

An Investigation on Stress Among Women Students Studying in Self Financing Arts & Science Colleges in Tiruchirapalli District

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Abstract: Stress is one of predominant issue to all human lives especially the students from higher secondary school level to college level. They felt entirely different atmosphere from their schooling which the unfamiliar environment may threatens them psychologically. The more importance given to psychological issues of this specific age group of female students is vital for the future nourishment of the country. In this way the researcher has tried to analyse the level of stress among female college students of arts and science stream from self financing colleges in Trichy District. For the aforementioned reason the researcher has followed Descriptive research design and primary data was used to study the level of stress. The required samples were selected using convenient sampling method has been used to collect the primary data from students (N=220) with the help of structured questionnaire. The collected data has been processed with the help of statistical tools like percentage analysis, ANOVA and Chi-Square test by using SPSS package. The study revealed that all the female students were encountered moderate level of stress among them. And the causes of stress were societal threats and academic burden. Colleges are recommended to conduct orientation and special counselling sessions exclusively for female students, so that the students will face the society without fear. Similarly, the academic burden has to be reduced especially in first semester.

Keywords: *Female College Students, Stress, Psychological Problems.*

Introduction

In today's fast scenario, stress is an inseparable part of life. Irrespective of demographic and socio-economic status, everybody touches the margin of stress. Despite this fact, College students face depression, stress and anxiety that creates mental and health problems among them (Gopinath, 2016a). Psychological stress among college women students is of increasing concern. They need mental health services from educational institutions. In the new campus atmosphere, college students face several educational, social, environmental and psychological complexities which affects the well-being and better learning outcomes. In the life of college students, stress become common for them because they need to ensure their survival of academic as well as social and to prepare themselves for the further career.

Stress refers to a "particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 19). College students'

academic stress refers to factors in the academic environment such as course work, group projects, and organizational involvement, as well as perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward academic demands (Wilks, 2008). Often college students are more passionate than school age students. Stress mainly comes from academic tests, interpersonal relations, relationship problems, life changes, and career exploration (Gopinath, 2016b). Such stress may usually cause psychological, physical, and behavioural problems (Cheng, 2009).

Review of Literature

Studies of Sivakumar & Chitra (2017) stated that even the teachers working on higher secondary schools have stress, due to the compulsion of result and unpredictable behaviour of the students. The same study has revealed that, students of school level also have some nominal level of stress because of fear of getting low marks in school board examinations.

Reynolds and Weigand (2010) found that self-efficacy was not significantly related to academic achievement (first semester Grade- Point-Average). They explained this inconsistent finding by saying that the reliance on first-semester Grade-Point Average (GPA) as the sole indicator of academic achievement may have affected the power of academic self-efficacy to predict academic achievement because the effect of academic self efficacy on academic achievement may be more long term.

Bataineh (2013) in his study measured the academic stressors experienced by students at university. The result of the analyses showed that there is an unreasonable academic overload, not enough time to study due to the vast course content being covered, high family expectations and low motivation levels are some of the reasons for the stress. Fear of failure is also the prime reason for stress. There was no significant difference found amongst the students from different of specializations.

Nandamuri and Gowthami (2011) studied the stress among students of professional studies and claimed that curriculum and instructions parameters were most responsible for stress with 86 percent, followed by 63 percent for placement related issues, assessment and team work issues accounted for 41 percent and 24 percent respectively. The study further identified various micro issues responsible for stress, and listed twelve sub issues related to curriculum and instruction. Once the sub issues of each parameter are identified, it provided improved vision to the academic administrators for initiating efforts to reduce the gravity of academic stress.

Singh & Upadhyay (2013) studied personality dimensions as predictors of academic stress and found neuroticism scores to be significantly positively related with academic stress in female but not in male undergraduate students. However no significant relation between academic stress and extraversion scores has been found in any group (male/female). Suicide is a wrong choice which an individual makes to the experienced stress in the absence of proper guidance to manage it. CNN_IBN Jan 2010 reports that 95-100 people in India commit suicide everyday-and from these 40% people are in the adolescence age. TOI March 08 reports that 5,857 students commit suicide across India due to exam stress. NCR Bureau reported that In 2013 alone, 2,471 suicides were committed due to examination failure

Dusselier and colleagues (2005) surveyed 462 undergraduate students to establish events and circumstances that predicted how frequently students experienced stress. Experiencing chronic illness and frequent conflicts with friends, family, or faculty were both predictors of stress. This survey also included an open-ended question allowing students to identify their primary source of stress. Over half of the students

indicated that academics were a primary stressor (e.g. homework, preparing for projects, or time required in class).

