

**STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS  
IN GLOBALIZE WORLD AND STRATEGY**

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Every individual aspires to have a peaceful life in a competitive global world. But very often the stressful life situations obstruct his or her normal process of physical and mental growth. So many questions come into our mind viz., 'What the stress is?', 'How it affects our day-to-day lives?' and 'Whether it is positive or negative for individual's overall development?'

As we know, 'Stress' is understood as individual's reaction to new or threatening factors in the environment. Though stress is viewed generally in a negative sense, it has positive side also. And it has its implication on performance and satisfaction. While some sort of stress (at low & moderate level) can lead to better performance, excessively high stress can lower performance. The effect of stress on satisfaction is negative always as it deteriorates individual's mind and body and misbalances his or her mental and physical stability.

The present study is aimed:

- To know what the stress is.
- To find out the causes of stressful life situation in competitive world order.
- To identify the symptoms of emotional and psychological stress the adolescent girl-students experience.
- To find out various behavioral changes amongst them under stressful situations.
- To observe what can be the consequences if stress gets out of control.
- To develop a coping mechanism to minimize the problem.

For the purpose of our study, 100 adolescent girl-students of Banasthali University were taken into accounts who reside within the university's

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campus. Through Participatory Observation Method, the data were collected. And for in-depth understanding of the problem our research was followed by experience sharing with the target groups viz. with the teachers and with the experts which gave the way to develop a coping mechanism/strategy to minimize the problem.

The ability of society to help the young generations in developing normal lives and competencies requires not only medical, educational, and psychological resources but also a social philosophy that recognizes them as persons with a value independent of any other purpose. Valuing the youngsters as person in their own right is crucial in building a healthy society. Concern for their needs, rights and care requires a prominent and consistent social activity and awareness among the people of society. Before any change occurs, it requires a philosophy of human understanding i.e. is how society recognizes and addresses the special needs of some of its members. In addition to human beliefs, each society must develop ways and means to recognize and protect the rights and needs of individuals, especially youngsters in broader sense.

Thus for recognizing and protecting the rights and needs of adolescent, it is important to identify the various problems, constraining factors in achieving the larger objectives or dilemmas in selecting the right path, difference between normal and stress situation in their day to day life, the emotional and other stresses and so on. The reorganization of stress is identification of various dimensions of stress which will guide us to evolve a proper mechanism for the mental and emotional wellbeing of young girls.

Adolescence is a period of biosocial transition between childhood and adulthood. It is roughly between 13 to 22 years. On the psychological side there is acute self consciousness, rebelliousness and idealism.

Since Stanley Hall's characterization of the adolescence period as one of 'storm and stress', many theorists have portrayed adolescence as a troubled and unique period of the life cycle. (Hall G. S. Adolescence. New York, Appleton, 1904)

The predominant views that have evolved since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century conceptualized "storm and stress" in terms of three characteristics: Parent - adolescent conflict, moodiness and risk taking behaviours. (For Anna Freud it a rapid oscillation between excess and asceticism during adolescence. (Freud, A Adolescence: psychoanalytic study of the child cited in Cliff, E. (Ed). Handbook of Developmental psychology, Princeton Hall, New Jersey, 1958.)

She viewed the swings of behaviour and mood as secondary to the sergeant effect on behaviour of the drives stimulated by sexual maturity and the hormones. In fact, the concept of adolescent turmoil coined by Erikson and his concomitant notion of identity diffusion became the hallmark of our view of normal adolescence (Erickson, E. H. - Identify and the life Cycles, New York; International University press, 1959 (Reissued by Norton, 1980).

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of various kinds of stress among young girls, it is first important to know the meaning of the stress, types of stress, its causes and symptoms and consequences of the stress.

Conceptually stress is defined as the consequences of failure of a human or animal being to respond appropriately to emotional or physical traits to the organism whether actual or imagined. It includes a state of alarm and adrenaline production short term resistance as a coping mechanism and exhaustion. It refers to the inability of a human or animal body to respond. The term stress was first used by the endocrinologist Hans Selye (Diseases of Adaptation, Wisconsin Medical Journal, 49(6): 515-516 in the 1930s, to identify psychological responses in a laboratory animals. He later broadened and popularized the concept to include the perception and responses of humans trying to adopt to the challenges of every day life. In Selye's terminology, 'stress' refers to the reaction of the organism and 'stressors' to the perceived threat. Stress in certain circumstances, may be experienced positively. Eustress, for example, can be an adaptive response promoting the activation of internal resources to meet challenges and achieve goals. Many often the term 'Stress' has also been regarded by various social scientists as a psycho-social phenomena. The term is commonly used by laypersons in a metaphorical rather than literal or biological sense, as a catch-all for any predefined difficulties in life.

