

Academic Stress among college students in Kerala, India

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Abstract: The purpose of the study is to know the sources of academic stress among college students in Kerala. According to Richard S.Lazarus “stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demand exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize”. Actually the academic stress is mainly connected with two elements; constraints and demand. The constraints prevent student from doing what they desire and the demand is that the loss of something which they desired. This research work focuses on identifying the sources of stress; a random sample of 120 students from the population of two districts in Kerala is selected. Primary data was collected through the questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was prepared after analyzing the various aspects of academic stress. It is also important that stress can create both positive and negative impact on students. As per psychologists extreme stress conditions are detrimental to human health but at the same time moderate stress is normal and in many cases proves it useful.

Keywords: Constraints, Demand, Mobilize, Psychologists, Stress.

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become a part of student’s academic life because of several factors. Stress cannot be considered as harmful, but it may seriously affect those who react to it badly. Everyone react to stress in different ways. Due to academic stress students may get frustrated and result in depression, anxiety or other psychological disorder. Education is an inevitable factor for economic and social development. It is necessary for building human capabilities and employment opportunities. Thus it is important for the academic institutions to maintain well balanced academic environment for better learning. Academic stressors are related to studying for university examinations, completion of assignments and seminars, parental pressure and above all large amount of content to master within a limited time. As per the study conducted by National Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience (NIMHANS) about the growing number of suicides in India among school and college going students, 11 percent of college students and 7 to 8 percent of high school students have attempted suicide.

Earlier studies also show that 20 percent of the children had subclinical depression. Another report reveals that depression and stress were taking a toll on the students in the Indian Institute of Technologies (IITs).An IIT council meet was also held in Delhi to study the rising number of suicides among the students. Kerala has ranked as one of the most literate states in India and the state is always given priority for education which leads to quality education. Indeed, students have a unique cluster of stressful experiences and several factors affect their academic performances.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

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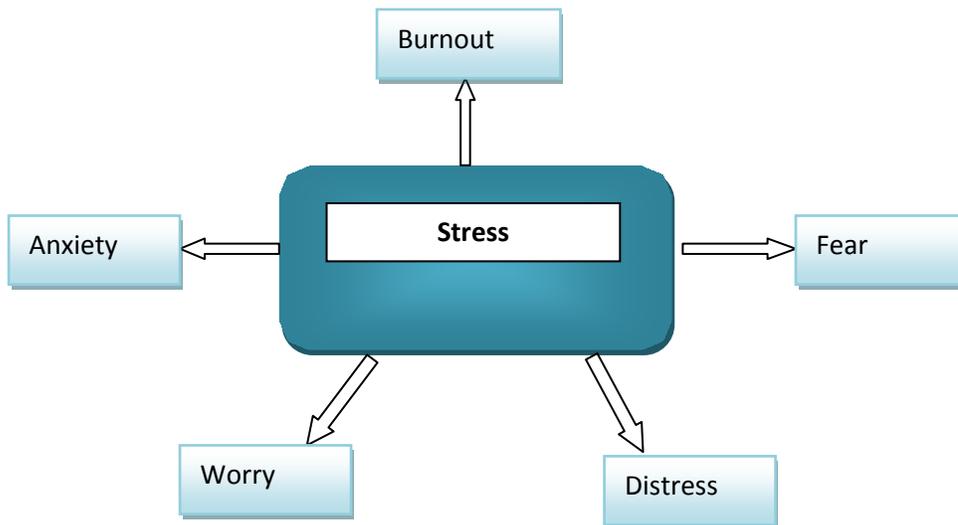
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- To identify the causes of stress among college students.
- To analyze the consequences of stress.
- To give possible recommendations upon research analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress is “a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important” (R.S Schuler) .Stress is physics word which refers to the amount of force used on a object and it relates in real life as to how certain issues that carry force applied to human life (Wheeler 2007, 2). Stress is “an uncertain reaction to external and internal factors” that means a negative or positive reaction to environmental stimuli (Pargman 2006, 5)’Bernstein et.al. (2008) define the source of stress as every circumstance or event that threatens to disrupt people daily functioning and causes them to make adjustments.Phinney and Haas (2003) stressed out sources of stress more specifically as a unique set of stressful encounters among student which includes, financial issues, responsibilities and a heavy academic load.

