



# **Emotional Wellness State of Students**

**2023-24**

# Executive summary:

In recent years there has been a rise in the stress levels of college-going students. This report aims to understand the stress levels of college-going students and investigate the causes behind them, which would be an essential instrument in resolving the problem.

A detailed analysis conducted by YourDOST in partnership with various colleges gave us great insights. The following are some of the major ones:

- Among the students who participated in the stress test, **77% were under high stress.**
- Of the students who participated in the survey, **80% of women were highly stressed compared to 74% of men.**
- Of the three-course students who participated in the test, **postgraduate students were found to be more stressed compared to undergraduate students and research scholars.**



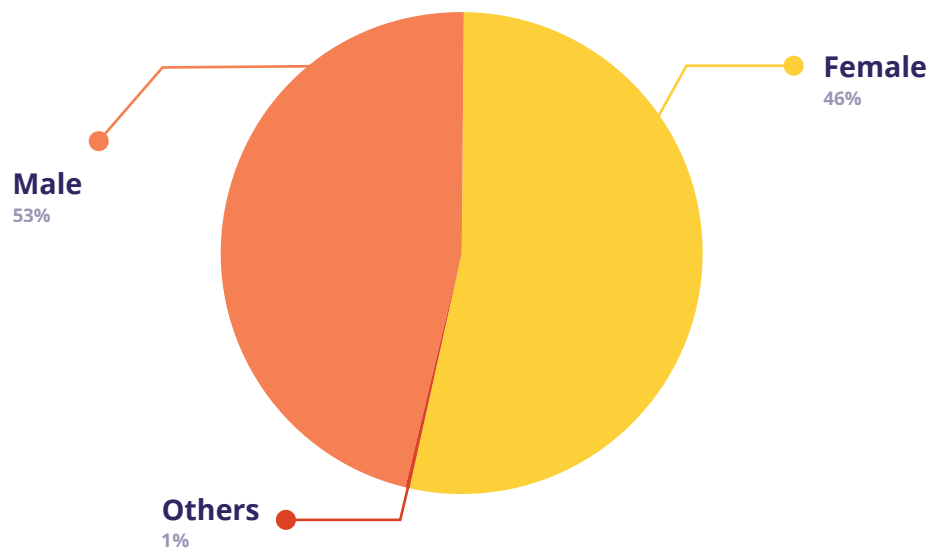


# Introduction

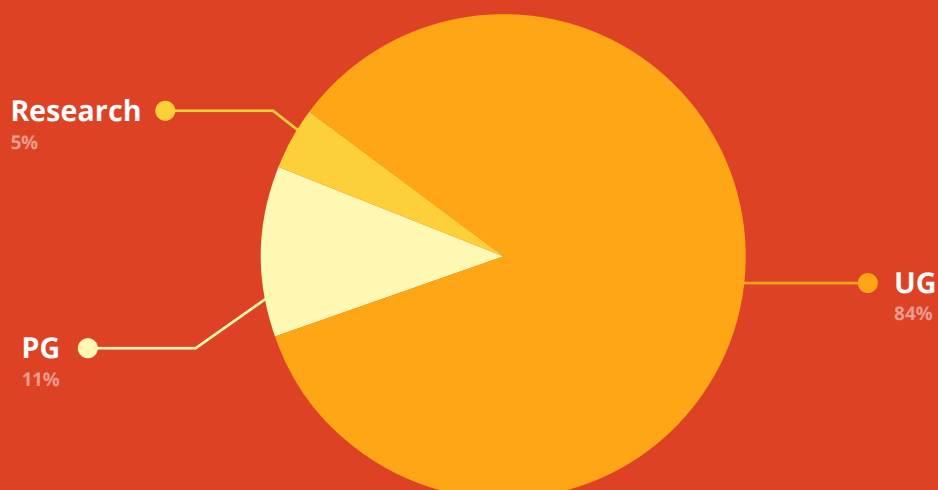
YourDOST conducted a survey to assess stress levels among college students. **The Emotional Wellness Test**, taken by **822 students** from various colleges, was designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of student stress. This test comprised 25 carefully crafted questions, each targeting one of four key aspects of stress:

- **Time management:** Assesses how well students can manage their time to balance and prioritize their extracurricular, personal, and academic responsibilities.
- **Personal functioning:** Evaluates students' everyday functioning, emotional stability, self-care, and stress management in addition to their general well-being.
- **Social functioning:** Assesses the degree to which students' social ties and interactions impact their mental health and stress levels.
- **Career development:** Determines how stressed students are about preparing and advancing their careers, including employment opportunities, internships, and professional development.

### Distribution of Gender



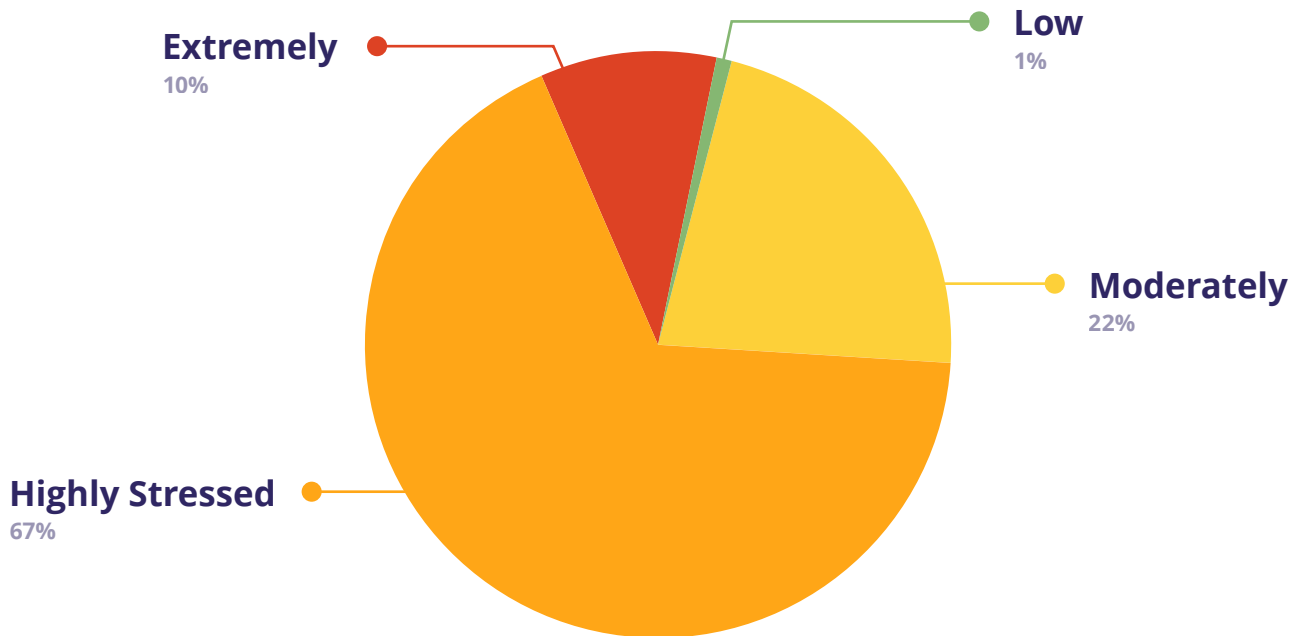
### Course Distribution



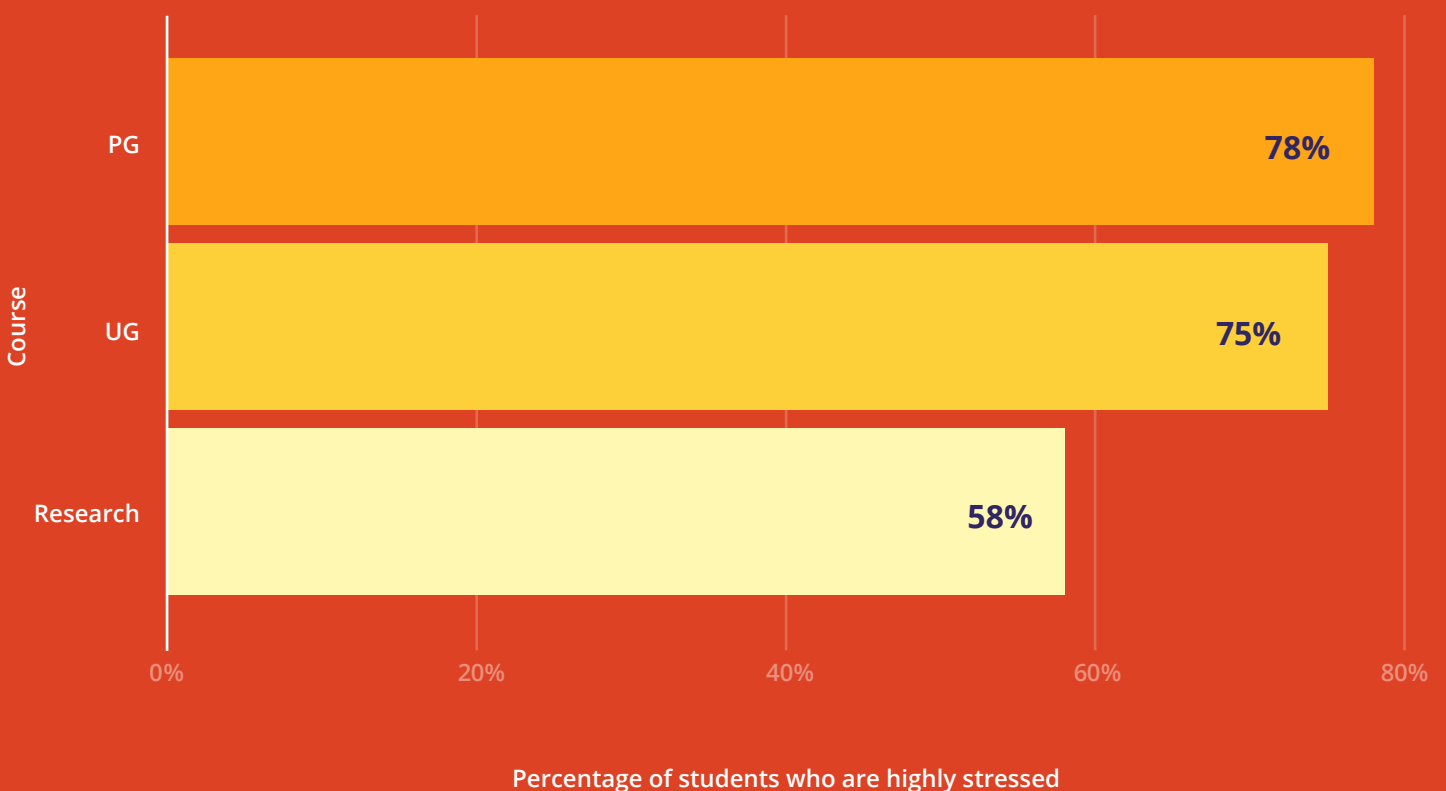


# How are the students handling stress?

The stress test scores are on a scale of 0-75 and higher scores imply higher stress levels. The data revealed that 77% of these students are under high stress, on an overall level.



The following chart outlines the percentage of people who are highly stressed, among undergraduate, postgraduate and research students:





### Postgraduate students:

Postgraduate students are most stressed due to difficult coursework, complex research, tight deadlines, and high academic expectations. Balancing these expectations with personal and professional responsibilities increases their stress.

