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### The Prevalence of Stress among High School Students of Government and CBSE Schools

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#### KEYWORDS

Stress; high school students; CBSE schools; government schools

#### A B S T R A C T

Stress is a common problem that affects everyone at some point in their life. Studies reveal that any event in the student life has the potential to be a major cause of stress (Reddy, 1989). In Kerala the high school education is happening mainly in government sector in state syllabus and in private sector in CBSE syllabus. The aim of the study is to find out prevalence of stress among high school students from Government and CBSE schools. The specific objectives of this study are to compare stress among high students from Government and CBSE schools and to find out gender difference in the prevalence of stress among stress among high students from Government and CBSE schools. The tools used for study are general information schedule and Student Stress scale (Akhtar, 2004). For statistical analysis t test, mean and standard deviation are used. The results show that there is significant difference in prevalence of stress among high school students from CBSE and government high schools. Result also shows that girls show more stress in high schools than boys.

#### Introduction

The current century is well known as the age of stress, anxiety and depression. Every single individual experiences stress in their own ways irrespective of age, gender, religion and so on. Hans Seyle (1936) defined stress as non-specific responses that results from a variety of stimulus. But his definition only looked at physiological aspects of stress and not the psychological factors. Therefore Lazarus and Folkman

(1984) defined stress as a relationship between the person and the environment in which the environment is appraised as being taxing or exceeding their resources and thus endangering their well-being.

There are differences in the way people experience and react to stress because it is highly individualistic in nature. Stress can be good at times. This was referred to as 'Eustress' which is positive in nature. Such stressors affect individuals and students in a

positive way, such that it enhances their efficiency. In such situations, though life may be demanding they still in control and are able to face those challenges. But sometimes, it gets to a point when they may find it difficult to cope with the stress. And this sort of stress is referred to as distress which means bad pressure. When students undergo any sort of distress, they become overwhelmed, panic, anxious and overall terrible.

Recent studies have suggested that student stress is on the rise especially for those involved in higher education. The way in which these students experience stress, the different stressors and their coping mechanism differ across school scenarios. Those who attend English medium schools may differ from other students in the stressors they face and in the same way, the syllabus or curriculum they follow may also affect these changes. These stressful experiences can directly affect their academic performance. Intelligent students are well able to deal with such stressors (Akhtar, 2004) because they don't want to rust out or burn out. Rust out is when they are under stimulated and burn out is when they are over stimulated and emotionally exhausted.

Several studies have shown that poor academic performance has been caused by a lack of adequate teaching facilities, unqualified teachers, student's poor study habits, psychological adjustment problems such as anxiety stress and depression. Researches which investigated adjustment of students in school showed that most of the problems were caused due to the academic anxiety regarding their future (Reddy, 1989). Verma and Gupta (1990) reviewed the cause of academic pressure which is commonly seen in school going adolescents and their results showed that it was caused

due to reasons such as examination system, homework burden and also attitude of parents and teachers.

Student's stress also seems to affect their health, both physical as well as mental. Dawood (1995) found that student stress affects their performance and he also showed that some of the stressors in a student's life are related to school, fear related. Many teenagers fall easily into depression because of these different stressors and anxieties and this in turn affects their overall performance in school and other important areas of their life. A study was conducted to assess academic stress and its determinants among high school students in Thalassery educational block, Kerala. The sample consisted of 600 boys and girls and they also compared the stress among students of the private schools to government schools. The result showed that half of the students face high academic stress and it was significantly associated among 10th standard students, rural students and private school students but there was no association between academic stress and gender (Thilak *et al.*, 2017).

Hodge (1996) found that in students who were prone to anxiety, the prevalence of stress was high. When looking at gender differences, in Indian culture, boys have more futuristic orientation than girls and thus they have more academic anxiety than girls have. But this may differ depending upon different stages of their educational life. Howard and Medway (2004), noted that most youth face the most amount of stress during their adolescent life due to many reasons and this can possibly lead to serious disorders if left unnoticed. Smritikana, (2016) aimed to find out whether there is significant difference between the government and private school students and also to study the gender difference of both

government and private school students with respect to academic stress. They took 200 samples of high school students from different schools of Ranchi town. The result state that the stress is higher in private school students when comparing to that of the government student and also found that Female students experienced higher academic stress than male students.

Gorsay and Yildi (2005), children and adolescents face anxiety in different ways depending upon the age category they belong to. Identity confusion during adolescence can create an extreme level of anxiety. Boys tend to have more academic anxiety than girls (Trivedi and Ojha, 2005).

Researchers who examined the relationship between stress and their adjustment found that there was no significant causal relationship between stress and adjustment. But adjustment levels influences the number of stressful events and also the amount of stress experienced by them.

A cross sectional study which observed stress and coping strategies among private and government high school children in Udupi Taluk, Karnataka (Tomar *et al.*, 2014) stated that students who are likely to suffer from severe mental disorders are 3% in private school and 2 % in government school due to their academic burden, relationship with parents and friends. Another study which focused on the academic stress and the adjustment level of students studied 100 students, 50 were taken from public school and the remaining 50 were taken from Government school and the result shows that private school students by and large suffer from higher level of academic stress than their Government school counterparts (Hussain *et al.*, 2008).