Adolescents with social and emotional stress are more likely than other youngsters to be highly emotional, socially fearful and inhibited, sad and lonely. They frequently experience socially distressing events with which they are unable to cope effectively in part, related to a lack of social skill. They fear most social situations, are afraid to meet or talk with other new people, avoid contact with any one outside their family and find it extremely difficult to attend school or college, participate in recreational activities and show poor performance in academics. A 1988 study of teenagers in ten developed and developing countries, conducted by Daniel Offer and others that 'Boys' expressed greater self confidence, less vulnerability and more happiness, pride and subjective sense of wellbeing than did girls. Since the girls perceive the day to day life situation in different ways, consequently they face greater stress than boys.

## **OBJECTIVES**

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This paper is based on our past experience with the student community in Banasthali University which accidentally prompted us to take initiative to understand their day to day stressful situation for which a workshop was conducted under Women Study and Research Centre of Banasthali University by involving the teachers, wardens, experts to identify the problems in more details and to develop a coping mechanism to minimize the problems.

## METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of present study, out of (3241) students enrolled under U.G. Courses (B. A./B. Sc/B.H. Sc/B. Tech/BCA/BBA/Bio-Science/Bio-tech, B. Pharma) in Banasthli University ,100 adolescent girls were chosen randomly on the basis of regular interval method.And through participatory observation method, the data were collected from the target groups.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

So far the socio-economic background of the target groups are concerned, majority of them belongs to urban community (86%) and out of which 32% are from metro and cosmopolitan cities and remaining others are from small cities. The facts regarding the types of family the respondents belong, majority of them (91%) from nuclear families The family size was 4 to 6 for 3/4<sup>th</sup> and 2 to 3 for 1/6<sup>th</sup> of subjects. Out of the total respondents, 57% of the respondents' fathers, are the single earner of the family whereas 34% of respondents parents are dual earners and rest of the respondents' parents, the mothers are the single earners. More than 90% of respondents' parents are highly qualified. As society is becoming more complex day by day due to rapid changes of values in global era, the adolescents face its negative consequences as almost all of them are in certain kind of stress which not only affects their personal lives but also stands as a barrier for developing a healthy society. The present study identified the following causes that lead to stress amongst the subjects.

**Table 1**  
**Causes of Stress Amongst Adolescents**

<i>Domains</i>	<i>Frequency (f )</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Home Sickness	89	89%
Lack of participation in extra curricula activities	76	76%
Career pressure	54	54%
Uncertainty about future	76	76%
Academic performance	31	31%
Family conflict	27	27%
Adverse experience	9	9%
Over expectation of parents	62	62%
Death of close relatives	4	4%
Issues related to opposite sex and Homosexually	23	23%
Lack of social relations	6	6%
Value conflict	21	21%

So for the causes of stress amongst the subjects are concerned, the data show that the most prominent cause of stress is 'Home sicknesses' in the study area. This is because as the sample children are away from their home they feel nostalgic. In our observation, we found that since the subjects reside in university's campus, they are unable to get direct family support when they are in need. Even the s

upport from the wardens, teachers, and friends in the campus do not replace their 'family-emotional-need'.

We also observed that the significant numbers of the respondents are uncertain regarding their future that is about 76% which indicates that they remain in confused state of mind due to multidimensional pressures on them that lead to their lives more stressful and critical in coping life's challenge.

As we know, involvement in games, sports and other cultural activities generally minimize the stress and anxiety, but in our observation, we found that our sample students do not show inclination in extra-curricular activities like participation in games, sports and cultural activities etc. Thus in this context the inference can be drawn that because of study pressure and lack of awareness regarding sports' significance in minimizing stress level the sample students keep themselves away from participation in these types of activities.

Apart from these, there are some other causes like, over expectation of the parents (62%), career pressure (54%), academic performance (31%), family conflict (27%), issues related to inclination towards opposite sex and homosexuality (23%), value conflict (21%), adverse experience (9%), lack of social relations( 6%) which lead to stress amongst adolescent girls.