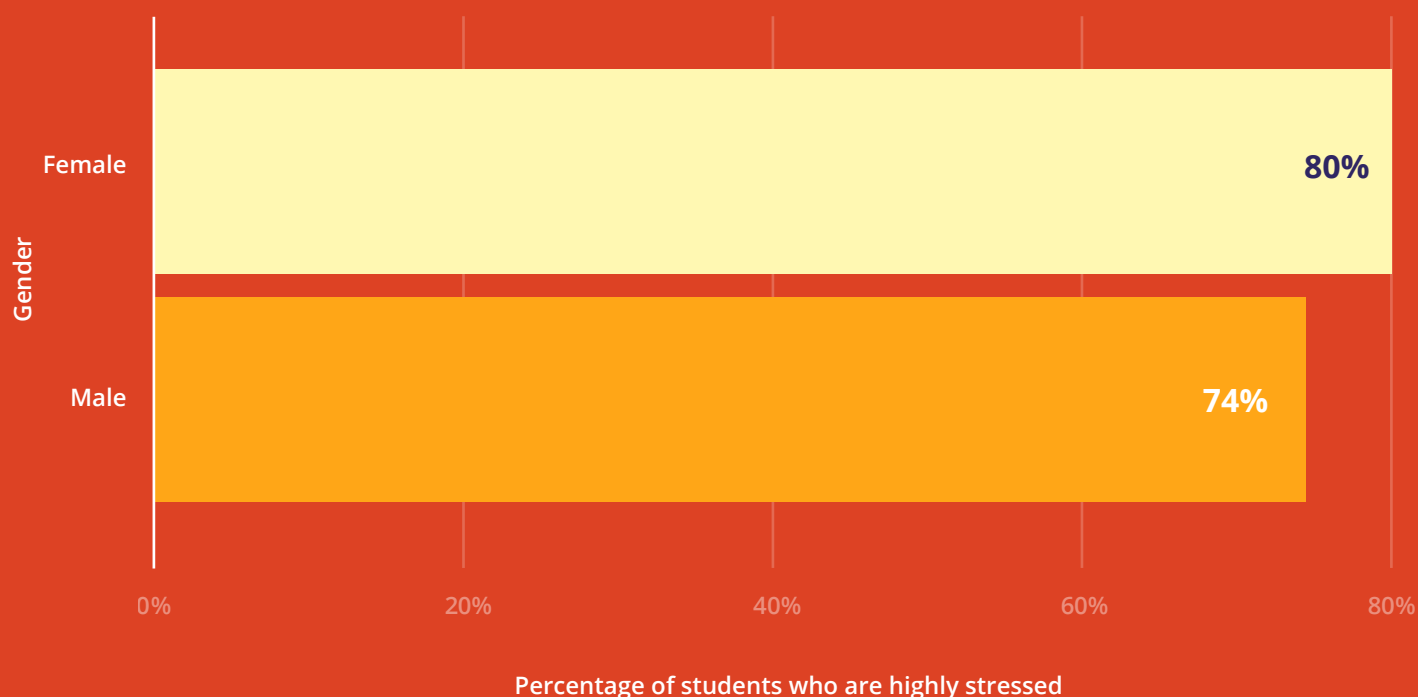
### Undergraduate students:

Maintaining grades, preparing for examinations, and considering job options all cause significant stress for undergraduates. The strain of combining academics, extracurricular activities, part-time employment, and social life adds to their stress.

### Research Fellow:

Research fellows have lower stress levels than the other groups. Their biggest source of stress is fulfilling research deadlines, publishing results, and receiving financing.

Given high stress levels we have identified the most affected gender based on the participant's overall scores:



The data indicates a **high prevalence of stress among students**, with 80% of female students and 74% of male students reporting being highly or extremely stressed.

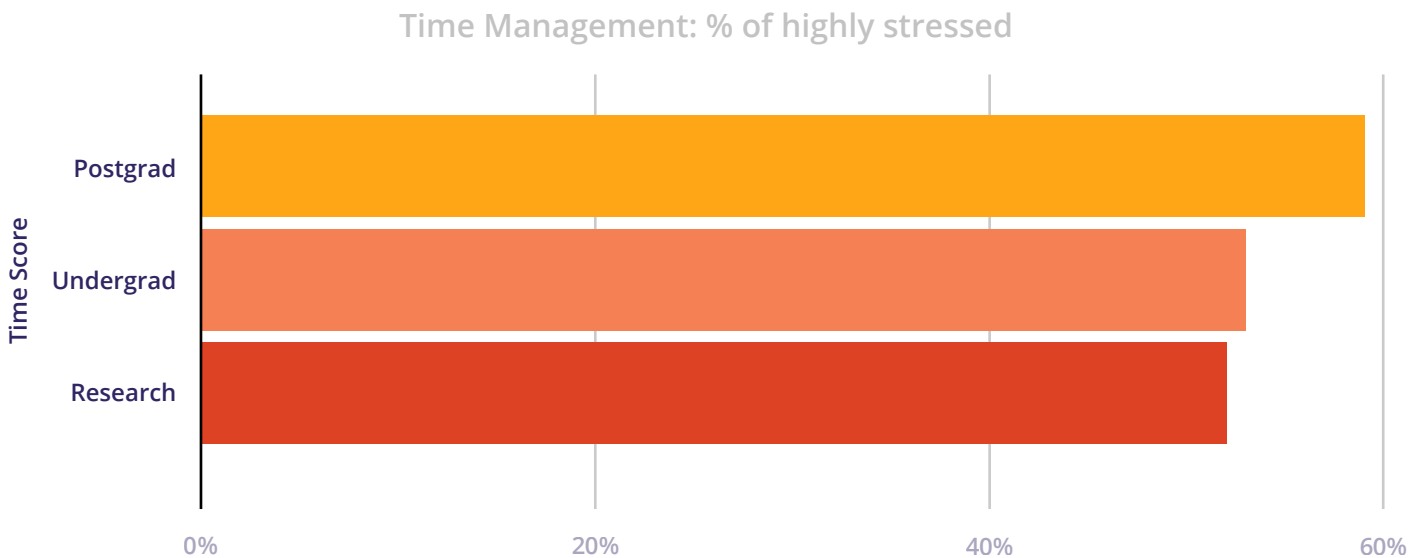
This suggests that a significant portion of both female and male students are experiencing considerable stress, highlighting the **need for effective stress management and support systems within educational environments**. The slightly higher percentage of stressed female students may indicate additional pressures or stressors faced by them which could be due to gender norms, societal expectations or any form of gendered stereotypes.