Aspects of Stress

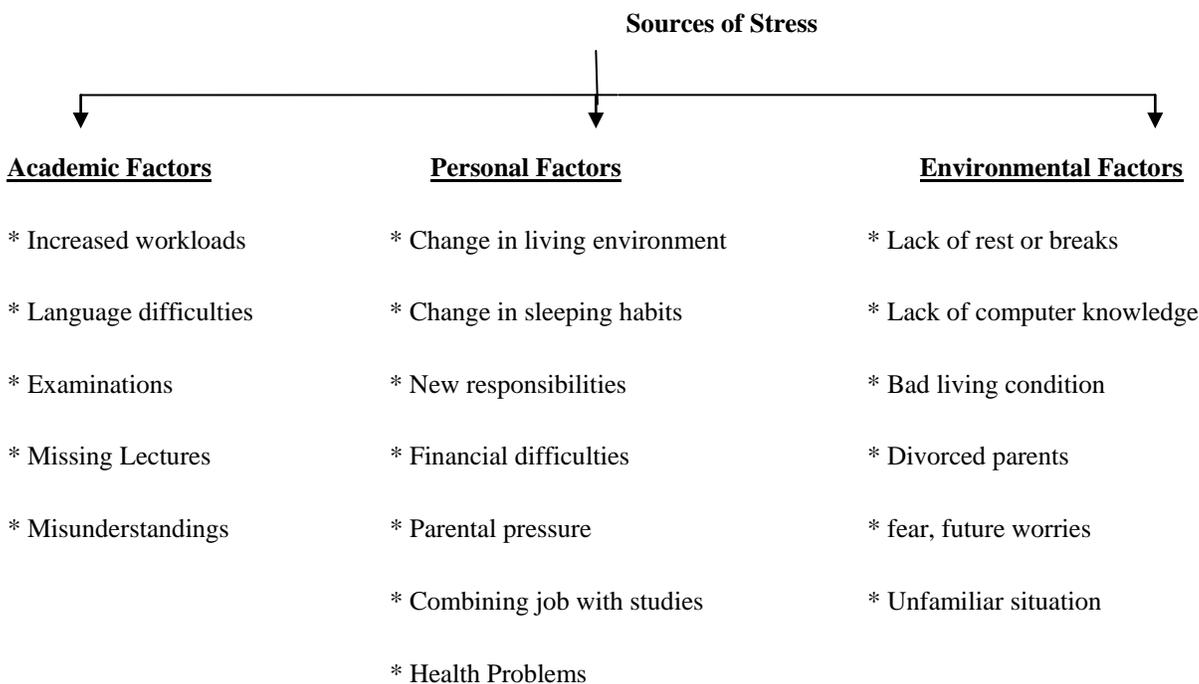


Stress Factors of College Students.

College students are stressed because of several factors namely academic factors, personal factors and environmental factors. Students may get stressed by increased workloads. They have to learn a lot of content for a semester and they are forced to over schedule their plan to complete their assignment and seminar presentations. At the same time some of the students are stressed because of language problems and missing lectures.

Personal factors too affect the student academic performance and stress them up. Change in living environment, change in sleeping habits due to academic workload, responsibility related to holding a job while studying, also financial difficulties make a student tensed and depressed. Poor nutrition and unhealthy eating habits increases the students stress level. Students may feel discomfort being in a new environment which adversely affects their studies. Human body needs some rest and break from time to time. A student who lacks skills of using computer for academic purposes is another cause for stress. Apart from this bad living condition, fear, future worries, divorced parents and their unrealistic expectations also stress them up.

