

# A Study of Stress among Hostellers

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## 1. Introduction

Life is full of challenges. We face many obstacles before our needs are satisfied or goals are achieved. These obstacles whether internal or external, make the target difficult for us. They place an adjustive demand on our body and our body reacts to it in a unique manner. This is known as Stress.

The sources of stress should be seen in the light of social system he/she belongs (Pestonjee, 1987). The sources of stress are not always necessarily harmful as found by Lazarus et al (1952), Waterhouse and Child (1953), Waters et al (1960) and Lawson (1965). As mentioned by Pestonjee (1987), it is 'natural and healthy to maintain optimal level of stress'. Kets de Vries (1979) had also found that moderate amount of stress is required to be alert and for efficient functioning.

## 2. Stress and Students

Like other groups of society, students also experience stress. Students feel many academic and institutional stresses (Mehan, 1978) and also other life stresses such as family stress, economic stress and social stress.

Need for academic achievement, pressure from parents, desire to pursue higher education and higher level of aspiration, pressure for academic achievement have been found to be major sources of stress among students (Tatar, 1995).

Researches have shown many ill effects of stress on students. It affects academic performance (Mannuel, 1982), impairs learning (Montague, 1953) and arouses confusion (Lucas, 1952). It also affects intellectual performance as found by Atkinson and Litwin (1960), Cox (1964), Singh (1966) and Spielberger (1962) and their ability to solve problems (Brown, 1953).

## 3. Origin of the Problem

Stress has invaded the life of every individual and needless to say even students have not been spared. Stress has affected the lives of even the youngest students, rendering the notion of a carefree childhood virtually obsolete. The severity of stress increases as they reach adolescence or adulthood.

Whereas on one hand the environment plays an important role in determining the stress on an individual, to some extent the same environment decides their coping behaviour that he adopts. For students, the environment of their college and their family plays an important role (Ranganathan, 1988 and Padmasri, 1992). The family support not only moderates the effects of stress, but also helps to cope with stressful

situation. From the family they get emotional, moral, financial support and guidance to solve problems.

But there are a large number of students who stay away from their families in hostels, to gain academic and professional qualifications. Leaving home and moving into a hostel can be a source of joy, a source of stress or a mix of both at varying degrees. Each student experiences this transition in a unique way – that cannot be generalised.

Their family environment is replaced by hostel environment. In this new environment, they come across many stressful situations. Hostellers find many problems e.g. home sickness, relationships with other residents of staff members, hostel facilities, managing finances and difficulties with certain rules and regulations. In addition to these problems, they face many academic and institutional problems too. Sometimes they are able to control the situation. When they are unable to do so, they feel stressed.

What then are the factors that cause stress among hostellers? To find out the answer to the above question, the present study has been undertaken by the researcher.

## 4. Statement of the Problem

The title of the present research can be stated as 'A study of stress factors among academic course hostellers and professional course hostellers'.

## 5. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are as follows:-

- 1) To study the stressors experience by the hostellers of academic courses.
- 2) To study the stressors experienced by the hostellers of professional courses.

## Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis has been made about the stress of hostellers of academic and professional course hostellers.

- 1) The hostellers of academic courses experience different types of stressors
- 2) The hostellers of professional courses experience different types of stressors

## Null Hypothesis

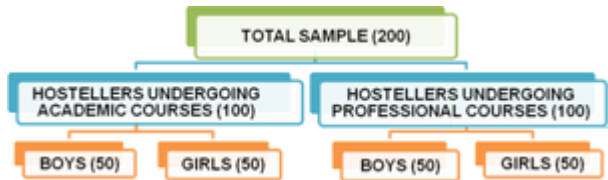
The above mentioned hypothesis can be written in null form as follows:-

- 1) The proportions of hostellers of academic courses who experience or do not experience various stressors are equal.

- 2) The proportions of hostellers of professional courses who experience or do not experience various stressors are equal.

### Research Methodology

The sample from the hostellers of different academic and professional institutions of Allahabad was selected by the method of purposive sampling.



Hostellers stress scale was developed by the researcher that consisted of 55 stressful situations that could have been faced by hostellers. It is a five point scale and the hostellers have been asked how many times they felt stressed while facing these situations during past one year. In order to develop the scale, the researcher interviewed 20 hostellers and some items were included from the 'Student Stress Scale' made by KS Mishra and SP Pandey and some items of 'Teacher Stress Scale' made by KS Mishra and Mrs Poonam were included after modification.

Chi-square test was used and the percentage analysis was done to draw the conclusions. Five point scale of hostellers stress scale was converted into two point scale. The two categories, namely never and sometimes were pooled together and it was assumed that these stressors were not experienced by the hostellers. Whereas, three response

categories, namely many times, often and always were pooled together and it was assumed that these were stressors which were experienced by hostellers.

### 6. Result and Discussion

#### Academic Course Hostellers

The values of Chi-square of academic course hostellers at 1 degree of freedom and 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance are given in Table 1.

