

## **Stress and stress related illnesses of school children in Sri Lanka: a survey of Advanced Level students**

Gamini Hapuarachchi<sup>1</sup>

Advanced Level is regarded as the most challenging examination in the Sri Lankan Education system. Not only because of its Testing style but also because of the social attitudes and social trends which have centered around the Examination it applies a high level of Stress on the students. Stress is defined as a physical, behavioral, emotional and cognitive affect of a severe mental pressure.

The aim of this study is to examine on A/L student's learning related stress and their stress related mental and physical illnesses. For this purpose a random sample of a thousand of students, belong to all three main streams of study, was selected. To identify their stress the following data were collected.

1. Number of study hours (in week days and weekends) both official and unofficial.
2. Number of sleeping and entertainment hours.
3. Personal feelings towards education and life.

The collected data clearly show that the vast majority of students are engaged in an extended number of study hours and they spend only few hours for sleep, rest and entertainment. It is argued that due to this high level of stress a vast majority of A/L students are suffering from various mental disturbances (such as restlessness, memory loses and concentration problems) and physical illnesses (such as gastritis, arthritis and muscle pain).

**Key words:** Student, Stress, Advanced Level Examination, Mental disturbances, Physical illness, Sri Lanka

<sup>1</sup> Department of Philosophy, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka