

Types of stress experienced by the youth and factors influencing it

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Two hundred undergraduate youth (female 110 and male 90) between the age group of 18-23 yrs were selected from randomly chosen five colleges of Parbhani town of Marathwada region, Maharashtra state. The data were collected by personally interviewing the sample with open ended interview schedule and by administering on them Bisht Battery of Stress Scales (BBSS) and Socio-economic status scale. Irrespective of gender, more than half of the sample youth experienced high levels of academic, institutional, vocational, financial and achievement stress. On the whole, the female youth were found to have experienced more stress as compared to their counterparts male youth. Significant negative correlations were recorded between youth's socio-economic status of the family, types of parenting practices adopted for them, specialization in degree programme, academic achievement, types of family, kind of interpersonal relations with family, disciplinary styles adopted by the parents and interpersonal relations with peers, teachers and neighbours with different types of stress experienced by them. The results advocate that, there is a great need to provide supportive social network of family, peers, lecturers and neighbours to youth for developing and maintaining good mental health in addition to training to them on relaxation strategies and techniques for combating stress and to empower them to lead quality life.

■ **KEY WORDS** : Stress, Youth, Quality life

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The young student population always is vulnerable to stressful life conditions especially in pursuit of higher professional education in a highly competitive environment (WHO, 1994; Saipanis, 2003). Hodge (1996) investigated that prevalence of stress was found to be among those students who were by nature prone to anxiety. In 21st century, mental health problems of youth are considered to be the biggest health problem across the world. The pressure to get good grades, difficulties of integrating into the system, peer pressure, competition, separation from family, freedom, balancing extra-curricular activities with assignments, excessive home work, unclear assignments, uncomfortable classrooms, academic requirements, strained inter-personal relationships with faculty members family and friends, faulty eating, leisure and sleeping habits, uncertain future are some of the sources of creating stress among the college students.

The other frequently recorded sources of stress are high parental expectations, dissatisfaction with the class lectures, vastness of academic curriculum, lack of entertainment facilities in the institutions, increased number of academic and competitive examinations and their evaluation procedures, lack of time for recreation, mess food problems, concerns about physical wellbeing and appearance etc. In addition to these, major sad events like death of beloved people, family/financial crisis, unemployment, academic failure, etc are also found to create mental stress among youth. Female students are found to be more likely to perceive stress than male students (Megel *et al.*, 1994). Many research studies indicated that, the stress interfere with the way youth think, feel and act in life, which lead to stress, depression, anxiety, personality and behavioural disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia etc. which ultimately have

an adverse impact on progress of youth, society and nation. Even though, a large number of youth are suffering from various kinds of stress viz., institutional, academic, financial, vocational, family, physical, etc. they can overcome it by adopting constructive and effective coping strategies. The research study was under taken to know the types of stress experienced by the youth and factors influencing it.

RESEARCH METHODS

Two hundred undergraduate students (female 110 and male 90) of Parbhani town of Marathwada region, Maharashtra, in the age group of 18-23 yrs were selected by simple random sampling method with an intention to have the youth of heterogeneous backgrounds. Out of the 20 co-edn colleges, 5 colleges (25%) were chosen at random to carry out this study. Out of the selected colleges, 3 colleges were affiliated to Marathwada Krishi Vidhyapeeth and the remaining 2 colleges to Swami Ramanand Tirth University. Total 2750 students were recorded to be enrolled in the 5 selected colleges. Out of which, total 275 under graduate students (10%) were selected randomly. The final sample constituted 200 undergraduate students (female 110 and male 90) after the deletion of 75 subjects (female 35 and male 40) due to the submission of incomplete survey schedules and inventories. The data pertaining to the study were collected by personally interviewing the sample youth based on open ended interview schedule and by administering on them Bisht Battery of Stress Scales (BBSS) developed by Bisht (2005) and revised Kuppuswamy's socio-economic status scale (2008). The data were collected, pooled, tabulated, statistically analyzed and discussed below.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that hundred per cent of the female youth reported to have experienced high level of institutional stress followed by academic (96.36%), financial (62.72%), self-concept (51.81%) and achievement stress (49%). While 20-30 per cent female youth were also found to have experienced social (30.00%) and social role stress (20.90%) as compared to the male youth. On the other hand, 82 per cent of the male youth were reported to have high level of academic stress followed by vocational stress (74.44%), achievement stress (56.66%), financial stress (51.11%), physical stress (50.00%), institutional stress (45.55%) and family stress (34.44%) as compared to the female youth. However, about 16 per cent of the male youth also found to have suffered from high level of social role stress and social stress as compared to their female counterparts. Whereas, the remaining percentages of the male and female youth assessed to have either average or low levels of the all types of stress depicted in Table 1. Irrespective of gender, it was found that 90 per cent of the youth rated to have high academic stress

