

## Sources of stress in government and private college students

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**Abstract:** *This study aims to investigate the sources of stress experienced by college students. Modern education system poses many challenges to the students and that is why they are getting more stressed than earlier time students. Today students' performance and well being is challenged by the increasing stress all over. In this reference, this study investigates the stress in government and private college students. 200 male and female students studying in intermediate class in a government and in I S E Board Inter College participated in the study with a age range of 16-18 years. A self structured 20 items questionnaire was used to study the different sources of stress in both types of college students. It was hypothesized that the government college students will experience greater stress than private college students. Results revealed that both groups of students reported many sources of stress, including academic stress and personal stress. But there was no significant difference found in the sources of stress in government college students and private college students. Increased work load, fear of getting lower marks, time pressure, inflective teaching method were found to be main sources of academic stress in the both group of students. And future worries, unrealistic parental expectation, financial problem and difficulty in adjustment to the new environment were found to be personal sources of stress for both groups of students.*

**Key Words:** *Academic stress, personal stress, unrealistic parental expectation, time pressure, fear of failure, future worries, competition.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Stress has become as unavoidable part of our life. Everybody is experiencing stress irrespective of age occupation race, social status and cultural background. World health Organization (WHO) (2002) has cited stress as a global epidemic. The Researchers, Vermunt and Steensma (2005), Topper (2007), Pines and Keiman (2007) have defined stress as the insight of incongruity between environmental burdens and the person ability to fulfill these demands. Auerback and Grambling (1997) defined stress as an unpleased state of emotional and Physiological arousal that individual experience in situation that they perceive dangerous or threatening to well being. Stress in felt by an individual when demands of the situations are more than his capacity. Since stress has serious consequences, researchers have studied it extensively in last few decades. Particularly students stress and its impacts have been studied very well by many researchers like Ahmad et al (2013) Thawabish and Quaisy (2012), Agolla and Ongori (2009). Our modern educational system places so many burdens on students that they get easily stressed. Smith, Johal, Wadworth, Smith and Peters (2000) have found advanced educational organizations place many burdens on students, that students are prone to experience stress. Misra and Mckean (2000) have propounded 'a person environment model', that is valuable for understanding stress among university students. This model suggested that individuals can consider stressful events as demanding or frightening. Perception of educational goal as a challenge brings stress and in turn this stress creates a sense of competence and enhanced learning capability. But perceptions of education as a threat brings such stress which brings hopeless and foreboding sense of loss and consequently leads to lower academic achievement. Stress is not always negative for the students. It is sometime beneficial for the students' performance. Researchers have suggested that for students an optimal level of stress can enhance learning ability. Kaplan and Sadock (2000), Linn and Zeppa (1984) have found that stress leads to both positive and negative effects to students. Auerbach and Grambling (1998) have found that moderate stress motivates individuals to achieve and fuels creatively, although it may hinder individuals from performance on difficult tasks. Stress can lead to serious problems to students if it is not managed at early stage. When a student in exposed to chronic stress, his physical and psychological well being is endangered and his academic performance or success is also negatively gets affected. Stress is considered to be a part of students' life. Academic work and success of students is gained after long stressful effects. Students report higher level of stress before their examination and declaration of results. Agolla and Ongori (2009) found that the academic work done by students is always accomplished with stressful activities.

Masih and Gulrej (2006) have listed following sources of stress in students i.e. admission procedure, high expectation of parents, curriculum comprised of complex concept, unsuitable school timings, unbalanced student teacher ratio, physical environment of classroom, unhealthy students teachers interaction, hard and fast rules of

discipline, to many or complex assignment, teaching methodology, teacher's unconcerned attitude and over emphasis or weakness rather than acknowledging strengths. Sibnath Deb, Esben Strodl and Jiandong Sun (2012) have investigated academic related stress in private secondary school students in India. They found that 35 to 37 percent students reported high academic stress and exam anxiety respectively. All students reported high levels of academic stress but those who had lower grades reported high level of stress than those with higher grades. Bataineh M.Z. (2013) has identified main stress of undergraduate students at king Saud University as academic overload, awkward courses, and high family expectation. It was noteworthy that fear of failure was the major of stress among students. Rajasekar (2013) has also found similar results in his study. George Essel and Patrich Owusu (2017) have given a detailed description of different Stresses including increased workload, low marks, longer study hours, language problems, procrastination, exams, future worries and parental expectations. Mishra, M (2017) has found similar results in her study on science and arts streams intermediate students.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW:**

