

# Childhood stress: Stressors and its symptoms in children

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Stress is experience in many forms and varies by the individual. Today's children are under a massive amount of stress and it is well documented that the heavy stress loads has negative effects on children. The study was conducted to identify various stressors, children's reaction to stress and to find out the inter-relationship between stressors and stress symptoms. A total number of 192 children studying in grade I to grade VI were selected randomly as sample for the study from eight different private schools of N.C. Hills district of Assam. A self constructed interview schedule was used to elicit background information, stressors and symptoms of stress exhibited by the children. The Interview schedule was constructed separately for the teachers and parents. School related information and family related information were collected from both the teachers and parents, respectively. The findings of the present study revealed that school related stressors such as overloaded assignments, project works, heavy class workloads and family related sources of stress like restrictions on recreational activities, watching television and confined at home even during holidays were identified to be the main stressors in children. Children's reactions to such stressors were expressed through various physiological, socio-emotional behavioural symptoms as well as changes in academic performances. It was also revealed that when the stressors increased the symptoms of stress also increased.

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**S**tress is the physiological and psychological responses of the body to any situations that creates imbalance in a person's life. Stress occurs when pressure exceeds a person's perceived ability to cope (Palmer, 1989). Stress can either compel an individual to act and make excited over something new or it can make an individual feel disgusted, rejected, angry, and depressed. It all depends on how an individual react to it. Stress is defined as a set of the body's reactions to stimuli (good or bad) that threaten its equilibrium. Heavy

stress can lead to lower learning capacity in school children and difficulty in social interaction (Sbaraini and Schermann, 2008). The period of childhood can be considered as a time when children are free from care, without facing any uncertainties. But children can also suffer from extreme stress, like adults and may have difficulty in handling stress. The effects of stress on children can be positive as well as negative. Some stress is a normal part of a child's everyday life and can have positive influences. Children react differently to stressful

situation. Some children will be able to verbalize how they feel, saying they are stressed, or exhausted, or worried.

Less verbal children may cope through tears and crying, through tantrums or by retreating from unpleasant situations. Some may show emotional changes which include nervousness, anxiety, loss of enthusiasm about things he or she used to enjoy, anger or hostility towards peers, shyness or withdrawal, and feelings of helplessness and hopelessness and spend a lot of time alone. Younger children may show signs of reacting to stress by picking up new habits like thumb sucking, nail biting, hair twirling or nose picking. Older kids may begin to lie, bully and may have nightmares, fights with friends and show drastic change in academic performance (Jirli, 2010). Some children experience physical effects like stomachache and headache and loss of appetite, digestive disorder and experience excessive weight gain or lost over a period of time.

Stress affects the child's physical, mental, emotional, and social health. Some of the stressors that the children may confront within these dimensions include- illness, injury, inadequate nutrition, low levels of physical fitness, peer and dysfunctional family lives (constant change in routine, death of family, marital separation), excess activity or over scheduling, limited time for active play, unreasonable expectations, fear of failure, moving to a new school, pressure to excel in academic and extracurricular activities. A certain amount of stress is normal and not always bad. Sometimes, stress can push a child to perform better. The problem forms when every play stress becomes overpowering that causes physiological and biological changes and may put a child at risk of disease, inappropriate behaviour and academic difficulties. Unfortunately, children are very stressed out at younger ages today. The stress varies from child to child, and the way it can easily handle the stress also varies. Theorists believe that the behavior of children represent their struggles to manage and react to stressful situations (Kochenderfer-Ladd and Skinner, 2002). Keeping these facts in view the present study has been undertaken with the objectives to identify various stressors, to study children's reaction to stress in terms of stress symptoms and to find out the inter-relationship between stressors and stress symptoms.

## ■ RESEARCH METHODS

A total number of eight private English medium

schools in N.C. Hills district of Assam were purposively selected for the study. A number of 192 children (96 boys and 96 girls) studying in 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade of age 6 to 11 years old were included in the sample. A self constructed interview schedule separately for teachers and parents on probable stress symptoms and statements pertaining to different sources of stress was used to collect data. Each statement was scored on four point scale namely – 'Very often', 'Often', 'Rarely' and 'Never'. The respondents have to give response to the most suitable option out of these four. The successive response intervals were subsequently scored as 4, 3, 2, 1 and all scores were added upto obtain the total score. Higher the score more will be the stress of the child. To elicit information about the various symptoms of stress and stressors of the children, the data were collected by arranging personal interview with the class teachers of respective class and parents of selected samples at school and at home setting. To find out the stressors and its symptoms, frequency and percentages were calculated and Karl Pearson's correlation co-efficient was applied to assess the degree of relationship between stressors and stress symptoms.