On the basis of the above data, we may conclude that due to cut throat competition in the competitive world order, the adolescent girls are very much confused regarding their career. Some of the respondents face the consequences of their family conflict, that is 27% and near about 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the total respondents happen to be stressful and disturbed due their attraction towards the opposite sex and homosexuality. On the basis of discussion with the respondents, we derived that 21% of them are under stress because of their exposure to modern values which happen to be contradictory with the traditional values. Very few respondents i.e.9 % have experienced adverse situations like the death of near and dear one, sexual abuse, critical economic condition of the family which consequently affect the respondents socially and emotionally. Being an introvert type of personality, we found very few of respondents, are unable to mix-up with the people and that is the reason, they do not share their feelings with others.

No doubt, stress is a psychological state of mind that may be very much explicit in their overt behavior. In our study we found, when adolescent girls are under stress, they are used show peculiarities in their behavior like avoidance of eye contact, crying or screaming, immobility, trembling voice, bunking classes, over sleeping /eating and repeating sentences.

It is noteworthy that 'stress', to some extent proves to be good and fruitful. As it often hits us when we do something important and in moderate doses, it helps us think and act more effectively. But the excessive stress leads to anxiety and uncontrollable anxiety can be debilitating. The person in this situation may go under acute depression. In our study from some self-reported cases we found that the children are also facing loss of memory gradually, suffering from dreadful diseases like blood pressure, mental/physical fatigue, diabetes . Even few cases reported that they feel to be committing suicide.

**Table 2**  
**Nature of Coping Stress Adopted by the Subjects**

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Frequency (Out of 100)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Meditation, yoga and exercise	6	6%
Pray to god	17	17%
Drink tea /coffee	62	62%
Consult teachers and wardens	38	38%
Discuss with friends and close persons	69	69%
Listening to music and internet chatting	72	72%

*Note:* Researchers observed more than one coping stress in the subjects.

Nature of coping plays a very crucial role in minimizing stress. On the basis of discussion with the subjects, we found that the majority of them (98%) tried to cope with the stress by prying to god. This shows that despite of adolescents' exposure to modern values, the traditional values of Indian spiritualism are very much prevalent amongst the sample children in order to cope up with the stressful situation. The 72% of the subjects are found to be busy in listening music and chatting through internet while they are under stress. Near about, two third of the respondents like to discuss with their friends and close persons while under stress. Drinking tea and coffee is very much preferred by the subjects while under stress. Although teachers and wardens are significant for the students in residential institutions, still in our study, the found, more than 60 % of the subjects show hesitation to discuss their stress related problems with them. The study found 6% of the subjects do meditation, yoga and exercise and 4% of the subjects take sleeping pills for releasing their stresses.

No doubt, few stresses are manageable in personal level, yet there are so many other stresses which need proper attention by the experts.

In our discussion, we inferred that the respondents are adopting few stress coping mechanism, still those are not proved to be that much effective as they are lacking proper channels to mitigate stresses. Consequently that lead to diminished health or illness as it can drastically affect many of body's immune systems, individual perceptions and nervous systems. And chronic stress has also been shown to impair developmental growth in children. To avoid these situations, stress must be managed. The stress management encompasses techniques intended to equip a person with effective coping mechanism for dealing with stress.

## CONCLUSION

In globalize world the young generation, especially the adolescent children face more stresses than never before. Historically and currently, they are caught between tradition and progress. There is much concern and speculation about western values, consumerism and secular role models that are being imposed on the world's youngsters. As societies become more complex, the family is no longer considered as the primary socialization agent for young people. On the other hand the educational institutions, teachers and the mass media also share the greater roles in over all personality development of young generation.

To resolve the adolescents' problems of stress, we evolved a suggestive model in the workshop where the parents, teachers and wardens would have a great role to play.

### **Phase-I: Identification Stage**

- (i) Identifying the problem in the initial stage.
- (ii) Create a safe and supportive environment in the family as well as in educational institution.
- (iii) Information-building through various sources regarding the problems.

### **Phase-II: Skill Building Stage**

- (i) Training for teachers and wardens.
- (ii) Involving parents.

### **Phase-III: Problem Solving Stage**

- (i) Counseling by the teachers, wardens and counselors.
- (ii) Consulting experts/Psychiatrists.

On the basis of the above analysis we may comprehend that setting up a counseling cell is a crying need for every educational institution which must involve the teachers, parents and experts.

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