# Factors contributing to stress:

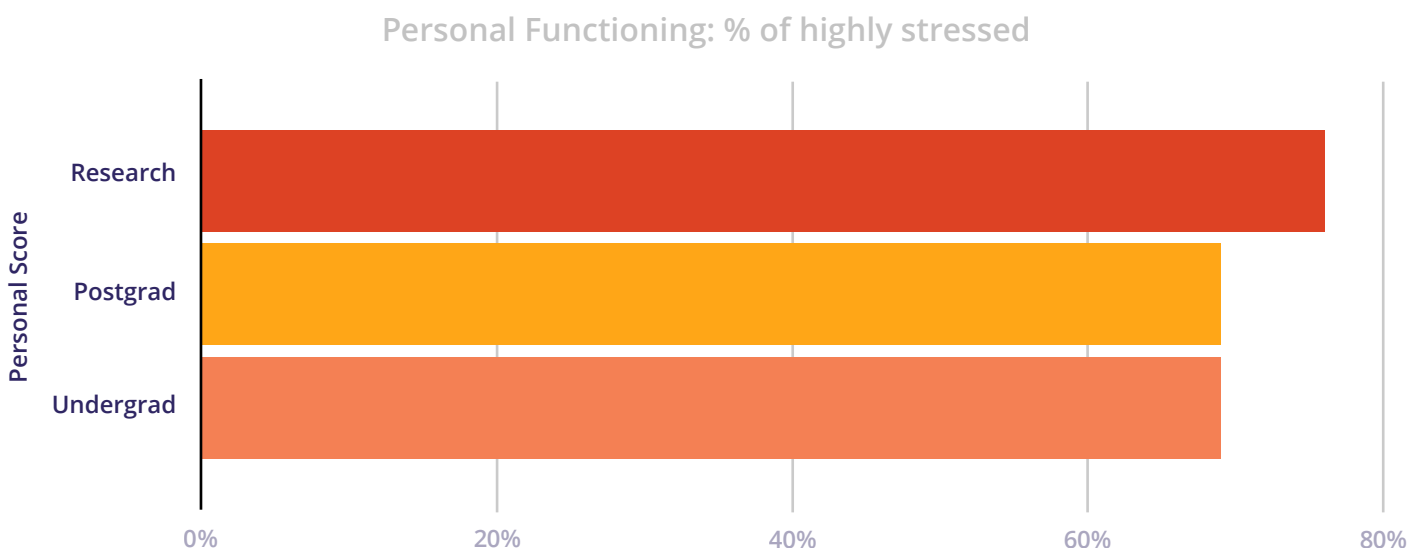
We now need to look at individual factors to identify the major parameters leading to high stress.

## TIME MANAGEMENT



Postgraduate students often face unique challenges in managing their time effectively due to the demands of coursework, research projects, and internships. This multitasking can make time management more challenging for them compared to undergraduate students and research scholars