### **2.1 Sources of stress in students**

Sources of student's stress and its impact have been extensively researched by the researchers. Particularly, academic stress among students has long been a topic of research and researchers have recognized different important stressors which include excessive assignments, unhealthy competition among students, fear of failure in educational achievements and lack of pocket money Fairbrother and Warn (2003). Ongori (2007), Awino and Agolla (2008) have identified the semester system and insufficient resources to perform academic work as main stressors to the students. Kumar and Jejurkar (2005) concluded in their studies that academic factors were mainly responsible for a higher level of stress among undergraduate students. Students experience stress due to mainly factors including issues of time management, financial matter, interaction with lecturers, personal subjective goals, social behavior, adjustment in the academic culture, lack of support system etc.

### **2.2 Impact of stress on academic achievements**

Stress has many positive and negative impacts on students. Some studies suggest that an optimal level of stress can enhance learning ability. It motivates one to accomplish and to accept the challenges ahead, Kaplan and Sadock (2000), Linna and Zeppa (1984). But there are more research evidences in favour of negative impacts of stress. Dusselier, Dunns, wang, Shelley and Whalen (2005), Misra and Mckean (2000) have found a strong relationship between stressful life events of college students and reduced academic performance and also link between health related quality of life and stress. In another study Dwyer and Cummings (2001) found that undergraduate students admitted that stress was the most common factor among all health factors which influence their academic performance as stress harmfully affects physical and psychological health. Wintre and Yaffe (2000) have also found relation between stress and social psychological problem leading to lower grade point average (G.P.A.) in the students. Similarly many studies have revealed that many psychological problems like depression anxiety and stress have an significant impact on student academic achievement. Williamson, Birmaher, Ryan and Dahl (2005) have reported in the depressed youth, stressful life events are considerably elevated with in turn leads to lower academic achievement. Saipanish (2003) found stress's negative impact on students learning process and memory. Niemi and Vaieniomaki (1991) have suggested that stress can cause physical and mental health problem, reduce student self confidence and academic achievements.

### **2.3 Psychological impacts of stress**

Many studies have been conducted on psychological impact of stress on students Dusselier et al (2005) have reported many emotional and physical symptoms commonly found in students such as headache, fatigue, depression, anxiety and the inability to cope. Hoover (2003) has revealed 58% increased in stress related mental health issues reported to campus counselors between 1988 and 2001. This increased stress causes some serious consequences. Suicide rates among college students are three times higher than they were in 1950 as described by American college health association statistics published in Psychology today, (Retrieved on March 10, 2016). Our school students have committed suicide due to school pressure (Times of India, September 21, 2017). A school student of class fifth of a convent school in eastern up committed suicide because of teachers partial approach and homework pressure. Well known case of Pradumana murder case, August, 2017 of Reyan Public School, Gurugram, India is latest evidence of how stress is influences student's life. It is very shocking that an eleventh class student murdered the smaller student just to postpone examination and parent teacher meeting. Our schools are imposing such pressure on students that they are not able to cope with it and they are even commuting crimes like murder. Thus, the effects of students stress are so threatening that it urgently needs to be addressed and solved. Rao (1978 ) has investigated the mental health of 428 students with 13-16 years age range .He reported that 19.60 % students had definite necrotic problem (18.80% boys and 22.8% girls). Of 428 students, 47 had symptoms of depression, and 8 reported psychogenic headache and 7 had problem of inability to concentrate, giddiness, vague pains and one student was found to be schizophrenic. Similar

results have been reported by Chandrasekhar et al (1980) in a cross sectional epidemiological study of mental morbidity among postgraduate and research students. They found that academic and personal stress was positively correlated with high mental morbidity. Thachore et al (1971) in a review of urban health centre service in Lucknow found that 37% of the total population attending the centre was students. In a study on 58 medical student Thackore et al (1971) found 1% rate of psychiatric morbidity and majority of them suffered from anxiety and depression. Wig et al (1969) found that of the sixty eight students referred for student counseling center 50% reported difficulty in concentration frequent sad mood 24.4% nervousness, 23.5% headache 23.5% inferiority feeling and difficulty in memory 22.4%. Among fifty eight students, twenty six were diagnosed as anxiety neuroses patients. Chaudhary (1979) has studied psychological problem of students who attend counseling center. He reported 57% of the students had psychosomatic complaints; only 3% had physical complaints.

