

Level of Stress of Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract

Stress is part of us, all human beings faced stress in all works of life. At present no matter where we are and what we do it is unavoidable. Therefore even in a student life stress is not an option, especially in a world where there is not only population explosion but knowledge explosion as well, students faced stress. For example, moving away from home to attend college and to cope up with all the changes that takes place in personal growth, adjustment in new environment, making friends, coping up with studies etc. all these factors can lead to stress. Therefore the main objectives of this paper is to find out the stress level of higher secondary students and also to find out the difference between gender and area. The descriptive survey method was used for the present study. Further the simple random sampling technique was used to collect the sample which consists of 240 higher secondary school students, 103 male and 127 female higher secondary students. The findings of the study revealed that overall male have moderate and female have below average stress level.

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Introduction

Stress is part of us, all human beings faced stress in all works of life. At present no matter where we are and what we do it is unavoidable. Stress often arises when a person goes through changes in life such as attending college, getting married, switching careers, or being ill etc. For example, moving away from home to attend college and to cope up with all the changes that takes place in personal growth, adjustment in new environment, making friends, coping up with studies etc. all these factors can lead to stress. For this reason, it's critical to understand the source of stress and how to cope with it, even if stress is unavoidable, its negative effects, such as sadness or high blood pressure, can be reduced.

Stress is described as a condition of worry or mental tension brought on by a challenging situation. Stress is a natural human response that motivates us to face difficulties and hazards in our lives. Everyone feels stressed to some extent. However, how we handle stress has a significant impact on our general well-being. Stress is typical human response to perceived threats or demands. A variety of physical and psychological variables can contribute to its occurrence.

Stress is a phrase used to describe the physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral reactions to circumstances that are

perceived as threatening, demanding, or challenging (Niwlikar, 2021) [16]. Furthermore, Niwlikar (2021) [16] defined stress as a negative emotional experience that is followed by predictable biochemical, physiological, cognitive, and behavioral changes aim at either changing the stressful events or coping known as stress. Nowadays, a large portion of the Stress we endure is mental in nature. We start to worry when we see threats (loss of job, missing a deadline), and we begin to worry. (Hans Selye, 1956) [23].

Lazarus and Launier (1978), identified stress as a relationship between individuals and their surroundings, referring to it as the "person-environment fit".

On approaching the previous literatures with regard to Stress Menaga and Chandrasekaran (2014) [15] found that there is a significant difference in stress among higher secondary students based on their gender, family type, and school management type. Kumar and Akojam (2017) [11] found that stress was more prevalent in females. Further, Yikealo, Karvinen, and Gebregergis (2018) investigated the stress level among college students and found that there was a Moderate level of stress among the students, moreover it was also found that the student's stress level has no statistically significant association with the gender and grade point average. However

Sripongwiwat, Bunterm, and Tang (2018) found no noteworthy distinctions in academic stress based on gender or parental education level. Fredrika Kuller and Elinor (2019)^[6] conducted a similar study and found that there are significant differences in perceptions of well-being and stress depending on gender. Neeta and Singh (2020) found that there exist high significant differences between the stress of male and female participants of higher secondary schools students. Furthermore, Saharia and Goswami (2020) found students disclosed substantial variations in examination stress levels, particularly evident between male and female students and among those hailing from rural versus urban areas. Meher and Meher (2021)^[14] in their study found significant majority, 68%, experienced moderate stress levels, with 17% and 15% experiencing low-stress levels, respectively. Lastly, Hachintu and Kasisi (2022)^[7] examined the relationship between stress and academic performance among high school students in Lusaka. Their analysis found a positive correlation between stress levels and academic performance, Stress, especially in students, is a significant concern. It can lead to various adverse outcomes, both physically and mentally. Research has shown that academic-related stress can reduce academic achievement, decrease motivation, and increase the raise the likelihood of dropping out of school. Moreover, chronic stress can persist into college years and lead to academic disengagement and mental health problems (Pascoe *et al.*, 2020)^[13]. Individuals may face different kinds of stress in various aspects, including personal relationships, academic challenges, health issues, and external factors like weather or societal unrest.

It is essential to comprehend and investigate students' stress levels because of how stress affects their academic performance and general well-being among students have been related with a series of its adverse outcomes. According to many researchers, high-stress levels can seriously harm students' academic performance by lowering their ability to focus, retain information, and learn in general. Furthermore, long-term stress increases the likelihood of mental illness and worsens common problems like anxiety and depression in students. Significantly, stress can impair cognitive functions in children and adolescents during critical times of brain development, which may have long-term effects. Stress is also linked to aggressiveness, substance misuse, and social disengagement, which emphasizes the need for intervention even more.