Table 1 Comparison of types and magnitude of stress experienced by the youth based on their gender

Types of stress	Magnitude of stress and percentages of youth										Z values		
	Female youth (110)					Male youth (90)					Inclusive of both gender(200)		
	High (a)	Average (b)	Low(c)	High(d)	Average(e)	Low(f)	High	Average	Low	a Vs d	b Vs e	c Vs f	
Institutional stress	100.00(110)	--	--	45.55(41)	54.44(49)	--	75.50(151)	24.50(49)	---	10.48**	----	---	
Academic stress	96.36(106)	3.63(4)	--	82.22(74)	17.77(16)	--	90.00(180)	10.00(20)	---	3.13**	**	---	
Vocational stress	69.09(76)	25.45(28)	5.45(6)	74.44(67)	20.00(18)	5.55(5)	71.50(143)	23.00(46)	5.50(11)	0.78 ^{NS}	0.84 ^{NS}	1.12 ^{NS}	
Financial stress	62.72(69)	28.18(31)	9.09(10)	51.11(46)	43.33(39)	5.55(5)	57.50(115)	35.00(70)	7.50(15)	1.56 ^{NS}	2.22 [*]	1.85 ^{NS}	
Self-concept stress	51.81(57)	41.81(46)	6.36(7)	45.55(41)	40.00(36)	14.44(13)	49.00(98)	41.00(82)	10.00(20)	0.84 ^{NS}	0.14 ^{NS}	0.62 ^{NS}	
Achievement stress	49.09(54)	19.09(21)	31.81(35)	56.66(51)	15.55(14)	27.77(25)	52.50(105)	17.50(35)	30.00(60)	0.98 ^{NS}	0.75 ^{NS}	1.58 ^{NS}	
Family stress	32.72(36)	59.09(65)	8.18(9)	34.44(31)	62.22(56)	3.33(3)	33.50(67)	60.50(121)	6.00(12)	0.29 ^{NS}	0.43 ^{NS}	1.07 ^{NS}	
Social stress	30.00(33)	35.45(39)	34.54(38)	16.66(15)	55.55(50)	27.77(25)	24.00(48)	44.50(89)	31.50(63)	2.40 ^{**}	2.88 ^{**}	1.41 ^{NS}	
Social role stress	20.90(23)	55.45(61)	23.63(26)	15.55(14)	52.22(47)	32.22(29)	18.50(37)	54.00(108)	27.50(55)	0.93 ^{NS}	0.42 ^{NS}	1.41 ^{NS}	
Physical stress	18.18(20)	52.72(58)	29.09(32)	50.00(45)	41.11(37)	8.88(8)	32.50(65)	47.50(95)	20.00(40)	4.98**	1.56 ^{NS}	4.04 ^{NS}	

*and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively NS= Non-significant

followed by institutional (75.50%), vocational (71.50%), financial (57.50%), achievement (52.50%), self-concept (49.00%), family (33.50%), physical (32.50%), social (24.00%) and social role (18.50%) stress. Significantly a higher percentage of the female youth experienced high level of institutional stress, academic stress and social stress as compared to the male counterparts and it was *vice-versa* with regard to their physical stress.

It can be concluded that, irrespective of gender more than half of the sample youth experienced high levels of academic, institutional, vocational, financial and achievement stress. Some of the results are in line with the findings reported by Moshe Zeidner (1992), Hudd *et al.* (2000) and Misra and Mckean (2000). This again indicates that during the past 2 decades, the types of stress experienced by the youth almost remained the same despite the rapidly changing cultural and financial scenario of society.