### **3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

Present study aims to investigate sources of stress experienced by Government College and private college students. Private college are increasing per year, so it is interesting to study that whether they are posing more stress for the students. Findings of the study may help the government and concerned to make plan for reducing students stress so that students may perform better and be successful.

### **4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To identify the sources of stress experienced by Government College and private college students.
- To study the difference between sources of stress in government and private college students.

#### **Hypothesis**

- College students will experience many academics and personal sources of stress.
- There will be a significant difference source of stress between governments and private college students.

### **5. METHOD:**

#### **5.1 Sample:**

Sample consisted of 200 students studying in a two intermediate at colleges Sant Kabir Nagar (UP) with age range 16-19 years. 100 participants were studying in a government inter college and 100 were studying in a private inter college.

#### **5.2 Instruments**

A self structured questionnaire was used to measure the source of stress by the students. The questionnaires measure two sources of students stress (i) Academic stress (ii) Personal stress. In academic stress 10 stress are taken and in 10 stresses are taken in personal stress. Then the questionnaires measure total 20 stresses of students. Administration and this administration is very easy respondents have to only tick mark the stress experienced One tick mark gets one mark, maximum mark on this questionnaires is 20.

#### **5.3 Procedure**

Data was collected in two intermediate colleges at Santkabirnagar. One was the government inter college and other was an ISE Board private college. After taking permission from the college administration questionnaire was administered in the classroom. Participants were properly instructed and helped to fill the questionnaires. Students took keen interest in filling the questionnaires.

### **6. RESULTS:**

Filled questionnaires were scored and frequency and percentage have been calculated. Results have been presented in table 1 and table 2. Table 1 shows the ten academic sources of stress in Government College and private college students. Increased workload homework was found to be the greatest sources of stress for students. 22% of private college students and 16% of government college students found it stressful. Then lower marks and fear of failure in the exam in the second important source of stress for 20% private and 17% government college students. A longer study hour was the third importance source of stress for 16% of private college students and 12% of government college students. Difficulty in understanding the course taught in the class was source of stress for 14% government and 8% private college students. Exam and time pressure use were also found to be important source of stress in the students for 18% private college students 12% of government college students. Language difficulty was found stressful for 11% of government college students and 5% of private college students Inadequate infrastructure was found to be stressful to 19% in government college students to 19% in government college students and 10% of private college students, and old ineffective teaching method was stressful for 18% of government and 12% of private college students. Teacher's partial/ unconcerned behavior was source of stress for 18% government and 13% of private college students.

Thus the result show that both group of students in experiencing academic stress. There is no significant difference in source of stress experienced by government and private college students. Private colleges students have experienced lessen stress in infrastructure/room/lab/library, learning method, difficulty in understanding the course and in language problems than students of governments college. But they have are stress for increased stressed workload, lower marks, time presence and examinations. To sum, private college students have reported more academic source of stress as compared to college government college students.

Table 2 presents the personal source of stress experienced by the government and private college students It is evident from the table that future worries was the greatest source of stress for both type of students. 42% of private college and 39% government college students found it stressful. Second important source of stress was financial problem 32% of Government College and 26% of private college students found it a source of stress. Maladjustment to new environment of school/college was found to be stressful for 22% of private college students and 20% of government college students. Other important personal source of stress found in the study were poor living conditions, relationship with girl/boy/friend/ and self image and beauty issue. On the whole, private college students reported more source of personal stress than government college students. Top fine academic stress has been presented in the pie diagram below.

**Table1:** Source of academic stress in government college and private college students N=200, government college =100 private college=100 students

S. No	Source of Academic Stress	Government college students	Private college students
1.	Lower marks in the examination, Examination/tests	17%	20%
2.	Increased workload/Homework/Assignment	16%	22%
3.	Time pressure and	12%	18%
4.	Longer hours of study	19%	10%
5.	Ineffective/old teaching method	18%	12%
6.	Inadequate infrastructure/ classroom/lab/library	19%	10%
7.	Partial/Unconcerned teacher	18%	13%
8.	Difficulty in understanding the course	14%	8%
9.	Language problem	11%	5%
10.	Tough Competition with fellow students	15%	22%

**Table 2:** Source of personal stress percentage in government and private college students. N=200, 100=government college, 100=private college students.