Normal or moderate stress is beneficial which leads to better performance. But uncontrolled stress can cause exhaustion, depression and several other diseases. Stress affects the productivity or output of the student. Stress makes the student confused and tensed, also suffer from amnesia.



Research methodology

Methods of data collection: combination of interview ad questionnaire method is used to collect data from the respondents.

Sample design: Under sample design method the method of random sampling is used to collect data from the respondents.

Sample size: Size of 120 respondents is taken for the collection of data.

Statistical tool used: Percentage method

$$\text{Percentage of Respondent} = \frac{\text{No. of Respondents}}{\text{Total No. of Respondents}} \times 100$$

Total No. of Respondents

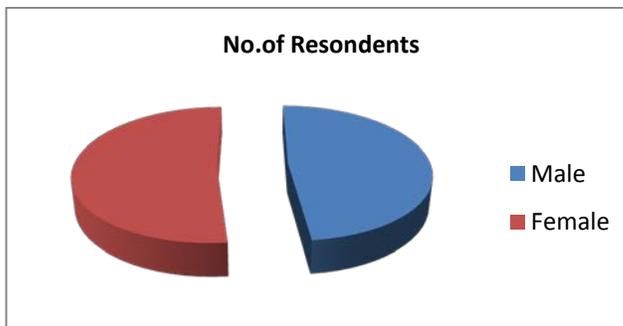
Data Analysis and Interpretations

1. Sex ratio of the respondents.

Table: 1

Chart: 1

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents
Male	58	48
Female	62	51.66
Total	120	100



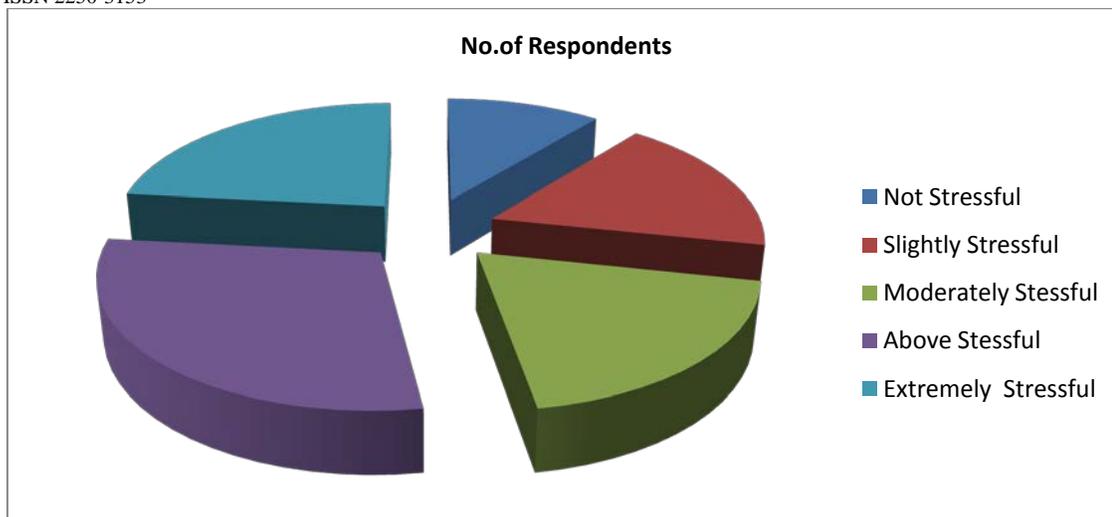
Interpretation: The graphical representation of the table shows that out of 120 respondents, 58 were male and 62 were female

2. How stressed do you feel on a daily basis during the academic year?

Table: 2

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Not Stressful	13	10.83
Slightly Stressful	21	17.5
Moderately Stressful	23	19.16
Above Stressful	35	29.16
Extremely Stressful	28	23.33
Total	120	100