One of the most common psychological problems of adolescents is anxiety. According to Bhansali and Trivedi (2008), showed through their studies that girls have considerable amount of academic anxiety when compared to that of boys. It is more important to note that student's overall level of adjustment was poor in students who went to a public school in comparison to those students who attended government schooling (Hussain *et al.*, 2008). Anda *et al.*, (2000) on Stress, stressors and coping among high school students. They took sample of 333 tenth and eleventh grade students to determine the degree of stress experienced, the stressors encountered most frequently, and the frequency with which specific coping strategies were employed along with their perceived effectiveness. The result shows that the respondents scored above the norms for their age on the State Trait Anxiety Inventory, and up to one third of the sample reported high levels of daily stress. Depression, anxiety and stress among Indian and Iranian students were compared in a study and the results showed that depression, stress and anxiety among Indian students were significantly higher than Iranian students and gender difference was not found to be significant (Ghaderi *et al.*, 2009).

From the above mentioned researches it is evident that student stress is an important issue that must be addressed in all its seriousness.

The Hindu newspaper in 2016 reported that the number of students who experienced exam stress were on the rise. But it is not just exam stress that students face these days. Students face stress every single day during their school life because of various reasons such as work overload, assignments, huge number of homework, family pressure and so on. The need to achieve high marks

and reach first in class is a demand that is taxed upon each and every student in today's world and this is on the rise in India. If we fail to identify such stressors and help students to face them, the number of students falling under depression and committing suicides will only increase as years pass by. Students can deteriorate in their mental health because of such extreme stressful environments. It is the responsibility of parents, teachers and community to identify such issues and make immediate measures to bring stress levels down.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to find out prevalence of stress among high school students from Government and CBSE schools

### **Objectives**

To analyze the socio-demographic details of high school students in government sector and CBSE sector.

To compare the prevalence of stress among high school students in government sector and CBSE sector.

To compare stress level of girls and boys from high school.

### **Hypothesis**

H1. There is significant difference in stress among high school students in government sector and CBSE sector

H2. There is significant difference in the level of stress among boys and girls in high school

## **Operational definitions**

Stress: - It is the result of what we get from administering the Student stress scale.

High school students: - students who belong to grade 8 to 10<sup>th</sup>.

Government sector: - those who belong to schools aided by the central or state government.

CBSE sector: - Those institutions who follow the CBSE syllabus.

## **Tools**

Socio-demographic sheet

Including Name, age, Gender and Class

Student Stress Scale

This scale identifies and measures the major kind of stress prevalent in the adolescent's student life from 13-18 years of age. The scale was developed by Zaki Akhtar (2014). The scale consists of 51 items and the scale is a five point rating scale ranging from always to never.

## **Design of the study**

This is a descriptive study using quantitative methods which aims to investigate the prevalence of stress among high school students in government sector and CBSE sector.

## **Sampling design**

The sample included high school students belonging to government and CBSE sector. A total of 60 samples were collected using convenient sampling from government sector and the same was followed for CBSE

sector. Thus the overall sample included 120 high school students.

**Inclusion criteria**

Students who belong to high school

Students from Government schools and CBSE schools.

Students who are willing to participate.

**Exclusion criteria**

Students who belong to primary or upper primary school

Students who don't belong to CBSE and government schools.

Students who have known physical or mental disabilities.

**Processes of data collection**

The researcher went to different schools in Ernakulum district and those met the inclusion criteria were chosen. We obtained the data by direct distribution of questionnaire to the samples.

**Statistical analysis**

To analyze the data, the researcher used mean, standard deviation and t-test.

**Results and Discussion**

Among the samples 92% of the students who are studying under CBSE syllabus are coming from middle and high economic status on the other hand 42% of the students studying in government schools are from low economic status. The mean of boys is 134.68 and girls is 166.60. It shows that girls have higher stress than boys in high school. The significance is 0.000.

There are differences in stress among boys and girls who study in private and government school is highly significant. Thus the hypothesis is accepted. These results also confirm with other studies such as Bhansali and Trivedi (2008), who showed through their studies that girls have considerable amount of academic anxiety when compared to that of boys. Results also showed that students who belonged to the government sector experienced lower levels of stress than those who belonged to private sector (Smritikana, 2016).

**Table.1** Result of t-test of gender difference

Gender	N	Mean	t	df	Sig
Boys	60	134.68	-5.926	117.90	0.000
Girls	60	166.60			

\*Significant at 0.000

**Table.2** Shows result of t-test among private and government sector

School	No. students	Mean	t	df	Sig
CBSE	60	176.53	13.40	103.86	0.00
Government	60	124.75			

\*Significant at 0.000

According to the analysis of the data, there was significant differences in stress among boys and girls in the government and private sector. There was also significant differences in stress among students who belonged to government as well as private sector. Stress affects students in multiple ways. It has both direct effects and indirect effects. The direct effects include psycho neuro-immunological, endocrine and indirect effects include health behavior pathways through which stress affects physical health, the psychological effects of stress on mental health, and the cognitive effects of stress include attention, concentration on academic success. Thus this study will help us in identifying these factors and can help teachers, health practitioner and academicians to develop certain strategies and techniques to identify and reduce stress among school students. However it must be kept in mind that there were certain limitations such as the size of the sample which prevented us from being able to generalize the results. The samples were collected only from Ernakulum so the research can be done in large scale including other districts and states. The honesty and genuine interest of the students who participated in this study may have been affected its result.

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