Based on the complexity of human experiences and the diverse sources of stress that individuals may encounter, therefore it is imperative to comprehend and effectively handle stress to maintain overall well-being and tackle all these problems which arises out of stress.

Objectives

1. To find out the Stress level of Higher Secondary School Students

2. To find out the difference in Stress between male and female Higher Secondary School Students
3. To find out the difference in Stress between urban and rural Higher Secondary School Students

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated:

H01: There is no significant difference in Stress between male and female Higher Secondary School Students

H02: There is no significant difference in Stress between urban and rural Higher Secondary School Students

Delimitations

- The present study was delimited only to class XII Arts Higher Secondary Schools Students in Jaiaw Shillong, East Khasi Hills District.
- The present study was delimited only to Schools affiliated to Meghalaya Board of School Education (MBOSE)

Materials and Method

Research Method: Descriptive Survey method was used for the present study

Sample of the Study: The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study and the sample consisted of 240 Higher Secondary School Students, 103 male and 137 female.

Tool Used in the Study: A standardized tool on Student's Stress Scale developed by Zaki Akhtar was employed for the present study. The scale is of 5-point Likert type having 51 items and each item has five alternatives' responses i.e. always, often, sometimes, rarely and never.

Data Analysis: Data was analyzed using descriptive survey method viz., Percentage, Mean, and Standard Deviation were used to understand the distribution of the scores and inferential statistics, viz., t-test and p-value, were used to find out any significant differences of higher secondary school students.

Results and Discussions: The following are the results of the study which are analyze according to the different objectives.

Analysis of Objective 1: To find out the Stress level of Higher Secondary School Students on the following categories.

- i) Male & Female (Overall)
- ii) Urban (Male & Female)
- iii) Rural (Male & Female)

The analysis of the stress level of higher secondary school students with regard to the different categories are given as follows.

i) Male & Female (Overall)

The analysis of the the stress level of higher secondary school students with regard to the different categories is given in the following Table 1.

Table 1: Norms for the interpretation of the stress level for overall Male and Female Higher Secondary School Students

Z-Score Range	Frequency		Percentage		Levels of Interpretation
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
+2.01 & above	0	0	0	0	Extremely High
+1.26 to +2.00	2	0	1.98	0	High
+0.51 to +1.25	17	14	16.83	10.09	Above Average
-0.50 to +0.50	40	42	39.60	30.21	Average/Moderately
-1.25 to -0.51	32	45	31.68	32.37	Below Average

-2.00 to -1.26	6	27	5.94	19.42	Low
-2.01 & below	4	11	3.97	7.91	Extremely Low
Total	101	139	100%	100%	

Interpretation

From Table 1 above, the present study found that (1.98%) of Male Higher Secondary School Students have High Stress level, (16.83%) have Above Average of Stress level, and (39.60%) Higher Secondary School Students have a Moderate Stress level. Further, (31.68%) of Higher Secondary School Students have Below Average Stress level, (5.94%) have Low Stress level and (3.97%) Higher Secondary School Students have an Extremely Low Stress level.

Again, from Table 1, it is observed that with regard to Female Higher Secondary School Students (10.09%) have Above

Average Stress level and (30.21%) have a Moderate Stress level. Also, (32.37%) of Higher Secondary School Students have Below Average Stress level, (19.42%) have Low Stress level and (7.91%) of Higher Secondary School Students have an Extremely Low Stress level.

ii) Urban (Male & Female)

The analysis of the Stress level of Higher Secondary School Students with regard to Urban (Male & Female) is given in the following Table 2.

Table 2: Norms for the interpretation of Stress level for Urban (Male & Female) Higher Secondary School Students

Z-Score Range	Frequency		Percentage		Levels of Interpretation
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
+2.01 & above	1	0	2.08	0	Extremely High
+1.26 to +2.00	9	0	18.75	0	High
+0.51 to +1.25	17	7	35.42	11.29	Above Average
-0.50 to +0.50	14	20	29.16	32.26	Moderate
-1.25 to -0.51	4	16	8.34	25.82	Below Average
-2.00 to -1.26	3	13	6.25	20.96	Low
-2.01 & below	0	6	0	9.67	Extremely Low
Total	48	62	100%	100%	

From Table 2 above, with regard to Urban it is found that (2%) of Male Higher Secondary School Students have an Extremely High Stress level, (18.75%) have High Stress level, (35.42%) have an Above Average Stress level and (29.16%) Higher Secondary School Students have a Moderate Stress level. Moreover, (8.34%) of Male Higher Secondary School Students have Below Average Stress level and (6.25%) of Male Higher Secondary School Students have Low Stress level.