Chart: 2



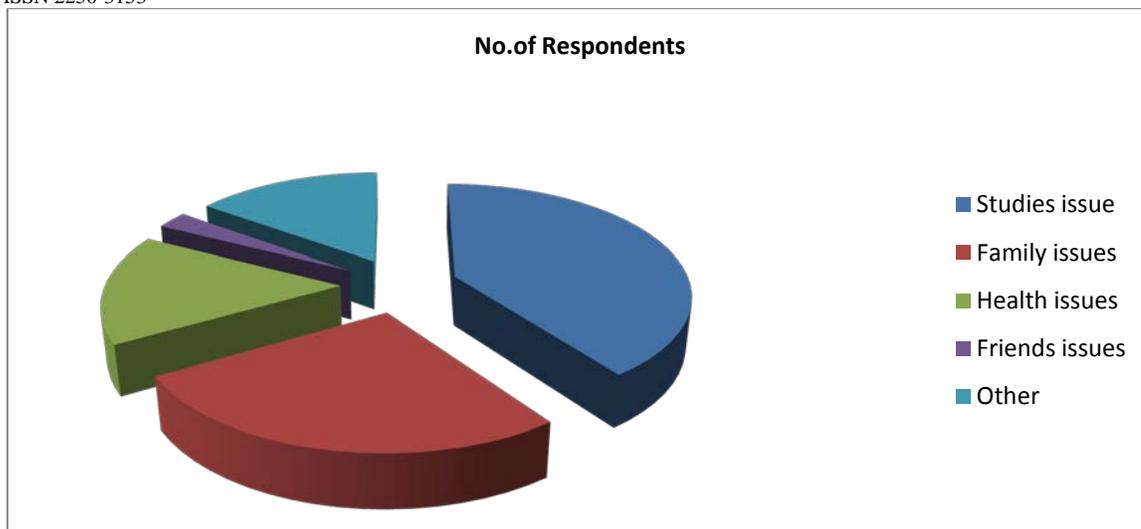
Interpretation: The graphical representation of the table shows that 29 percent of respondents are above stressful, 23 percent commented that they were extremely stressful, about 19 percent were moderately stressful, above 17 percent were slightly stressful and above 10 percent respondents were not stressful.

3. What are the usual causes of stress in your life?

Table: 3

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Studies issue	48	40
Family issues	32	26.66
Health related issues	19	15.83
Friends issue	3	2.5
Other	18	15
Total	120	100

Chart: 3



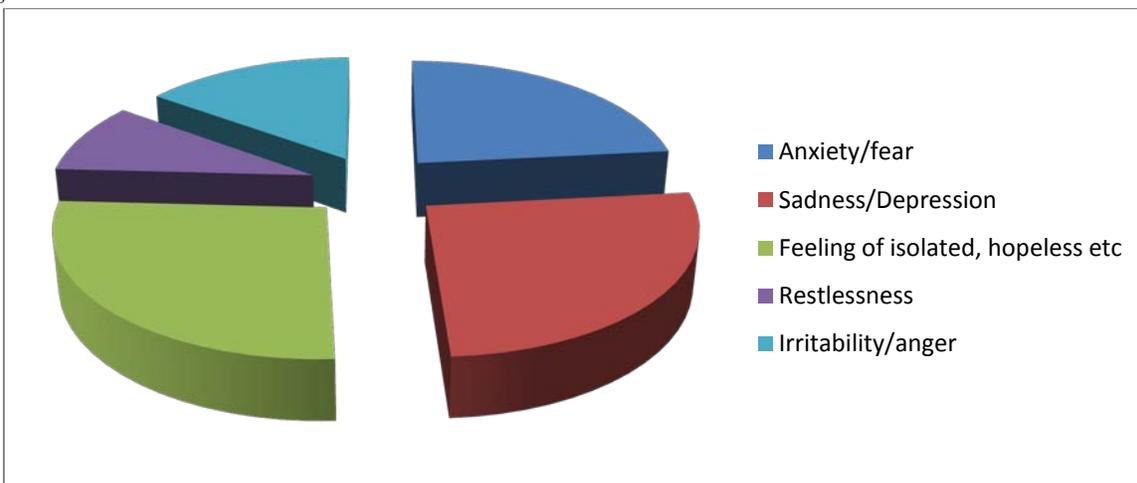
Interpretation: The graphical representation of the table shows that 40 percent commented that they were stressed by study related issues, above 26 percent of them were stressed up with family issues, above 15 percent were affected by health issues, only 2.5 percent were affected by friends issue.