Reddy *et al.* (2018) concluded that stress does exist in students at personal, social and institutional level. Remedies such as feedback, yoga, life skills training, mindfulness, meditation and psychotherapy have been found useful to deal with stress. To identify the main reason of stress is the key to deal with it. Professionals can develop tailor made strategies to deal with stress. The integrated well being of the students is important not only for the individual but for the institute as well.

Statement of the problem:

The college environment is much stressful for female students who are transit from schools. The culture, rules and regulations of self financing and government colleges were significantly different. The stress could cause social, psychological and environmental problems among students especially the female who were studying in self financing colleges. This because of new surroundings, teaching methodology, relationship with students especially with opposite gender, stiff competition and gathering and even their adolescence is also a matter that creates stress to them (Gopinath, 2016c). In addition, they are in the position to perform well in studies and tests in various disciplines. If suppose, the students failed to cope up with such kind of demands, stress may leads to mental and health issues. In the area of academic , theory and practical's also played a major role of stress among female students.

More studies have conducted on stress among the female students, even though the results are inconclusive. This topic still needs more attention, because the colleges had the responsibility to create the successful, brave and confident women. The educated women can rule and role the world who making them as good citizens of country.

Objectives of the study

- To investigate the causes of stress among female students in self financing colleges.
- To identify the stress level of academic, social, behavioural, psychological factors among college students of arts and science.
- To understand the relationship between the level of stress and academic performance.

Research Methodology

The targeted population of this study were female students enrolled in arts and science self financing colleges of Trichy district. A self administered Questionnaire was used to collect the primary data from respondents. The questionnaires were distributed to students in college campus. Demographic part in questionnaire which was used to collect demographic information of the students and their academic performance was measured by using the average percentage of completed semesters. Descriptive research survey is used to collect the data from government and private colleges, male and female of under; post graduates.

The collected data were processed with SPSS package and the descriptive statistics such as frequency of distribution, mean and standard deviation were used to summarise and analyse the data.

An Investigation on Stress Among Women Students Studying in Self Financing Arts & Science Colleges in Tiruchirapalli District

Results and Discussions

It is generally believed that the health of students is affected by the stresses of academic life. These stressors may affect their learning ability, academic performance and health. Stress is a kind of mental imbalance of human beings. Regardless of the status and level, stress affects person's physical and emotional well-being. Everyone experiences stress differently and it can affect physically, mentally and emotionally. Stress affects the mind, behaviour and body in many ways. Also it collapses the equilibrium state of body and mind. It is important to learn how to manage and control the stress within us. Stress cannot be removed from our lives, but we should try to minimize it. Always be optimistic, and focussing the positive ways of happenings relieves stress.

Basic data Analysis:

Table 1: Basic Data Analysis of the Respondents

Stream	Person	%	Graduates	Person	%
Arts	110	50	Under Graduates	110	50
Science	110	50	Post Graduates	85	38
Total	220	100	Research Scholars	25	12
-	-	-	Total	220	100
UG Grade	Person	%	PG Grade	Person	%
I year	30	27	I year	40	47
II Year	39	35	II Year	45	53
III Year	41	38	Total	85	100
Total	110	100	Research Scholars	Person	%
Discipline	Person	%	I year	5	20
Arts	110	50	II Year	11	44
Science	110	50	III Year	9	36
Total	220	100	Total	25	100

Source :Primary Data

From this study, it can be found that every college student has affected by stress. Gender wise analysis results revealed that experience of stress of female student is inescapable. Compare to under graduates, Post graduates and research scholars have more stress because of commitments, responsibility and career development in future (Gopinath, 2016d).

