

## **Academic Stress and Its Management- A Study**

**B. Lavanya**

Assistant Professor

School of Management Studies

Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, India

**Dr. S. Saraswathi**

Head of the Department

School of Management Studies

Chaitanya Bharathi Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, India

### **ABSTRACT**

Academic Stress is the feeling of anxiety or apprehension over one's performance in the academic endeavors. In this competitive academic environment, irrespective of the levels of the education, students are undergoing immense amount of the stress in various ways. Some of them include, derived from a need for perfection, worry over grades, parental pressure, competition and a tough class load. Higher secondary students are one of the most common victims of stress. It is one such phase, where most of the students experience academic stress, as they are in transition stage of their education and focused on achieving a good score in the competitive examinations. Even though, moderate amount of stress acts as a motivation for students, but at times too much of it may disturb with their daily lives. When built over time, stress can give rise to a host of serious problems such as depression and anxiety. So the present study makes an attempt to study the factors causing stress among the higher secondary students and analyze the consequences of stress on the students. The study also examines the personal coping strategies adopted by students, apart from the Institutions support to overcome stress. Structured questionnaire was used as primary source to collect the required data. The secondary data sources include books, magazines, journals, web sources. Convenient sampling technique is adopted to select the respondents. Sample size is 112 students who are pursuing their higher secondary education in Twin cities of Telangana state. Descriptive analysis and Percentage analysis are used to interpret the data collected. From the study it was found that the main reasons for academic stress are too many extra demands on students and interest in some subjects. The major impact of academic stress on the students is being Moody and showing Nervousness. Students are finding alternatives on the actions to cope up with stress. It is also noticed that certain institutions are taking measures like helping students to manage stress. A model is proposed to manage academic stress effectively based on the findings of the study.

**Key words: Academic stress, Competitive environment, coping strategies, Higher Secondary Education**

## **INTRODUCTION**

“Stress” is obtained from the Latin Language word “strictus” which means “tight” or “narrow” and “stringer” which is used for tighten. It means ‘psychological or intramural feeling of squeezing’ – that a person feels when he is in stress. Academic stress is a mental stress because of some anticipated frustration associated with parental pressure on high performances; tough class load; worry over grade competitions; sports etc. Consequently, it puts an enormous amount of stress on children which may lead to wrong decisions or lead to use of suitable copying strategies like alcohol, drug etc. and it could be too late to recover.

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Recent study conducted by Michaela C et al (2020) has found that “The ongoing stress relating to education has demonstrated negative impact on students’ learning capacity, academic performance, education and employment attainment, sleep quality and quantity, physical health, mental health and substance use outcomes. Increasing students’ stress-management skills and abilities is an important target for change. Twin cities of Telangana state are well known for well-established higher secondary educational institutions. It is often observed that most of the students incline towards engineering or medical education. In order to fulfill this dream of becoming either engineer or a doctor, the dream of their own or their parents, students join institutions where they are undergoing immense pressure. So the present study has been undertaken to understand the stress and its management by higher secondary students.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

According to Sindhu (2016), stress is the state of an individual which results from their interaction with the environment that is perceived as too demanding and a threat to their well-being.

Balaji Nihal et al. (2019) from their study found out that in both medical and engineering students, there is a significant association of perceived stress and anxiety with academic performance. Both medical and engineering students adopted active coping a little more than avoidant coping strategies during the examination time. The association of all the coping strategies used, with the academic performance, is statistically significant, thereby proving the importance of coping states in academic performance.

Bhargava and Trivedi (2018) suggest that more emphasis can be given to development stage of child into adolescence. Pupils should be brought up in the positive environment, where more emphasis is given to the outdoor activities. The Institutions should create hostile learning environment by reducing the negative impact of stressors.

Reddy et al. (2018) in their study found that remedies such as feedback, yoga, life skills training, mindfulness, meditation and psychotherapy have been found useful to manage stress. They

suggested that to identify the main reason of stress is the key to deal with it and Professionals can develop appropriate strategies to deal with stress. The study confirmed that the integrated well-being of the students is important not only for the individual but for the institute as well.