## ■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been presented under following heads :

### Stressors :

There are various stressors which affect the child's physical, social, emotional and mental health. Some of the school and family related stressors that the children may confront within these dimensions are identified and the number of children exposing frequently to these stressors are being discussed.

### School related stressors :

It was evident from the results (Table 1) that majority of the children from all the grades were frequently getting assignment/project work (93.23%), home work (91.14%), class work (50.52%) and 70.31 per cent children are unable to complete their assigned works on time when it is overloaded. Due to tremendous amount of works children are unable to find enough time of their own which leads them to lose interest in their studies and under perform. The failure in achieving the desired goal set by the teachers may result in experiencing stress by the children. Teachers rebuked and punished children

when they are unable to complete the assigned works on the given time. The finding is in consistent with Piekarska (2000), who found that the most frequent stressors were due to teachers' abusive behaviors in the classroom teaching and assessment. Children who attend both school and private tuition classes are placed under considerable pressure. Right after school, with or without a break, the children has to rush to tuition classes. At tuition, the child is expected to maintain alertness and receptivity throughout the session. This alone is not an easy task, after the long hours they have spent in school. Even after the tuition class adjourns, the child would still have to complete the homework, have to revise all the lessons and have little or no time for active play and thus stress increase in children. The finding can be supported

by the study of Pendley (2011), who conducted a study on Childhood stress and found that the potential cause of stress is the over schedule. Regarding other school related stressors, it was seen that 33.85 per cent of the children were often forced to participate in extracurricular activities. This may be indicative of the fact that the teachers were not well familiar with the children's interest and thus sometimes insist on participating in extracurricular activities where they are not willing to and thus stress generated in children. The findings can be supported by the study of Donaldson *et al.* (2000) who conducted a study on Pattern's of children's coping with life stress and found that, the most common causes of childhood anxiety stem from either school stressors (such as grades and extracurricular activities).

**Table 1 : School related stressors at various grades** (n=192)

School related Stressors	Grade						Total
	I (n=34)	II (n=30)	III (n=30)	IV (n=30)	V (n=34)	VI (n=34)	
Assignment/ project work	32 (94.11)	29 (96.66)	29 (96.66)	24 (80)	33 (97.05)	32 (94.11)	179 (93.23)
Home work	32 (94.11)	26 (86.66)	27 (90)	26 (86.66)	32 (94.11)	32 (94.11)	175 (91.14)
Heavy class workload	32 (94.11)	17 (56.66)	17 (56.66)	14 (46.66)	26 (76.47)	12 (35.29)	97 (50.52)
Inability to complete assignment on time	28 (82.35)	19 (63.33)	20 (66.66)	23 (76.66)	24 (70.58)	24 (70.58)	135 (70.31)
Unable to fulfill teacher's expectation	17 (50)	10 (33.33)	9 (30)	10 (33.33)	14 (41.14)	6 (17.64)	66 (34.37)
Scolding by teachers	13 (38.23)	13 (43.33)	15 (50)	15 (50)	20 (58.82)	13 (38.23)	89 (46.35)
Corporal punishment	7 (20.58)	5(16.66)	8 (26.66)	7 (23.33)	11 (32.35)	8 (23.52)	46 (23.95)
Private tuition after/before school	15 (44.11)	4 (13.33)	4 (13.33)	12 (40)	13 (38.23)	13 (38.23)	61 (31.77)
Forced participation in extracurricular activities	14 (41.14)	8 (26.66)	8 (26.66)	8 (26.66)	13 (38.23)	11 (32.35)	65 (33.85)
Lack of peer acceptance	8 (23.52)	6 (20)	11 (36.66)	12 (40)	9 (26.47)	17 (50)	62 (32.29)
Inability to pay School's fees regularly	8 (23.52)	5 (16.66)	2 (6.66)	1 (3.33)	6 (17.64)	6 (17.64)	28 (14.58)