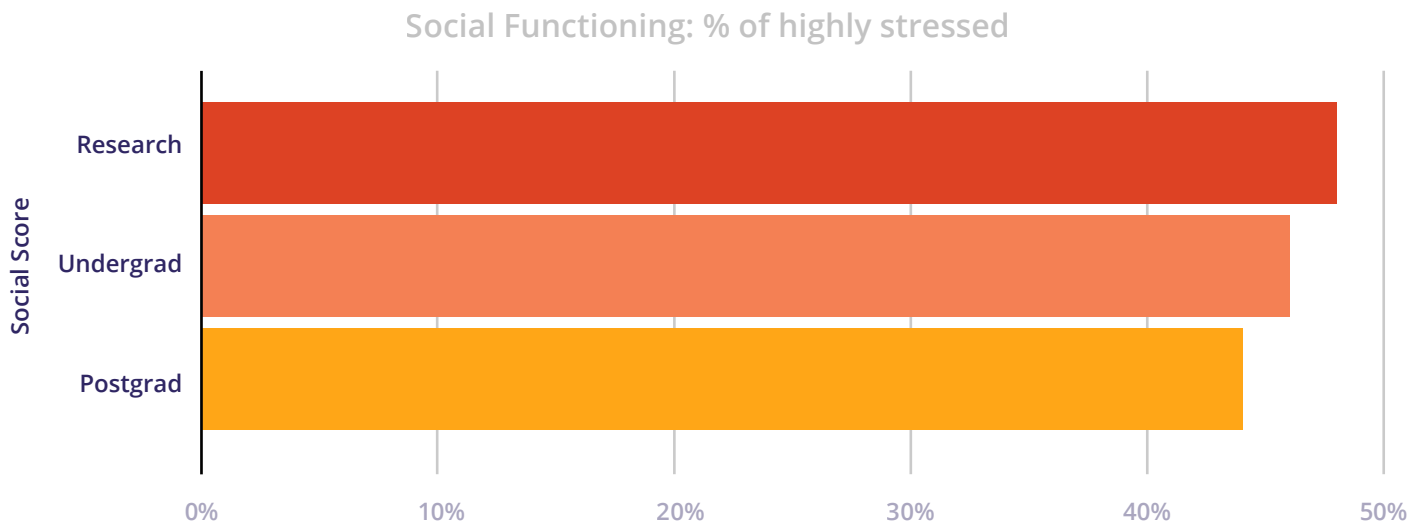
## PERSONAL FUNCTIONING



The graph illustrates that research scholars report significantly higher levels of personal stress compared to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. This suggests that the demanding and stressful nature of their academic work may contribute to elevated stress levels in their personal lives.

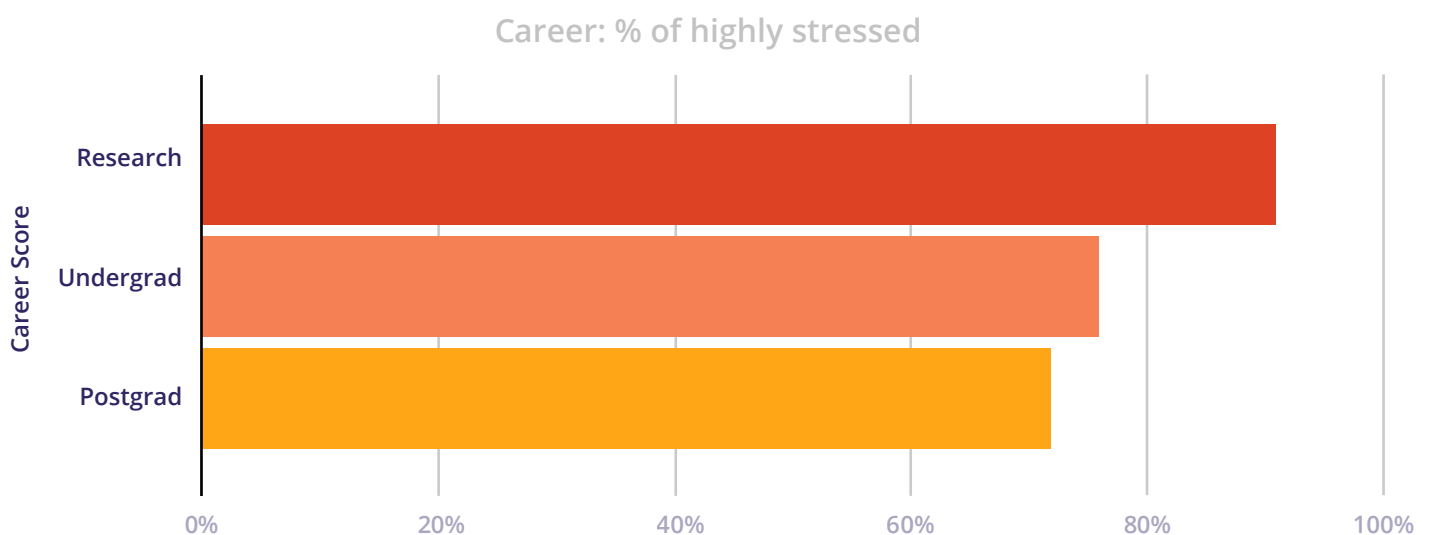


## SOCIAL FUNCTIONING



Compared to undergraduates and postgraduates, research scholars exhibit higher levels of stress in social relationships. This could be attributed to the isolated and demanding nature of their work, which often requires intense concentration and significant time commitments. These factors may leave research scholars with less time and energy to nurture social connections and seek social support.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT



According to the graph, research scholars report high career stress. The primary stressors for academic researchers include the competitive job market, challenges in finding work opportunities post-research, and comparisons with industry peers who often have higher earning potential. These factors contribute to the heightened career stress experienced by research scholars in academic settings.

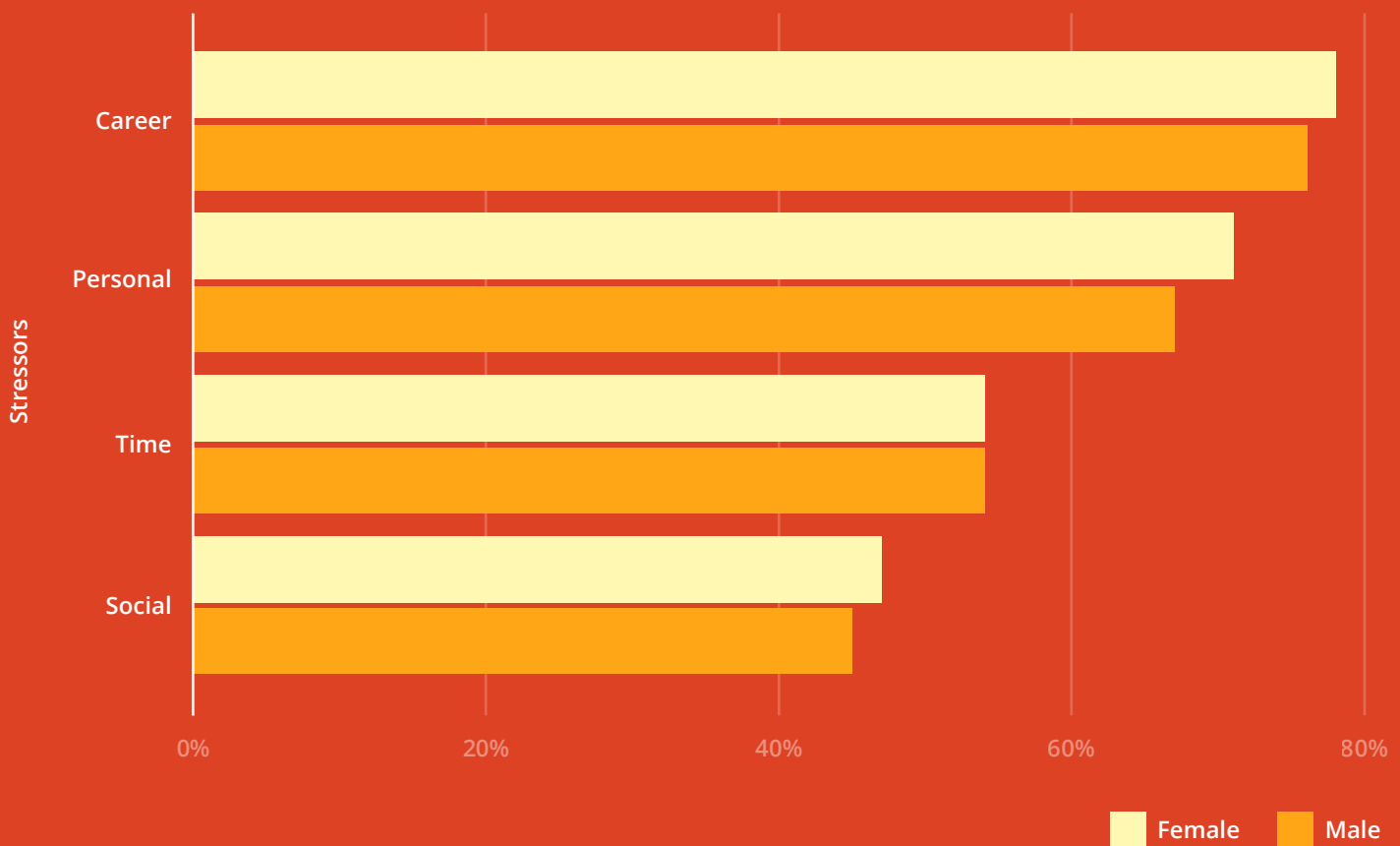


# Inferences

- Career significantly influences stress levels across all course types (UG, PG, and Research). This underscores the need for structured career counselling programs to support students in navigating the challenges of career preparation and development.
- Postgraduate students exhibit higher stress levels in time management compared to undergraduate students and research scholars. This is likely due to the heavy coursework and strict timeline pressures inherent in postgraduate studies.
- Postgraduate students tend to report slightly lower levels of social stress compared to undergraduates and research scholars. This could be attributed to stronger social networks and better coping mechanisms developed through their academic experiences.

## MEN or WOMEN: Who is more stressed?

Now, looking into the gender aspect based on each parameter:



Career stress is the highest for both genders, with females experiencing more due to balancing career and personal responsibilities. Females also report higher stress levels for personal issues, likely from juggling multiple roles. Social and time management stress levels are similar between genders, though females slightly edge higher in social stress, possibly due to greater emotional investment and social expectations. Overall, females tend to have higher stress levels across all categories.





## Recommendations

1. Academic institutions should introduce **comprehensive stress management programs** tailored to meet the needs of different student groups. These programs should include stress reduction techniques, mental health awareness, and mindfulness workshops.
2. UG and PG students will benefit from academic assistance, in the form of training focussed on learning to manage time and beat procrastination. Additionally, **sessions around managing academic expectations, exam preparation, and planning career options would be beneficial for UG students.**
3. Insights highlight that **research scholars would benefit from career planning opportunities**, this could be through targeted workshops, 1:1 career coaching sessions, and placements.
4. **Social relationships are also a source of stress for students across their academic careers.** Focussed workshops on building interpersonal skills, managing romantic and parental relationships, and 1:1 counselling support are integral to ensure students can manage their stress stemming from interpersonal relationships.