María Guadalupe Acosta-Gómez (2018) from their research revealed that the main sources of academic stress were examinations, choosing a career path, and family troubles. The students' adopted activities like listening to music, talking with someone about the problem, and exercise to deal with the stress.

Subramani and Kadiravan (2017), based on the finding from the study, confirmed the association between academic stress and mental health among students. They also propounded that students from private schools are more pressurized when compared to students from government schools due to the excess of homework and other academic related assignments.

Arun, Priti et al. (2017) concluded that assessment of stress among adolescents should extend beyond academic difficulties. Teachers and parents need to be more aware of the multiple issues leading to stress among students to learn ways to handle and guide adolescents.

Dimitrov (2017) claimed that stress can be addressed by ensuring that the students give utmost importance to their welfare. Food, exercise, work, recreation are some of the areas to focus on. It was also inferred from the study that students are usually conditioned in a way that makes them fearful to take up upcoming challenges as the focus is only the academics and not the development of a go getter mentality.

Pratibha Sagar and Bijender Singh (2017) founded that there exists high significant difference between the academic stress of male and female participants of higher secondary school students, but no significant difference was found among academic stress of arts, science and commerce stream students. It was also found that there was no significant difference between academic stress of government aided & self-finance school students and rural & urban area school students.

Sharma et al. (2016), based on the findings recommended the use of various methods to curb stress. Doing one physical exercise on daily basis can address the concern of stress. One can also adopt to various time management tools and get involved with leisure activities which can benefit students. Also, it was suggested that colleges should have a conducive ambience where the style of delivery from teachers end and providing mentors can bring fresh air to the teaching style.

Prabu (2015) researched on the higher secondary students and found that male students are more stressed than the female students. Urban student's academic stress is greater than the rural students. Government school student's stress is lower than the private school student's stress. Students from Science stream are more stressed than the students from Arts.

Kaur (2014) acknowledged that mental health of teenagers get affected due to the academic stress. Girls with academic stress were found to have poor mental health as compared to the boys. This was accounted on the study that parents at times put pressure and strain on students that leads to deteriorated mental health.

Deb et al. (2014) conducted research on academic stress by considering 400 male students from five private secondary schools in Kolkata who were studying in grades 10 and 12. Students with marginal grades were said to have higher level of stress as compared to students with better grades. Also, students involved with extra-curricular activities were noted to be more stressed as related to those students who were not involved with it.

Bataineh (2013) measured the academic stressors experienced by students at university. The result of the analyses showed that the unreasonable academic overload, not enough time to study due to the vast course content being covered, high family expectations and low motivation levels are some of the reasons for the stress. Fear of failure is also the prime reason for stress. There was no significant difference found amongst the students from different of specializations.

Khan and Kausar (2013) concluded that stress definitely impacts the academic performance in a negative way though no significant difference was found as per the gender. The difference was evident between junior and senior students. Stress, for sure, affects the ability to study efficiently and managing the time.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The objectives of the current study includes i) to study the factors causing stress among the students; ii) To analyze the consequences of stress on the students iii) to examine the personal coping strategies adopted by students and the institutions to overcome stress iv) To propose a model that helps to manage academic stress among Higher secondary students.

The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is the fresh information that is obtained from original sources by the researchers. A structured questionnaire is prepared to collect relevant data. The secondary data is collected from the published sources such as books, magazines, journals and web sources.

Respondents to the study were chosen using convenient sampling technique. The information was collected from the 112 students of top Higher secondary colleges located in Twin cities of Telangana state. The questionnaire was distributed to the sample study group to collect the students 'responses.

