

Survey on Stress and Coping Strategies of Post Graduate Students

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Abstract:- In the present day of globalization, a lot of competition, creativity, innovation and adaptability is required to survive in society which creates stress. Stress is the condition of emotional pressure of an individual by socioeconomic & environmental constraints. It is caused mainly by physical & emotional tensions which lead to change in feelings and physical state of the body. The stress usually shows a negative impact on health, which results in anger, depression, poor concentration, headache, bowel disorder, skin rashes, insomnia, etc. The stress in students mainly comes from academic performance, relationship with family and friends and career exploration that leads to psychological, physical, and behavioral problems in the individual. The younger generation should enhance their stress management strategies to overcome the pressure and lead a healthy life. The postgraduate students are more susceptible to experience stress because of the tension related to their immediate professional career. The main objective of the study is to find out the stress levels among postgraduate students of different disciplines. In this paper, we conducted a survey by structured google form for the analyzation of the sources, causes, stress signs, health issues faced & coping methodologies that help to make a healthy life by minimizing the negative impact of stressor.

Keywords:- Stress, Stressor, Coping Strategies, Symptoms of Stress, Postgraduate Students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a change of physical or mental disturbance in the body which makes your emotions express like feeling frustrated, showing anger, becoming nervous, over sweating, etc. Stress is a state of mind, when a person feels experiencing a situation requires more resources than the ability of the individual. As the younger generation in the present competitive society is more stressed, they experience psychological symptoms like depression, attempt to suicide tendencies, and many more according to various articles and statistical analysis. The stress is categorized into two types, acute or short-term stress and chronic or long-term stress. The chronic stress leads to many health issues like high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, acne or eczema, depression or anxiety, menstrual problems, and so on. Considering all the factors, young college

students are focused for the analysis that helps in understanding the level of adjustment and the academic performance of students for an improved living.

The causes of stress or stressors, generally considered among the students include academics, financial aspects, career, time management, relationships, etc. The stressors discussed in this paper are related to academic performance, anxiety, poor understanding capacity, assignments, competition in placements, relationship with friends & family and status of the family as the most significant possibilities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Every person faces different stress like work stress, family stress, financial stress, or any other type in which work stress is the biggest source of stress. Stress is a feeling of the individuals when they have to struggle to meet the demands in financial, relationships, work and any other situation. Perceived stress in the youth or college students is an alarming inclination. There are many factors which causes stress- emotional, congenital, economic, social, biological and psychological. The students face academic stress due to competition among students for scoring the highest marks, academic failures, assignments with deadlines, insufficient pocket money leading to mental health problems among them in collegiate life. These students carry the stress not only with them but also to their family members. The stress is proportional to the existence of the stressor, due to which students experience a substantial amount of stress, that leads to negative academic outcomes or health problems.

These stressors were analyzed in many different fields of students. Any individual showing the symptoms of depression, increase or decrease in appetite, restlessness, tension, anxiety, unable to concentrate are the victims of stress. Stress initiate a complex reaction of neurological and endocrinological system of the body where adrenaline or noradrenaline hormones respond to sudden situations that arises by behavioral, physiological reactions. The immune defense mechanism of the body is activated by a sympathetic nervous system against the stressors and releases adrenaline hormone to overcome stress. The negative impact of stress varies from person to person and also depend on their coping strategies adopted. There are

two coping strategies, approach style coping and avoidance style coping. Balancing academics, personal life, relationships and other peer activities by students is very difficult. The difficulty alters the situation to a challenge in case of career in students.

➤ *Rationale of the Study:*

The rationale of the study is to find out the different factors of stress, expression of stress, coping technologies to overcome the stress among the postgraduate students. In the present scenario of the education system, all the school and college students are exposed to various stressors and the level of stress changes from individual to individual, teacher & institution. Based on the factors the following objectives are listed out.

➤ *Objectives of the Study:*

- To list out the major causes and symptoms of stress affecting the postgraduate students.
- To identify the effect of the level of stressors on the physical and mental health of individuals.
- To know the strategies and cope up to overcome stress by the postgraduate students.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

➤ *Coverage of study:*

This study covers the stress levels among the postgraduate students by an online questionnaire survey. The target group for the survey includes the students of Arts, Science & Commerce streams studying in various affiliated and constituent colleges under Osmania university located in Hyderabad. The exclusion criterion includes the university colleges.

