



A COMMUNITY BASED STUDY TO ASSESS THE REASONS OF STRESS AND ITS MANAGEMENT AMONG YOUTHS IN DAKSHINA KANNADA

Shueer Ahamed^{*1}, Satish S.² and A. R. Shabaraya³

^{*1,3}Department of Pharmacy Practice, Srinivas College of Pharmacy, Valachil Post Farangipete, Mangalore-574143, Karnataka, India.

²Father Muller College of Pharmaceutical Sciences.



*Corresponding Author: Shueer Ahamed

Department of Pharmacy Practice, Srinivas College of Pharmacy, Valachil Post Farangipete, Mangalore-574143, Karnataka, India. Email id:

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ABSTRACT

The study conducted in Dakshina Kannada explores the prevalence of stress, its unique stressors, existing coping strategies, and the need for tailored interventions among the youth. The demographic analysis reveals that a majority of participants are aged between 15 and 20 years (61.5%), with females making up 58.8% of the sample. Most participants reside in urban areas (52.5%). The study identifies academic pressure (63.1%) and financial concerns (33.9%) as the leading stressors faced by the youth. Coping strategies vary widely, with 52.2% of participants turning to friends or family for support, while 30.2% engage in hobbies as a means of stress relief. However, 34.9% report ignoring the problem altogether, indicating that some individuals may struggle with effectively managing their stress. Physical symptoms of stress are common, with 71.8% of participants experiencing headaches and 40.5% reporting sleep difficulties. These symptoms highlight the significant impact of stress on both mental and physical health. While a majority of respondents (58.1%) feel comfortable seeking help for stress, 41.9% face barriers to accessing mental health support, indicating that there are challenges in utilizing available resources. This suggests a need for improved mental health services and awareness to ensure that all youth have the support they need. In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of addressing the specific stressors faced by the youth in Dakshina Kannada. It calls for the promotion of effective coping strategies and tailored interventions to support their mental well-being and reduce the impact of stress on their lives.

KEYWORDS: Stress, youth, stressors, mental health, well-being, academic pressure.

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a common challenge that affects individuals across all age groups, but it is particularly impactful for youth aged 18 to 25, a time when they navigate significant life transitions and external pressures. The Smith study delves into the prevalence, sources, and coping mechanisms of stress within this age group, with the aim of identifying factors that contribute to stress and developing tailored interventions to foster resilience and improve mental well-being. The study highlights that this age group is particularly vulnerable to stress due to academic and career pressures, relationship issues, financial instability, and the general uncertainty of emerging adulthood.

A key finding of the Smith study is that while stress is prevalent, coping mechanisms vary widely. Many youth resort to unhealthy methods, such as avoidance or substance use, while others engage in more constructive strategies, such as seeking social support or engaging in physical activities. The study underscores the importance

of understanding these coping mechanisms in order to develop targeted interventions that encourage healthier strategies for managing stress.

Similarly, Bhargava and Trivedi's research also focuses on stress management among youth. Their findings emphasize the need for developing and promoting effective coping strategies to manage stress. The researchers stress the importance of mental health education and awareness programs, which can help young people better understand and address their stressors. Moreover, they highlight the role of supportive social networks, the integration of stress management techniques, and the promotion of resilience in enhancing mental well-being.

Both studies point to the critical need for tailored interventions that address the unique challenges faced by youth in this age group. By focusing on improving coping strategies, providing mental health resources, and fostering resilience, we can help mitigate the impact of

stress on young people and promote healthier mental well-being as they transition into adulthood.

Some of the objectives are

1. Assessing the frequency and sources of stress experienced by youth.
2. Exploring the coping mechanisms employed by youth.
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of current stress management techniques used by youth.
4. Examining the impact of stress on youth's relationships, academic/work performance, and overall well-being.

2. METHODOLOGY

Data Collection: A structured questionnaire was developed based on the sample questionnaire provided, incorporating items related to stress frequency, sources, coping mechanisms, effectiveness of stress management techniques, perceived obstacles, and impact on various aspects of life. The questionnaire will be administered online or in-person, depending on participant preference and accessibility.

