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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DIFFERENT STREAMS

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Abstract

The modern world is a world of stress. Now a day's stress is not confined to adults alone but also affects children and adolescents. The main objective of present study was to compare the academic stress of senior secondary students enrolled in different streams i.e. science, arts and commerce. For the purpose a sample of 150 senior secondary students was selected by simple random sampling method out of which 50 were enrolled in science stream, 50 were enrolled in arts stream and 50 were enrolled in commerce stream. The Academic Stress questionnaire (ASQ) developed by Md. Akram, Ilias Khan and Sabiha Baby was used for data collection. The results revealed that students enrolled in science and commerce streams were found academically more stressed as compared to students enrolled in arts stream. However there was no significant difference found between academic stress of students enrolled in science and commerce stream. It was also observed that girls and boys enrolled in science stream didn't vary significantly in their academic stress. Similarly girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream didn't vary significantly in their academic stress while unlike science and commerce girls and boys enrolled in arts stream vary significantly in their academic stress. Boys enrolled in arts stream were found academically more stressed than girls enrolled in arts stream. It was concluded that students enrolled in science and commerce streams might come across a variety of stress inducing situations which may increase the stress particularly in academics. It was also concluded that boys enrolled in arts stream might come across a variety of stress inducing situations regarding their worry about their future responsibilities and inadequate academic environment that increase the level of stress among them. It is, therefore, suggested to develop programmes and strategies to cope up with the students' stressors.

Keywords: Academic Stress, Science, Arts, Commerce, Senior Secondary Students.

Introduction:

The 21st century is a competitive era where students are expected to perform excellently for being academically successful and making a place in the society. This expectation creates lots of pressure upon them. Stress is a process that involves a person's interpretation and response to a threatening event. "Stress is any uncomfortable emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological and behavioral changes" (Baum 1990). Stress is a perceived imbalance between demand and response capability under conditions and where failure to meet

demands has important consequences. For academic excellence as well as taking advantage of future opportunities learning is very important particularly it assumes a great importance at 11th and 12th standard. Almost all adolescents experience unusual stress from time to time. In today's highly competitive world adolescents are under pressure due to heavy academic workload, disinterest in attending classes, inability to understand the subject, negative consequences of failures, cut-throat competition, exam stress etc. If this pressure is not managed well at proper time, it may hamper the development of good mental health among them.

In the present educational system, success is measured by academic performance that leads to academic stress among students. Academic stress refers to the anxiety and stress that comes from schooling and education by imposing extra academic work beyond the capacity and capability of an individual like- educational expectations from parents, teachers, peers and family members, school examination, competing with other class mates etc. For some students, the experience of academic stress leads to a poor mental health which is generally manifested in a variety of psychological and behavioral problems. The academic demands may tax or exceed available resources of the students as a consequence they can be under stress. Academic stress is one of the most severe kinds of persistent problems across countries, cultures, and ethnic groups, which is faced by each and every student. Every student aspires to pursue academic success to achieve respect, family pride, and social mobility, that results in high academic demands and extraordinary pressure on students as a consequence students are not able to enjoy their academic life and it becomes joyless and burden for them.

Adolescents are the precious human resources of the country but they are exposed to excessive competition, rapidly changing culture and social values, cross-cultural influences etc. All these exposures made the young generation to live in urgency and emergency; as a result they become direction less and fail to perceive their real goal. The constant feeling of comparison hampers the development and maintenance of healthy social relations and cause stress among them. Expectations of the youth are generally unrealistic and unusual which unintentionally lead to frustration and a result in misbehaviours like- suicides, addiction to drugs, intolerance etc. and therefore present study is the need of the days.

Kadapatti and Vijayalaxmi (2011) conducted a study on “Academic Stress and Coping Strategies among Pre-university Students: a Comparative Study” and found that second year PUC students and male student significantly had higher academic stress than first year and female students irrespective of all faculties. Arts and Commerce students of first year had lesser stress than second year students of arts and commerce unlike science students where in both first and second year stress was similar. It was observed that a highest percentage of students employed one or the other coping strategies to manage stress. Anand and Devi (2012) conducted a study on “Academic stress in relation to self-efficacy and peer relations among college students”. They found that academic stress was significantly negatively related with self-efficacy and peer relations. In a study on depression, anxiety and stress among arts, commerce & science junior college students in rural area of India Baviskar et al. (2013) found that students of rural area are vulnerable to depression, anxiety and stress. Arts students had a higher level of depression as compared to their peers from

science and commerce faculties. Stress was higher in 12th class students who faced board exams. Bataineh (2013) conducted a study on academic stress among undergraduate students and found that academic overloads, course awkward, inadequate time to study, workload every semester, exams awkward, low motivation, and high family expectations were moderate driving force for stress among students. Kumari and Jain (2014) reported positive correlation between examination stress and anxiety of college students. Students of arts faculty were found having highest stress and anxiety during examination as compared to students of commerce faculty. In a study on effect of gender and stream on depression among adolescents Sharma (2014) found that gender and stream had significant effect on depression among adolescents. Girls showed higher score on depression as compared to boys, and arts students were more depressed as compared to science and commerce students. Tina and Annayat (2014) conducted a study on academic anxiety of adolescents in relation to their vocational and educational interest and found that there exists significant difference in academic anxiety of adolescent boys and girls. Dhull and Kumari (2015) conducted a study on "Academic stress among adolescents in relation to gender". Finding indicated that, there is significant difference between academic stress of male and female adolescents. Female subjects were found to be under more academic stress as compared to their male counterparts. Kaur and Kaur (2016) conducted a study on "Academic Stress in Relation to Emotional Stability of Adolescent Students". Results revealed that there is no significant difference exist between academic stress (academic frustration, academic conflict and academic anxiety) with respect to gender but academic pressure showed significant difference between boys and girls. Girl participants are found to be more under academic pressure as compared to boys. According to Ghosh (2016) students in private schools have more academic stress than their counterparts in government schools. Female students experienced higher academic stress than male students.