Amongst Female Higher Secondary School Students from Urban areas (11.29%) have an Above Average Stress level,

(32.26%) of Female Higher Secondary School Students have a Moderate Stress Level. Further, (25.82%) of Female Higher Secondary School Students have Below Average Stress level, (20.96%) have Low Stress level and (9.67%) of Female Higher Secondary School Students have an Extremely Low Stress level.

iii) Rural (Male & Female)

The analysis of the Stress level of Higher Secondary School Students with regard to Rural (Male & female) is given in the following Table 3.

Table 3: Norms for the interpretation of Stress level for Rural (Male & Female) Higher Secondary School Students.

Z-Score Range	Frequency		Percentage		Levels of Interpretation
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
+2.01 & above	0	0	0	0	Extremely High
+1.26 to +2.00	0	0	0	0	High
+0.51 to +1.25	1	7	1.89	9.09	Above Average
-0.50 to +0.50	8	22	15.09	28.57	Moderate
-1.25 to -0.51	23	29	43.39	37.67	Below Average
-2.00 to -1.26	16	14	30.18	18.18	Low
-2.01 & below	5	5	9.45	6.49	Extremely Low
Total	53	77	100%	100%	

From Table 3 above, with regard to Rural it is found that (1.89%) of Male Higher Secondary School Students have an Above Average Stress level (15.09%) have a Moderate Stress level, (43.39%) have Below Average Stress level. Moreover, (30.18%) of Male Higher Secondary School Students have Low Stress level and (9.45%) of Male Higher Secondary School Students have an Extremely Low Stress level.

Amongst, Female Higher Secondary School Students from Rural areas (9.09%) have an Above Average Stress level, (28.57%) of Female Higher Secondary School Students have a Moderate Stress level. Further, (37.67%) of Female Higher secondary School Students have Below Average Stress level, (18.18%) have Low Stress level and (6.49%) of Female Higher Secondary School Students have an Extremely Low Stress level.

Analysis of Objective 2: To find out the difference in Stress between Male and Female Higher Secondary School Students. The differences in Stress between Male and Female Higher Secondary School Students is given in Table 4. The Null hypothesis is stated as:

H01: There is no significant difference in Stress between Male and Female Higher Secondary School Students.

Table 4: Difference in Stress between Male and Female Higher Secondary School Students.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Stress	Male	101	151.5	26.13	238	3.28	0.001
	Female	139	160.6	24.86			

*Not Significant at .01 level

From the above Table 4, it is observed that there is no significant difference in the Stress level between Male and Female Higher Secondary School Students. An independent sample t-test showed the difference in Stress between Male (N=101, M=151.5, & SD=26.13) and Female (N=139, M=160.6, & SD=24.86) was found statistically not significant with, t (238) =3.28, P =0.001. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis at 0.01 level.

Analysis of Objective 3: To find out the difference in Stress between Urban and Rural Higher Secondary School Students. The differences in Stress between Urban and Rural Higher Secondary School Students is given in Table.5. The Null hypothesis is stated as.

H02: There is no significant difference in Stress between Urban and Rural Higher Secondary School Students.

Table 5: Difference in Stress between Urban and Rural Higher Secondary School Students.

Variables	Location	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Stress	rural	130	157.6	23.65	238	0.65	0.51
	Urban	110	155.8	28.15			

*Not Significance at .01 Level

From the above Table 5, it is found that there is no significant difference in Stress level between Urban and Rural Higher Secondary School Students. An independent sample t-test showed the difference in Stress between Rural (N=130, M=157.6, & SD=23.65) and Urban (N=110, M=155.8, & SD=28.15) was found statistically not significant with, t (238) =0.65, P =0.51. Hence, we fail to reject the null hypothesis at 0.01 level.

Discussion

The present study has focused on finding the Stress level of Higher Secondary School Students and the study found out that majority of the Overall Higher Secondary School Students have a Moderate Stress level. Thus, the finding of the present study was similar to the studies conducted by Yikealo, Karvinen, and Gebregergis (2018) who found out that most of the Higher Secondary School Students have Moderate level of Stress. Thus, the probable reason for this finding may be that Higher Secondary School Students do not feel pressured from any angle for example parental pressure, academic pressure or performance, and societal expectation. However, this finding is in contrast to the findings of Porwal and Kumar (2014) ^[18] who found out that Senior Secondary Students experienced high level of Stress.