Ethical Considerations: The study received approval from the institutional review board, and all participants provided informed consent. Data confidentiality is guaranteed, and participants have the right to withdraw at any time.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics will summarize stress frequency, sources, coping mechanisms, effectiveness of techniques, perceived obstacles, and impact on various aspects of life. Inferential statistics, like chi-square tests or regression analyses, may examine associations between demographic variables and stress management outcomes.

Limitations: Potential limitations of the study may include self-report bias, limited generalizability due to sample characteristics, and challenges in establishing causality in cross-sectional data.

Study Site: Mangalore

Study Type: Survey-based study

Study Duration: 1 Month

Sample Size: 250 Individuals

Inclusion Criteria

1. Youth aged 18 to 25 years old.
2. Residents of the community where the study is conducted.
3. Willingness to participate in the study and provide informed consent

Exclusion Criteria

1. Individuals outside the age range of 18 to 25 years.
2. Non-residents of the community.
3. Individuals unwilling or unable to provide informed consent to participate in the study.

3. RELATED WORKS

The findings of this study reveal that stress is highly prevalent among youth, with a significant number of participants reporting elevated stress levels. A total of 301 responses were collected, and the majority of respondents were female, with a high percentage residing in urban areas. The study demonstrated that a larger proportion of students, employed individuals, and others experienced stress, highlighting the widespread nature of the issue. This aligns with similar studies conducted in India, which have shown that students frequently experience stress, particularly in the form of depression, insomnia, and poor eating habits. In fact, a study by Bhargava *et al.* (2021) found that 81.6% of students reported suffering from depression, with additional symptoms such as anxiety and poor eating habits also prevalent. This research emphasized that youth's desire to fulfill various personal and academic goals often leads to stress when they are unable to meet these expectations.

Furthermore, the main sources of stress in the current study were identified as academic pressure, family issues, and financial concerns. Other contributing factors included relationship problems, peer pressure, and health issues. These findings are consistent with those reported by Trivedi *et al.* (2020), who also noted physical symptoms of stress such as headaches (reported by 216 respondents), difficulty sleeping, and increased heart rate. Some participants also experienced stomach aches, muscle tension, and fatigue. Notably, the study found that one of the major obstacles to effective stress management was the lack of a solid support system, with many individuals struggling to find adequate resources or assistance. The emotional and cognitive impact of stress was also significant, as it negatively affected both work and academic performance. Coping strategies identified in the study included talking with friends and family, listening to music, or, in some cases, ignoring the problem altogether. Trivedi *et al.* (2020) proposed several solutions to address this issue, such as providing counselling services in schools and colleges, teaching time management skills, promoting physical exercise, and encouraging healthy eating habits.

Additional studies conducted in India, such as the one by Ameen *et al.* (2019), corroborate these findings by showing that youth experience a range of mental health challenges, including sadness, anxiety, and other psychological disorders. The study observed that unfulfilled desires—particularly academic and social aspirations—contribute significantly to stress. This stress can manifest in a variety of ways, including withdrawal from family and peer relationships, difficulties in concentrating on academics and extracurricular activities, and, in extreme cases, substance abuse. Symptoms also include poor appetite, weakened immunity, and overall emotional instability. These findings further emphasize the urgent need for targeted interventions to mitigate the impact of stress on young people.

In conclusion, these studies collectively highlight the widespread prevalence of stress among youth, particularly in relation to academic and social pressures. They underscore the importance of developing effective coping strategies and creating robust support systems to help manage stress and improve mental well-being among young people.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic information

The study in Dakshina Kannada aimed to explore stress reasons and management among youths. Demographic analysis showed a significant portion aged 15-20, indicating critical periods for impactful stress management strategies. A higher representation of females suggests gender-specific stressors and coping mechanisms, while urban residency prevalence hints at urban lifestyle factors contributing to stress, such as academic pressure and competition.

Table 1: Demographic information.