➤ *Data collection or sources of data:*

The data and information are gathered by an online questionnaire survey by using google platform for generating responses of the post graduate students. The data is collected based on primary data-Questionnaire and secondary data- Internet, Journals, Books etc. The questionnaire includes demographic factors, causes of stress, signs of stress, relation of stress and health & coping strategies

➤ *Sample size:*

The population size considered is 22,230 at 95% confidence level and Margin of error being 5%, the targeted sample size n = 138, while we have received responses from 263 samples. The google structured questionnaire is sent to different college post graduate students given under inclusion criteria.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The respondents are from the different colleges from faculty of Arts, Science & Commerce given under the inclusion criteria of colleges in Hyderabad. The first section of questionnaire is demographic factors. The table 1 shows the total number of distribution of samples that consists of 263 respondents. By taking all the respondents into consideration, 72.2% are females and 27.8% are males (Fig.1). The respondents in survey shows that there is almost equal participation of both first year and second year students of 20-23 years old (given in table.2) of which 21-year age group students are more in number (Fig.2)

Gender	N	%
Female	190	72.2
Male	73	27.8
Total	263	100

Table 1:- Distribution according to Gender

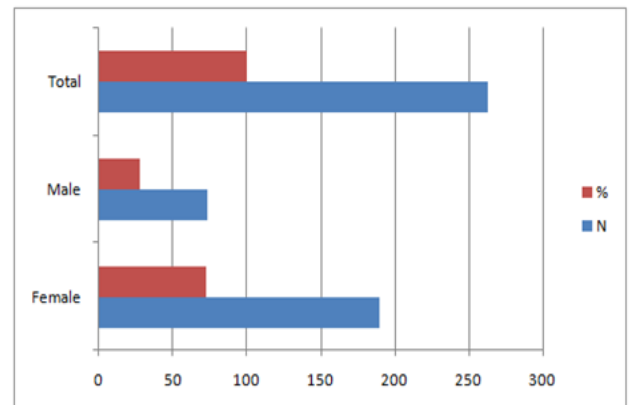


Fig 1

Age	Number	%
20	23	8.7
21	92	35
22	80	30.4
23	68	25.9
Total	263	100

Table 2:- Age in years

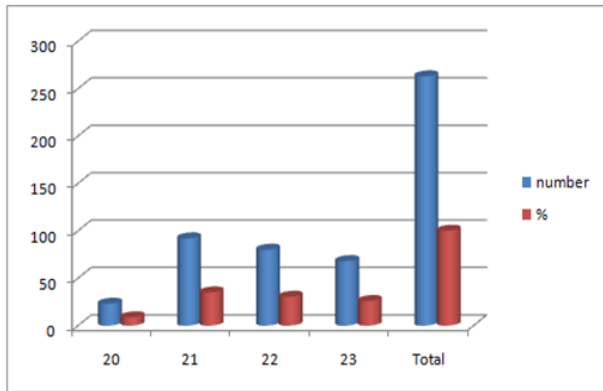


Fig 2

Each course students of different streams are prone to different stresses based upon their curriculum designed as per the requirement of their discipline of study. The respondents in the study are faculty of science (76%), Faculty of Arts (4.9%) & Faculty of commerce (19%) (Table 3). The fig.3 shows that respondents from Master of Science are more in number.