The comparison of means of various stress levels experienced by the youth based on their gender and irrespective of gender are depicted in Table 2. It is obvious from the obtained mean scores of types of stress that both the female and male youth were found to have experienced high academic stress (198.95±27.56 to 199.70± 49.83) as compared to their other types of stress. With respect to their other types of stress, it was recorded that the female youth found to have experienced more social stress (160.20±41.85) followed by family (159.16±43.72), institutional (151.98±14.37), achievement (144.11± 43.12), financial (138.08± 41.09), vocational (137.08±38.75), physical (114.60±30.44), self-concept (107.80±39.71) and social role (107.31± 24.25) stress. The corresponding mean scores of the male youth were 151.05±36.18, 149.38±31.43, 95.16±27.24, 148.64±31.66, 124.36±32.17, 127.90±26.31, 144.50±32.38, 105.18±41.97 and 102.73±25.19. However,

it was evident from the mean scores of various types of stress of the youth that irrespective of gender, their academic stress was found to be more among them followed by social stress, family stress, achievement stress, vocational stress, financial stress, physical stress, institutional stress, self-concept stress and social role stress.

No significant differences were recorded between the different types of stress experienced by the female and male youth except for institutional and financial stress which was more for female youth as compared to the male youth and it was *vice-versa* for the physical stress. There was more variation in types of stress experienced by the youth based on their gender.

From the above mentioned results, it can be inferred that the female youth were found to have experienced more stress as compared to their counterparts male youth. These results are at par with the findings quoted by Moshe Zeidner (1992), Hudd *et al.* (2000), Misra and Mckean (2000) and Amponsah (2010).

The significant negative correlations were recorded between socio-economic status of the youth's family (r-0.19*), types of parenting practices adopted for them (r-0.16*), specialization in degree programme of the youth and their academic achievement (r-0.18*) with their institutional stress (Table 3). It is evident from the results that the youth studying professional degree courses were observed to have more institutional stress as compared to other degree programmes. The socio-economic status of youth (r -0.18*) and the types of parenting practices adopted for them (0.18*) were also found to have significant negative correlations with their academic stress. The types of parenting practices adopted for the youth (r-0.22*) and their interpersonal relations with peers, teachers and neighbours (r -0.19*) were observed to be significantly negatively and correlated with

Table 2 : Comparison of mean scores of various types of stress experienced by the youth based on their gender and irrespective of gender

Type of stress of youth	Mean scores of stress of youth			Z values a Vs b
	Female youth (110) Means ± S.D. (a)	Male youth (90) Means ± S.D. (b)	Inclusive of both gender Means ± S.D. (200)	
Institutional stress	151.98 ± 14.37	95.16 ± 27.24	126.41 ± 35.22	17.85**
Academic stress	198.95 ± 27.56	199.70 ± 49.83	199.29 ± 39.07	0.12 ^{NS}
Vocational stress	137.08 ± 38.75	127.90 ± 26.31	132.95 ± 33.96	1.98 ^{NS}
Financial stress	138.08 ± 41.09	124.36 ± 32.17	131.91 ± 37.87	2.64**
Self concept stress	107.80 ± 39.71	105.18 ± 41.97	106.63 ± 40.66	0.44 ^{NS}
Achievement stress	144.11 ± 43.12	148.64 ± 31.66	146.15 ± 38.37	0.85 ^{NS}
Family stress	159.16 ± 43.72	149.38 ± 31.43	154.76 ± 38.89	1.83 ^{NS}
Social stress	160.20 ± 41.85	151.05 ± 36.18	156.60 ± 39.57	1.65 ^{NS}
Social role stress	107.31 ± 24.25	102.73 ± 25.19	105.25 ± 24.86	1.29 ^{NS}
Physical stress	114.60 ± 30.44	144.5 ± 32.28	128.09 ± 34.60	6.70**

** indicate significance of value at P=0.01 NS = Non-significant

Table 3 Correlations between types of stress levels of the youth and their selected background variables irrespective of gender