4. What are the usual psychological or emotional effects of stress you have noticed?

Table: 4

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Anxiety or Fear	28	23.33
Sadness/depression	31	25.83
Feeling of isolated, hopeless etc.	32	26.66
Restlessness	11	9.16
Irritability/anger	18	15
Total	120	100

Chart: 4



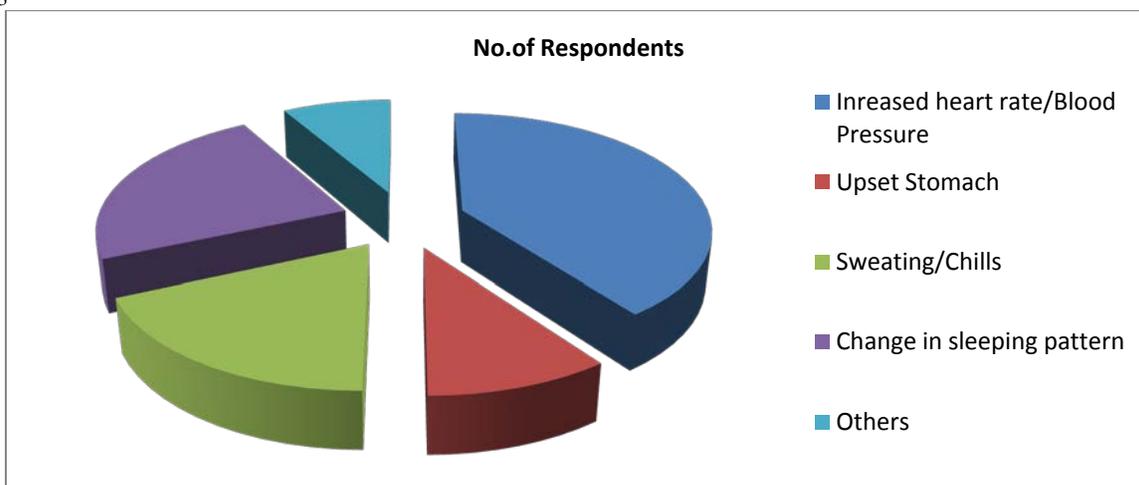
Interpretation: The graphical representation of the table shows that above 26 percent commented, they feel like isolated when they get stressed, above 25 percent had feeling of depression, above 22 percent were anxious and rest of them had the feeling of anger and restlessness respectively.

5. Mention the usual physical effect of stress you have noticed at yourself?

Table: 5

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Increased heart rate/Blood pressure	48	40
Upset Stomach	12	10
Sweating/Chills	22	18.33
Change in sleeping pattern	28	23.33
Others	10	8.33
Total	120	100