Demographic information	N(%)
1. Age	
a. 15-20	116(61.5%)
b. 21-30	185(38.5%)
2. Gender	
a. Male	124(41.2%)
b. Female	177(58.8%)
3. Location	
a. Urban	158(52.5%)
b. Rural	143(47.5%)
4. Occupation	
a. Student	243(80.7%)
b. Employed	38(12.6%)
c. House wife	12(4.0%)
d. Other	8(2.7%)

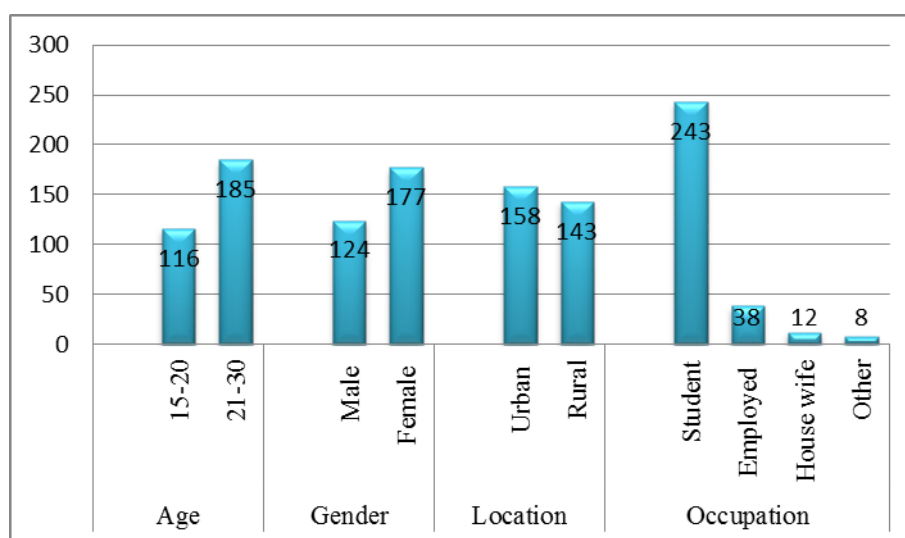


Figure 1: Demographic information.

Despite the youthful age group, the prevalence of stress was notable, with over 80% of respondents reporting feeling stressed sometimes, often, or always in their daily lives. Academic pressure emerged as a prominent stressor, with 63.1% of respondents citing it as a common source of stress. Financial concerns were also significant stress contributors, with 33.9% of respondents indicating them as a source of stress.

Physical symptoms associated with stress were prevalent, with headaches (71.8%) and difficulty sleeping (40.5%) being the most commonly reported. These findings highlight the tangible impact of stress on individuals' physical well-being, emphasizing the need for holistic approaches to stress management that address both psychological and physiological aspects.

Table 2: Reasons for stress.

Reasons for stress	N(%)
Often do you feel stressed in your daily life?	
a. Never	8(2.7%)
b. Rarely	47(15.6%)
c. Sometimes	147(48.8%)
d. Often	51(16.9%)
e. Always	48(15.9%)
What are the common sources of stress for you? (can choose more than one)	
a. Academic pressure	190(63.1%)
b. Family issues	104(34.6%)

c. Peer pressure	47(15.6%)
d. Relationship problem	56(18.6%)
e. Financial concerns	102(33.6%)
f. Health issues	79(26.2%)
How often do you feel overwhelmed by your stress?	
a. Never	21(7.0%)
b. Rarely	71(23.6%)
c. Sometimes	157(52.2%)
d. Often	30(10.0%)
e. Always	22(7.3%)
Have you noticed any physical symptoms associated with stress? (can choose more than one)	
a. Headaches	216(71.8%)
b. Stomach aches	40(13.3%)
c. Muscle tension	33(11.0%)
d. Fatigue	48(15.9%)
e. Difficulty sleeping	122(40.5%)
f. Increased heart rate	72(23.9%)

REASONS FOR STRESS

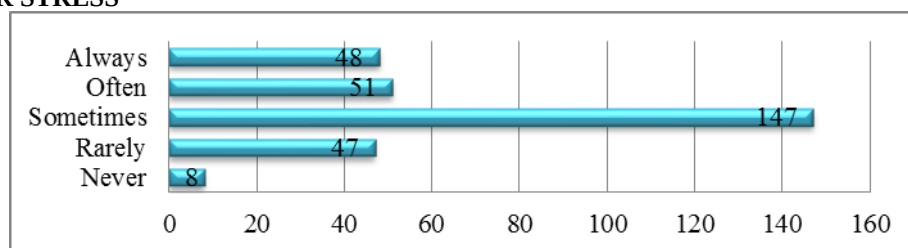


Figure 2: Frequency of stress.