In order to measure stress experienced by the students, Academic Stress Scale developed by Rajendran and Kaliappan (1991) was used. The scale measures the sources of stress primarily on four dimensions namely, personal inadequacy, fear of failure, teacher pupil relationship, interpersonal difficulties, and inadequate study facilities. Self-designed questions were prepared to find causes of stress and to examine how it is managed by adopting coping strategies.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

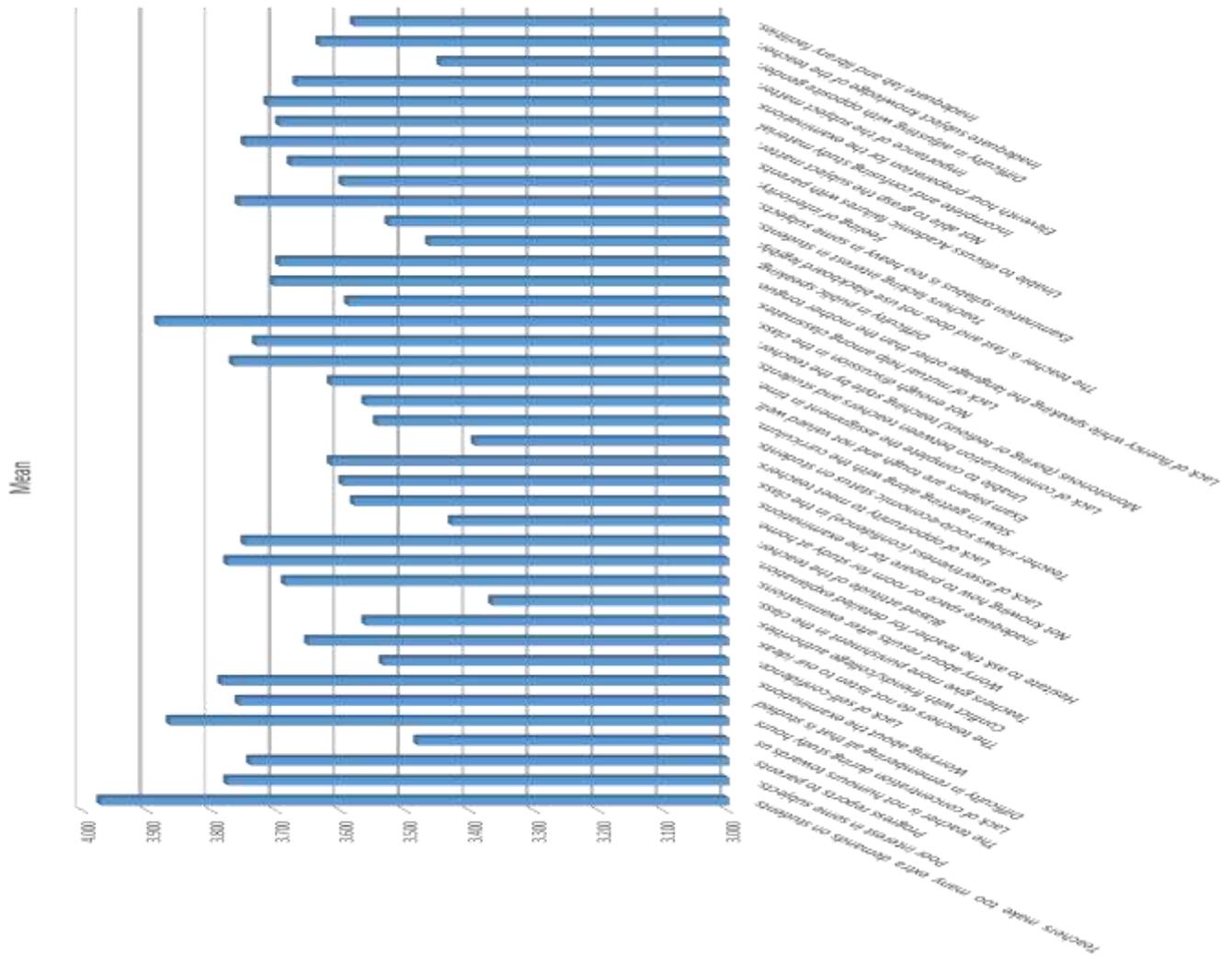
In order to fulfill the objectives the relevant questions were included in different sections. All items were measured on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 (Strongly agree) 4 (Agree) 3 (Neutral) 2 (Disagree) 1 (Strongly disagree) and for some sections relevant data from the respondents was collected from items framed on 5 (Always) 4 (Most of the times) 3 (Sometimes) 2 (Rarely) 1

(Never). Descriptive statistics have been used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics, in short, help describe and understand the features of a specific data set, by giving short summaries about the sample and measures of the data. The mean values are only considered to interpret the data.