Chart: 5



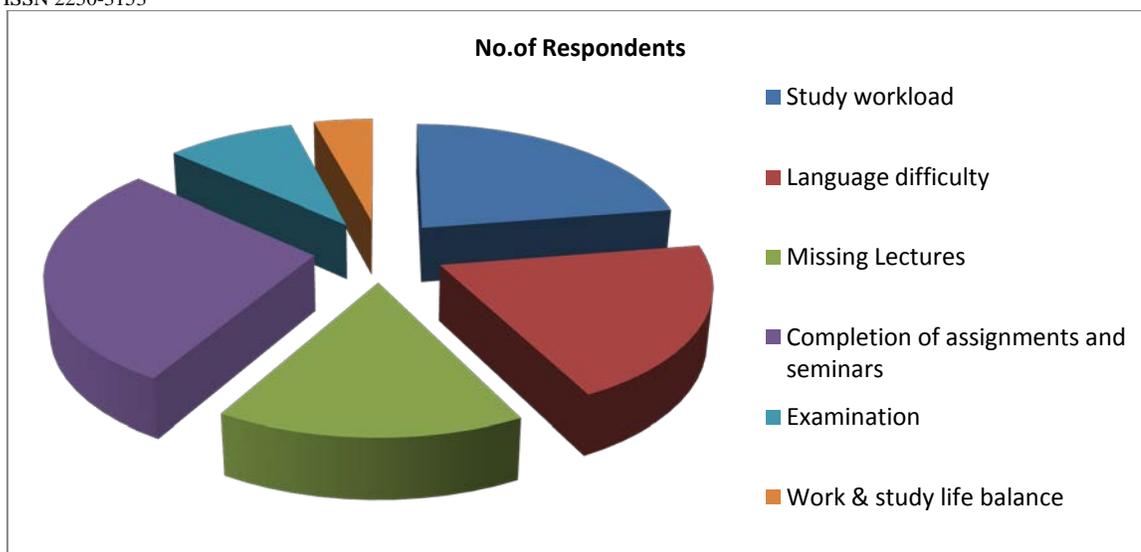
Interpretation: The graphical representation of the table shows that about 40 percent commented that their heart rate and blood pressure get increased when they are stressed, above 23 percent said that their sleeping pattern get changed.

6. Mention the most stressful factor in your current academic context?

Table: 6

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Study workload	27	22.5
Language difficulty	24	20
Missing Lectures	19	15.83
Completion of assignments and seminars	34	28.33
Examination	11	9.16
Work and study life balance	5	4.16
Total	120	100

Chart: 6

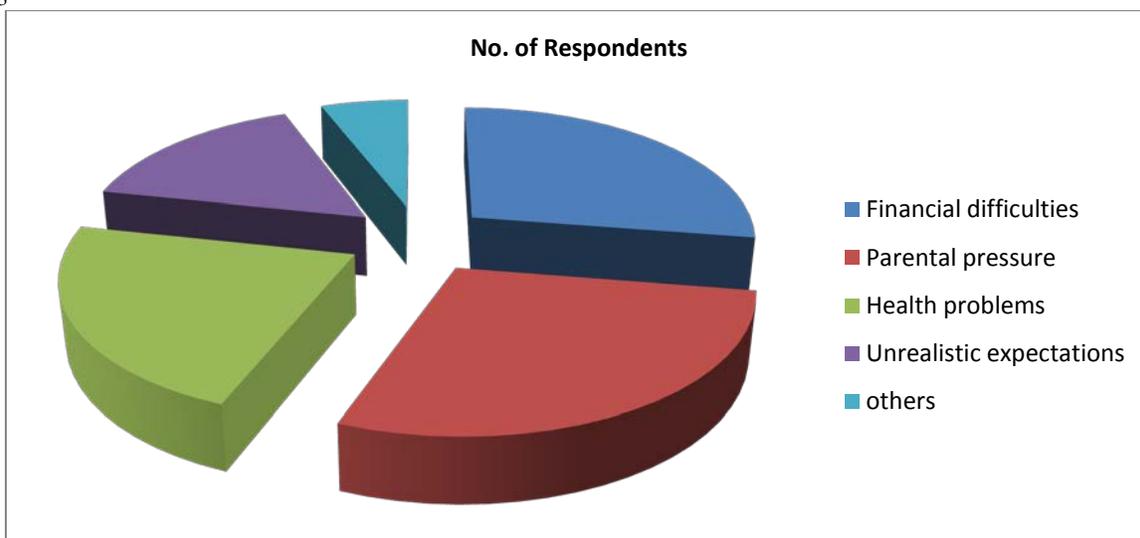


Interpretation: The graphical representation of the table shows that above 28 percent were stressed because of limited time for the completion of assignments and seminars, and rest of them were stressed due to study workload missing lectures, examination and work and study life balance respectively.

