking loudly, Remaining silent or aloof, Quarrelling or abusing, Disturbed eating patterns, Floating anxiety-anxious feeling for no specific reason. The term that is of prime importance to the study are explained below
Stress : Stress is a non-specific demand on the individual's body or mind to adapt a change physically or psychologically.
Causes of Stress : There are several factors causing stress. In the year 1999, Desai classified stressors into three major categories viz.
Physiological Causes : The physiological category includes genetic and congenital factors, life experience, biological rhythms, sleep, posture, diet, fatigue, muscular tension, and diseases of adaptation.
Psychological Causes : The psychological causes comprised nine elements; perception, emotion, situation, experience, sensation, decisions, memory, motivation, cognition and appraisal.
Environmental Causes : This category of stressors consists of those factors which originate from the environment like ambient environment, physical events, social events, and biotic events. In this research, the researcher is concerned with the mental stress of the higher secondary students in relation Peer group pressure, Teacher's pressure and Parent's pressure

Objectives : To identify the factors causing stress among higher secondary students. To study stress among higher secondary students due to academic pressure. To study stress among higher secondary students due to peer group pressure. To study stress among higher secondary students due to par-

ents' pressure. To compare stress among students English medium schools. To compare stress level among students of Gujarati Medium schools. To compare stress level among students of English and Gujarati medium schools

Research Questions : The researchers made attempt to answer the following research questions. Which types of stress do the students feel due to academic pressure? Which types of stress do the students feel due to peer group pressure? Which types of stress do the students feel due to parents' pressure? What is the stress level among the students of Gujarati medium schools? What is the stress level among the students of English medium schools?

Rationale of the Study : The researchers themselves as students had undergone stress and as a teacher had seen many students suffering from stress or tension. That is why the researchers wanted to know the reasons of stress of higher secondary students so that after diagnosis, steps can be taken to rectify the problem. The researchers themselves are also teachers. The researchers have observed many stress related problems among the students like nervousness, worry, tension, anger, loneliness and quarrelsome nature. Sometimes the students try to commit suicide due to too much stress.

Research Design : The present study is a descriptive study as the researchers have collected data through a survey. The purpose of the research is to study the different stress levels among the higher secondary students. The methods of research utilized in descriptive research are survey methods of all kinds, including comparative and correlation methods. The population of the study comprises of all the Higher Secondary Students of Kheda district in Gujarat. The researchers have selected the sample through stratified random sampling. The researchers have selected 20 students from each of the three English medium schools and 20 students from each of the three Gujarati medium schools of Nadiad District. For the present study the researchers used the following self-constructed tools: 1) Questionnaire for Students, 2) Questionnaire for Teachers, and 3) Questionnaire for Parents

(1) Questionnaire for Students

(a) Close Ended Questions : They were about stress level of the higher secondary students. There were 35 close ended questions in which the students had to tick mark the answer 'Yes' or 'No' in the questionnaire

(b) Open ended Questions : They were ten questions related to different stress levels of the students in which they had to present their own ideas and experience about stress. In this questionnaire for students multiple choice types of 35 questions and 10 open ended questions were given. These questions were related to students' stress in the higher secondary schools. In the present study the researcher gave the questionnaire to the 20 students from three English Medium

schools each and 20 students from three Gujarati Medium schools each.

(2) Questionnaire for Teachers : This questionnaire consisted of ten open ended questions. These questions were related to teachers' observation and experience about the students' stress in the Higher Secondary Schools of both the mediums. The researchers got the questionnaire filled up by the ten teachers from Higher Secondary Schools in general.

(3) Questionnaire for Parents : This questionnaire consisted of ten open ended questions. These questions were related to parents' observation and experience about the students' stress in the Higher Secondary Schools of both the mediums. The researchers got the questionnaire filled up by the ten parents.