This research is used to understand the perception of students towards their stress level scaled as Never, Sometimes and Often. This research has revealed more important information about stress according to some stress factors such as academic, behavioural, social psychological and psychosomatic of female students. These results shall also alarm the parents and teachers to help the students in right way to balance their stress (Gopinath, 2016e).

Source of Stress

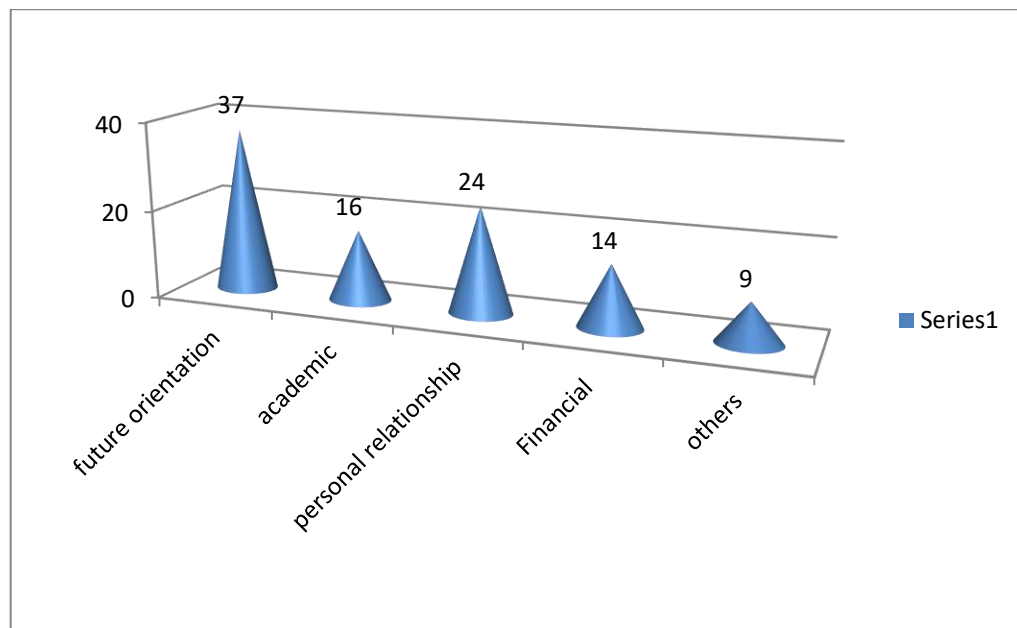


Figure 1: Source of stress among college students

The above figure showed that out of 220 participants, 37% are felt more stress by thinking about future aspects, 24% with personal relationship stress, 16% academics, 14% financial and 9% other problems. During Young adulthood, most of the mental health disorders like anxiety, depression, eating disorders (Bulimia. Bingeeating) have arisen. Kessler et al. observed that by the age of 25 years, 75% of those who will have a mental health disorder have had their first onset. Blanco C, et al observed that anxiety disorders are the most prevalent psychiatric problems among college students, with approximately 11.9 % of college students suffering from an anxiety disorder.

A common mental health problem among college students is depression, with prevalence rates in college students of 7 to 9 % (Eisenberg D, Hunt J, Speer N). Zisook et al. found that over half of all cases of depression had a first onset during childhood, adolescence, or young adulthood. Eisenberg D, et al observed that out of 2,822 college students, 9.5% of students screened positive for an eating disorder with a greater proportion of females relative to males (13.5 vs. 3.6 %, respectively).

Academic Stress

The data presented in Table 2 is used to determine the level of academic stress of the female college students in self-financing colleges. The results revealed that the majority of the students (63%) reported a moderate level of stress, 21% felt low level of stress and 16% high level of stress.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of academic stress level

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	45	21	21
Moderate	140	63	84
High	35	16	100
Total	220	100	100

Source: Primary Data

**An Investigation on Stress Among Women Students Studying in Self Financing Arts & Science Colleges in
Tiruchirapalli District**

As a result of academic stress, Table 3, given the frequency distribution of specific aspects that produce academic stress. All aspects have been found to contribute the level of stress to the student's community. High percentage of students responded that Internal Marks Assessment is the major reason for high level stress in the college and Unfair grading system in the college is the second reason for their high level of stress. Elite students' felt that they were given the internal marks with minimum difference between them and moderate and average students. This was the common practice followed by the self – financing colleges because of result orientation. Many students have also pointed that they felt stress due to rigid rules of the college and difficulty in manage the medium of English. Academic workload and dissatisfaction with tutor's subject mastery also play a minimum role of their least stress.