7. Which of the following personal factor, more stressful in your academic life?

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Financial difficulties	33	27.5
Parental pressure	34	28.33
Health problems	27	22.5
Unrealistic expectations	19	15.83
others	7	5.83
Total	120	100

Chart: 7



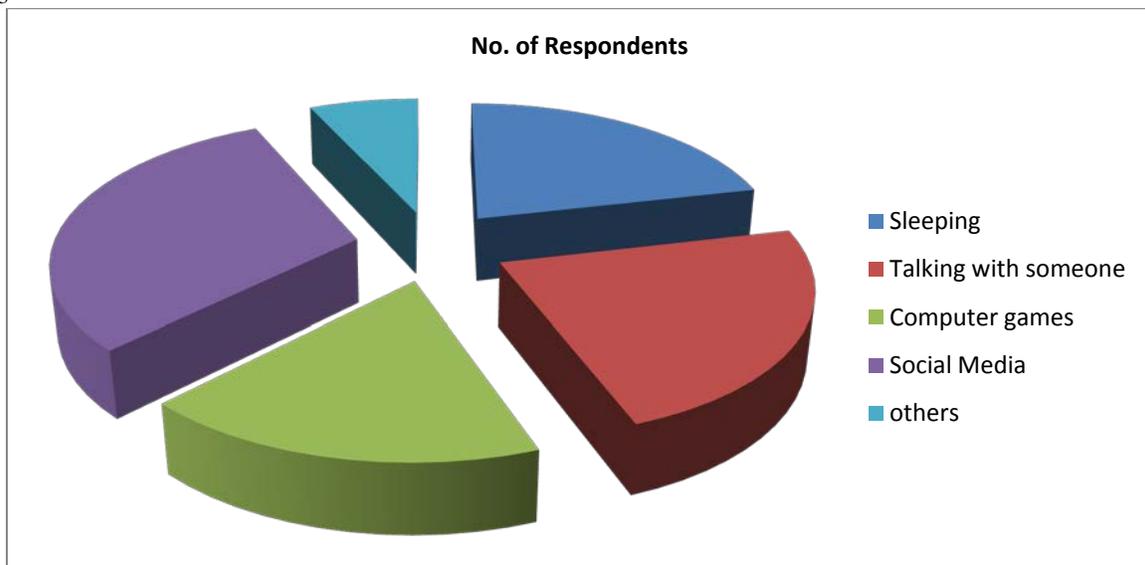
Interpretation: The graphical representation of the table shows that above 28 percent stressed by parental pressure, above 27 percent stressed by financial difficulties.

8. Mention your personal method to relieve stress?

Table: 8

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Sleeping	25	28.83
Talking with someone	27	22.5
Computer games	21	17.5
Social Media	36	30
others	8	6.66
Total	120	100

Chart: 8



Interpretation: The graphical representation of the table shows that above 30 percent involve in social media when they get stressed, above 28 percent commented that sleeping is their main stress relief method.

Research Finding

- College students are stressed by study workload and completion of assignments and seminars within a limited span of time.
- Financial difficulties, parental pressure and unrealistic expectations also cause stress among students.
- Some of the students also stressed by responsibility due to work and study.
- Academic Stress causes certain psychological problems like feeling of isolation, hopeless and finally depression. Stress also creates physiological problems like change in sleeping pattern, increased blood pressure, weight gain or weight loss etc .
- Students commented that involving in social media is one of their stress relief factors.

Conclusion

Academic stress may adversely affect the performance and their health condition so it is very important to arrange some workshops at the beginning of each semester. Thus the students will be able to learn how they can overcome their stress while studying. Institution should also arrange classes for practicing yoga, meditation, physical exercise etc. Through effective counseling, counselors and also psychologists can help the students to reduce the stress and motivate them for better academic performance.

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