



## **12. Quality Education and Learning Environment in IKS and Stress Management Strategies for University Students**

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### **Abstract**

In various modern discussions, a fresh aspect of knowledge is becoming more acknowledged. Sustainable development is no longer solely associated with Western science and technology. There is an increasing recognition of the potential contributions of indigenous peoples and their communities to sustainable development. Incorporating indigenous knowledge (IK) into formal educational curricula, particularly in environmental education (EE), is viewed as a crucial strategy for making education more pertinent to rural students. This will also enhance the intellectual diversity necessary for addressing the breadth, complexity, and uncertainty of both local and global environmental challenges. This study was designed to assess learning environment and stress management strategies preferred for university students. The objectives of the study were to find out the common symptoms of stress, the causes of stress, and to suggest stress management strategies to the students for coping with stress. For collecting data, the survey method was adopted. This study was completed by following the procedure of the descriptive method of research. A standard questionnaire (the "mental health questionnaire") with 39 questions was used for data collection. 100 students from different departments of the Mithila University of Darbhanga were chosen as a sample for the study. This study concluded that the majority of students felt fatigued and stressed during class. The burden of study and assignments were the major causes of stress. And the coping strategies they used agreed that they reduce stress by watching TV, movies, or mobile, listening to music, or taking part in other leisure time activities. It was recommended that proper planning of study may be reduced by conducting extracurricular activities in academic areas.

**Key Words-** Stress, behaviour, academic pressure, and stress management.

### **Introduction**

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) refers to a set of important insights generated and held by local communities around the globe. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) consists of a multifaceted and often subtle educational framework that can be difficult to identify. This paper examines IKS through the lens of complexity thinking and suggests that applying Capra's ideas of meaning, Luhmann's theory of communication within social systems, and



concepts like autopoiesis (self-organization), emergence, and holism from complexity can enhance the educational understanding of IKS and its relationship with education. Utilizing these concepts in the context of IKS indicates that university and school curricula need to be reoriented, and academic disciplines should be reorganized to facilitate interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, aimed at addressing urgent societal challenges.

Experiencing stress is an unavoidable aspect of everyday life. We frequently encounter situations in our daily routines that generate stress. Individuals may interpret and respond to stress-inducing events in various ways. For instance, public speaking may provoke anxiety for some while being enjoyable for others. Nonetheless, excessively high levels of stress can lead to significant health and social issues. Any event or condition that challenges or surpasses a person's ability to manage is referred to as stress (Lahey, 2004, p. 500). In fact, the layman's definition of stress and the range of stress are very confusing and multidimensional. Stress is an abnormality in behaviour, psychology, emotional outburst, restraint in performing day-to-day routine work, or physiological changes in a human being.

Stress is a multifaceted concept. It can manifest as everyday stress at home, school, and work. Alone, these stressors may be relatively manageable, but when combined, they can lead to significant strain. Different factors trigger stress in different individuals. For students, this is an integral part of their everyday experiences. From the beginning of their education through university, various educational styles and their unique demands contribute to stress levels. Students encounter a range of stressors, including academic pressures tied to performance, uncertainties about the future, and challenges related to adapting to the system. These individuals grapple with social, emotional, physical, and familial issues that can impact their learning capabilities and academic outcomes (Fish & Nies, 1996; Chewgrahan, Rogers, & Yassin, 2003). University students who are under stress are unable to concentrate, enjoy their education, behave well, or develop their special skills. Anxiety, despair, and frustration brought on by stress can result in substance misuse, antisocial behaviour, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and even violence. Stress has grown in importance in both our culture and the academic community. Since stress in academic settings can have both beneficial and detrimental effects if not properly handled, it is now widespread among university students and can be addressed by stress management techniques. The ability to sustain and regulate stress when circumstances, people, and events place undue demands on oneself is known as stress management. By using several techniques, university students' stress levels can be identified. We need to keep an eye out for any strange or aberrant behaviour. Some people are simply not bothered by situations that others perceive to be stressful (Glavin et al., 1991). Stress occurs in academic areas for different reasons. Researchers have identified a number of stressors in academic institutions, such as many assignments, competition with other students, failures, a lack of pocket money (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003), poor relationships with other students or teachers, family problems, or problems at home. Institutional (university)-level



stressors are overcrowded lecture halls (Omgori, 2007; Awino & Agolla, 2008), the semester system, and inadequate resources to perform academic work (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2000).

It's essential to understand that, regardless of the origin, much of the stress experienced by students can be seen as beneficial. Stress is not necessarily synonymous with distress. Positive and negative events can both elicit stress. The anxiety that students feel when they begin exams for which they have adequately prepared differs considerably from the stress experienced by those who did not study effectively. When managed properly, stress can play a beneficial role in our lives. "Increased stress enhances productivity up to a certain point, beyond which performance declines rapidly," stated Paul J. Rosch, M.D. (2007), President of the American Institute of Stress. Using stress in a constructive manner relies on knowing where the boundary lies between stress that enhances performance and stress that hinders it.