Table 3: Summary distribution of reasons of academic stress

Reasons	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Academic Assignments & Tests	21.3	33.0	36.3	9.5
Difficult to deal with medium of English	17.9	31.1	41.0	9.9
Unfair grading system in the college	16.5	36.3	35.4	11.8
Assessment of Internal Marks	17.9	38.7	29.7	13.7
Dissatisfaction with Tutors bias	20.8	39.6	31.5	8.0
Culture & rules of college	25.0	31.6	33.0	10.4

Social Stress

As a result of Table 4, majority of the respondents(56%) have agreed that they felt a low level of stress as a result of social factors. 31% of respondents have experienced a moderate level of stress and least(13%) no of respondents only have a high level of social stress.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Social stress level

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	35	16	16
Moderate	62	28	44
High	123	56	100
Total	220	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 depicted the frequency distribution of factors that contribute to student's social stress. All the social stressors play the major role of higher level of stress among the college students, some stressors have the major contribution of social stress. Only 16% of participants have responded that they have experienced a lower level of stress .75.3% and 87.9% respondents also responded that they experienced a lower level of stress as a result of enjoy and conflict with friends respectively.56% of the respondents agreed that they have lack of inter personal relationship and relationship with family , Love affairs , abuse and exploitation which causes the social stress. Comparison making the social stress among the college students. 11.2% of the respondents felt that comparing them with other students in the college and society creates the social stress. Conflict with tutors causes the minimum level of social stress among the college students.

Table 5 : Summary distribution of reasons of social stress

Reasons	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Unable to enjoy with friends	75.3	12.0	10.3	2.4
Getting Conflict with Parents	87.9	10.1	1.4	0.6
Abuse & Exploitation	72.3	16.3	1.2	10.2
Lack of relationship with family	47.9	18.7	19.7	11.7
Don't Compare me with others	58.8	24.6	5.4	11.2
Difficulty in dealing with Society	28.0	42.6	17.9	11.5

Psychological Stress

According to the American Psychological Association, stress that's constant and lasts over an extended period of time, can result in high blood pressure or a weakened immune system. Stress pertaining to Psychological issues can also contribute to the development of obesity and heart disease. As presented in Table 6, 28% of the participants have experienced a low level of stress, 54% moderate and 18% high level of stress as a result of psychological stressors.

Table 6: Frequency Distribution of Psychological Stress Level

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	61	28	28
Moderate	118	54	82
High	41	18	100
Total	220	100	100

Source: Primary Data

As the results revealed in Table 7, lack of motivation (52.7%), low self-esteem (18.7%) and pessimistic thoughts (15.4%) were found least contribution to the high level of stress among the college students. It was reported that Inferiority complex (17.5%) and feeling of Incompetence (17.1%) were the major reasons for high level of stress of the students. The students from arts and science background felt that they were not competing with tech and engineering students. Lack of career guidance and personal counselling programmes were the main reason for their complex behaviours. Such kind of programmes were given the confidence more to the students community. Sometimes anxiety (22.1%) also play the reason for stress of the students.

Table 7 : Summary distribution of reasons of Psychological Stress

Reasons	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Lack of motivation	52.70	26.70	14.10	6.50
Low self-esteem	18.70	7.10	71.70	2.50
Inferiority complex	40.10	18.70	22.70	17.50
Pessimistic thoughts	15.40	13.40	68.10	3.10
Feeling of Incompetence	42.60	20.80	19.50	17.10
Anxiety	35.20	31.60	22.10	11.10

An Investigation on Stress Among Women Students Studying in Self Financing Arts & Science Colleges in Tiruchirapalli District

Behavioural Factors

From Table 8, 49% of the respondents have moderately affected by their behaviours, 31% have least and 20% have felt high level of stress.