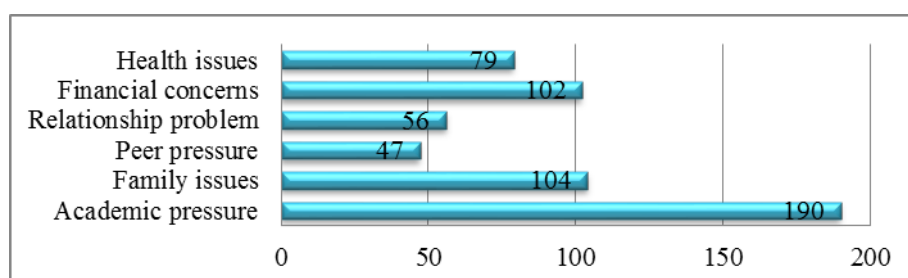


Figure 3: Common sources of stress.

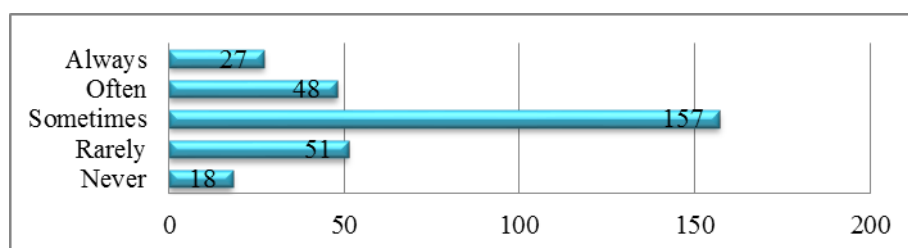


Figure 4: Overwhelmed of stress.

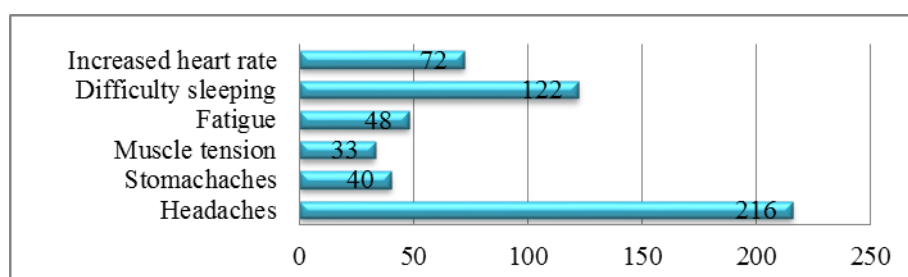


Figure 5: Symptoms of stress.

Table 3: Rate level of happiness and satisfaction life currently? 0-9.

Rating Group	N(%)
0-3	41(13.7%)
4-6	125(41.7%)
7-9	135(45.0%)

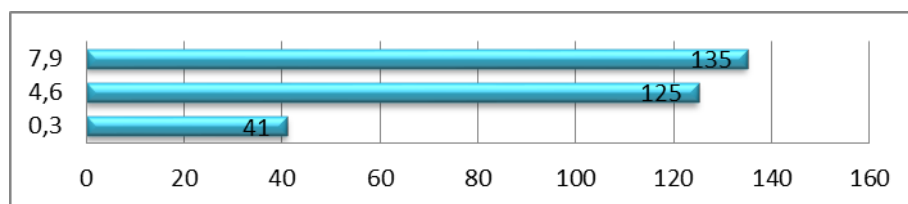


Figure 6: Level of happiness.