S.No	Source of personal stress	Government college students	Private college students
1.	Future Worries	39%	42%
2.	Unrealistic parental expectation	22%	26%
3.	Tensions at home/Divorce of parents	6%	10%
4.	Poor living condition/ Room/Food	18%	8%
5.	Relationship with classmates/roommate	16%	26%
6.	Relationship with girlfriend/boyfriend	18%	29%
7.	Financial problem	32%	28%
8.	Self image beauty/weight/height issue	16%	19%
9.	Health Problem	4%	6%
10.	Difficulty in adjustment to new environment of school/ college	20%	22%

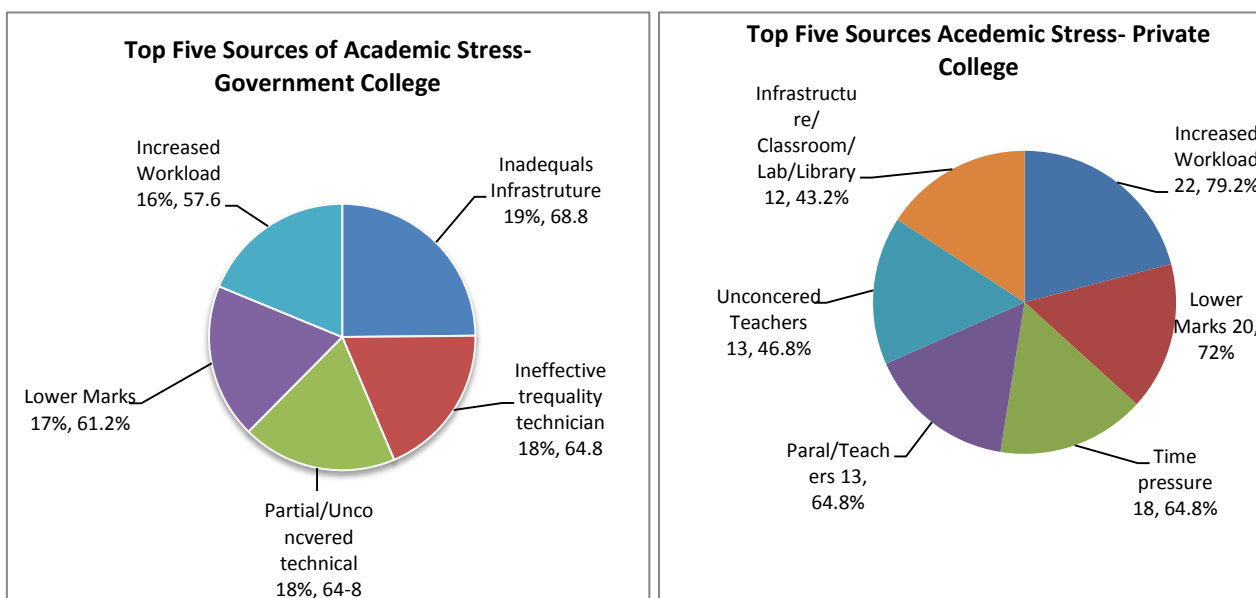
Top five sources of academic and personal stress have been presented in table 3 and table 4. Figure 1 and figure 2 also demonstrate these finding. As it is evident from table 3 and figure 1, for government college students' inadequate infrastructure was greatest source of academic stress, while for private college students increased work load was greatest source of stress. Ineffective teaching technique was the second important source of stress for government college student, while it was on first number of Private college students. Lower mark was the fourth important stressor for government college students, while for private college student, it was on second number. Partial/unconcerned teacher was the third important source of stress for government college student, but it was fourth for private college students. Infrastructure/ classrooms was the greatest important source of stress for government college students, it was on fifth number for private college student. Figure 1, Pie diagram also demonstrates these

finding. Table 4 and figure 2 shows the top five sources of personal stress in Government and private college students. It is evident that three out of five sources of stress are on same position in both groups. Future worries was the on first position in both group of students, unrealistic parental expectation was on second position in both group, and difficulty in adjustment to new environment was on fourth position in both group of students. Financial problem was on second position in Government college students while it was on third position in private college students. Poor living condition and relationship with boy friend/girlfriend was in fifth position in government college students, while relationship with boyfriend/girlfriend was on second position in private college students.