Course	Number	%
M.Sc.	200	76
M.A	13	4.9
M.Com	50	19
Total	263	100

Table 3:- Academic course stream

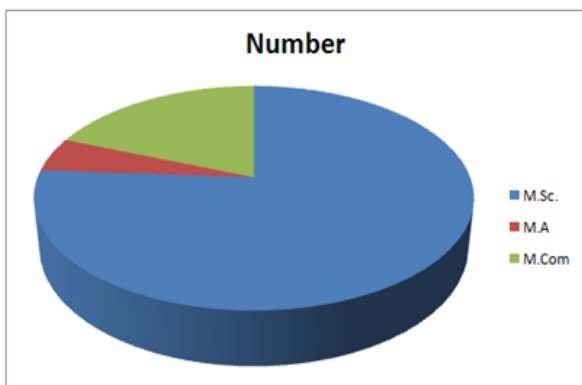


Fig 3

Long duration of study and sleeping hours may or may not be linked to increased stress. Thus, to understand and analyze the Stress level in the students, their sleeping, working and studying pattern was focused. From total respondents, 51.7% students were night owls (table 5), maximum of them work & study for around 0-2 hours (47.5%) (Table 4) and sleep for around 6-8 hours a day (62.4%) (Table 6). (Fig. 4, 5, 6)

Hours of study	Number of students	%
0-2	125	47.5
2-4	85	32.3
4-6	41	15.6
6-8	10	6.8
>8	2	0.8
Total	263	100

Table 4:- Hours of study

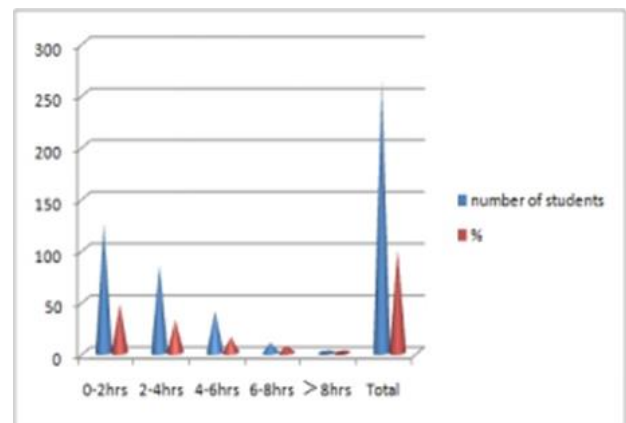


Fig 4

Study time	Number of students	% of students
Late night hours	136	51.7
Early morning Hours	127	48.3
Total	263	100

Table 5:- Study hours- early or night

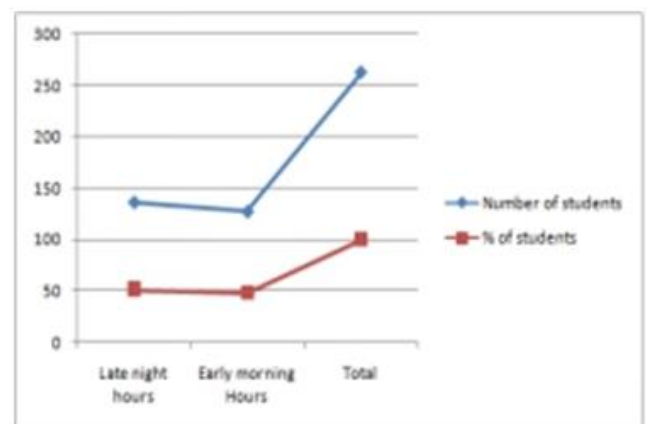


Fig 5

Hours of study	Number of students	%
0-2	3	1.1
2-4	4	1.5
4-6	56	21.3
6-8	164	62.4
8-10	31	11.8
>10	5	1.9
Total	263	100