N.B Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage to the total

**Table 2 : Family related stressors at various grades** (n=192)

Family related stressors	Grade						Total
	I (n=34)	II (n=30)	III (n=30)	IV (n=30)	V (n=34)	VI (n=34)	
Not staying with parents	13 (38.23)	14 (46.66)	15 (50)	14 (46.66)	16 (47.05)	19 (55.88)	91 (47.39)
Engage in household chores	-	5 (16.66)	13 (43.33)	16 (53.33)	25 (73.52)	21 (61.76)	80 (41.66)
Looking after siblings	5 (14.70)	9 (30)	11 (36.66)	10 (33.33)	12 (35.29)	13 (38.23)	60 (31.25)
Restriction on watching television	27 (79.41)	19 (63.33)	21 (70)	21 (70)	23 (67.64)	25 (73.53)	136 (70.83)
Watches frightening movies/ news of world conflict/ natural disaster	3 (8.82)	2 (6.66)	4 (13.33)	6 (20)	4 (11.76)	7 (20.58)	26 (13.54)
Confined at home during holidays	31 (91.17)	24 (80)	20 (66.66)	19 (63.33)	28 (82.35)	18 (52.94)	140 (72.91)
Restriction on recreational activities	13 (38.23)	10 (33.33)	9 (30)	11 (36.66)	15 (44.11)	13 (38.23)	71 (36.97)
Unable to meet parental expectation	19 (55.88)	16 (53.33)	15 (50)	11 (36.66)	19 (55.88)	18 (52.94)	98 (51.04)
Increasing study hours	22 (64.70)	8 (26.66)	8 (26.66)	15 (50)	21 (61.76)	17 (50)	91 (47.39)
Attend music class after school	3 (8.82)	4 (13.33)	7 (23.33)	5 (16.66)	5 (14.70)	4 (11.76)	28 (14.58)

N.B Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage to the total

**Family related stressors :**

It is obvious from the findings (Table 2) that 47.39 per cent children were not staying with their parents and stayed in their relatives' house or rented house with siblings as the school was far from their place and thus 41.66 per cent of the children need to be engaged in household chores. Their parents rarely visit them. This may be indicative of the fact that the parents who are employed could not spend time for their children and they received less assistance from the parents in their study. Thus, children experienced stress when their needs are not fulfilled. Children who are having parents with low educational qualification also experienced stress as parents could not assist them in their study. Besides, older children were often allotted the task of looking after their siblings and engaged in household chores when their parents are away from home. Moreover, children without father or mother who stay with their relatives were more likely to engage in household chores. Children at young age are unable to engage in works all the time, hence stress generates in children. The findings also revealed that majority of children (72.91%) were confined at home during holidays and 70.83 per cent were restricted to watch television. Children received holiday home works which they have to complete within the minimum time period, for which they were even restricted to watch television and over recreational activities. When the children were given more restrictions, they are unable to spend time on their own desire and experience more stress. Further, it was found that parents had high expectation on academic matters and increased their study hours (47.39%). This may be due to the fact that today's parents have become excessively worried about the study as they understand the value of education very

well. So, parents constantly try to encourage their children from the very young age so that they can excel in school and give better performances. But when parental expectations are unrealistically high, children are doomed to be failure. Moreover, highly ambitious parents are usually in the habit of imposition of goal set by themselves on their children, irrespective of their intellectual level, interest and personality. The failure in achieving the desired goal set by parents on academic matters may result in experiencing high stress level by their children. The findings is consistent with the study of Pendley (2011) who found that the potential cause of stress is overscheduled and showed that parents who are themselves high achieving, often have very high expectations for their child's performance in school and in other activities, and if the child lacks their parents' motivation or does not share the same goals, then this can cause extreme stress and frustration.

**Children's reaction to stress in terms of stress symptoms :**

Children show different kinds of reactions when they are stressed. Children's reaction to stress may be different from one another. Their physiological, socio-emotional as well as school related reactions to stress which are expressed through various symptoms are being discussed.