Management of stress

Coping mechanisms varied among respondents, with a substantial portion choosing to engage in stress-reducing activities such as talking to friends/family (52.2%) and

engaging in hobbies/activities (30.2%). However, a concerning proportion opted to ignore the problem, with 34.9% of respondents admitting to this approach.

Table: 4 Management of stress.

Cope With Stress? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)	
a. Exercise	49(16.3%)
b. Deep breathing/meditation	47(15.6%)
c. Talking to friends/family	157(52.2%)
d. Listening to music	151(50.2%)
e. Engaging in hobbies/activities	91(30.2%)
f. Seeking professional help	13(4.3%)
g. Ignoring the problem	105(34.9%)
(1 – 10), EffectivenessOf Current Stress Management Techniques	
a. Low (1-3)	64 (21.2%)
b. Moderate (4-7)	157 (52.0%)
c. High (8-10)	79 (26.2%)
Management of stress	
Manage time and prioritize tasks	
a. Time Management	82(27.2%)
b. Prioritization techniques	58(18.3%)
c. Time-blocking methods	37(12.3%)
d. Stress-reducing activities	127(42.2%)
School/work environment is conducive to managing stress effectively?	
a. Yes	68(22.6%)
b. No	105(34.9%)
c. Sometimes	126(42.5%)
Changes you would like to see in reduce stress levels?	
a. Yes	236(78.4%)
b. No	65(21.6%)
Engage in activities purely for relaxation and enjoyment	
a. Never	18(6.0%)
b. Rarely	51(16.9%)
c. Sometimes	157(52.2%)
d. Often	48(15.9%)
e. Always	27(9.0%)
Biggest obstacles to managing stress effectively	
a. Time constraints	79(28.2%)
b. Coping Mechanisms	29(9.6%)
c. Support system	107(35.5%)
d. Environment factors	86(28.6%)
Stress levels impact relationships and daily functioning	
a. Strains on relationships	41(13.6%)

b. Emotional effects	142(47%)
c. Physical effects	42(14.0%)
d. Performance at work/school	78(25.2%)

MANAGEMENT OF STRESS

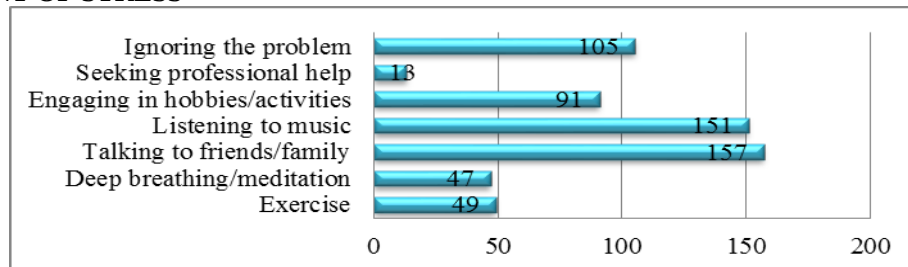


Figure 7: Cope with stress.

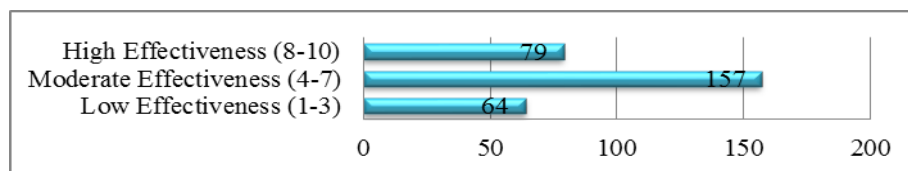


Figure 8: Current stress management.

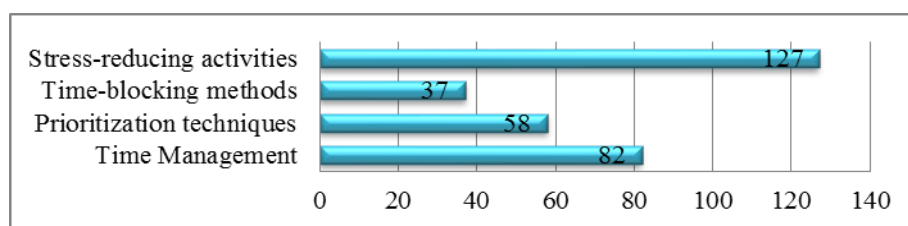


Figure 9: Manage time and prioritize tasks of stress.