**Table-1: Presents the mean values for the factors Causing Stress**

Statements	Mean
1. Teachers make too many extra demands on students	3.973
2. Poor interest in some subjects.	3.777
3. Progress reports to parents	3.741
4. The teacher is not humors towards us	3.482
5. Lack of concentration during study hours	3.866
6. Difficulty in remembering all that is studied	3.759
7. Worrying about the examinations.	3.786
8. Lack of self-confidence.	3.536
9. The teachers do not listen to our ideas.	3.652
10. Conflict with friends/college authorities.	3.563
11. Teachers give more punishment in the class.	3.366
12. Worry about results after examinations.	3.688
13. Hesitate to ask the teacher for detailed explanation.	3.777
14. Biased attitude of the teacher.	3.750
15. Inadequate space or room for study at home.	3.429
16. Not knowing how to prepare for the examinations.	3.580
17. Lack of assertiveness (confidence) in the class.	3.598
18. Lack of opportunity to meet teachers.	3.616
19. Teacher shows socio-economic status on students.	3.393
20. Slow in getting along with the curriculum.	3.545
21. Exam papers are tough and not valued well.	3.563
22. Unable to complete the assignment in time.	3.616
23. Lack of communication between teachers and students.	3.768
24. Monotonous (boring or tedious) teaching style by the teacher.	3.732

25. No enough discussion in the class.	3.884
26. Lack of mutual help among classmates.	3.589
27. Lack of fluency while speaking the language other than the mother tongue.	3.705
28. Difficulty in public speaking.	3.696
29. The teacher is fast and does not use blackboard legibly.	3.464
30. Teachers lacking interest in students.	3.527
31. Examination syllabus is too heavy in some subjects.	3.759
32. Feeling of inferiority.	3.598
33. Unable to discuss Academic failures with parents.	3.679
34. Not able to grasp the subject matter.	3.750
35. complete and confusing study material.	3.696
36. Eleventh hour preparation for the examinations.	3.714
37. Importance of the subject matter.	3.670
38. Difficulty in adjusting with opposite gender.	3.446
39. Inadequate subject knowledge of the teacher.	3.634
40. Inadequate lab and library facilities.	3.580