**Physiological symptoms :**

It was evident from the results (Table 3) that in relation to physiological reactions to stress, half of the children (50.52%) showed sign of fatigue, one fourth of children (25.00%) experiences loss of appetite and few numbers of children react to stress by showing the

**Table 3 : Percentage of children exhibiting physiological reaction to stress (N=192)**

Physiological symptoms	Grade						Total
	I (n=34)	II (n=30)	III (n=30)	IV (n=30)	V (n=34)	VI (n=34)	
Loss of appetite	9 (26.47)	8 (26.66)	7 (23.33)	3 (10)	13 (38.23)	8 (23.52)	48 (25.00)
Change in eating habits	14 (41.14)	9 (30)	11 (36.66)	5 (16.66)	13 (38.23)	12 (35.29)	58 (30.21)
Stomachache	9 (26.47)	4 (13.33)	7 (23.33)	7 (23.33)	8 (23.52)	3 (8.82)	37 (19.27)
Headache	2 (5.88)	3 (10)	7 (23.33)	10 (33.33)	6 (17.64)	14 (41.14)	44 (22.91)
Digestive disorder	4 (11.76)	4 (13.33)	8 (26.66)	4 (13.33)	10 (29.41)	9 (26.47)	39 (20.31)
Fatigue	23 (67.64)	15 (50)	10 (33.33)	13 (43.33)	21 (61.76)	16 (47.05)	97 (50.52)
Bedwetting	-	-	-	1 (3.33)	1 (2.94)	2 (5.88)	4 (2.08)
Sleep disturbance (insomnia/sleeping too much)	19 (55.88)	16 (53.33)	11 (36.66)	11 (36.66)	23 (67.64)	15 (44.11)	95 (49.48)
Nightmares	-	-	1 (3.33)	3 (10)	4 (11.76)	-	8 (4.16)

N.B Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage to the total

symptoms like stomachache (19.27%) and headache (22.91%). Children of young age enter an elementary class for the first time; so, the workload given to them in school seems to be very hectic for them compared to their age and in addition parents has high expectation on the children's academic performance. Thus, the children become tired and affect their physical health. This may be supported by the study of Bagdi and Pfister (2006) who found that children under large amount of stress may also develop stomach ulcers. As high as 49.48 per cent of children showed changes in sleeping habits. The finding remain in agreement with the finding of Pendley (2011) who found that a variety of short-term behavioral symptoms can manifest themselves because of high stress levels, including changes in sleep patterns, and bed wetting. It was also found that few numbers of children (4.16%) had nightmares. Moreover, older

children were often exposed to frightening media, which can also contribute to nightmares. The findings can be supported by the study of Schredl *et al.* (2000), who conducted a study on Nightmares in Children: Influencing Factor to investigate the relationship between nightmare frequency and both sleep and waking-life behavior in children aged 6 to 11 years and found out the occurrence of stressors (school problems, parental divorce) affected nightmare frequency.

#### Socio-emotional behavioral symptoms :

From the present findings (Table 4) it can be revealed that children react to stress by showing behavioural symptoms such as nail biting/ thumb sucking/ teeth grinding/ hair twirling, bullying other children, indulge in self injury, engage in disputes and quarrel, display surprising fearful reactions and express excessive hostility