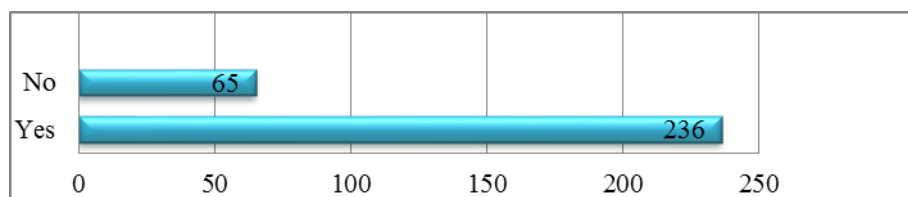


Figure 10: School/work environment is conducive to managing stress.

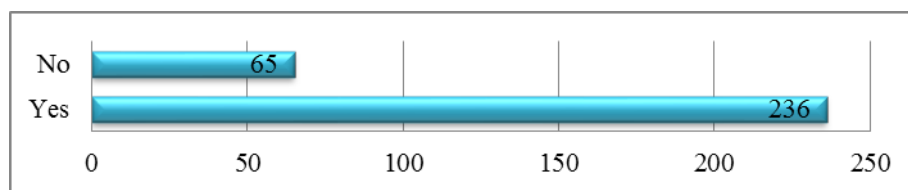


Figure 11: Changes you would like to see in reduce stress levels.

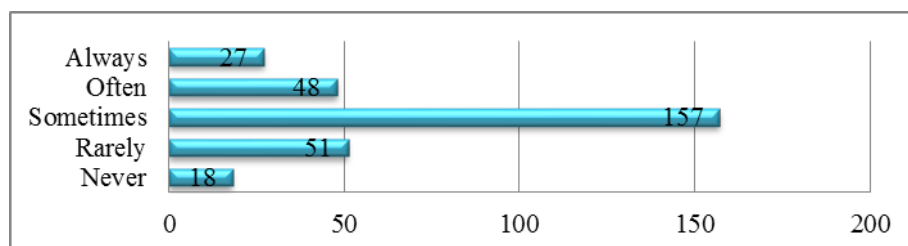


Figure 12: Engage in activities purely for relaxation and enjoyment.

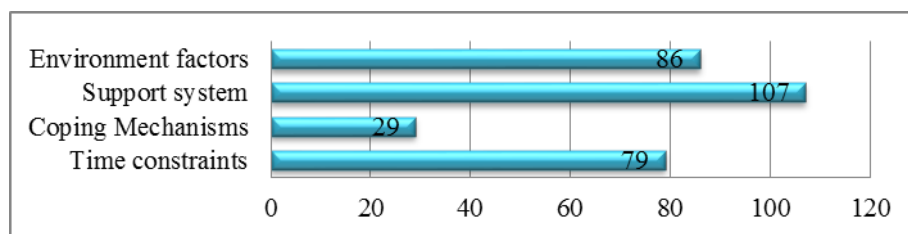


Figure 13: Biggest obstacles to managing stress effectively.

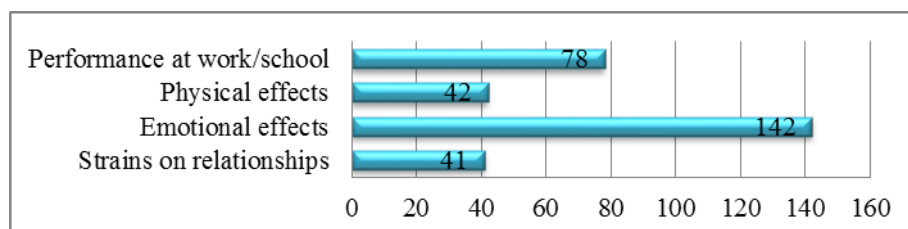


Figure 14: Stress Levels Impact Relationships and Daily Functioning.