Table 8: Frequency Distribution of behavioural factors

Level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	73	33	33
Moderate	98	45	78
High	49	22	100
Total	220	100	100

Source: Primary Data

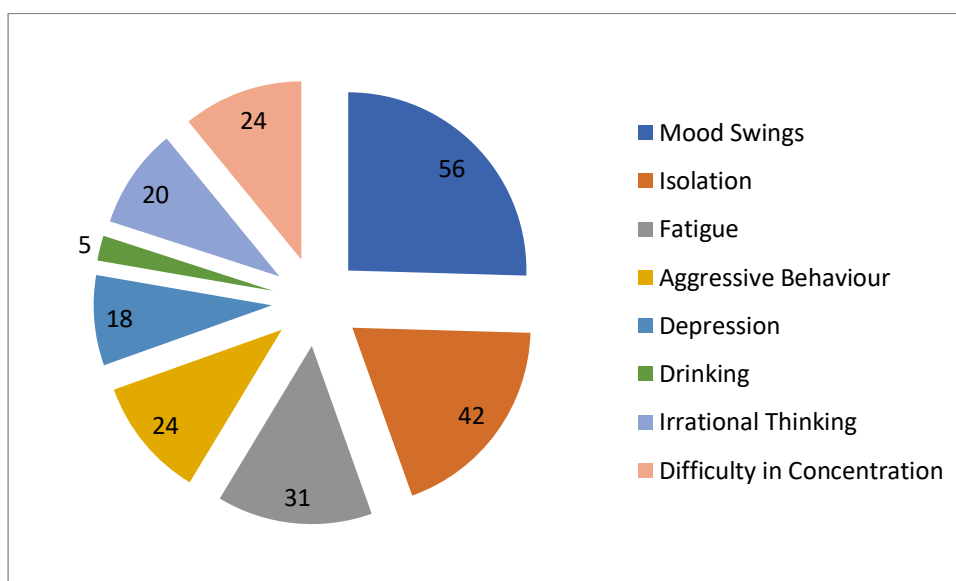


Figure 2: Percentage of affected students having Behavioural factors

The above figure presented the behavioural changes faced by the students when stress occurs such as depression, Mood Swings, Irrational thinking, Drinking. Here, it is shown that aggressive behaviour plays the major role. Less concentration in studies is the main problem faced by the female students. This will reveal the low academic performance of the students.

There were different symptoms regarding psychosomatic factors. Headache and hair fall was found in more percentages which lead to major stress among the students. Some more problems are also observed along with these students such as social problems, sleep disorders and Obesity. Except social problems, all these problems were mainly observed during examination days.