Methodology:

The study belongs to descriptive research hence survey method was used for the present study. Participants were selected through simple random sampling method from 8 senior secondary Government schools of Samastipur.

Objectives:

1. To find out the difference between academic stress of students enrolled in different streams i.e. science, arts and commerce.
2. To find out the difference between academic stress of girls and boys enrolled within the stream i.e. science, arts and commerce.

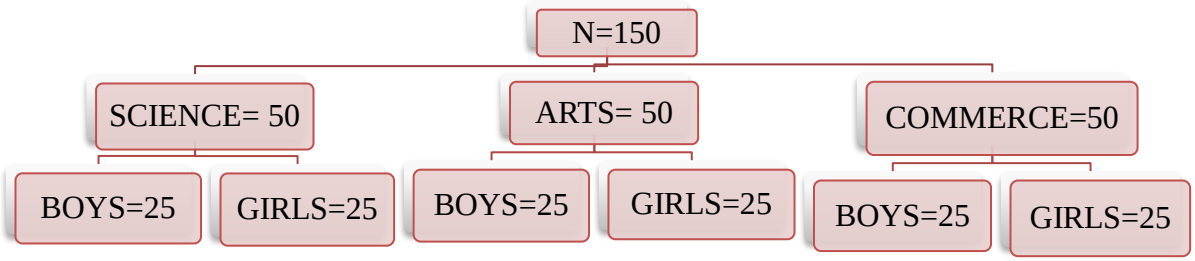
Hypothesis:

1. There is no significant difference between academic stress of students enrolled in science and arts streams.
2. There is no significant difference between academic stress of students enrolled in science and commerce streams.
3. There is no significant difference between academic stress of students enrolled in commerce and arts streams.
4. There is no significant difference between academic stress of girls and boys enrolled in science stream.

5. There is no significant difference between academic stress of girls and boys enrolled in arts stream.
6. There is no significant difference between academic stress of girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream.

Sample:

Total 150 participants were selected for the present study out of which, 50 were enrolled in science stream (girls=25 and boys=25), 50 were enrolled in arts stream (girls=25 and boys=25) and 50 were enrolled in commerce stream (girls=25 and boys=25) in 8 different senior secondary Government schools of Samastipur. Research design was as follows-



Research tool:

Academic Stress Questionnaire (ASQ) developed by Md. Akram, Md. Ilyas Khan and Sabiha Baby was used for the data collection. It is a 36 items questionnaire having items related to five dimensions namely inadequate academic environment in college/university, lack of adjustment, apprehensive about future, poor administration and worries. Cronbach's alpha for all five dimensions were found to be .68, .60, .55, .53, and .57 respectively. The construct validity of ASQ ranges from 0.41 to 0.88

Procedure:

The questionnaire was distributed among the 150 students studying in 8 different school of Samastipur during their class hours and all the required instructions were given to them. It was explained in a friendly atmosphere that the researchers did not intend to test their capabilities and their filling up of questionnaires had nothing to do with school grades. No response is right or wrong. They were also assured that their responses will be kept confidential and only the researcher would have to access their data.

Statistical analysis:

Mean, standard deviation and 't- test' were used for the analysis of data, interpretation of the result and drawing conclusion.

Results & Discussion:

Table 1 and Fig. 1 show data on difference of academic stress among students enrolled in science and arts streams. The mean score of academic stress of students enrolled in science stream is 87.74 while that of the students enrolled in arts stream is 82.86. The obtained t-value (1.74025**) is found to be significant as compared to the

table value (0.042477), so there is statistically significant difference exist between academic stress of students enrolled in science stream and arts stream at p=0.05 level. The result revealed that students enrolled in science stream found academically more stressed as compared to the students enrolled in arts stream hence hypothesis one was rejected.

Table 1: Shows difference between academic stresses of students enrolled in science and arts streams.

GROUP	N	Mean	SD	't'value	Level of significance
Science	50	87.74	11.15	1.74025	S**
Arts	50	82.86	16.39		

Significant at P= 0.05

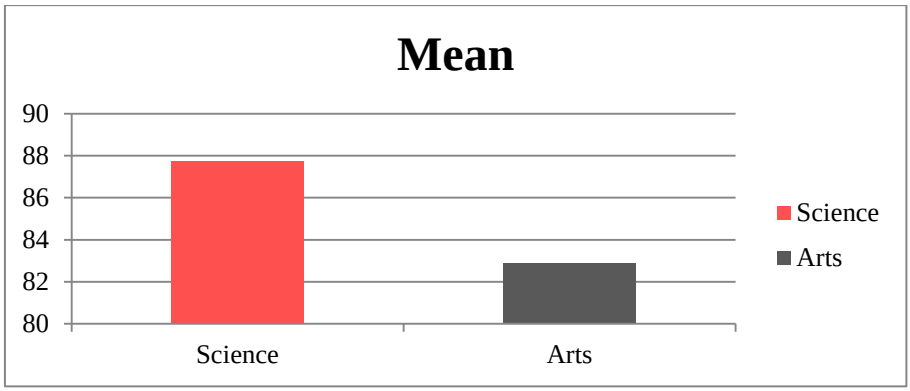


Fig. 1: Shows graphical representation of academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science and arts streams.

Table 2 and Fig. 2 show dimension wise data of academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science and arts streams. It is clear from the (Table 2 and fig. 2) that students enrolled in science and arts streams vary significantly only on two dimensions out of five dimensions namely 'Inadequate academic environment (D-1)' and 'Apprehensive about future (D-3)'. It is quite clear that 'Inadequate academic environment' causes more academic stress in students enrolled in science stream and 'Apprehensive about future' causes more academic stress in students enrolled in arts stream.

Table 2: Shows dimension wise academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science and arts streams.