Table 6:- Study hours- early or night

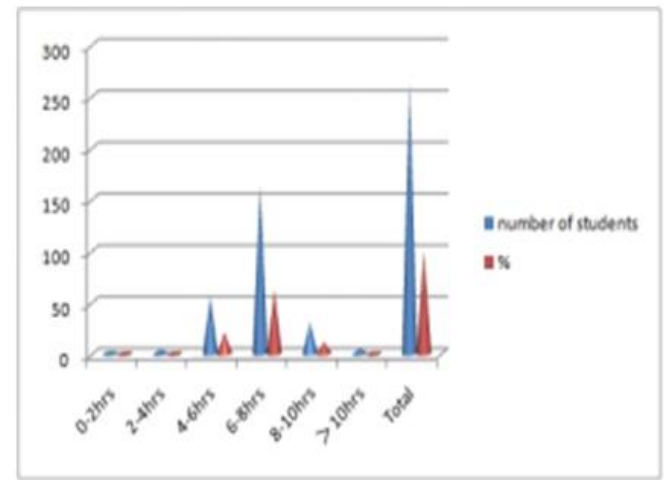


Fig 6

The general causes included in the stress questionnaire shows that students with low financial background are prone to more stress comparatively. In the present society, the cost of education is high, due to which students are unable to maintain balance between the family financial status and their aspiration of attaining the higher education. Out of all the respondents, almost 47.9 % students feel that family financial status is causing stress. Next to financial status, other general causes are choice of career (41.1%) and employment opportunities (35%) showing maximum respondents (Table 7, Fig. 7)

General factors which cause stress	Number of students	% of students
Family financial status	126	47.9
Parental belief	59	22.4
Placement opportunities	92	35
Career option/Aspiration to get job	108	41.1
Health issues(self)	48	18.3
Health issues of family and friends	35	13.3
relationship with family	59	22.4
Social Relationship with Friends	43	16.3
Social media profile	19	7.2

Table 7:- General factors which cause stress

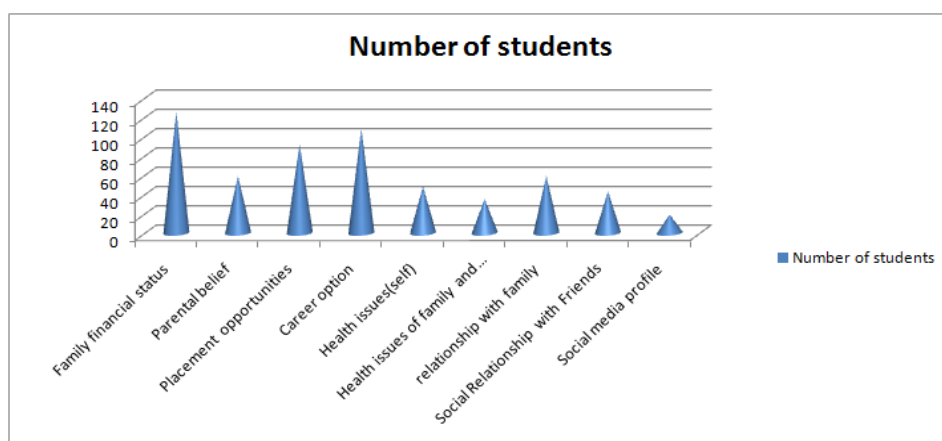


Fig 7

In academic stressor, competition in performance, work/project deadlines, project presentations and public speaking almost show the similar number of responses comprising 23-26% followed by academic

performance(21.3%), Uncertainty of placements (15.6%), long working/studying hours(17.9%) in decreasing order of the responses of the students.(Table 8 , Fig. 8)

Academic stress factors	Number of students	% of students
Work/project deadlines	65	24.7
Long working/studying hours	47	17.9
Academic performance	56	21.3
Viva voice	39	14.8
Public speaking & project presentations/stage fear	62	23.6
Team workloads	11	4.2
Duration of course	22	8.4
High fee structure/cost of study	44	16.7
Uncertainty - placements	41	15.6
Creativity/Uniqueness	14	5.3
Competition in performance	68	25.9