1. Have you ever tried any stress management techniques that you found particularly helpful? If so, please describe.
- While a majority of respondents felt comfortable seeking help for stress (58.1%), a significant

proportion did not, suggesting potential stigma or barriers to accessing mental health support services. This underscores the importance of DE stigmatizing mental health issues and increasing awareness about available support resources.

Table 5: Comfortable talking to someone about your stress or seeking help.

Do you feel comfortable talking to someone about your stress or seeking help?	
a. Yes	175(58.1%)
b. No	126(41.9%)

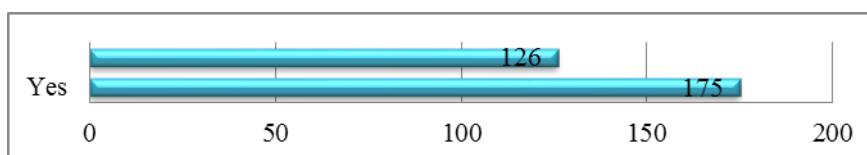


Figure 15: Comfortable talking to someone about your stress or seeking help.

5. DISCUSSION

From the findings, it clearly shows that youth have high level stress. 301 response was collected among them majority were female and high percentage of people belong to urban area. This study demonstrated that a greater number of students, employed and others are suffered from stress. Similarity study done in India result showed that students do experience stress and symptoms, highest percentage is 81.60% suffering from depression, followed by insomnia and bad eating habit. It was also observed that most of the suffering from depression, tension, etc. the lifestyle of youth consists of various desires. They want to fulfil the desire and if they are not capable to fulfil the wishes, they feel somewhat stress Bhargava, D *et al.*,^[1]

The major reason for stress was academic pressure family issues and financial and some of the minor reasons are re relationship problems, peer pressure, and health issues. They also noticed some physical symptoms associated with stress that is headache, which was experienced by 216. People followed by difficulty in sleeping and increased heart rate. Sometimes they may

experience stomach aches, muscle tension, and fatigue. It was observed that the biggest obstacle to managing stress effectively was support system. The impact cause, emotional effects and performance said work and school is decreased. Majority of the people with stress by talking with friends and family, listening to music, and some ignore the problem. The solution for this might be providing counselling at the schools and colleges, Time management, keeping organized and planned, involving in various activities, positive thinking, and exercise regularly and good nutritional food, mingling with friends and family and sharing your problems, may reduce the stress Trivedi, H. *et al.*,^[2]

Similarity study done in India result showed that the majority of young people suffer from sadness, anxiety, and other mental illnesses. Youth have a variety of desires that they want to fulfil, and if they are unable to do so, they experience some stress. The severity of the symptoms is on the rise. Academics and athletics may be difficult for children to focus on. They cut themselves off from family and peer contacts. Adolescents can be dabbling in drugs and alcohol. They may have a poor

appetite and have a weak immune system Ameen, N. O., *et al.*,^[3]

KEY FINDINGS

The major findings of this study on stress and its management among youths in Dakshina Kannada include:

1. **Prevalence of Stress:** A significant proportion of respondents reported experiencing stress sometimes, often, or always, with academic pressure being a primary stressor.
2. **Coping Mechanisms:** While many respondents engaged in stress-reducing activities like talking to friends/family and hobbies, a considerable portion chose to ignore the problem altogether.
3. **Physical Symptoms:** Physical symptoms associated with stress, such as headaches and difficulty sleeping, were prevalent among respondents, indicating the impact of stress on physical health.
4. **Help-Seeking Behaviour:** Despite experiencing stress, only around half of the respondents felt comfortable seeking help for stress, highlighting potential barriers to accessing mental health support services.
5. **Desire for Change:** The majority of respondents expressed a desire for changes in their environment to help reduce stress levels, emphasizing the need for structural interventions to address stressors effectively.

6. CONCLUSION

Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of stressors, coping mechanisms, and their impact on the well-being of youths in Dakshina Kannada. Addressing the identified stressors and promoting effective stress management strategies tailored to the youths' needs could significantly contribute to improving their overall mental health and well-being...

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