Dimensions	Groups	M	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Inadequate academic environment	Science	20.5	2.89	5.86319	S**
	Arts	16.1	4.45		
Lack of adjustment	Science	16.52	3.07	0.77696	NS
	Arts	15.98	3.83		
Apprehensive about future	Science	17.5	3.35	-2.16428	S**
	Arts	19.1	4.01		
Poor administration	Science	16	2.92	1.54673	NS
	Arts	15.1	3.28		
Worries	Science	17.1	3.94	0.49482	NS
	Arts	16.6	4.9		

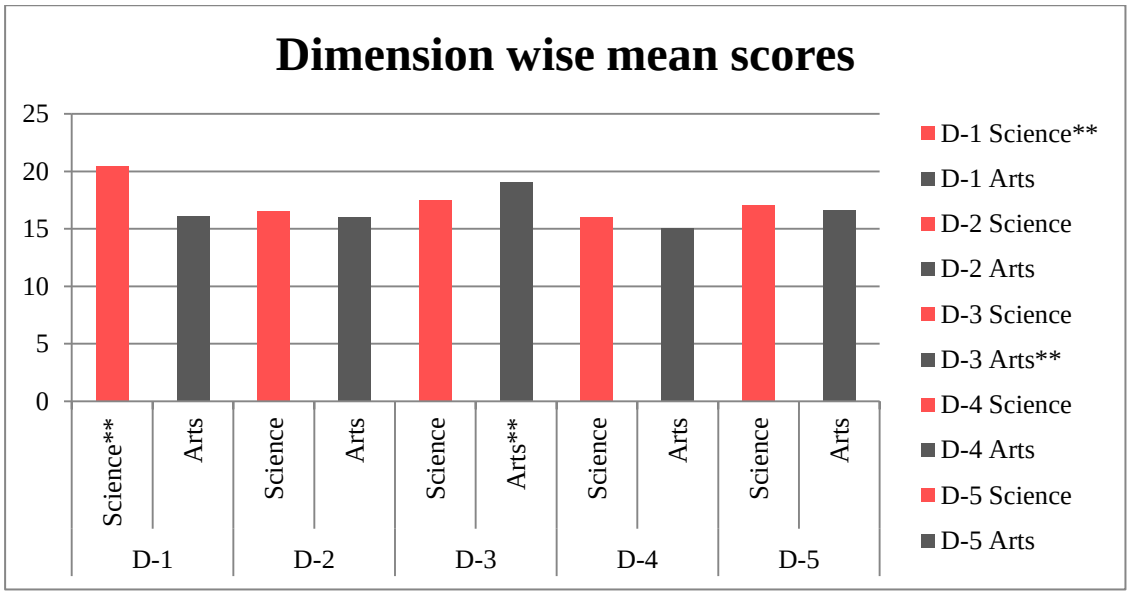


Fig. 2: Shows graphical representation dimension wise academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science and arts streams.

Abbreviations:

D-1: Inadequate academic environment

D-2: Lack of adjustment

D-3: Apprehensive about future

D-4: Poor administration

D-5: Worries

Table 3 and Fig. 3 show data on difference of academic stress among students enrolled in science and commerce streams. The mean score of academic stress of students enrolled in commerce stream is 88.52 while that of the students enrolled in science stream is 87.74. The obtained t-value (0.30649) is not found to be significant as compared to the table value (0.379941), so there is statistically no significant difference exists between academic stress of students enrolled in science stream and commerce stream at p=0.05 level. The result revealed that students enrolled in science and commerce streams didn't vary significantly in their academic stress hence hypothesis two was accepted.

Table 3: Shows difference between academic stresses of students enrolled in science and commerce streams.

GROUP	N	Mean	SD	't'value	Level of significance
Commerce	50	88.52	14.12	0.30649	NS
Science	50	87.74	11.15		

Not significant at P= 0.05

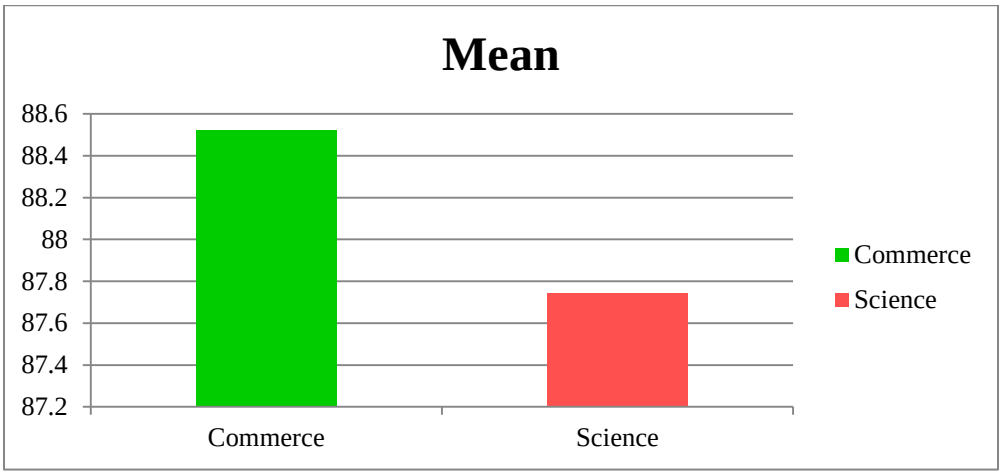


Fig. 3: Shows graphical representation of academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science and commerce streams.

Table 4 and Fig. 4 show dimension wise data of academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science and commerce streams. It is clear from the (Table 4 and fig. 4) that students enrolled in science and commerce streams vary significantly on only one dimensions out of five dimensions namely 'Lack of adjustment'. It is quite clear that 'Lack of adjustment' causes more academic stress in students enrolled in science stream as compared to the students enrolled in commerce stream.

Table 4: Shows dimension wise academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science and commerce streams.