Table 8:- Academic Stress Factors

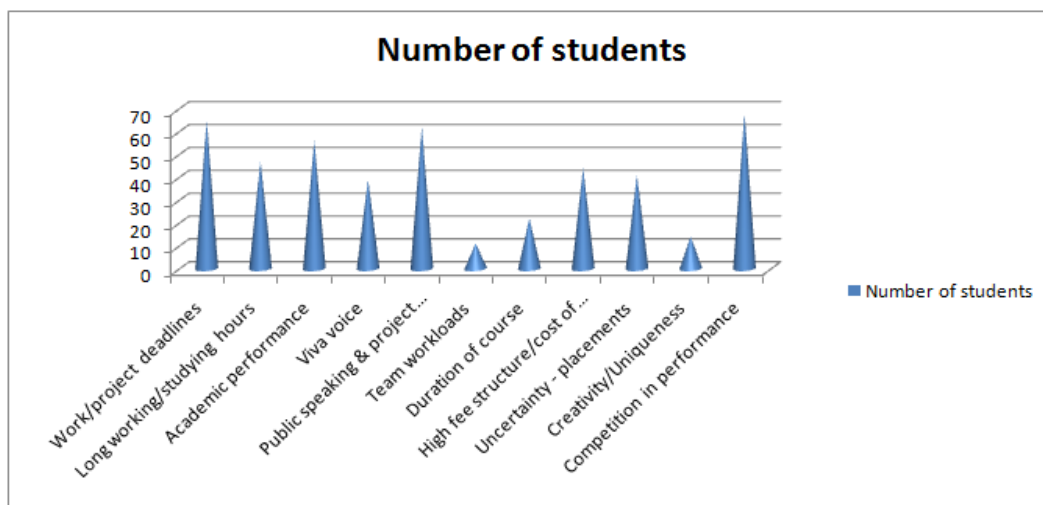


Fig 8

An individual is different from another individual in expressing the stress signs and depends on time of exposure of stressor. Some may show early sign of stress like insomnia, frustration, worrying etc., but few signs of stress often appeared in most of the individuals include anger (31.6%), Tears (30.4%), Agitated Irritability (25.5%), Sleeplessness (22.4%) by maximum number of respondents. These signs of mood irritability or mood swings appear at instances based upon situations. Only few signs of stress are taken into consideration in the questionnaire given in the table 9 (fig.9)

Regular stress symptoms	Number of students	% of students
Upset/Tearfulness	80	30.4
Agitated Irritability	67	25.5
Guilty/Worthless	43	16.3
Empty/Blank/Numb	33	12.5
Isolated/separated	24	9.1
Lacking of self confidence	55	20.9
Hopelessness/Despair	24	9.1
Exhausted/Tired/Unable to sleep	59	22.4
Anger	83	31.6
Suicidal tendency	6	2.3
None	50	19

Table 9:- Stress symptoms

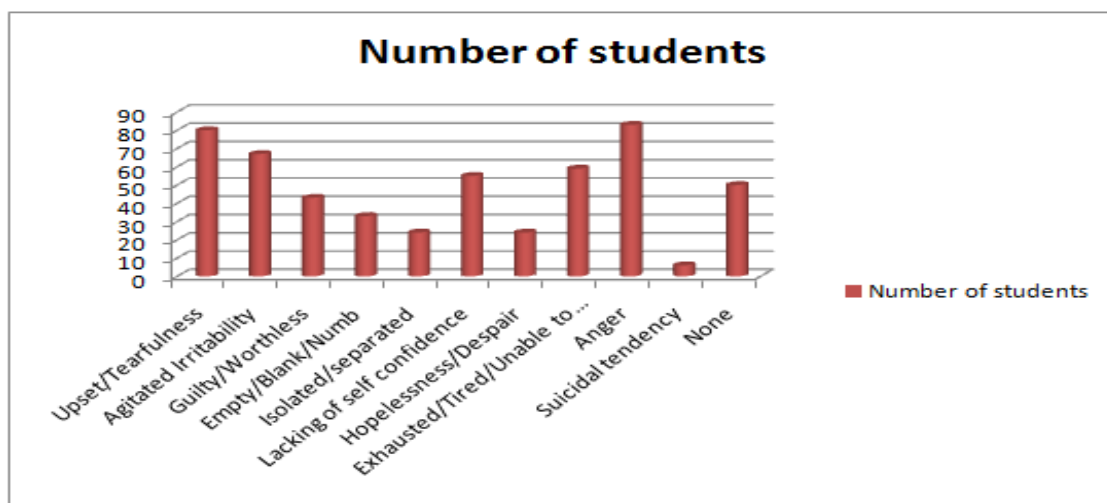


Fig 9

The post graduate students are usually in the age group of 20-23 which is a very tender age to get any health issues, but then it is clearly understood by the responses that stress is linked with health. Maximum numbers of respondents are facing headache/migraine comprising 51% of sample size. Other health problems of respondents showing maximum number are loneliness, poor concentration, depression, back ache (fig.10). The stress on students is also making them experience hypertension, stomach, skin disorders, dizziness but in low proportion given in table 10.

