SYNOPSIS

The inspiration for the present research was drawn from the realization that while adult stress was greatly emphasised and publicized, children's stress was given relatively less importance. It was felt that children are also prone to stress in the course of their lives and that very often inability to cope suitably with stressful situations leads them into difficulties in behavior and adjustment. Thus, the present study sought to understand the phenomenon of children's stress. The specific objectives of the study were to (a) identify the behavioral correlates of stress; (b) to study the nature and magnitude of the relationship between stress and academic performance; (c) to study whether stress and academic performance were affected by variables such as type of school, sex and class; and (d) to ascertain the nature of relationship of stress and academic performance with the school organisational climate.

Eight types of schools, namely Public school, Government school, N.D.M.C. school, Missionary school, Private management school, Aided school and Un-aided regional Trust school were included in the analysis. The sex factor was studied at two levels viz. - boys
and girls and likewise class was also studied at two levels - class I and II.

Stress was measured by using a behavior checklist which was specially designed for the purpose by the researcher. The behavior checklist yielded a two dimensional, scoring of stress - (a) 'stress intensity score' which indicated the overall magnitude of stress; and (b) 'stress symptoms score' which was indicative of the total number of stressful symptoms present in each child.

The academic performance of students was adjudged by the percentage of marks they obtained in the final examination.

To study the organisational climate of each school the standardised School Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire (SOCDQ) developed by Motilal Sharma was used.

The results of the study showed that stress was constituted by eight factors; namely psychomotor symptoms factor, mental symptoms factor, low self-esteem factor, attention symptoms factor, conversion symptoms factor, withdrawal symptoms factor, hostility factor and anger symptoms factor. Among these, only two complete factors,
namely anger symptoms factor and attention symptoms factor were found to predict academic performance. In the remaining six factors, some of the constituent variables were found to predict academic performance. Stress intensity and stress symptoms were found to vary significantly in terms of type of school and sex factor respectively. In general, the Government run schools were found to have a greater degree of stress than the remaining schools. In schools where the sex differences were found to be significant, boys were found to have greater stress than girls. The class factor was not found to influence stress.

Stress was found to be significantly, negatively related to academic performance, in general. Thus, children afflicted with stress were found to be poorer in regard to their academic performance, than children who were free of stress.

Academic performance was found to vary as a function of type of school. In general, the students of the Public, Private and Missionary schools showed better academic performance than children studying in Government run schools. Boys and girls were not found to differ significantly in terms of their academic performance.
Stress was found to be significantly positively related to the school organisational climate only in terms of the leadership behavior of the Principal. Academic performance was not found to be related to organisational climate in any way.

Thus, the present study has clearly delineated the behavioral factors of stress and established the relationship of stress with academic performance in Primary school children. The importance of type of school and sex in influencing stress has also been highlighted. It is hoped that these findings would help to understand the phenomenon of children's stress, better and contribute to some remedial action being taken in this direction.