Dimensions	Groups	M	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Inadequate academic environment	Science	20.5	2.89	0.76896	**NS**
	commerce	20.1	2.83		
Lack of adjustment	Science	16.52	3.07	3.95236	**S****
	commerce	14.38	2.28		
Apprehensive about future	Science	17.5	3.35	-0.05652	**NS**
	commerce	17.5	3.72		
Poor administration	Science	16	2.92	0.39303	**NS**
	commerce	15.8	3.18		
Worries	Science	17.1	3.94	-0.8511	**NS**
	commerce	17.7	3.82		

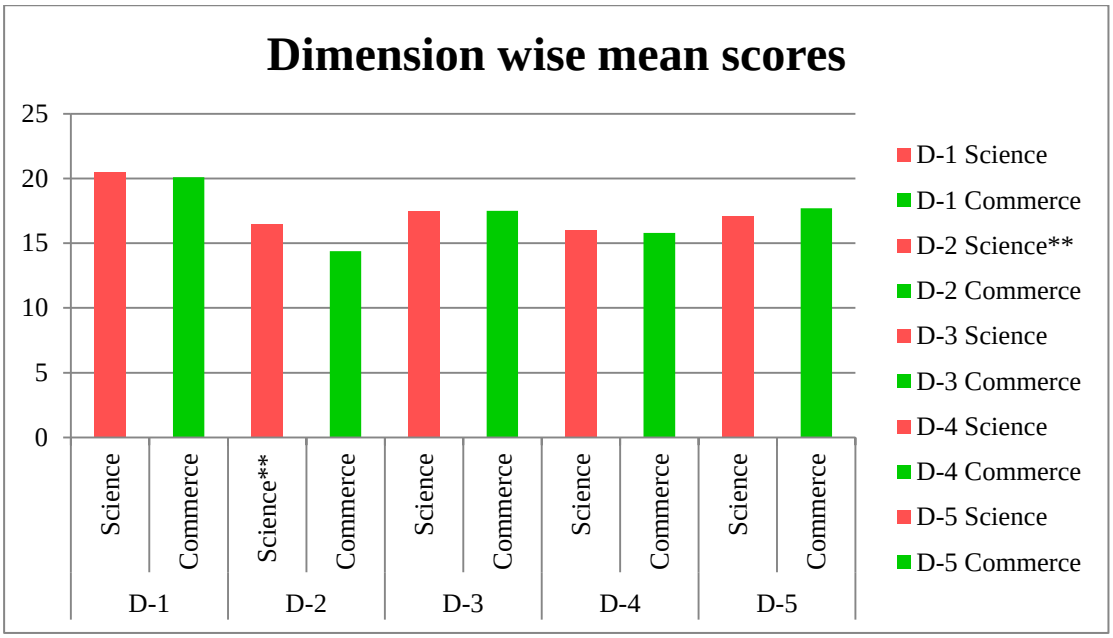


Fig. 4: Shows graphical representation dimension wise academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science and commerce streams.

Table 5 and Fig. 5 show data on difference of academic stress among students enrolled in commerce and arts streams. The mean score of academic stress of students enrolled in commerce stream is 88.52 while that of the students enrolled in arts stream is 82.86. The obtained t-value (1.84961**) is found to be significant as compared to the table value (0.033692), so there is statistically significant difference exists between academic stress of students enrolled in commerce stream and arts stream at p=0.05 level. The result revealed that students enrolled in commerce streams were found academically more stressed as compared to the students enrolled in arts stream hence hypothesis three was rejected.

Table 5: Shows difference between academic stresses of students enrolled in commerce and arts streams.

GROUP	N	Mean	SD	't'value	Level of significance
Commerce	50	88.52	14.12	1.84961	S**
Arts	50	82.86	16.39		

Significant at P= 0.05

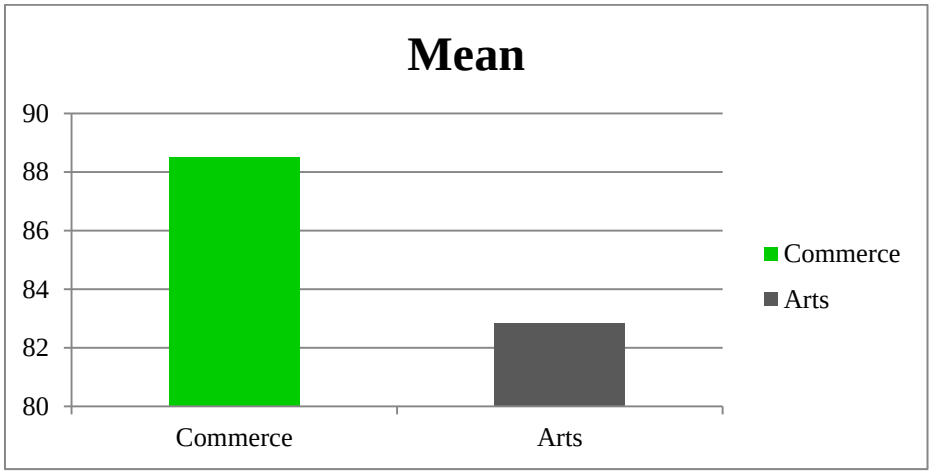


Fig. 5: Shows graphical representation of academic stresses mean scores of students enrolled in commerce and arts streams.

Table 6 and Fig. 6 show dimension wise data of academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in commerce and arts streams. It is clear from the (Table 6 and fig. 6) that students enrolled in commerce and arts streams vary significantly on three dimensions out of five dimensions namely 'Inadequate academic environment (D-1)', 'Lack of adjustment (D-2)' and 'Apprehensive about future (D-3)'. It is quite clear that 'Inadequate academic environment' causes more academic stress in students enrolled in commerce stream while 'Lack of adjustment' and 'Apprehensive about future' causes more academic stress in students enrolled in arts stream.

Table 6: Shows dimension wise academic stress mean score of students enrolled in commerce and arts streams.