Health problems faced due to stress	Number of Students	% of students
Headache/migraine	134	51
Hypertension	15	5.7
Stomach Upset/bowel disorder	18	6.8
Chest pain	16	6.1
Back ache	37	14.1
Skin problems	19	7.2
Diabetes	0	0
Respiratory Problems/breathing difficulty	6	2.3
Fatigue/Dizziness/Drowsiness	19	7.2
Depression	48	18.3
Poor concentration	61	23.2
Loneliness	48	18.3
None	64	24.3

Table 10:- Health problems faced due to stress

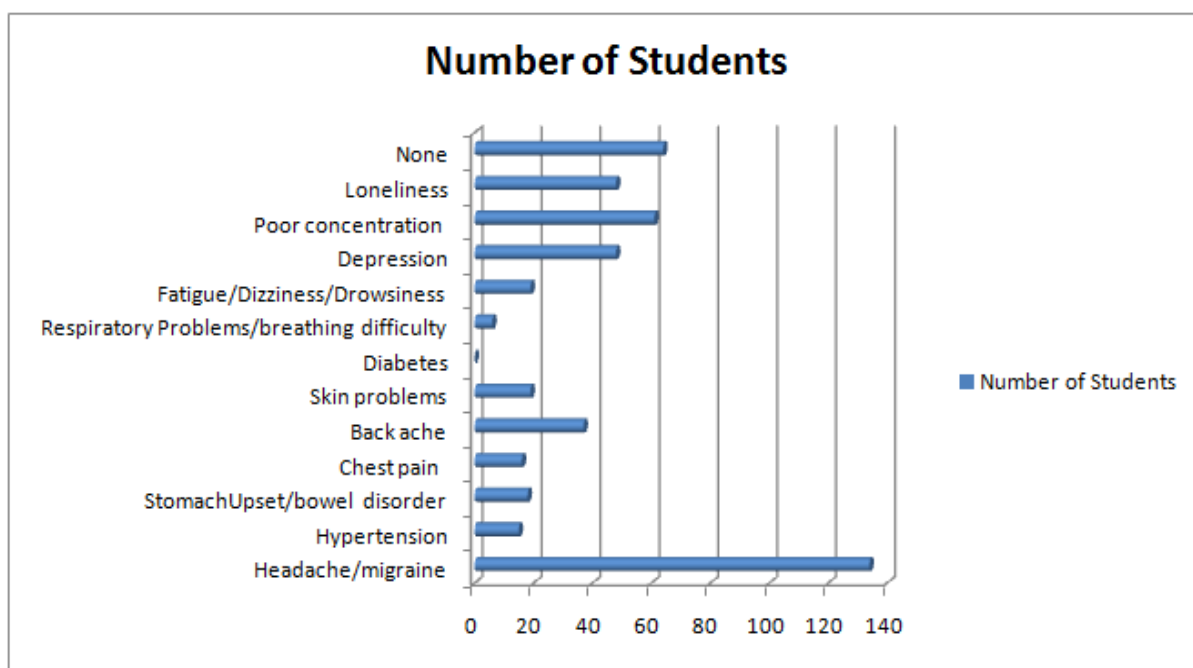


Fig 10

The coping strategies help in reducing the stress in students. The maximum number of respondents are with intention of getting psychological support from family and friends (35.4%) and being optimistic (34.6%). The other coping strategies mentioned in questionnaire is to divert them by taking active participation in activities to get distracted, sharing views with family and friends, Meditation, and so on. Among the respondents, the chance of getting addicted to smoking and boozing comprises about 1-3%. (Table 11, Fig. 11)