**Table 4 : Percentage of children exhibiting socio-emotional behavioural reaction to stress (n=192)**

Socio-emotional behavioural symptoms	Grade						Total
	I (n=34)	II (n=30)	III (n=30)	IV (n=30)	V (n=34)	VI (n=34)	
Engage in nail biting/thumb sucking/ teeth grinding/ hair twirling	9 (29.41)	5 (16.66)	8 (26.66)	8 (26.66)	9 (26.47)	7 (20.58)	45 (23.437)
Tell lies	3 (8.82)	-	2 (6.66)	-	2 (5.88)	1 (2.94)	4 (2.08)
Steal others belongings	2 (5.88)	2 (6.66)	1 (3.33)	1 (3.33)	2 (5.88)	-	7 (3.645)
Bully other children	6 (17.64)	9 (30)	8 (26.66)	7 (23.33)	12 (35.29)	12 (35.29)	54 (28.12)
Indulge in self injury	7 (20.58)	2 (6.66)	1 (3.33)	-	4 (11.76)	3 (8.82)	17 (8.85)
Engage in disputes and quarrel	13 (38.23)	6 (17.64)	5 (16.66)	5 (16.66)	10 (29.41)	6 (17.64)	44 (22.91)
Display surprising fearful reactions	15 (44.11)	10 (33.33)	6 (17.64)	9 (30.00)	14 (41.17)	12 (35.29)	66 (34.37)
Day dreaming	17 (50)	14 (46.66)	15 (50)	17 (56.66)	21 (61.76)	18 (52.94)	102 (53.12)
Irritability	7 (20.58)	5 (16.66)	2 (6.66)	2 (6.66)	4 (11.76)	2 (6.66)	22 (11.45)
Aggressive in behavior	8 (23.52)	7 (23.33)	10 (33.33)	11 (36.66)	9 (26.47)	7 (20.58)	52 (27.08)
Inability to relax	12 (35.29)	18 (60.00)	9 (30)	13 (43.33)	21 (61.76)	15 (44.11)	88 (45.83)
Moodiness	24 (61.76)	19 (63.33)	19 (63.33)	18 (60)	28 (82.35)	17 (50)	124 (64.58)
Express worries	31 (91.17)	28 (93.33)	25 (83.33)	27 (90)	32 (94.11)	31 (91.17)	174 (90.62)
Get nervous	18 (52.94)	14 (46.66)	19 (63.33)	13 (43.33)	20 (58.82)	8 (23.52)	92 (47.91)
Feels embarrass	29 (85.29)	22 (73.33)	22 (73.33)	21 (70)	18 (52.94)	9 (26.47)	121 (63.02)
Cries easily	6 (17.64)	6 (20)	2 (6.66)	3 (10.00)	4 (11.76)	2 (5.88)	23 (11.97)
Not interested to go for outings	22 (64.70)	18 (52.94)	12 (40)	10 (33.33)	24 (71.16)	17 (50)	103 (53.64)
Spend time in watching television	27 (79.41)	23 (76.66)	22 (73.33)	23 (76.66)	26 (76.47)	26 (76.47)	147 (76.56)
Play video games	15 (44.11)	11 (36.66)	10 (33.33)	15 (50)	18 (52.94)	17 (50)	86 (44.79)
Withdraw from things she loves	18 (52.94)	12 (40)	12 (40)	10 (33.33)	22 (64.70)	18 (52.94)	92 (47.91)
Express excessive hostility towards family members	14 (41.17)	10 (33.33)	10 (33.33)	11 (36.66)	16 (53.33)	18 (52.94)	79 (41.14)
Refrain from family activities	20 (58.82)	14 (46.66)	19 (63.33)	11 (36.66)	22 (64.70)	18 (52.94)	104 (54.16)
Disobey family rules	11 (32.35)	9 (30)	8 (26.66)	8 (26.66)	12 (35.29)	9 (26.47)	57 (29.68)
Cling on to parents	9 (26.47)	3 (10)	6 (20)	9 (30)	12 (35.29)	8 (23.52)	47 (24.47)
Avoid parents	12 (35.29)	7 (23.33)	9 (30)	9 (30)	14 (41.17)	11 (32.35)	62 (32.29)

N.B Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage to the total

towards family members. This may be due to the fact that when children’s stress level exceeds, their ability to cope positively with the situation decreases and children may begin to exhibit visible behavioural dysfunctions. The finding is also consistent with the study of Houck (2004), who found that children with higher levels of stress develop higher levels of behaviour problems. It was also evident from the results that majority of children exhibited socio-emotional behavioural reaction to stress by showing emotional changes which include worries (90.62%), moodiness (65.58%), embarrassment (63.02%), day dreaming (53.12%), nervousness (47.91%), and inability to relax (45.83%). In the present study, it was found that children who were moving to a new school could not adjust immediately with the new school environment and thus develop emotional changes due to stress. The findings remain in agreement with the finding of Pendley (2011), who found that a variety of short-term behavioral symptoms can manifest themselves because of high stress levels, including mood swings. It was also obvious from the findings that 76.56 per cent and 54.16 per cent of children spent their time in watching television and

refrain from family activities. This may be due to the fact that when children are in stress they love to spend time alone instead of spending time with others. The findings is supported by the study of Streight and Copeland (1998) who noticed that as children get older, their responses to stress may include more attention-seeking behaviors, mood changes, avoidance of certain activities, isolation and school refusal or changes in the quality of schoolwork.

**School related symptoms :**

The results (Table 5) indicated that majority of the children were unwilling to go to school (76.04%), refrain from school activities (60.41%), lost interest in study (80.73%) and inability to concentrate in the class (82.29%), respectively. Academically poor children were unable to complete their assignment, class workloads on the given period and for this reason, they had a fear of getting punishment and scolding from the teachers. So, they started complaining about school and the workloads. Children who were moving to a new school required time to adjust with the new school environment as some