From Table 1, it can be observed that for the stressors No 10, 19, 26, 27, 28, 44, 51 and 54 the value of Chi-square is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, with respect to these eight stressors the null hypothesis are acceptable and it can be concluded that the proportion of ACH experiencing and not experiencing these stressors are equal.

The value of Chi-square for item no 1 and 55 is significant at 0.05 level. Whereas, for rest of the items, the value of Chi-square is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, for these items the null hypothesis that the proportions of ACH experiencing and not experiencing various stressors are equal, stand rejected. It means that the proportion of ACH experiencing and not experiencing these stressors is not equal.

The percentage of academic courses hostellers experiencing the stress due to various situations is also mentioned in Table 1.

**Table 1**

S.No	Stressor	% of ACH experiencing stressor	% of ACH not Experiencing	$\chi^2$
1	Availability of electricity for less time	38	62	5.76*
2	Lack of Adequate drinking water	24	76	27.04**
3	Problem at home	27	73	21.16**
4	Friction with room-mate	10	90	64.00**
5	Bad behaviour of senior students	12	88	57.76**
6	Disturbance in studies due to noise created by the in mates in neighbouring rooms.	24	76	27.04**
7	Inability to meet ill family members	6	94	77.44**
8	Overcrowded room in Hostel	17	83	43.56**
9	Difference in language of the community where hostel is situated and yourself	13	87	54.76**
10	Groupism based on caste	45	55	1
11	Home sickness	63	37	6.76**
12	Quarrel with senior students	8	92	70.56**
13	Disturbance by roommate during exams	9	91	65.24**
14	Substandard quality of food	77	23	29.16**
15	Conflicts among groups of inmates in the hostel	21	79	33.64**
16	Non-receipt of financial help from home.	10	90	64.00**
17	Inability to express views before groups members	17	83	43.56**
18	Pressure from the seniors to do the things which are against one's views	10	90	64.00**
19	When the examination approaches	44	56	1.44
20	Insufficient financial help from home	6	94	77.44**
21	Not getting importance, for one's views, from friends	11	84	60.84**
22	Unsympathetic behaviour of warden		91	67.24**
23	Compulsion to do one's work oneself	63	37	6.76**
24	Pressure to participate in various activities of hostel unwillingly	20	80	36.00**
25	Strict discipline in the hostel	6	94	77.44**
26	Friends' Habit of criticism	52	48	0.16

27	Secret doing of the undesirable activities by Hostellers	41	59	3.24
28	Presence of mischievous elements in the hostel	42	58	2.56
29	Betrayal by dear friend	18	82	40.96**
30	Coming of sexual thoughts to mind	31	69	14.44**
31	Neglect from friends because of physique	10	90	64.00**
32	Difference in the culture of home town and hostel town.	27	73	21.16**
33	Annoyance of dear friends	13	87	54.76**
34	Non-inclusion by friends in their group	1	99	96.02**
35	Confusion regarding ideals to be adopted	29	71	17.64**
36	Non-tolerance of criticism of one's ideas.	28	72	19.36**
37	Nobody to take care of during illness	22	78	31.36**
38	Unable to attract others through one's conduct	14	86	51.84**
39	Inability to follow ideals in conduct	26	74	23.04**
40	Worries regarding future	92	8	70.54**
41	Compulsion to listen to uninteresting words of seniors	19	81	38.44**
42	Inadequate freedom in the hostel	7	93	73.96**
43	Feeling lack of confidence in oneself	25	75	25.00**
44	Lack of Control of warden over the dominating hostel inmates	51	49	0.04
45	Non-tolerance of ridicules of seniors	29	71	17.64**
46	Neglect by servants	12	88	57.76**
47	Unable to meet parents/guardians in spite of desire	16	84	46.26**
48	Not getting help from friends regarding difficulties related to studies	31	69	14.44**
49	Excessive distance of college from hostel	8	92	70.56**
50	Non availability of medical facilities in the hostel.	73	27	21.16**
51	Difference in life style of one self and other hostel inmates	41	59	3.24
52	Difference in eating habits of oneself and in mates	31	69	14.44**
53	Rules for going outside the hostel	28	72	19.36**
54	Getting less time for studies	48	52	0.16
55	Groupism based on region	38	62	5.76*

\*/\*\* values are significant at 0.05/0.01 level respectively

### Professional Course Hostellers

The values of Chi-square of professional course hostellers at 1 degree of freedom and 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance are given in Table 2.

