ABSTRACT
Academic stress is a significant source of stress for many students, covering not only examinations but also other academically related stressors such as fear of logging behind in the homework, writing assignment, time pressure, lack of financial support, scheduling classes and required motivation to study. The sources of academic stress for high and intermediate students are mainly board and entrance exams, college admissions, tuition classes, over scheduling and parents expectations etc. The adolescent can easily cope with their academic stress by using stress relief techniques, managing work, taking help from friends and counselors. Parents can also help their adolescents in overcoming academic stress by being supportive, paying attention to their wards’ needs, having realistic expectations and teaching children to overcome obstacles and so on. It has been noticed that most of the youngsters are reluctant to share their academic related problems with their parents as they have their own personal reasons and this is where the role of an admission consultant kicks in. The kind of services that they offer are unique and student driven, they help them in choosing higher education courses, how to prepare for standardized tests, that allow students to establish uniqueness. One of the most important roles that these career consultants and guidance cells perform is to help students with all the pre-admission/post-admission procedures so that they can concentrate on their career without having to worry about the future.

KEYWORDS: Adolescent; Academic Stress; Counselor.

INTRODUCTION
Academic stress is a mental distress with respect to some anticipated frustration associated with academic failure or even awareness of the possibility of such failure. (Gupta and Khan, 1987). Academic stress pervades the life of students, and tends to impact adversely their mental and physical health, and their ability to perform schoolwork effectively (Clark & Rieker, 1986; Felsten & Wilcox, 1992).

The shadow of academic stress all the more darkens for the students of high and intermediate schools who have to step out of schools into the world of competition to choose their respective careers. There have been many researches on academic stress among students and researchers have identified stressors as high aspiration, poor study habits, more study problems, change in the medium of instruction and low socio-economic conditions many
assignments, competition with other students, failures, lack of pocket money, pressure to perform well in the examination or test and time allocated makes academic environment very stressful (Kadapatti and Khadi, 2006; Fairbrother and Warn, 2003; Erkutlu and Chafra, 2006; Polychronopoulou and Divaris, 2005; Misra and McKean, 2000). Academic pressure does not begin in college. The nervous breakdowns, panic attacks, burnouts and depressions are also apparent in many younger students. This situation is not always stressful for all people, and all people do not undergo the same feelings or gloomy thoughts when stressed.

Having a strong support network to fall back on when times get tough at school is critical to staying upbeat and maintaining a big picture perspective. At this stage, besides dealing with the physiological and emotional changes, and adolescent has to cope up with parental expectations, his career and school, which at times tend to have a negative effect on him. Family, which serves as a first school for the child, appears to be an important source of rising expectations.

Parents have critical positive or negative influence on the academic aspirations and achievements of children. A large body of research suggests that parents have a particularly strong influence on their child’s education in a variety of ways. Studies conducted with western samples have found that parents may have high expectations for their child’s future, hold positive beliefs about their child’s abilities, and involve themselves in their child’s education (Eccles, Jacobs, & Harold, 1990; Jodl, Michael, & Malanchuk, 2001).

Sources of academic stress

- **Academic Track:** In Central and State board schools, until the 10th grade, all students learn mathematics, natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology), social sciences (history, geography, civics, economics), and languages. At the end of 10th grade, students take exams which will determine the academic track that they pursue for 11th and 12th grade. Based on their performance in these exams, students are guided into one of three ‘tracks’ – a science track, commerce track, or arts track. Students work hard to achieve their streams thus exposing themselves to academic stress.

- **Students forced to change schools:** The academic stress also arises when the students have to change schools due to various reasons as they need to make adjustments to an especially demanding academic environment.

- **Board Exams:** The board exams are administered once a year over the course of two weeks in March. Each exam is three hours long and is not in multiple-choice format;
instead, students are required to answer questions in full detail. If a student does not earn passing grades in all the exams, the chances of being admitted to college are very low and consequently this exposes him/her to stress.

- **Entrance Exams:** Entrance exams may be administered by a consortium of institutions (such as theater, or the All India Engineering Entrance Examination), or by individual institutions. These are typically administered only once a year on an appointed date and time. A combination of board exam and entrance exam scores (usually weighed equally) determines the prestige of the institution that a student can attend. Thus passing these entrance exams contribute to academic stress among students.

- **Tutions and Coaching Classes:** To further aid the probability of a good performance on the board exams or entrance exams, many high school and intermediate students take out-of-school classes called tutorials in order to score good marks. As a result students devote extraordinary amounts of time to attend tutorial classes which leads to academic stress.

- **Social Comparison:** In Indian families it is common to compare the academic performance of the child with that of older siblings, cousins, and friends. While parents usually find out about their child’s peers indirectly, they will explicitly find out, or be told, the scores of immediate family members. This trend forces students to worry about their grades and hence being a source for stress in education.

- **Exam Stress:** Exams are a way of assessing what a student has learned during the academic year. However, for most students, exams bring with it lot of tension, stress and anxiety. The main reason for this is because of increased pressure and stress that they receive from their parents and teachers to perform well in the exams. Many times, due to exam fear, students tend to forget what they have learned, thus scoring less than they could have.