5. **Research scholars appear to experience high levels of stress stemming from social pressures** and may benefit from planned activities such as inter-departmental dinners, sports events, networking opportunities and more.
6. To address higher stress levels among college students, particularly females, **colleges should offer easy access to counselling support.** Creating support groups, fostering a supportive campus culture, and implementing mentorship programs can further aid students.



## Building A Caring Campus: Pillars Of Wellness

Take a moment to introspect and reflect on your campus' wellness pillars. Can you say for certain that you are a part of a 'caring campus'?

S. No.	Statement	Status
1.	Is your institute equipped to handle mental health emergencies?	
2.	Does your institute offer access to mental health professionals on campus and online for concerns like academics, relationships, self-improvement, sexual wellness, etc.?	
3.	Are the students, faculty and staff trained to support each other's emotional well-being?	
4.	Does your institute involve parents in recognising and supporting students in emotional distress?	
5.	Are there mandatory courses on emotional wellness, life skills, substance use, prevention of sexual harassment, etc.?	
6.	Does the institute promote responsible digital usage and address digital misconduct?	
7.	Are there policies and practices to ensure inclusion across gender, age, language, religion, abilities, etc.?	
8.	Are there mechanisms to address academic indicators of emotional wellness, such as academic performance, absenteeism, etc., and offer preventative support?	
9.	Is there a provision for students to disclose mental health needs at the time of induction and seek support?	
10.	Are there mandatory clubs or activities for social interaction and physical fitness for all students?	

If you need support to build a roadmap and interventions to strengthen the pillars of wellness and enhance your campus' care quotient, contact us at [richa.singh@yourdost.com](mailto:richa.singh@yourdost.com) for a consultation.



### **About YourDOST:**

Founded in 2014 by Richa Singh and Puneet Manuja, YourDOST is one of India's first and largest holistic emotional wellness organisations. We provide our consulting methodology to Corporates, Educational Institutions and Government organisations to build and execute their Emotional Wellness programs.

At its heart, YourDOST is not just an organization but a movement towards reshaping how mental health is perceived and addressed in corporates, educational institutions, and government organizations across India.

Our mission is to help individuals, communities and organisations unlock and expand their full potential - for a better world. We do this by helping organisations build an enriching work environment, by fostering resilience & engagement in communities and empowering individuals to become a better version of themselves.

### **Contact us:**



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