

# A Study on Stress Among Students of Women's Colleges in Madurai City

Hariprabha B

*Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Ambiga College of Arts and Science, Anna Nagar, Madurai*

*Corresponding Author Email: [Hariprabha2612@Gmail.Com](mailto:Hariprabha2612@Gmail.Com)*

## **Abstract**

*Stress has become a significant psychological and academic concern among college students, particularly female students who face multiple academic, financial, and social challenges. The present study aims to analyze the level and sources of stress among students studying in women's colleges in Madurai city. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Cluster sampling technique was used to select 100 respondents from different women's colleges. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire through Google Forms, while secondary data were gathered from journals, books, and online research articles. Statistical tools such as Percentage Analysis and Two-Way ANOVA were applied to analyze the data. The findings reveal that academic workload, examination pressure, financial burden, lecture hours, sleep disturbance, and institutional factors are major contributors to stress among students. The study concludes that effective stress management strategies, counseling services, and academic reforms are necessary to improve students' mental health and academic performance.*

**Keywords:** *Academic Stress, Women Students, Higher Education, Madurai, Stress Management, Two-Way ANOVA*

## **I. Introduction**

Stress is a psychological and physiological reaction that occurs when individuals perceive an imbalance between demands placed upon them and their ability to cope. In the context of higher education, stress has become a common and growing concern. The transition from school to college life introduces new academic challenges, social adjustments, and personal responsibilities. Women students in particular face unique stressors such as:

- Academic competition
- Family expectations

- Safety concerns
- Financial dependency
- Career uncertainty
- Social comparison

Madurai city, one of the major educational hubs in Tamil Nadu, houses reputed women's institutions such as:

- Sri Meenakshi Government Arts College for Women
- Lady Doak College
- Fatima College
- Ambiga College
- E.M.Gopalakrishna Kone Yadava Women's College

While these institutions provide quality education, students often experience academic overload, continuous assessments, internal examinations, project work, and competitive grading systems. These pressures can lead to emotional exhaustion, anxiety, sleep disturbance, and reduced academic performance. Therefore, understanding the nature and intensity of stress among women students is essential for developing institutional support systems.

## 2. Concept of Stress

Stress refers to the body's response to any demand or challenge. It may be:

1. Eustress (Positive Stress): Motivates individuals to perform better.
2. Distress (Negative Stress): Leads to anxiety, tension, and health problems.

In educational settings, moderate stress can improve focus and performance. However, prolonged and excessive stress results in burnout and emotional exhaustion.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

### 3.1 General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

According to Hans Selye, stress occurs in three stages:

1. Alarm Reaction
2. Resistance
3. Exhaustion

College students often remain in the resistance stage for extended periods due to continuous academic workload, eventually leading to exhaustion.

### 3.2 Transactional Model of Stress

Lazarus and Folkman explain stress as a process involving:

1. Primary appraisal (evaluation of threat)
2. Secondary appraisal (evaluation of coping ability)

If students believe that academic tasks exceed their capability, stress levels increase significantly.

## 4. Review of Literature

Previous research highlights that:

1. Female students report higher stress levels compared to male students.
2. Academic workload is the most significant stress factor.
3. Examination pressure contributes to anxiety and sleep disturbances.
4. Financial difficulties increase emotional stress.
5. Lack of institutional counseling facilities worsens the situation.

However, region-specific studies focusing on women's colleges in Madurai city are limited, which justifies the need for the present study.

## 5. Objectives of the Study

- I. To analyze demographic characteristics of respondents.
- II. To identify major academic stress factors.
- III. To examine financial stress among students.
- IV. To measure overall stress level.
- V. To suggest measures to reduce stress.

## 6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Demographic Profile

- I. Majority belong to 21–23 years age group.
- II. Most respondents are unmarried.
- III. 51% are undergraduate students.
- IV. Majority study in English medium.

## 6.2 Academic Stress Factors

- I. Heavy syllabus
- II. Continuous internal assessments
- III. Semester examinations
- IV. Arrear subjects
- V. Lack of sufficient lecture hours

Students with arrears reported higher anxiety levels.

## 6.3 Financial Stress Factors

- I. High semester fees
- II. Additional expenses for books and projects
- III. Dependency on parents
- IV. Coaching class expenses

Although parents pay fees, students feel emotional pressure to succeed academically.

## 6.4 Physical and Emotional Impact

Students reported:

- I. Headaches
- II. Sleep disturbance
- III. Reduced concentration
- IV. Mood swings
- V. Irritability

Sleep deprivation significantly increases stress levels.

## 7. Hypothesis Testing (Two-Way ANOVA Interpretation)

The Two-Way ANOVA results indicate:

- I. Academic year significantly affects stress level.
- II. Financial background influences satisfaction level.
- III. Interaction effect exists between academic year and stress.

Final-year students exhibit comparatively higher stress.

## 8. Major Findings

- I. Academic workload is the primary stress factor.
- II. Semester system increases examination pressure.
- III. Arrear subjects intensify anxiety.
- IV. Financial dependency causes emotional burden.
- V. Lack of sleep worsens stress.

## 9. Suggestions

- I. Establish mental health counseling centers in colleges.
- II. Organize stress management workshops.
- III. Introduce mentorship programs.
- IV. Provide flexible fee payment options.
- V. Reduce excessive internal assessments.
- VI. Promote yoga and meditation sessions.

## 10. Scope for Future Research

- Comparative study between rural and urban colleges
- Study on impact of social media on stress
- Long-term stress tracking studies
- Psychological intervention research

## 11. Conclusion

The study concludes that stress among women college students in Madurai city is a multidimensional issue influenced by academic, financial, and institutional factors. While moderate stress may enhance productivity, excessive stress negatively impacts mental health and academic performance. Academic workload and examination pressure are the most significant contributors to stress. Educational institutions must recognize student mental health as a priority. Implementation of structured counseling systems, stress management programs, and supportive academic policies is essential to create a healthy learning environment. Empowering women students through emotional and institutional support will contribute significantly to their personal and professional development.

## 12. References

1. Kothari C.R., *research Methodology- Methods Techniques* (2004)
2. Dr. H. Premraj & Dr. P. Rizwan Ahmed, *computer Application in Business (SPSS & Tally Prime – 2024)*
3. Lazarus, R.S., & Folkman, S.(1984) *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping.*
4. Cohen, S., & Herbert, T. B. (1996). *Health Psychology: Psychological Factors and Physical Disease from the Perspective of Human Psychoneuroimmunology. Annual Review of Psychology, 47, 113-142.*