**Table 3: Top five sources of academic stress in government college students and private college students**

S. No.	Government College		Private College	
	Source of Stress	%	Source of Stress	%
1	Increased workload	22%	Inadequate infrastructure	19%
2	Lower Marks	20%	Ineffective teaching technique	18%
3	Time pressure	18%	Partial/Unconcerned Teacher	18%
4	Unconcerned Teacher	13%	Lower Marks	17%
5	Infrastructure/ classroom/Lab/Library	12%	Increased workload	16%

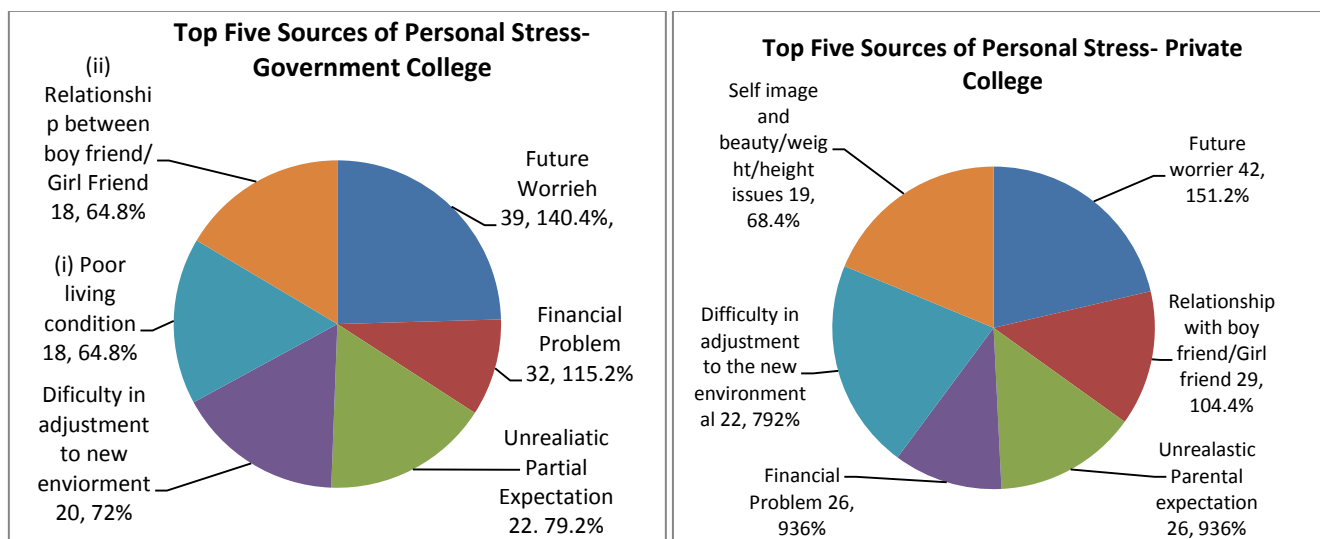
**Fig 1: Top five sources of academic stress in government college students and private college students**



**Table 4: Top five personal sources of stress in government college students and private college students**

S. No.	Government College		Private College	
	Source of Stress	%	Source of Stress	%
1	Future worries	39%	Future worries	42%
2	Financial problem	32%	Relationship with boyfriend/Girl friend	26%
3	Unrealistic parental expectation	22%	Unrealistic parental expectation (i) Parental Expected (ii) Financial problem	26%
4	Difficulty in adjustment to new environment	20%	Difficulty in adjustment to new environment	22%
5	(i) Poor living condition (ii) Relationship between boyfriend/Girl friend	18%	Self image and beauty/weight/height issues	19%

**Fig 2: Top five personal sources of stress in government college students and private college students**



## 7. DISCUSSION:

Results demonstrate that students in this study identified increased workload, fear of getting lower marks in exam, time pressure and not getting through the taught material in the class as the main academic sources of stress. These findings are consistent with previous studies. Agolla and Ongori (2009). Workload is closely connected with time pressure and is found related with stress in many studies. Tyler and Cushway (1995) have found a significant and positive link between work load level and stress level in nurses. The relationship between stress and workload has also been found in laboratory studies. Searle et al (2001) found the level of stress for high workload condition was significantly greater than level of stress reported in the low workload condition.