**Table 2**

S.No.	Stressor	% of PCH experiencing stressor	% of PCH not experiencing	X <sup>2</sup>
1	Availability of electricity for less time	27	72	19.36**
2	Lack of Adequate time drinking water	27	73	21.16**
3	Problem at home	4	96	84.69**
4	With room-mate	7	93	73.96**
5	Bad behaviour of senior students	10	90	64.00**
6	Disturbance in studies due to noise created by the inmates in neighbour's rooms.	29	71	17.64**
7	Inability to meet ill family members	8	92	70.56**
8	Overcrowded room in Hostel	13	87	54.76**
9	Difference in language of the community where hostel is situated and yourself	11	89	60.84**
10	Groupism based on caste	8	92	70.56**
11	Home sickness	67	33	11.56**
12	Quarrel with senior students	6	94	77.44**
13	Disturbance by roommate during exams	4	96	84.64**
14	Substandard quality of food	68	32	12.96**
15	Conflicts among groups of inmates in the hostel.	11	89	60.84**
16	Non-receipt of financial help from home.	6	94	77.44**
17	Inability to express views before groups members.	14	86	51.84**
18	Pressure from the seniors to do the things which are against one's views.	3	97	88.36**
19	When the examination approaches	79	21	33.64**
20	Insufficient financial help from home.	4	96	84.64**
21	Not getting importance, for one's views, from friends	13	87	54.76**
22	Unsympathetic behaviour of warden	12	88	57.76**
23	Compulsion to do one's work oneself	60	40	4.00*
24	Pressure to participate in various activities of hostel unwillingly	16	84	46.24**
25	Strict discipline in the hostel	24	76	27.04**
26	Friends' Habit of criticism	47	53	0.36
27	Secret doing of the undesirable activities by Hostellers	18	82	40.96**

28	Presence of mischievous elements in the hostel	26	74	23.04**
29	Betrayal by dear friend	11	89	60.84**
30	Coming of sexual thoughts to mind	26	74	23.04**
31	Neglect from friends because of physique	11	89	60.84**
32	Difference in the culture of home town and hostel town.	22	78	31.36**
33	Annoyance of dear friends	15	86	49.0**
34	Non-inclusion by friends in their group	6	94	77.44**
35	Confusion regarding ideals to be adopted	27	73	21.16**
36	Non-tolerance of criticism of one's ideas.	37	63	6.76**
37	Nobody to take care of during illness	14	86	51.84**
38	Unable to attract others through one's conduct	14	86	51.84**
39	Inability to follow ideals in conduct	23	77	29.16** <sup>1</sup>
40	Worries regarding future	83	17	43.56** <sup>1</sup>
41	Compulsion to listen to uninteresting words of seniors	21	79	33.64*
42	Inadequate freedom in the hostel	19	81	38.44**
43	Feeling lack of confidence in oneself	16	84	46.24**
44	Lack, of Control of warden over the dominating hostel in mates	23	77	29.15**
45	Non-tolerance of Ridicules of seniors	7	93	73.96**
46	Neglect by servants	12	88	57.76**
47	Unable to meet parents/guardians difficulties related to studies	26	74	23.04**
48	Not getting help from friends regarding difficulties related to studies	10	90	64.00**
49	Excessive distance of college from hostel	15	85	49.00**
50	Non availability of medical facilities in the hostel.	81	19	38.44**
51	Difference in life style of one self and other hostel in mates	34	66	10.24**
52	Difference in eating habits of oneself and in makes	27	73	21.16**
53	Rules for going outside the hostel	49	51	0.4
54	Getting less time for studies	49	51	0.04
55	Groupism based on region	19	81	38.44**

\*/\*\* values are significant at 0.05/0.01 level respectively

From Table 2 it can be observed that for stressor no 26, 53 and 54 the value of Chi-square is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore with respect to these three stressors the null hypotheses are acceptable and it can be concluded that the proportion of PCH experiencing and not experiencing these stressors is equal.

The value of Chi-square for item no 23 is significant at 0.05 level of significance whereas for the rest of the items the value of Chi-square is significant at 0.01 level. Hence for these stressors the null hypothesis, that the proportion of PCH experiencing and not experiencing various stressors are equal stands rejected. It means that the proportions of PCH experiencing and not experiencing the stressors are not equal.

The percentage of professional courses hostellers experiencing the stress due to various situations is also mentioned in Table 2.

## 7. Conclusions and Implications

Stress ranges in intensity from the negative extreme of being in physical danger to the joy of completing a desired good. For hostellers, all the

stressors are not bad. The educators and the hostel and college management should identify how much a particular situation is responsible for creating stress and various desirable and undesirable coping strategies the hostellers adopt. The present study is an attempt in this direction.

The study points out many problems regarding hostel facility and hostel environment. A majority of hostellers of both the

groups felt the lack of medical facilities and substandard quality of food as a stressor. Also the problems related to social environment of hostel e.g. groupism based on caste and region, lack of control of warden over the dominating inmates were found to be the major contributors towards stress. The hostel management should look into the matter and should take necessary steps to ensure that inmates get all the facilities required for their comfortable living and also that they interact in an open and supportive environment.

The study indicates that most of the hostellers felt anxiety regarding their future. They also felt examination stress and other stresses related to their studies. Therefore the colleges should have the counseling centers. They should have psychologists and career counselors who can give guidance to the students when required.

The hostellers face many personal and interpersonal problems such as their relationship with other inmates and staff, time management and adjustment in hostel environment. They need certain competencies to deal with these stressors. The findings of the study may provide a help in identification of stressors and in selection and execution of different coping strategies.

The study reveals that not only hostel environment but environment at home also can contribute to stress. The family can give support in stress management of hostellers, by helping them in academic, financial and emotional issues and also by making them realize that they are not alone.



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