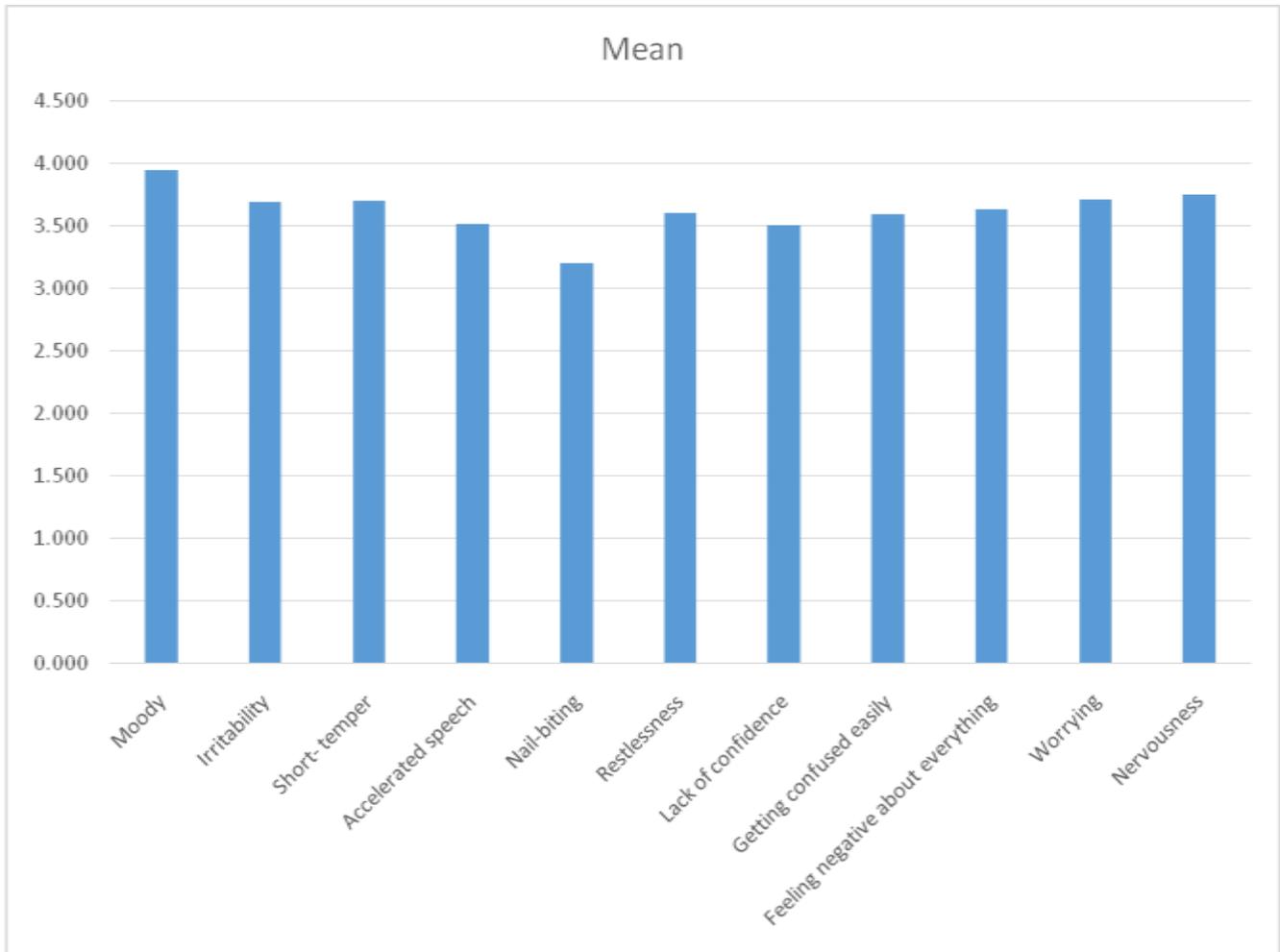


**Graphical representation-1: Mean values for the factors Causing Stress**

It can be interpreted from the graph that the prime reasons causing academic stress are: Teachers make too many extra demands on students (M= 3.973), Lack of concentration during study hours (M=3.866) and No enough discussion in the class (M =3.884). When observed the mean values, it can be understood that the prevailing academic culture of the institutions imparting higher secondary education are causing stress among the students.

**Table-2: Presents the mean values for the Consequences of Stress**

Consequences	Mean
Moody	3.946
Irritability	3.688
Short- temper	3.696
Accelerated speech	3.509
Nail-biting	3.196
Restlessness	3.598
Lack of confidence	3.500
Getting confused easily	3.589
Feeling negative about everything	3.625
Worrying	3.705
Nervousness	3.750



**Graphical representation-2: Presents the mean values for consequences of Stress**

The graphical representation -2 depicts the consequences faced by the students due to stress in which most effected statements are being moody, worrying and nervousness. The least effects statements are nail biting and lack of confidence.

**Table-3: Presents the mean values for the coping strategies adopted by the students to manage stress**

Statement	Mean
I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in.	4.170
I've been getting emotional support from others.	3.732
I've been taking action to try to make the situation better.	3.813
I've been getting help and advice from other people.	3.625
I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do.	3.679
I've been making jokes about it just to feel better	3.589

I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, or shopping.	3.446
I've been doing something to think about it less, such as watching TV	3.554
I've been doing something to think about it less, such as reading	3.527
I've been doing something to think about it less, such as day dreaming or sleeping	3.518
I've been doing something to think about it less, such as surfing social media	3.643
I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive.	3.554
I've been learning to live with it.	3.652
I've been taking psychology sessions to overcome stress	3.223
I've been sweating out stress with a good workout	3.366
I've been drinking tea or coffee to feel relaxed	3.357
I've been watching motivational videos for overcoming stress	3.420
I've been considering role models to reach my goal by thinking very less about obstacles	3.438