Data Collection Procedure

Stage – 1 : The researchers prepared the tools for data collection and validated the same. The tools were shown to the experts and thereby their suggestions and comments were incorporated and tools were validated. **Stage – 2 :** The researchers personally visited and sought permission from three English Medium schools and three Gujarati Medium schools

Stage – 3 : The researchers administered the questionnaire to students of Higher Secondary Schools of Gujarati and English Medium **Stage – 4 :** The researchers administered the questionnaire to parents whose children are studying in Higher Secondary Schools of Gujarati and English Medium. **Stage – 5 :** The researchers administered the questionnaire to teachers who teach in Higher Secondary Schools of Gujarati and English Medium.

Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion : Once the data are collected and organized in a precise way, the next step in research process is the analysis and interpretation of the same in order to get a meaningful picture out of the raw information collected. Analysis of data involved the breaking down of existing complex factors into simpler parts and combining the parts into new arrangements for the purpose of interpretation. Data have been studied from as many angles as possible, to find newer facts. Interpretation of data is the process by which the analyzed data are given meaning, significance to find out whether or not the answer to the original problem is obtained. Careful and critical thinking is essential to safeguard against misinterpretation. In the present study, the researchers analyzed the data with the help of content and percentage analysis.

Interpretation of the Questionnaire for Students from both English medium and Gujarati medium Schools

66.99% students feel stress while coping up with the studies whereas 33.01% students do not feel stress while coping with the studies. 54.99% students get enough time to relax and enjoy whereas 45.01% students do not get enough time to relax and enjoy. 43.83% students get enough time to play with their friends daily whereas 56.17% students do not get enough time to play with their friends daily. 64.17% students get enough time to watch movies once in a month whereas 35.83% students do not get enough time to watch movies once in a month. 41.64% students feel headache often whereas 58.36% students do not feel headache often. 53.33% students have made a good combination of studies and play whereas 46.67% students have not made a good combination of studies and play. 61.67% students are compared with their better performing friends by their parents whereas 38.33% students are not compared with their better performing friends by their parents. 83.33% students want to study due to their own interest whereas 16.67% students do not want to study due to their own interest. 10.83% students study due to the pressure of their parents whereas 89.17% students do not study due to

the pressure of their parents. 83.33% students get enjoyment in their study whereas 16.67% students do not get enjoyment in their study.

Interpretation of Open ended questions for Students from both English medium and Gujarati medium Schools

45.83% students of English medium and Gujarati medium schools feel jealous, shame and bad. 42.49% students feel happiness and encouraged. 10.83% students feel the desire to work hard and 0.83 students feel proud when their friends score more marks than them. 87.83% students of English medium and Gujarati medium schools feel bad, shame, angry, insulting, hesitating and embarrassed, 7.72% students think to work hard and be courageous and 4% students feel to take revenge when their peers laugh at them when they are unable to answer correctly. 71.66% students of English medium and Gujarati medium schools feel bad, angry, guilty, insulted, embarrassed and shame, 20% students feel to come early, 5% students feel to accept the mistake and 3.34% students feel to go back home when they come late and are not allowed to enter the class. 71.25% students of English medium and Gujarati medium schools feel bad, shame, guilty, insulted, angry, fear, confusion and repentant, 4.58% students think to give proper reason, 5% students feel good and 19.17% students feel to accept the mistake and be regular next time when they are scolded by the teacher in the classroom for not doing the homework. 7.5% students of English medium and Gujarati medium schools feel bad, embarrassed and insulted, 66.67% students feel happiness and encouraged, 25.83% students feel pride and confidence when their teachers praise them in the classroom.

Interpretation of questions of parents' interviews : 30% parents think that 11th and 12th standards are extremely important for them and their children because it is very important to enter into the most important profession. As 11th and 12th standards are base to go for the higher education. 20% parents think that these standards are the base of their future studies whereas 50% parents think that it is very important to build their bright career and prosperous life.

According to the parents' interview about their son/daughter's stress level in the 11th and 12th stds, 25% parents believe that it spoils their mental and physical health, 30% parents believe that they feel stress and tension, 05% parents believe that it is the base of their future education, 20% parents think that it is necessary to work hard, 10% parents think that their wards diverts their mind due to T.V and internet whereas 10% parents believe that their wards need to have stress. 80% parents feel depression and bad whereas 20% parents try to motivate their children when they do not meet their expectations. 20% parents try to find out the reason and solve their problems, 70% parents feel bad, anger and blame the teachers whereas 10% parents feel to scold their children when their children do not pay attention towards their studies. 35% parents feel angry and bad, 30% parents try to motivate them, 15% parents never get angry with their children whereas 20% parents think that it is necessary to be in competition when their wards gets less marks.