Fear of getting lower grades and exam was also found to an important source of stress in the study. Similar finding have been reported in studies. Deb. S strode E and Sun Jianlong (2012) have found that found that 35 and 37 percent students reported high level of academic stress and exam anxiety respectively. In this study all students reported high level of academic stress but those students who had lower grades reported higher levels of stress. It was also noteworthy that those students who engaged in extracurricular activities were more likely to report exam anxiety than those students who did not engage in extracurricular activities. Bataineh M.Z. (2013) has reported that academic overload; lower grades in exams in adequate time to study, workload every semester, awkward exam, low motivation and high parental expectation were related with students stress. Fear of failure was found to be the major sources of stress among undergraduate students in the study. Fear of failure forces many to students commit suicide after board exam result every year. When students do not score well or fail in the examination, they get disheartened. They are scared of not getting admission in the desired courses. They assume that there is no ray of hope for them as their dreams are utterly shattered. They find difficult to face parents, relatives and the society. They fail guilty of defaming their parents and not been able to fulfill parents expectation. Thus the stress of failure and not fulfilling parental expectation is forcing student to end their lives.

Tough competition with other students was also found to be an important source of stress in the study. Fairbrother and Warn (2003) have identified students stress as too many assignment competition with other students failures and poor relationship with the students or teachers. Time pressure has also been an important source of stress in the study students have to complete many assignments in allotted time. They constantly face time pressure. This time pressure makes them stressed and decrease their academic performance. Erkutle and Chafra (2006) have found time perspective detrimental. Rawson, Bloomer Kendall (1999) have found that students reported high academic stress at predictable times in semester which results from preparing and taking exam, class ranking competition and mastering huge amount of syllabus in a small time.

Thus major sources of academic stress found in the study includes: (i) increased workload (ii) fear of failure lower marks (iii) Exams (iv) time pressure and (v) Tough competition among students.

As for as personal sources of stress are concerned, future worry was the most dominant source found in the study. Today students are most concerned about their future and getting a good job. They are scared of insecure future or not getting job after studies. Financial problem were also found in the students. Students need a certain amount of financial security for perusing their studies. Managing the finance required is a great concern for students.

Modern education system is quite experience, students are more concerned about managing their fees, coaching expenses and other requirements. Mal adjustment to the new environment of college was an important source of stream. Environment of a college is totally different from that of a school. When students enter into a college he finds everything new and strange. He has to make deliberate efforts to adjust to this new environment. Particularly the students from rural background face this problem. They find difficult to adjust to new people, new culture as and

environment. They get nervous and confused, they go through a 'culture shock' many times Government college students and private college students have reported this as a major source of stress.

Unrealistic parental expectations were also an important source of stress. Actually, parents want to fulfill their unfulfilled dreams through their children. They impose their wishes aspirations on their children and force them to study courses of their parents choice, not their own. Thus unrealistic parental expectations makes students stressed. They are always afraid of not fulfilling parents dreams. Poor living conditions at home/hostel and food have also been a great source of stress for students. Relationship with friend, roommate, girlfriend, boyfriend, have also been a great source of stress to the student.

Appearance related issues have also been found as great source of stress to the student. Students are constantly concerned about their looks, cloths, weight, height etc. Thus main sources of personal stress in the study were (i) Future worries (ii) Adjustment to new environment (iii) Financial problem (iv) Poor living conditions (v) Relationship with friend/roommate/and self image issues.

Thus, the first hypothesis to the study was conformed. But the second hypothesis was not confirmed as there was no significant difference in the source of stress in government and private college students. Both groups of students were stressed. Government college students had more infrastructure related and financial problems while private college students reported more personal stresses. But the difference of source of stress in government college and private college students was not found to be significant. So, no conclusion could be drawn.

## **8. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION:**

Present study investigated the main academic and personal source of stress experienced by Government College and private college students. It was found that both group of students reported many academic and personal sources of stress. Increased workload, time pressures, lower marks and fear of failure, and tough competition with were the main academic sources of stress to both groups of students. Future worries, unrealistic parental expectation, financial problems and difficulty in adjustment to the new environment were found to be personal source of stress to the both group of students. There was no significant difference found in the sources of stress of Government College and private college students.

The study has valuable implications. It identifies the main stress faced by the students. By identifying the student stress, efforts can be done to reduce it and train students to cope with it. Its findings will help parents, teachers and the educational institutions to understand their student's problems sympathetically and make substantive efforts to help them. Thus, the finding of the study may contribute to the academia to understand the students stress and to the society to make concrete efforts to reduce the stress level of students.

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