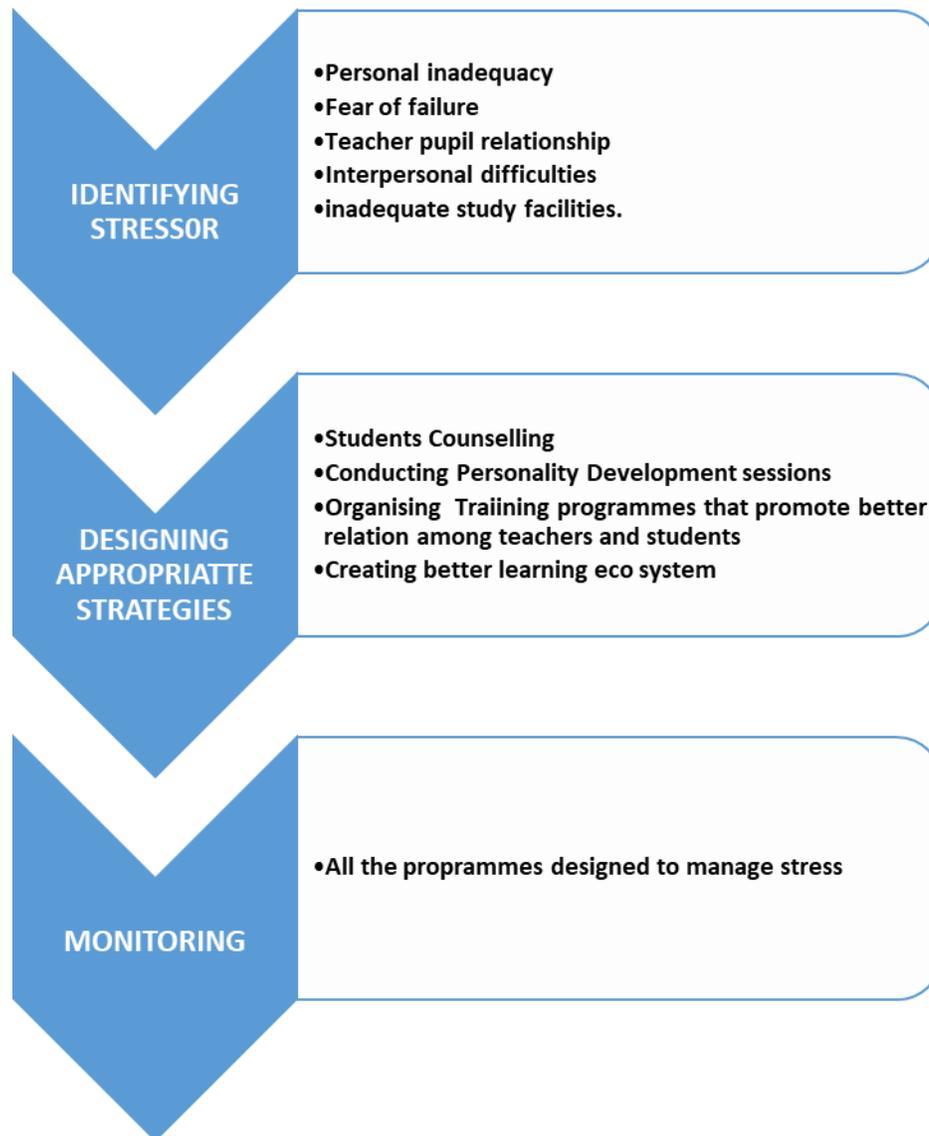
From the graphical representation, it can be inferred that the students are adopting coping strategies personally also to overcome stress. The students are concentrating on their efforts on doing something about the situation they are into, to come out of the stress. Some of the respondents even expressed that they try seeking emotional support and advice from others to come out of stress. Least preferred strategy is to attend psychology sessions to overcome stress.