Further the study found that there is no significant difference between Male and Female Higher Secondary School Students. Thus, the probable reason may be that Higher Secondary School Students both males and females do not have any kind of high or low Stress or pressure which will lead them to be less or high stressful, since maybe they can adapt or adjust well to all situations or can tackle any problem, they faced in their way be it academic performance or any other. Thus, this finding is contrast with the study of Menaga and Chandrasekaran (2014) ^[15] and Fredrika Kuller and Elinor (2019) ^[6] who found that there is significant difference towards Academic Stress of Higher Secondary Students in relation to the Gender. In continuation, Neeta and Singh (2020) found that there exist high significant differences between Academic Stress of male and female Higher Secondary School Students. However, when we compare the mean score of both the groups, it is found that the mean is higher of the Female Higher Secondary School Students. Thus, the probable reason for this finding may be that female tensed to be more stress as compared to males, they may also be more stress because may be of low confidence or due to lack of self-esteem and also, they are unable to tackle problems or get things done on time. Another probable reason may also be the change of educational system or the introduction of the New Educational Policy 2020 which have led to too many changes and adjustment problems with regard to academic achievement or performance which might have led to this finding.

Lastly, the present study found that there is no significant difference in Stress of Higher Secondary School Students between Rural and Urban areas. Therefore, this finding is in line with the findings of Sagar and Singh (2017) ^[19] and Neeta and Singh (2020) who found out that no significant differences were found among students from rural and urban areas. However, when we compare the mean score of both the groups, it is found that mean score is higher of rural Higher Secondary School Students. Thus, we can say that rural Higher Secondary School Students have high Stress as compared to urban Higher Secondary School Students. Thus, the probable reason for this finding may be that Higher Secondary School Students from rural areas do not have the same opportunities like other students in urban areas get, for example such as appropriate infrastructure, quality teaching-learning methods, good communication skills, can write proper English when compared to rural students who cannot understand proper English, who cannot adjust to new concepts and environment etc.

Implications and Suggestions of the Study

The implications and suggestions of the present study on Stress level of Higher Secondary School Students have been discussed from the findings. Thus, the following are the implications and suggestions:

- The finding of the study found out that Overall, both Male and Female Higher Secondary Students have a Moderate of Stress level which implies that maybe both the groups faced similar academic pressure, social expectations, have similar life experiences. Therefore it was suggested that they should involve in any kind of activities and also, they should create daily routine such as physical activity, studying, and household chores in order to manage stress efficiently.
- From findings it was found out that there is no significant difference in Stress between male and female Higher Secondary School Students. Thus, this finding implies

that may be both male and female Higher Secondary School Students have similar life experiences, faced similar academic pressure, have similar interest, they may also have similar study habits, similar socio-economic background. Another probable reason may be that Higher Secondary School Students comes from a similar age group which makes them to have no difference in Stress. Further, when we compared the means, it was found that female Higher Secondary School Students tensed to be more Stressful than male Higher Secondary School Students, thus the probable reason for this finding may be that female lack self-confident, also females in nature only tensed to have a more worried personality when things are not done on time since may be majority of the females Higher Secondary School Students have to do household chores and other kind of works which make them to be stressful if they do not finish their school work on time. thus, it was suggested that it Students should encourage to have a healthy lifestyle, limit screen timing as this really affects the health and sleep of students which also might be a contributing factor to not having time in completing their homework and assignments. However, it was also found that female tensed to be more Stress, therefore it was suggested that they should engaged in physical activity such as exercise, eat healthy food and time relaxation in over to reduce Stress and another suggestion is that School should teach students on the different coping mechanism in stress by organizing different seminars.

- Findings found that there is no significant in Stress of Higher Secondary School Students from rural and urban areas. Thus, this finding implies that maybe both the groups receive similar support from their families and also maybe they have equal study habits, faced similar academic pressure etc. However, when we compare the means, it was found that Rural Students have high Stress when compared with students from urban areas. Thus, the probable reason may be that they do not get equal opportunities for example like have best educational resources, such as advanced classes, extracurricular activities and access to technology, have qualified teachers, up to date study materials, new teaching and learning methods and so on which will put pressure to them as compared to urban Higher Secondary School Students. so it was suggested that schools can organize programmes in order to help students manage Stress or Schools can also organize workshop where certain exercises may be given in order to help students with stress, further it is also suggested that Students should be engage in physical activities like yoga, dance class, Zumba class and gym class, However, it was found that students from Rural areas have high Stress it suggests that they should conduct awareness program and discussions to increase awareness of mental health so that it will help them to have normal Stress level.

Conclusion

The study on Stress level of Higher Secondary School Students in Jaiaw, bring a brief understanding of Stress level of Higher Secondary School Students. The study indicates that the Higher Secondary School Students experienced Moderate Stress level. Further, the study found that there was no significant difference between male and female. Similarly, the study found that there was no significant difference between rural and urban areas. Thus, the study, suggested that

students should engaged more in physical activity and awareness program.

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