Dimensions	Groups	M	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Inadequate academic environment	commerce	20.1	2.83	5.3054	**S****
	Arts	16.1	4.45		
Lack of adjustment	commerce	14.38	2.28	-2.53401	**S****
	Arts	15.98	3.83		
Apprehensive about future	commerce	17.5	3.72	-2.01744	**S****
	Arts	19.1	4.01		
Poor administration	commerce	15.8	3.18	1.11402	**NS**
	Arts	15.1	3.28		
Worries	commerce	17.7	3.82	1.25203	**NS**
	Arts	16.6	4.9		

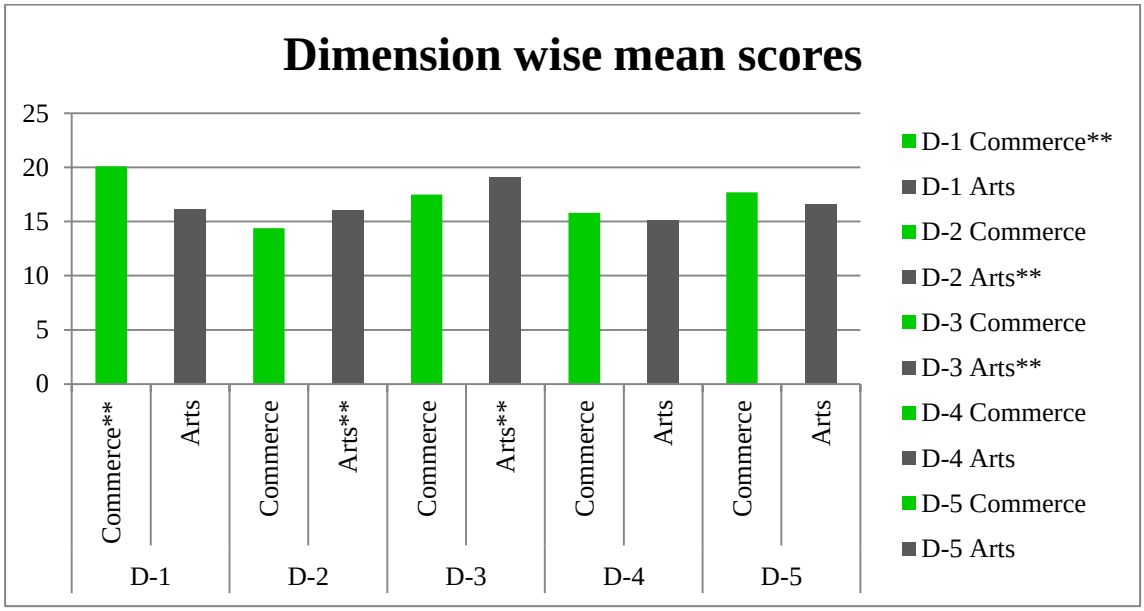


Fig. 6: Shows graphical representation dimension wise academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in commerce and arts streams.

Table 7 and Fig. 7 show data on difference of academic stress among girls and boys enrolled in science stream. The mean score of academic stress of girls enrolled in science stream is 88 while that of the boys enrolled in science stream is 87.48. The obtained t-value (0.16319) is not found to be significant as compared to the table value (0.435527), so there is no statistically significant difference exists between academic stress of girls and boys enrolled in science stream at p=0.05 level. The result revealed that girls and boys enrolled in science stream didn't vary significantly in their academic stress hence hypothesis four was accepted.

Table 7: Shows difference between academic stresses of girls and boys enrolled in science stream.

GROUP	N	Mean	SD	't'value	Level of significance
Girls	25	88	12.16	0.16319	NS
Boys	25	87.48	10.28		

Not significant at P= 0.05

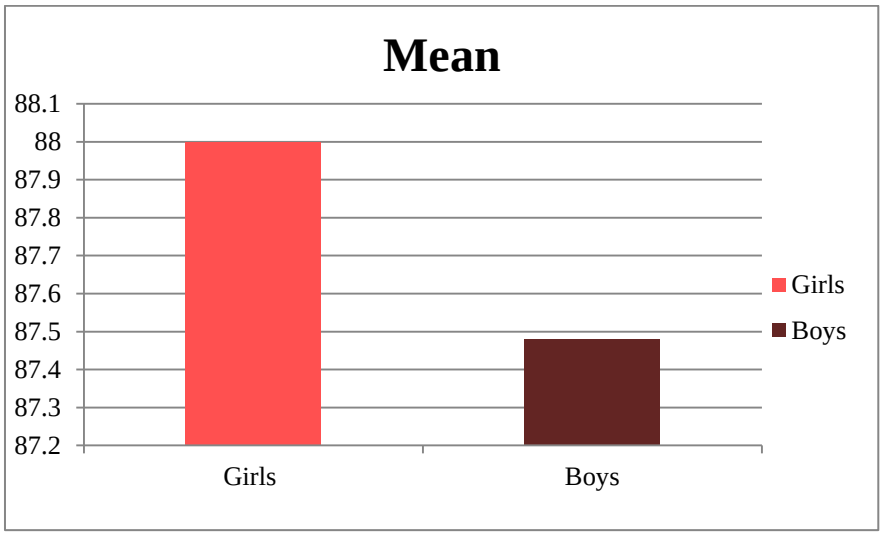


Fig. 7: Shows graphical representation of academic stresses mean scores of girls and boys enrolled in science stream.

Table 8 and Fig. 8 show dimension wise data of academic stress mean scores of girls and boys enrolled in science stream. It is clear from the (Table 8 and fig. 8) that girls and boys enrolled in science stream vary significantly on three dimensions out of five dimensions namely 'Lack of adjustment (D-2)', 'Poor administration (D-4)' and 'Worries (D-5)'. It is quite clear that 'Lack of adjustment' and 'Poor administration' causes more academic stress in boys while 'Worries' causes more academic stress in girls enrolled in science stream.

Table 8: Shows dimension wise academic stress mean scores of girls and boys enrolled in science stream.