While stress is frequently discussed in negative contexts, a healthy or moderate level of stress can spur individuals to take action, learn new skills, optimize performance, and reach their potential. Stress is not only prevalent in university settings but is a part of life itself. Developing the ability to anticipate, recognize, and effectively manage stress is a vital life skill, as unregulated stress can lead to emotional, physical, and relational issues.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the 21st century, stress is often termed the "cancer of the mind" as it hinders students from focusing on their studies and responsibilities. During study periods, students encounter numerous physical and psychological challenges due to academic stress. It is crucial for students in educational institutions to comprehend the learning environment and stress management techniques; consequently, this research focuses on "Learning Environment and Stress Management Strategies Preferred by University Students."

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study has the following objectives:

1. To recognize the common indicators of stress among college students.
2. To explore the sources of stress faced by university students.
3. To investigate the stress management methods employed by students.
4. To suggest strategies for stress coping.

### **Research Methodology**

This research was descriptive and utilized a survey methodology. The following steps were taken during this investigation:

#### **Population**

The study's population consisted of all male and female students at L.N.M.U. Darbhanga Bihar. A total of 100 university students participated in this research, selected through multistage random sampling from 10 departments of Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga. The selection process was as follows: the first student was chosen from each row on the right side of the classroom. Each class contained 5 to 10 rows, with one student selected from each row.



**Table 1 presents the various departments of the university**

Department	No. of Students
Home Science	10
Sociology	10
History	10
English	10
Psychology	10
Economics	10
Chemistry	10
Zoology	10
Commerce	10
Geography	10

### **Development of research tools**

Descriptive research was carried out on the basis of information and the measurement of data. For this study, a questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was designed on a four-point Likert scale. All the questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended except the last two. Each close-ended statement provided a description of four levels: mostly always, mostly, sometimes, and never.

In the present study, the questionnaire was selected for the collection of data due to the following reasons:

1. The population of this study was educated and could read and write.
2. It was a valid way to collect a lot of information from a large sample in written form.
3. It was considered a convenient method to get responses.

### **Analysis of the data**

After collecting all the data from male and female students of L.N.M.U. Darbhanga, Bihar, through research tools, the total number of responses for each item was calculated. The percentage of responses on each item as well as the mean scores were calculated. The items that received the highest value on the percentage scale were interpreted as findings in light of the objectives of the study. The generalisations of the findings lead to conclusions. In light of this conclusion, recommendations were made.

### **Findings**

A present study was undertaken to find out about "Learning environment and Stress Management Strategies Preferred for University Students" in Darbhanga City. With major objectives in mind, a research procedure was developed and carried out. Data obtained from the field study using a questionnaire was tabulated, interpreted, and discussed for analytical purposes. The details of the results so obtained are shown and presented in the following figures and table, along with their description.

**Fig:1 Shows that stress in university students while attending classes**



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**Table:2 Source of stress (agree or disagree) in university students while attending class and their percentage.**

Sr. No.	Source of stress (Agree/Disagree)	% of Population
1.	Fatigue/Tired	82%
3.	Muscle pain	68%
4.	Concentrate under stress	62%
5.	Remember thing	75.5%
6.	Dryness of mouth	59%
7.	Irritable and Anxious when stressed	52%
8.	Feel anxiety without knowing	51%
9.	Feel restless	60.5%
10.	Feel diarrhoea, indignation, upset stomach, vomiting.	57.5%
11.	Headache when under stress.	54.5%
12.	Feel angry quickly when stressed	57%
13.	Disagreed that they feel dream when stressed	42.5%
14.	Disagreed often feel loss of appetite/eat	55.5%
15.	University environment create stress.	59%
16.	Different educational setup increases stress	51%
17.	Competitive environment create stress	54%
18.	Burden of study	75%
19.	Exam	73%
20.	Assignment	66.5%
21.	Poor time management	59.5%
22.	Lack of origination skills	58.5%
23.	Lack of facilities of study researches	57.5%
24.	Difficulty to understand the teacher	74.5%
25.	Teacher student relationship	57.5%



26.	Presentations	57%
27.	Remove Attention to humour laugh	65%
28.	Things and facts that they cannot change	63.5%
29.	Stress can be controlled with proper time management	63.5%
30.	Reduce stress by properly hydrate body/drinking water	60%
31.	Balance diet to reduce stress	53%
32.	Talk to themselves in stress	57%
33.	Reduce stress when they get support of friends and family	77%
34.	Disagreed for exercise	50%
35.	Agreed to reduce stress by getting an adequate amount of sleep	57%
36.	Break from work, Watching TV/movies	55%
37.	Take deep breath and relax	64%
38.	Lack of facilities to study, Burden of study and research work in semester system	32%
39.	Release their stress by remaining busy in various activities of interest	68%

Table 2 describe the significant majority of the respondents (82%) agreed that they feel fatigued under stress. The majority of the respondents (68%) agreed that they felt muscle pain. The majority of the respondents (62%) agreed that they have difficulty concentrating under stress. The majority of the respondents (75.5%) agreed that they have difficulty remembering things when under stress.