**Table 5 : Percentage of children exhibiting school related symptoms (n=192)**

School related symptoms	Grade						Total
	I (n=34)	II (n=30)	III (n=30)	IV (n=30)	V (n=34)	VI (n=34)	
Unwilling to go to school	31 (91.17)	26 (86.66)	20 (66.66)	20 (66.66)	29 (85.29)	20 (58.82)	146 (76.04)
Refrain from school activities	24 (70.58)	8 (26.66)	12 (40)	19 (63.33)	28 (82.35)	25 (73.52)	116 (60.41)
Avoid school function	16 (47.05)	4 (13.33)	8 (26.66)	17 (56.66)	22 (64.70)	17 (56.66)	84 (43.75)
Complain more than usual about school	31 (91.17)	24 (80)	27 (90)	26 (86.66)	30 (88.23)	30 (88.23)	168 (87.5)
Losing interest in studies	30 (88.23)	23 (76.66)	21 (70)	22 (73.33)	29 (85.29)	30 (88.23)	155 (80.73)
Gets fewer marks	33 (97.05)	28 (93.33)	26 (86.66)	26 (86.66)	33 (97.05)	31 (91.17)	177 (92.18)
Avoids homework	23 (67.64)	17 (56.66)	19 (63.33)	16 (53.33)	29 (85.29)	23 (67.64)	127 (66.14)
Remain absent from class	12 (35.29)	3 (10)	5 (16.66)	7 (23.33)	15 (44.11)	10 (29.41)	52 (27.08)
Inability to concentrate in the class	31 (91.17)	25 (83.33)	23 (67.64)	24 (80)	30 (88.23)	25 (73.52)	158 (82.29)
Reluctant to question teachers	22 (64.70)	18 (60)	15 (50)	17 (56.66)	27 (79.41)	22 (64.70)	121 (63.02)
Hesitate to answer the teachers’ queries	28 (82.35)	18 (60)	13 (43.33)	15 (50)	26 (86.66)	20 (58.82)	120 (62.5)
Fear of exam	23 (67.64)	19 (63.33)	17 (56.66)	16 (53.33)	26 (86.66)	16 (47.05)	117 (60.93)
Falls sick during exam	9 (26.47)	7 (23.33)	7 (23.33)	8 (26.66)	10 (29.41)	5 (14.70)	46 (23.96)
Ignore school rules and regulation	7 (20.58)	2 (6.66)	1 (3.33)	4 (13.33)	10 (29.41)	7 (20.58)	31 (16.14)

N.B Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage to the total

**Table 6 : Inter-relationship between sources of stress and stress symptoms**

Stressors	Symptoms		
	Physiological symptoms	Socio-emotional behavioural symptoms	School related symptoms
	r	r	r
School related stressors	0.368**	0.666**	0.751**
Family related stressors	0.208**	0.432**	0.444**

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

children were from disadvantaged school background. Children find difficulty to cope with the new situation but parents and teachers neither consider the importance of helping their children to cope with the new situation nor understand their children's necessities. Thus, children experienced stress and began to complain about the school and its activities and refuse to go to school.

It was also clear from the findings that maximum number of the children (92.18% and 66.14%) obtained poor marks and avoid homework. As high as 63.02 per cent and 62.5 per cent of the children hesitate to question and answer the teachers. More number of children (60.93% and 23.96%) had feared and worries about examination and also falls sick during exam. There were some children who were intellectually very low and consequently obtained poor marks. Furthermore, some children did not have anyone to assist them in their study, and working parents were unable to devote time for their children and thus children showed drop in grades and had fear and worry about examination. There were also some children who experienced stress due to family dysfunctional lives such as conflict between parents, parental substance abuse etc. These children showed more signs of academic failures. The findings is supported by the study of Pendley (2011) who noticed that children may also have problems concentrating in school or completing their homework and may have drastic changes in their academic performance when they are stressed.

### **Inter-relationship between sources of stress and stress symptoms :**

Findings of the study (Table 6) showed positive and highly significant relation between stressors and symptoms of stress in children. This indicates that if the school related stressors and family related stressors increase, the physiological, socio-emotional behavioural and school related symptoms also increase.

### **Conclusion :**

School related stressors such as overloaded assignments, project works, heavy class workloads and family related stressors like restrictions on recreational activities, watching television and confinement at home even during holidays were identified to be the main stressors in children. Due to these situations, children react to stress by showing physiological, socio-emotional behavioural symptoms and showed changes in academic

performances. It can be also revealed that when the stressors increase the symptoms also increase. The parents and teachers should model healthy behaviours to their children to cope with stressful situations and prepare themselves in helping children to deal positively with stressful causing events.

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