Dimensions	Groups	M	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Inadequate academic environment	Girls	19.36	3.01	0.31957	NS
	Boys	19.12	2.24		
Lack of adjustment	Girls	16	2.39	-2.35789	S**
	Boys	17.92	3.29		
Apprehensive about future	Girls	18.32	3.38	1.29407	NS
	Boys	17.2	2.69		
Poor administration	Girls	14.88	2.55	-1.95891	S**
	Boys	16.24	2.35		
Worries	Girls	19.28	4.56	2.00092	S**
	Boys	17	3.40		

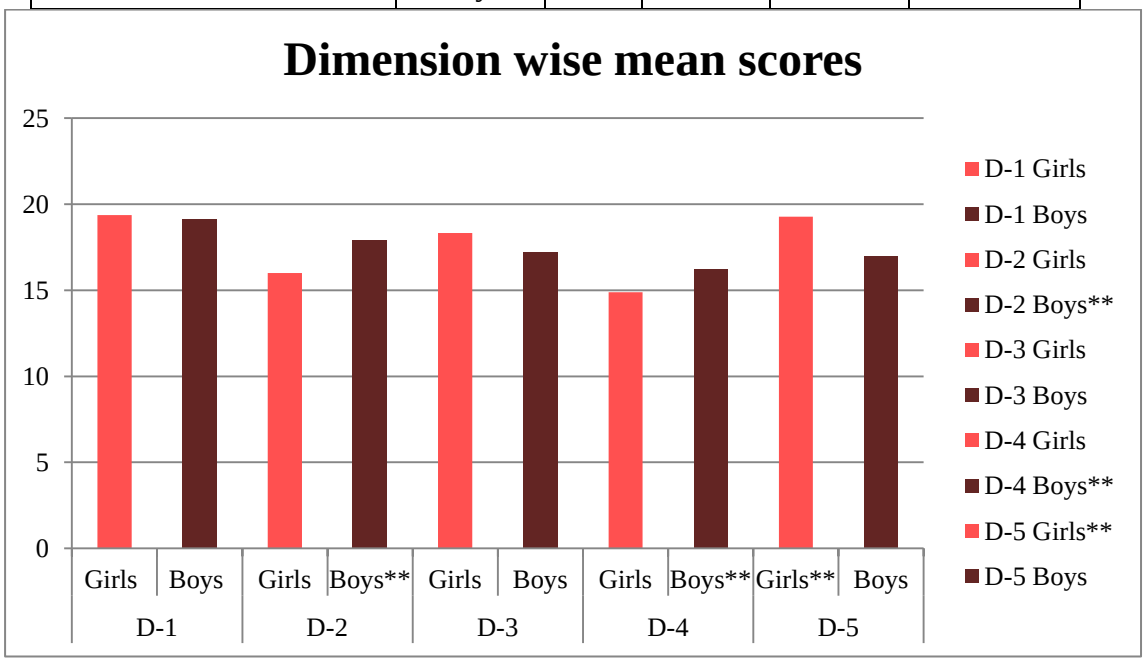


Fig. 8: Shows graphical representation dimension wise academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in science stream.

Table 9 and Fig. 9 show data on difference of academic stress among boys and girls enrolled in arts stream. The mean score of academic stress of boys enrolled in arts stream is 88.52 while that of the girls enrolled in arts stream is 77.2. The obtained t-value (2.57803**) is found to be significant as compared to the table value (0.006531), so there is statistically significant difference exists between academic stress of boys and girls enrolled in arts stream at p=0.05 level. The result revealed that

boys enrolled in arts stream were found academically more stressed as compared to girls enrolled in arts stream hence hypothesis five was rejected.

Table 9: Shows difference between academic stresses of girls and boys enrolled in arts stream.

GROUP	N	Mean	SD	't'value	Level of significance
Boys	25	88.52	11.24	2.57803	S**
Girls	25	77.2	18.85		

Significant at P= 0.05

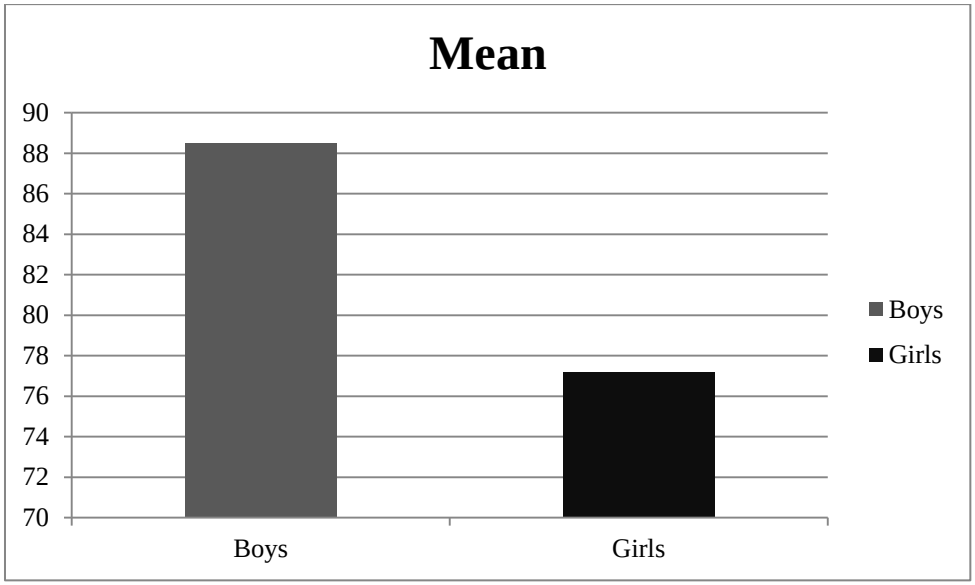


Fig. 9: Shows graphical representation of academic stresses mean scores of girls and boys enrolled in arts stream.

Table 10 and Fig. 10 show dimension wise data of academic stress mean scores of boys and girls enrolled in arts stream. It is clear from the (Table 10 and fig. 10) that boys and girls enrolled in arts stream vary significantly on three dimensions out of five dimensions namely 'Inadequate academic environment (D-1)', 'Apprehensive about future (D-3)' and 'Worries (D-5)' and all the three dimensions cause more academic stress in boys as compared to girls enrolled in arts stream.