Background variables	Correlations with types of stress and youth's background variables (200)									
	Institutional stress	Academic stress	Vocational stress	Financial stress	Self-concept stress	Achievement stress	Family stress	Social stress	Social role stress	Physical stress
Types of family	-0.08 ^{NS}	-0.11 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}	-0.09 ^{NS}	-0.14*	-0.01 ^{NS}	0.06 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}	-0.13 ^{NS}
Socio-economic status	-0.19*	-0.18*	-0.12 ^{NS}	-0.24*	-0.04 ^{NS}	-0.09 ^{NS}	-0.15*	0.03 ^{NS}	0.02 ^{NS}	-0.27**
Types of parenting practices	-0.16*	-0.18*	-0.22*	-0.09 ^{NS}	-0.08 ^{NS}	-0.15*	-0.16*	-0.17*	-0.09 ^{NS}	-0.28**
Kind of interpersonal relations with family	-0.04 ^{NS}	-0.04 ^{NS}	-0.10 ^{NS}	-0.07 ^{NS}	-0.06 ^{NS}	-0.18*	-0.11 ^{NS}	-0.16*	-0.02 ^{NS}	-0.03 ^{NS}
Types of childhood experiences	-0.05 ^{NS}	-0.05 ^{NS}	-0.02 ^{NS}	-0.13 ^{NS}	-0.05 ^{NS}	0.03 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}	-0.04 ^{NS}	-0.05 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}
Disciplinary styles adopted by parents	-0.03 ^{NS}	-0.12 ^{NS}	-0.11 ^{NS}	-0.05 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}	-0.16*	-0.12 ^{NS}	-0.08 ^{NS}	-0.12 ^{NS}	-0.11 ^{NS}
Kind of inter-personal relations with peers, teachers and neighbours	-0.10 ^{NS}	-0.07 ^{NS}	-0.19*	-0.04 ^{NS}	-0.02 ^{NS}	-0.06 ^{NS}	0.01 ^{NS}	-0.13 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}
Area of specialization in degree programme	-0.27**	-0.08 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}	0.03 ^{NS}	-0.01 ^{NS}	-0.04 ^{NS}	-0.05 ^{NS}	-0.02 ^{NS}	-0.05 ^{NS}	-0.21*
Academic achievement	-0.18*	-0.01 ^{NS}	-0.03 ^{NS}	-0.06 ^{NS}	-0.02 ^{NS}	-0.03 ^{NS}	-0.02 ^{NS}	-0.04 ^{NS}	-0.03 ^{NS}	-0.10 ^{NS}

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively NS=Non-significant

their vocational stress, while the similar trend of correlation also was recorded with the socio-economic status of the youth (r-0.24*) and their experienced financial stress. On the other hand, types of family (r -0.14*), types of parenting practices adopted for the youth (r-0.22*), kind of interpersonal relations with family (r-0.18*) and the disciplinary styles adopted by the parents (r-0.16*) were found to be significantly negatively correlated with their achievement stress. Further the youth's socio-economic status and the types of parenting practices adopted for them and their area of specialization of degree programme were recorded to be having significant negative correlations with their family stress, social stress and physical stress. However, their types of childhood experiences was recorded to have no significant relationships with the types of stress experienced by them. Some of the findings are in support of the results stated by Negga (2007), Gupta (2010), Wahl *et al.* (2010) and Venmathi (2011). From these results it can be concluded that socio-economic status of families mattered a lot with respect to different types of stress experienced by the youth, which further cautions families that as children grow older, SES of families needs to be enhanced to meet various needs of growing children properly to prevent stress.

Conclusion:

Irrespective of gender more than half of the sample youth experienced high levels of academic, institutional, vocational, financial and achievement stress. On the whole, the female youth were found to have experienced more stress as compared to their counterpart male youth. Significant negative correlations were recorded between youth's socio-economic status of the family, types of parenting practices adopted for them, specialization in degree programme, academic achievement, types of family, kind of interpersonal relations with family, disciplinary styles adopted by the parents and interpersonal relations with peers, teachers and neighbours with different types of stress experienced by them. The results advocate that, there is a great need to provide supportive social network of family, peers, lecturers and neighbours to youth for developing and maintaining good mental health in addition training to them on relaxation strategies and techniques for combating stress and to empower them to lead quality life.

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