**Table-4: Presents the coping strategies adopted by the Institutions to manage stress**

Statement	Yes	No
The college provide well drafted time table	68	44
Proper breaks are given	38	74
Mentoring students during academic stress	37	75
Counselling students and parents	45	67

Adequate home works	65	47
Allowing two day offs	20	92
Providing sufficient preparation holidays before exam	42	70
Providing sufficient holidays after exams	38	74
Allowing students to play (Any physical activity)	31	81

The table-4 shows the measures taken by college management to manage stress. From the responses, it can be analyzed that the colleges provide well drafted time tables, adequate homework that helps students in managing stress. Students also opined that if the management provides regular counselling to the parents and students, it would be of great advantage.



### **PROPOSED MODEL TO MANAGE ACADEMIC STRESS**

The model proposed focus primarily on identifying the factors causing stress. They include dimensions namely personal inadequacy, fear of failure, teacher pupil relationship, interpersonal difficulties, and inadequate study facilities. Based on the dimension causing stress the educational Institutions need to design appropriate strategies that can help managing stress. Continuously monitoring the programmes implemented would result in effective academic stress management.

## CONCLUSION

From the study, it can be concluded that the Academic Environment existing of higher secondary students in Twin cities are leading to stressful condition. The main reasons for this being: teachers make too many extra demands on students, lack of concentration and no enough discussion in the classes. The major impact of academic stress on the students is being Moody and showing Nervousness. Students are concentrating on the efforts, seeking emotional support and finding alternatives to cope up with stress. Though certain institutions are taking measures to help students manage stress, it can be observed from the discussion with the students that they are inadequate. All the Stakeholders need to play their significant role in providing a learning environment which encourages the students to learn and grow rather than feeling stressed.

Convenient sampling technique is limitation for study as analysis could not done based on the category of the college. This may give rise to scope for the further research.

## REFERENCES

- Arun, Priti; Garg, Rohit; Chavan, Bir Singh, "Stress and Suicidal Ideation among adolescents having Academic Difficulty"Industrial Psychiatry Journal. Jan-Jun2017, Vol. 26 Issue 1, p64-70. 7p.
- Balaji, Nihal; Murthy, P; Kumar, D; Chaudhury, Suprakash." Perceived stress, anxiety and coping states in medical and engineering students during examinations", Industrial Psychiatry Journal. Jan-Jun 2019, Vol. 28 Issue 1, p86-97.
- Bhargava, D., Trivedi, H. (2018). A Study of Causes of Stress and Stress Management among Youth. IRA-International Journal of Management & Social Sciences (ISSN 2455-2267), 11(3), 108-117.
- Dimitrov.G (2017). A study on the impact of Academic Stress among college students in India, Ideal Research. 2(4)
- Kaur,S. (2014). Impact of Academic Stress on Mental Health: A Study of School going Adolescents, Global Journal for Research Analysis, 3(4)
- Khan,M.J. and Altaf, S. Kausar,H.(2013). Effect of Perceived Academic Stress on Students' Performance, FWU Journal of Social Sciences, 7(2), 146-151
- Michaela C. Pascoe, Sarah E. Hetrick & Alexandra G. Parker (2020) The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education, International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 25:1, 104-112,
- Reddy,K.J., Menon. K., Anjanathattil (2018). Academic Stress and its Sources among University Students, Biomed Pharmacol Journal, 11 (1), 531-537

María Guadalupe Acosta-Gómez, José María De la Roca-Chiapas, Alicia Zavala-Berverna, Antonio Eugenio Rivera Cisneros, Verónica Reyes Pérez et al. (2018) Stress in High School Students: A Descriptive Study. *Journal of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* - 1(1):1-10.

Prabu, P. S. (2015). A study on academic stress among higher secondary students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 4(10), 63-68.

Sharma,B. Kumar,A. and Sarin,J. (2016). Academic Stress, Anxiety, Remedial Measures Adopted and Its Satisfaction among Medical Student, A Systematic Review, *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research*, 6(7), 368-376

Sindhu, P. (2016). Impact of stress on academic achievement among engineering students. *The international journal of Indian psychology*, 4(1), 9-14.

Subramani, C. and Kadhiravan, S. (2017). Academic Stress and Mental Health among High School Students, *Indian Journal of Applied Research*, 7(5).

Pratibha Sagar and Bijender Singh (2017). A study of academic stress among higher secondary school students. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*