Table 10: Shows dimension wise academic stress mean scores of girls and boys enrolled in arts stream.

Dimensions	Groups	M	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Inadequate academic environment	Boys	19.76	2.72	3.62209	S**
	Girls	16	4.41		
Lack of adjustment	Boys	16.52	2.46	-0.73285	NS
	Girls	17.28	4.55		
Apprehensive about future	Boys	17.88	3.78	22.8065	S**
	Girls	14.8	3.96		
Poor administration	Boys	14.96	2.09	0.20143	NS
	Girls	14.76	4.50		
Worries	Boys	19.28	4.42	4.0981	S**
	Girls	14.36	4.06		

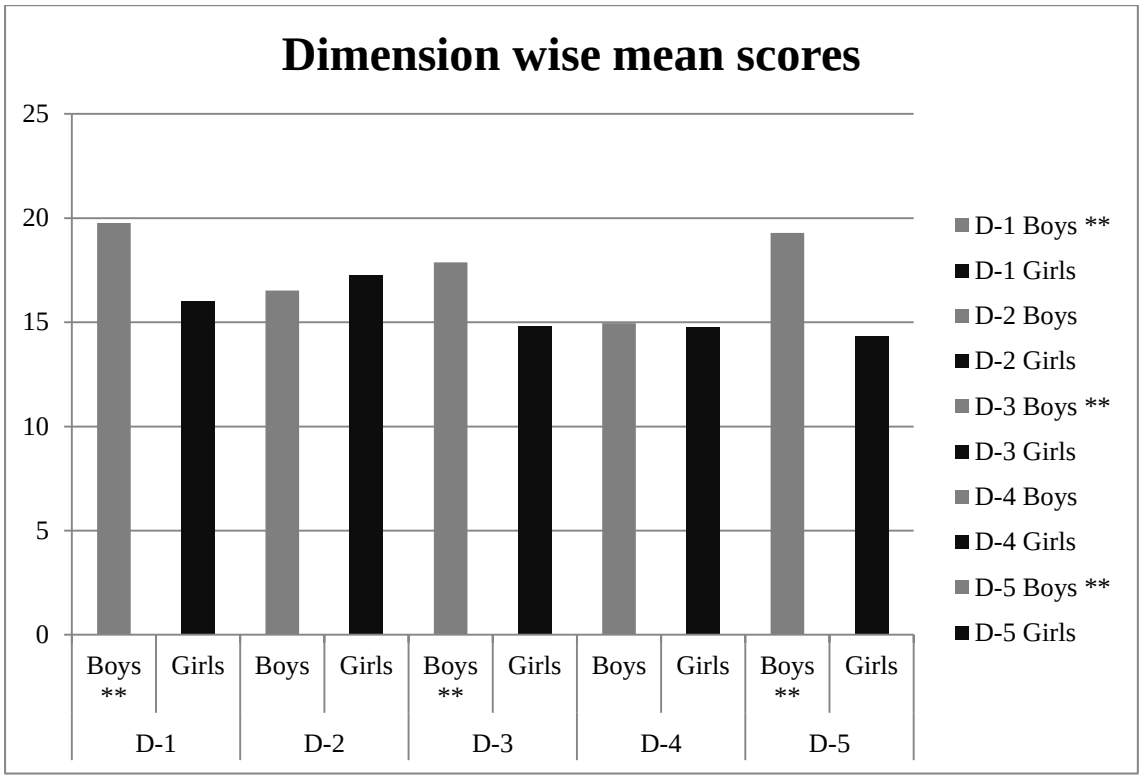


Fig. 10: Shows graphical representation dimension wise academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in arts stream.

Table 11 and Fig. 11 show data on difference of academic stress among girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream. The mean score of academic stress of boys enrolled in commerce stream is 89.64 while that of the girls enrolled in science stream is 87.4. The obtained t-value (0.55683) is not found to be significant as compared to the table value (0.290117), so there is no statistically significant difference exists between academic stress of girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream at p=0.05 level. The result revealed that girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream didn't vary significantly in their academic stress hence hypothesis six was accepted.

Table 11: Shows difference between academic stresses of girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream.

GROUP	N	Mean	SD	't'value	Level of significance
Boys	25	89.64	11.34	0.55683	NS
Girls	25	87.4	16.60		

Not significant at P= 0.05

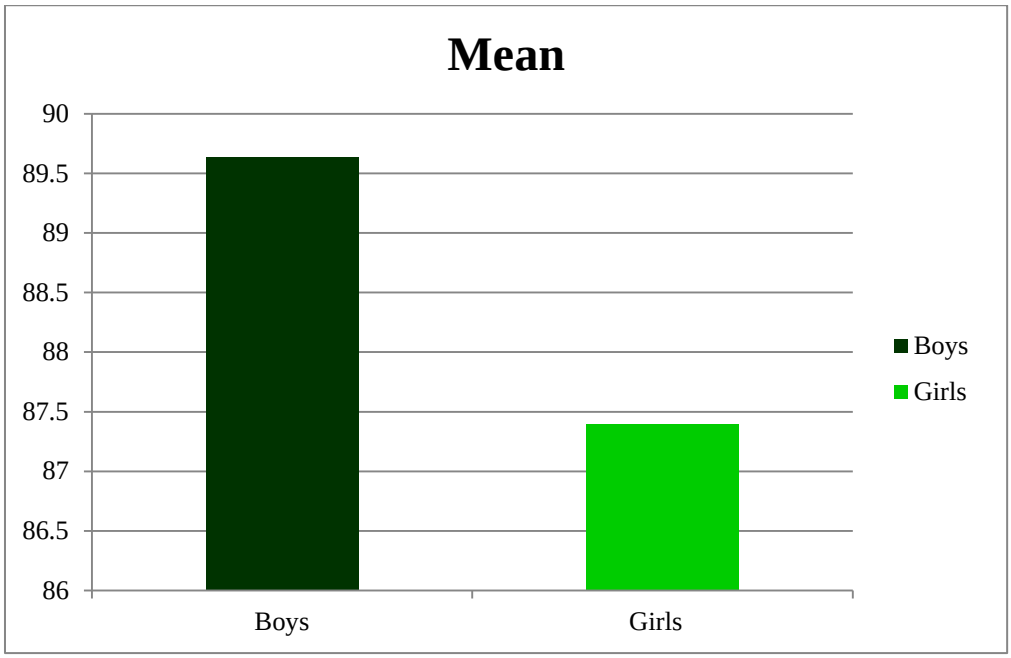


Fig. 11: Shows graphical representation of academic stresses mean scores of girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream.