Coping strategies	Number of students	% of students
psychological support from friends and families	93	35.4
advice of health care professional	12	4.6
Mentoring (Faculty, Professors)	12	4.6
Diverting in other activities	78	29.7
strategic planning to deal with situation	60	22.8
Chill out/Making fun of the situation	57	21.7
Be optimistic	91	34.6
Exercises/Sports	51	19.4
Participation in University clubs and societies	8	3
relaxation postures/Breathing exercises	19	7.2
Meditate/Pray	43	16.3
Drink alcohol	7	2.7
Smoke Cigarettes	3	1.1
Eat junk/Comfort food	25	9.5
Use any medication	3	1.1
Vacation trips	27	10.3
Resort to pet therapy	4	1.5
Others	20	7.6
None	27	10.3

Table 11:- Coping strategies practiced to reduce stress

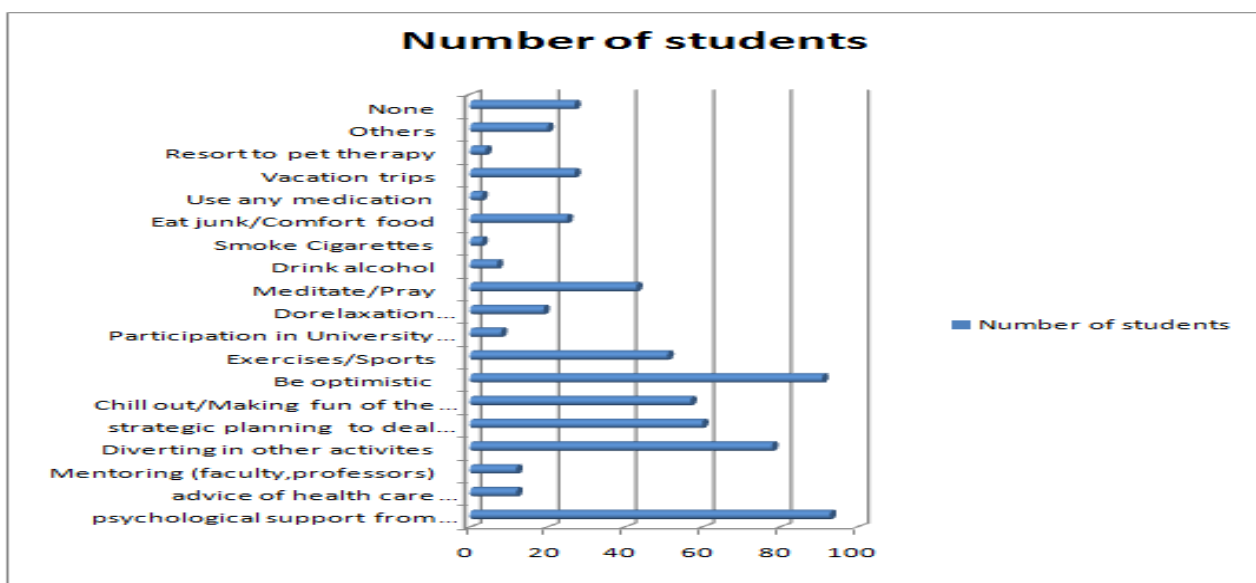


Fig 11

V. CONCLUSION:

Stress in post graduate students is caused by many different factors with numerous negative health issues. From the above results, it is clear that headache/migraine, poor concentration, depression, back pain are more common signs of stress among the students. It is also helping us to realize that long working hours and less sleeping hours can be harmful to health. It is analyzed from the above data that, the major general causes of stress in postgraduate students are financial situations, choice of career, employment opportunities and major academic causes are competition, deadlines of project, academic performance. The uncertainty of getting placed with good academic performance to survive in the present competitive environment of the society is one of the major factors for the stress of young postgraduates. Bouncing back from stress using different coping strategies is the good idea to overcome the distress. Some coping strategies identified by majority of young postgraduates to cope up from stress are psychological and emotional support from the family and friends and the other is meditation, yoga & exercises. The meditation and yoga comprise asana, pranayama, Dhyana which revitalize the body, mind & spirit to lead healthy lives. This research paper addresses the limited factors or causes of stress, the stress symptoms experienced with relation to the health issues faced and coping strategies adopted by professional post graduate students. It would be further protracted to find the comparative stress with additional quantitative and qualitative analysis of diverse experiences among various discipline professionals.

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