Interpretation of questions of teachers' interviews : 20% teachers think that 25% to 30% students feel nervousness during exam, 5% teachers believe that it depends upon subjects; 10% teachers believe that 50% to 55% students feel nervousness. According to the teachers' observation, 40% students pay attention towards study, 40% students participate in all the activities, 10% students feel study as burden whereas 10% students feel tension during their study. According to the teachers' observation, 25% weak students of 11th and

12th feel nervousness during the year, 15% weak students disturb the class, 10% weak students remain aloof and feel study as burden, 25% weak students try to seek the help from others, 10% weak students try to learn with patience whereas 15% students feel shy during the year. According to the teachers' observation, 15% students suffer from fever and loss of appetite, 15% students suffer from headache, 15% students suffer from different problem due to the change in the atmosphere, 20% students suffer from different diseases due to unhealthy food, 15% students suffer from different diseases due irregular food whereas 20% students suffer from different diseases due to the adolescence age. 10% students do not study seriously, 15% students feel depression due to the bad company of friends, 15% students get excited or burst into tears when they are in depression, 20% students remain reserved and fear ridden during depression, 05% students feel depression due to their social background, 20% students feel depression due to competition among students, 15% students feel depression due to too much stress about study and homework. Thus, this portion focused on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through interviews and survey. This is followed by Findings, Suggestions for further study and Implications.

Findings : Most of the students have difficulties in coping with the studies and homework but they can manage their time to relax and enjoy satisfactorily and get time to play with their friends and watch movies once in a month. Very few students feel hunger and headache during the time of examination. Most of the students study due to their interest and are not ready to leave their studies. Very few students want to study due to their teachers' and parents' pressure. Most of the students get enough time for studies. Most of the students' teachers and parents want them to study harder and are dissatisfied with the performance of the students. Most of the students feel bad and jealous when their friends score more marks. Most of the students think that their parents should motivate them. Very few students think that studying makes them tense. Some of the students think that their parents get unnecessarily angry with them. Very few students think that their parents and teachers should not scold them about studies. Some of the students have fixed goals in their life. Some of the students feel that they should perform like their friends in exams. Very few students like only to study.

Implications of the Study : After this study the researchers arrived at following conclusion that most of the students feel stress in their studies but they are able to manage their time, to relax, to play with their friends, to watch movies. Most of them have fixed goals in life. They want to perform as well as their friends. Their parents and teachers want them to study more. They also feel that their parents and teachers are unnecessarily angry with them. Parents and teachers should motivate them more. Many of them are not satisfied with their performance and feel tensed during exam. The Gujarati medium students are better in managing time. The Gujarati medium students feel less stress in the comparison of the English medium students. English medium students feel more headache than Gujarati medium students. Parents and teachers feel that students should study more. They feel dissatisfied with their performance. It may cause stress among them. As Gujarati medium students feel less stress than English medium schools, it suggests that students feel more comfortable in their mother tongue. Parents and teachers have major role to play in motivating and encouraging the students. They should not scold and causes stress for the children but provide proper counselling to de-stress their children.

Conclusion : In this way, the study can go a long way to help teachers, parents and even students to help them know about stress at the higher secondary level. The study can help in diagnosis of the students' problems and the possible remediation. It is rightly said that future of a country is seen in the classrooms. If students are satisfied, happy and without tension then the country will develop. If our students are tensed, nervous and disturbed, the future of the country will also be disturbed. So it is necessary for parents, teachers, leaders and counsellors to work in this direction i.e. to provide suitable and conducive environment for all-round development of children. Too much nervous, exam oriented children face difficulty in life. The research experience has certainly helped the researchers to develop insights not only into students' behaviour but also some ways of helping them to cope with stress.

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