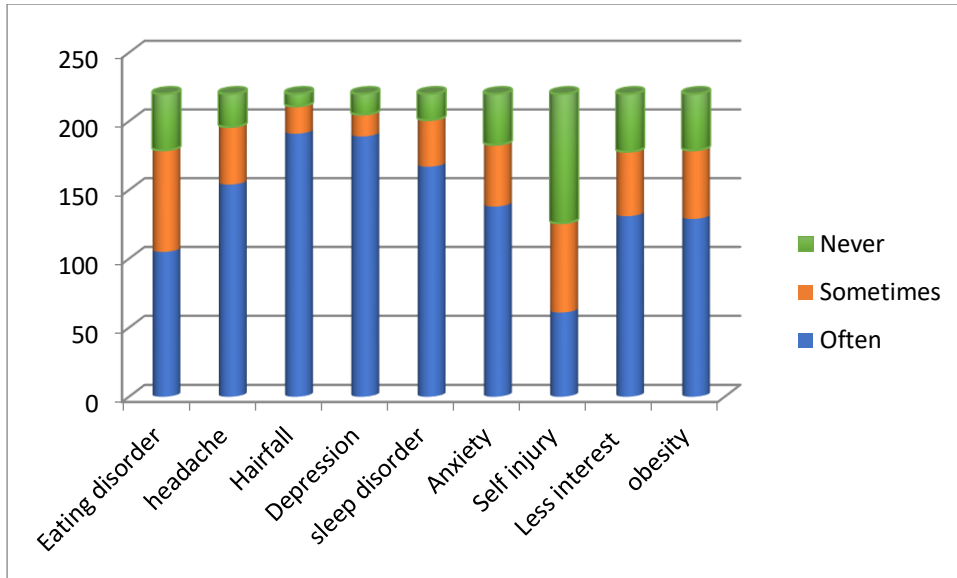


Figure 3 : Analysis of affected female students by stress

Level of stress and Demographic factors

Association between the level of overall stress and their graduation

From Table 9, the result revealed that 62(56%) out of 110 under graduate respondents were found a moderate level of stress. The rest of the respondents 36(33%) were found having lower level of stress. Only 12(11%) respondents who experienced a high level of stress. Regarding the post graduate female respondents, 44(52%) out of 85 experienced moderate stress, 30(35%) lower and 11(13%) felt higher levels of stress. The frequency distribution revealed that they more or less had a similar level of stress, but post graduate female had more than other respondents. By using chi square test, whether the association between the stress level and gender was statistically significant (Gopinath & Shibu, 2014). The result revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in stress scores between male and female $\chi^2(2, N=220) = 5.26, p=0.19$.

Table 9: Summary of Cross tabulation of Gender and level of stress

Graduation		Level of Stress			Total
		Lower	Moderate	Higher	
UG	Number	36	62	12	110
	%	33	56	11	100
PG	Number	30	44	11	85
	%	35	52	13	100
Research Scholars	Number	10	10	5	25
	%	40	40	20	100

From Table 10, the result revealed that the students with first class(Exemplary) 18 (56%) out of 32 experienced a moderate stress level and 10(31%) were found lower level of stress. Only 4 exemplary students was found experiencing a high stress. Likewise, CGPA 7.51-9.00(First class with distinction) ,

**An Investigation on Stress Among Women Students Studying in Self Financing Arts & Science Colleges in
Tiruchirapalli District**

minimum students 6(12%) out of 51 had higher stress level. 26 (51%), 19(37%) out of 51 felt moderate and low level stress respectively. The result revealed that majority of the students have got first class with CGPA6.01-7.5. 37(41%), 47(52%),7(7%) out of 91 have experienced low, moderate and higher level stress respectively. 18% (38) of students have the score with second class experienced low(34%) , moderate(50%) and higher(16) stress level. The frequency distribution of level of stress with CGPA, all the students have stress regardless of their academic performance. The chi-square test revealed $X^2 = 5.22$, $p=0.34$, no significant difference in the level of stress and their academic performance (Gopinath & Ganesan, 2014).

Table 10: Summary of Cross tabulation of Academic performance and level of stress

CGPA		Level of Stress			Total
		Lower	Moderate	Higher	
9.01 and above(Exemplary)	Number	10	18	4	32
	%	31	56	13	100
7.51-9.00(Distinction)	Number	19	26	6	51
	%	37	51	12	100
6.01-7.50(First Class)	Number	37	47	07	91
	%	41	52	07	100
5.00-6.00(Second Class)	Number	13	19	6	38
	%	34	50	16	100
Total	Number	79	110	23	212
	%	37	52	11	100

CGPA - Cumulative Grade Point Average

Conclusion

This research shown that the majority of the self – financing arts and science students have a moderate stress level. The research also revealed that psychological and academic components of stress were found to be higher among the students. Mood swings, Depression, Inferiority complex, feeling if incompetence and anxiety were the main psychological problems faced by majority of the students from arts and science colleges. Improper way of Internal mark assessment and valuation pattern of universities is also the considering factor of stress among students in academics. In regard to academic stressors, assessment of internal score, unfair grading system and rigid rules of the colleges were found the most stressful items causing high level of stress among the students (Gopinath, 2014a). According to their behavioural factors, aggressive behaviour, smoking, consumption of alcohol and drugs where is no statistically significant difference between the level of stress and gender. Because the reactions of students when stress occurs. In this study, the findings reveals that the results proved that maximum female participants were found experiencing a moderate level of stress (Gopinath, 2014b). Similarly, the study reveals that there is significant association between the level of stress and academic performance.

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**An Investigation on Stress Among Women Students Studying in Self Financing Arts & Science Colleges in
Tiruchirapalli District**

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