A slight majority of the respondents (59%) agreed that they feel dryness in their mouth and throat when stressed. A slight majority of the respondents (52%) agreed that they feel irritable and anxious when stressed. (51% of respondents) agreed that they feel anxiety without knowing when they are stressed. The majority of the respondents (60.5%) agreed that they feel restless when stressed. (50%) respondents disagreed that they felt diarrhoea, indignation, an upset stomach, or vomiting.

A slight majority of respondents (57.5%) agreed that they often feel headaches when under stress. A slight majority of respondents (54.5%) agreed that they often get angry quickly when stressed. A slight majority of respondents (57%) disagreed that they often feel like they dream when stressed.

(42.5%) respondents disagreed that they often feel a loss of appetite or eat more than they used to when under stress, and (24.5%) were uncertain about the statement. A slight majority of respondents (55.5%) said that university environments create stress. A slight majority of respondents (59%) agreed that different educational setups increase stress levels among university students. A slight majority of the respondents (54%) agreed that competitive environments create stress.



The majority of the respondents (75%) agreed that the burden of study increases stress levels among university students. The majority of the respondents (73%) agree that exams create stress. The majority of respondents (66.5%) agreed that assignments increase stress levels among university students.

A slight majority of the respondents (59.5%) agreed that stress arises due to poor time management. A slight majority of the respondents (58.5%) agreed that a lack of origination skills creates stress.

A slight majority of the respondents (57.5%) agreed that a lack of facilities for study and research creates stress. The majority of respondents (74.5%) agreed that difficulty understanding the teacher creates stress in students. A slight majority of the respondents (57.5%) agreed that teacher-student relationships create stress. A slight majority of the respondents (57%) agreed that presentations create stress for students. The majority of respondents (65%) agreed that they pay attention to humour and laugh when stressed. The majority of respondents (63.5%) agreed that they accept the things and facts that they cannot change when stressed. The majority of respondents (63.5%) agreed that stress can be controlled with proper time management. The majority of respondents (60%) agreed that they reduce stress by properly hydrating their bodies and drinking water.

A slight majority of the respondents (53%) agreed that they take a balanced diet to reduce stress. A slight majority of the respondents (57%) agreed that they talk to themselves when stressed. The majority of respondents (77%) agreed that they get support from friends and family when stressed.

50% of respondents disagreed that they go for exercise when stressed. A slight majority of the respondents (57%) agreed that they reduce stress by getting an adequate amount of sleep. A slight majority of the respondents (55%) agreed that they take a break from work when stressed.

The majority of the respondents (64%) agreed that watching TV or movies could reduce stress, listen to music, or take part in other leisure time activities or hobbies. The majority of the respondents (65%) agreed that they take deep breaths and relax to reduce stress.

**Results related to the two open-ended questions stated in the questionnaires are:**

Causes of stress (32% of respondents) feel stressed due to a lack of facilities to study. (41% of respondents) feel stressed due to the burden of study and research work in the semester system. Strategies to cope with stress (68%) respondents release their stress by remaining busy in various activities of interest.

**Conclusion**

The majority of the university students agreed that they feel fatigue, muscle tension, and difficulty concentrating and remembering things during stress. The majority of the university students agreed that they feel dryness of the mouth, irritability, anxiety without knowing it, and restlessness during stress. The majority of the university students disagreed



that they feel upset stomachs when stressed. The majority of the university students agreed that they get headaches and get angry quickly when stressed. The majority of the university students disagreed that they lost their appetite or ate more than they used to when stressed. The majority of the university students agreed that the university environment, different educational setups, competitive environment, and burden of study were the major causes of stress. The majority of the university students agreed that assignments were major causes of learning stress.

The majority of the university students agreed that exams and poor time management were causes of stress. The majority of the university students agreed that lack of organisational skills, facilities for study, and difficulties understanding the teachers were major causes of stress. The majority of the university students agreed that they remove tension with humour, accept the things and facts that cannot change, and use proper time management. The majority of the university students agreed that they eat a balanced diet, get support from friends and family, and do regular exercise to reduce stress. The majority of the university students strongly agreed that they remove stress by watching TV or taking part in other leisure-time activities or hobbies.

### **Implementation of the study**

We can use this study to deal with the postural problems of university students. This study will help in understanding the stress level and stress management of the students. Knowing this, we can make a strategy for it. This study can be used to make education policy.

### **Recommendation of the study**

1. Educators can recognize signs of stress in students and offer counseling services to support their coping mechanisms.
2. A departmental committee may be formed, which should educate the students about how to identify and manage stress.
3. The university may promote a positive learning environment and provide study and research facilities so that stress may be minimised during study sessions.
4. The stress of study may be decreased at the university level by co-curricular activities.
5. University students might receive guidance on effective time management.
6. Student guidance and counselling programmes at the university level may be set up to help reduce student learning stress.
7. Learning stress among university students may be reduced by the utilisation of good study skills, which basically involve remaining calm, focused, and organised.
8. The teacher may guide the students in completing assignments.

### **Limitations of this study**

Small sample size. Cross-sectional study. Large number of variables affecting the activity.



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