- **Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE):** The CCE system was formulated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Kapil Sibal (2010). This is the new teaching method in which students’ marks are replaced by grades which are evaluated through a series of curricular and extra-curricular evaluations along with academics. Students are graded on the basis of work experience skills, dexterity, innovation, steadiness, teamwork, public speaking, behavior etc. Thus obtaining these grades is a source of stress for many students.
Teacher expectation: Teachers expect work to be completed on time. Students may underestimate the amount of time it takes to complete reading and writing assignments, to print out copies of their work, or to travel to school. Missing deadlines, regardless of the reason, is stressful, especially because missing work leads to falling behind. Even well-prepared students will experience stress, especially if they spend a lot of time on assignments but do not receive the grade they expected. (Marie Brown)

Over scheduling: In order to provide the best possible developmental experiences, many parents are enrolling their kids in too many extra-curricular activities. As the kids become teens, school extracurricular activities also become a major part of their daily academic schedule. College admissions standards are also becoming highly competitive, making it difficult for college-bound high school students to avoid over scheduling themselves. (Elizabeth Scott, M.S., 2011)

Parent expectations: Many parents recognize that the academic struggle to avoid failing is an important course can be quite stressful. It may be the common experience that academically capable students who feel the greatest pressure as they find themselves competing for score. Tatar (1995) found that parents’ choice for high grades and desire to pursue higher education as major actual or potential source of stress among their adolescents.

College Admission: A professional education is usually considered a stepping stone to success in India. This includes the various fields such as engineering, medicine, computer science, law, and recently, other related fields. An education in one these fields are considered prudent in terms of professional and financial stability. The competition to get into professional schools contributes to academic stress.

Management of academic stress
Management of the academic stress is a crucial task as it requires the major contributions of not only the students but also of their parents and counselors. Their respective roles are discussed below:

Role of students
- Sleep: Students usually miss sleep and work for long hours which in turns make them less productive apart from ruining their health. Proper sleep for at least eight hours is itself a stress buster.
Visualizations: Students must visualize themselves performing well in a particular task which they find difficult to perform. This will surely help them to release stress.

Exercise: Regular exercise helps in keeping mind and body fit. These exercises may include yoga, going for walk, breathing and muscular exercises which provide relaxation to the students.

Music: It acts as a soothing balm and thereby helps in keeping a person calm and in a relaxed state.

Eat right: Eating healthy nutritious food helps in releasing stress and keeping the body fit. It is a good management technique to overcome stress.

Positive thinking: Positive thinking words and actions help students to perform well in their lives and hence remove stressing thoughts from their mind.

Discussing problems: Students face several problems in their academic lives. These problems must be discussed with parents, teachers or peers friends so that these hurdles do not act as source of stress.

Set realistic goals: Students must realize their own potentials and work accordingly. It is important to be honest to oneself and remember that everyone possess strength and weakness.

Manage academic work effectively: It is necessary for the students to plan schedule for their everyday work as they have to complete a lot of course by the end of their sessions. This planning and management will help them to reduce stress and thereby complete work on the given time.

Get help from a peer tutor: There are some students in the class who are extraordinary and are the masters of certain subjects. It is better to ask help from them in their field of mastery as they can explain better than the rest.

Attend classes regularly: Teachers not only teach the lessons from the textbooks but also give tips to learn effectively without much stress. Theses necessary strategies can only be learnt by attending the classes regularly.

Take help of a counselor: Many schools have counseling centers which play a significant role in dealing with all kinds of students problems. If a student feels overwhelmed or just need some tips to handle the increased stress that school puts in him/her, consider sharing problems with a counselor.

Role of parents

Being Supportive: Parents play a vital role in the lives of their children and thereby their constant support and motivation will help them to face challenges in their lives. During school days they are under heavy stress and it is the responsibility of parents to help them cope.
Realistic expectations: Parents should have to be realistic in their expectations. They should decide reachable goals for their children which are according to their capabilities and strengths so that their wards are not crushed under extreme pressure.

Healthy communication: Many a times it is noticed that parents are highly engrossed in their own personal work which gradually leads to communication gap between parents and students. If there is better interaction between students and parents all problems can be settled rationally. Parents should realize that their children need their attention the most during their student days when they face many hassles.

Teaching relaxation strategies: Parents must encourage their wards to do exercise, deep breathing and listen to the music as these techniques will be helpful in overcoming extreme academic stress and will also help them to remain mentally healthy and active throughout the day.

Paying attention to the wards’ needs: Parents must take care regarding the eating habits of their children which can be done by forbidding them to eat junk food and including fruits and vegetables in their diets. They should also make sure that their wards sleep for at least eight hours daily.

Showing positive attitude: Parents must also have a positive attitude towards their children by noticing even the smallest achievement of their wards. This will motivate them to overcome their stress easily and come out victorious in their lives.

Teaching children to overcome obstacles: Parents must train children to tackle obstacles such as lack of fluency in language, health problems, financial instability, family problems or unhealthy friendship. They should make sure that their wards are aware of these major problems and deal with them effectively.

Role of counselors
High and intermediate school is the final transition into the world of work as students begin separating from parents and exploring and defining their independence. During this period adolescents face increase pressures regarding academics as they face high-stakes testing, the challenges of college admissions, the scholarship and financial aid application process and entrance into a competitive job market. This is where the role of school counselors kicks in. School counselors advise students regarding college majors, selection of subjects, admission requirements, entrance exams, financial aid, trade or technical schools, and apprenticeship programs. They help students develop job search skills, such as resume writing and interviewing techniques. They also help students to understand and deal with social,
behavioral, and personal problems. These counselors emphasize preventive and developmental counseling to enhance students' personal, social, and academic growth and to provide students with the life skills needed to deal with problems before they worsen.

References