Table 12 and Fig. 12 show dimension wise data of academic stress mean scores of girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream. It is clear from the (Table 12 and fig. 12) that girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream vary significantly on only one dimension out of five dimensions namely 'Poor administration (D-4)' and this causes more academic stress in boys as compared to girls enrolled in commerce stream.

Table 12: Shows dimension wise academic stress mean scores of girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream.

Dimensions	Groups	M	SD	t- value	Level of significance
Inadequate academic environment	Boys	19.28	2.65	0.30339	NS
	Girls	19	3.77		
Lack of adjustment	Boys	17.12	3.47	-1.30591	NS
	Girls	18.6	4.47		
Apprehensive about future	Boys	18.64	2.73	1.14703	NS
	Girls	17.56	3.83		
Poor administration	Boys	16.6	3.08	2.03497	S**
	Girls	14.88	2.89		
Worries	Boys	18	3.37	0.57253	NS
	Girls	17.36	4.45		

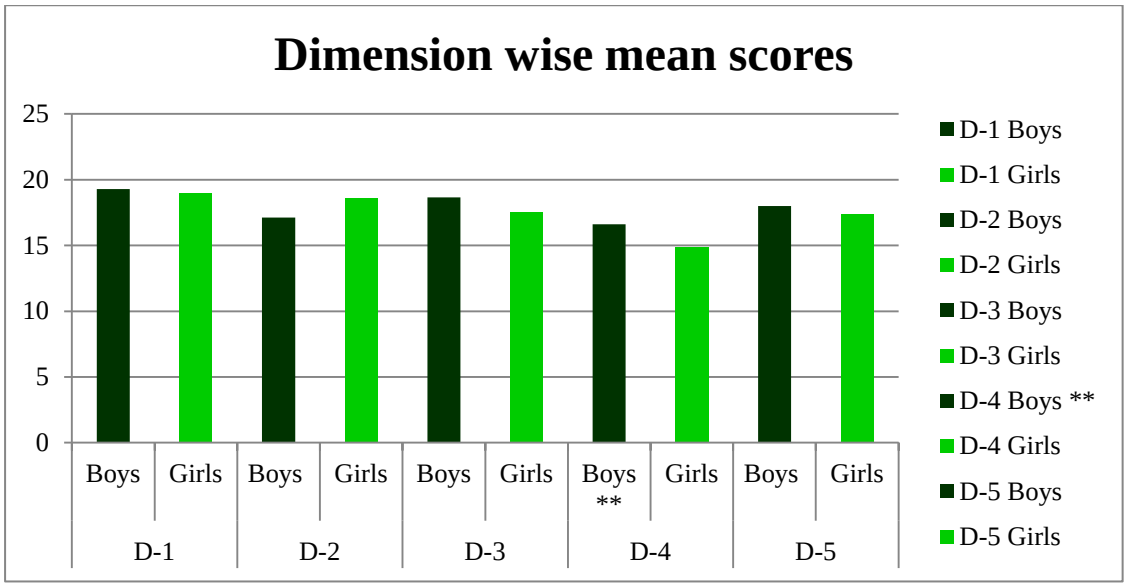


Fig. 12: Shows graphical representation dimension wise academic stress mean scores of students enrolled in commerce stream.

Findings:

Major findings of the present study are-

1. When students enrolled in science and arts streams compared together, they differed significantly in their academic stress. Students enrolled in science stream were found academically more stressed as compared to students enrolled in arts stream. The dimensions inadequate academic environment causes more academic stress in students enrolled in science streams and apprehensive about future causes more academic stress in students enrolled in arts stream.
2. When students enrolled in science and commerce streams compared together, they didn't vary significantly in their academic stress. However the dimension lack of adjustment causes more academic stress in students enrolled in science stream as compared to students enrolled in commerce stream.
3. When students enrolled in commerce and arts streams compared together, they differed significantly in their academic stress. Students enrolled in commerce stream were found academically more stressed as compared to students enrolled in arts stream. The dimensions inadequate academic environment causes more academic stress in students enrolled in commerce stream while lack of adjustment and apprehensive about future causes more academic stress in students enrolled in arts stream.
4. When girls and boys enrolled in science stream compared together, they didn't vary significantly in their academic stress. However the dimensions lack of adjustment and poor administration cause more academic stress in boys while worries causes more academic stress in girls enrolled in science stream**.**
5. When girls and boys enrolled in arts stream compared together, they vary significantly in their academic stress. Boys enrolled in art stream were found academically more stressed than girls enrolled in arts stream. The dimensions inadequate academic environment, apprehensive about future and worries

cause more academic stress in boys as compared to girls enrolled in arts stream.

6. When girls and boys enrolled in commerce stream compared together, they didn't vary significantly in their academic stress. However the dimension poor administration causes more academic stress in boys as compared to girls enrolled in commerce stream.

Conclusion:

Results of the present study showed that students enrolled in science and commerce streams might come across a variety of stress inducing situations like- lack of adjustment, worry, apprehension about future, poor administration etc. which may increase the stress particularly in academics. It was also found that boys enrolled in arts stream might come across a variety of stress inducing situations regarding their worry about their future responsibilities and inadequate academic environment that increase the level of stress among them. It is, therefore, suggested to develop programmes and strategies to cope up with the students' stressors. It is also recommended that parents should never impose extra pressure upon their children and teachers should be cooperative.

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