

Diagnosing Stress Level in Employees of Indian Banking Sector: A Study

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Abstract

Workplace stress has become a major issue for employers, employees and organizations. Tough competition has made employers realize that employees are the only source of competitive advantage. Given the pressure to compete and perform, stress is a natural concomitant. It is therefore, necessary to keep employee stress at bay to ensure good health, performance, morale and wellbeing of employees. The present paper attempts to measure the intensity of stress among bank employees of India. Organizational Role Stress Scale (ORS Scale) developed by Pareek (1983) is used for measuring the ten role stressors by observing the frequency of behaviours associated with each role stressor. Further, to find the relationship, if any, that may exist between employees of different age groups, educational level, experience and stress levels, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) is done.

Keywords: Employee Stress, Employee health, Banks, Stress Level, Stress Management.

1. Introduction

Stress is a natural concomitant of work life, a phenomenon that is inevitable today. It cannot be cordoned off from ones' life but can be coped with (Gibbons & Gibbons, 2007). In 1936, "the father of modern stress", Prof. Hans Selye, brought

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to the fore the concept of stress as non-specific response of the body to any demand. However, stress is not a new concept; rather its reference can be located in Indian *vedic* literature as “*dukha*” that is grief and “*dushchinta*” that is anxiety (Pathak, 1992). Today, people are living in the ‘age of stress’ (Pestonjee 1999). For maintaining human wellbeing and effectiveness in the organizational and non-organizational contexts it is necessary to understand stress, its nature and complexities, its causes and determinants (Gibbons & Gibbons, 2007). No doubt stress affects not only a company’s bottom line but the morale of the employees too (Pathak, 1992, Herrero et al., 2013).

Workplace stress also known as organizational stress has become a critical issue for the employers, employees and the organizations (Horwitz, 2010; NIOSH, 1999). Organizational stress arises when there is a mismatch between person-environment (French & Caplan, 1972; French et al., 1982; French & Kahn, 1962; Kahn et al., 1964; McGrath J.E., 1976). It is based on two basic assumptions that stress arises when there is a misfit between the person and environment and second, that subjective perceptions of work environments primarily determine stress (Bickford, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to have consonance between characteristics of a person and his environment so that individual and the organization both mutually benefit each other resulting in positive outcomes. There should be integration between the individual and his work environment so that they fit in like a lock and key. When work environment fails to provide opportunities for meeting individual’s needs and aspirations stress may result affecting the health, morale, performance and wellbeing of the individual. According to Vazquez (2001) people respond to meaning of the stimulus in relation to their perception of the environment. An event that is stressful for one person may be normal for others and vice versa. Thus, stress is a response as well as a function of individual appraisal of the situation (Carver & Connor, 2010; Dumitrescu, 2014; Leskovic, 2013).

When organizational stress affects human potential in the organization it may lead to impaired quality, lower productivity, absenteeism and poor health, and can affect wellbeing and morale of the employees (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Quick et al., 1997; Spielberger & Reheiser, 1994; Spielberger et al., 2002). Studies have suggested that stress results in a wide range of somatic, psychological and behavioral reactions that are detrimental to the individual (Babin & Boles, 1998; Childs & Stoeber, 2012; Singh & Dubey, 2011; Strange & Brown, 1970). This in turn has negative economic implications too (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Edworthy, 2000).

Physical danger also contributes to the stressfulness of a job (Bryce, 2001). Stress has been defined as ‘silent killer’. According to WHO and previous studies,

occupational stress when left untreated leads to various medical related illnesses such as hypertension, depression and musculoskeletal disorder (Weinberg & Francis, 2000). It also leads to alcohol and drug abuse, interpersonal relationship difficulties, depression, anxiety, and suicide (Banovcinova & Baskovaa, 2014; Chung & Wu, 2013; Herrero et al. 2013; Levey, 2001; Shapiro 2000)

Stress, however, is not always negative. It can arouse a person towards action. It can result in a new awareness; keep people happy, motivated, challenged and productive. Stress can increase alertness among employees and mobilize their adaptive capabilities. Therefore, to some extent, a certain level of stress potentially contributes to organizational effectiveness (Chusmir & Franks, 1988). Such stress is referred to as “eustress” which leads to constructive planning and corrective actions; it is essential for success in any endeavor.

2. Literature Review

Industrialization, urbanization, automation, modernization and changing work environment have led to occupational stress which is adversely affecting efficiency of employees (Jung et al., 2010). These changes have not only impacted the health and well-being of employees but have affected organizational efficiency also.

Dumitrescu (2014) investigated the influence of therapeutic interventions on occupational stress. His sample size was 60 employees of a hypermarket in Romania. Occupational stress was measured using Job Stress Scale developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983). Stress level of all the respondents was evaluated and then the participants were sent for therapeutic session in order to understand, manage and reduce occupational stress levels. Following therapeutic sessions, occupational stress level of participants was again reviewed. Findings showed that there was a significant difference between scores obtained from pre-intervention test and post intervention test demonstrating the effectiveness of psychotherapy in the management of occupational stress.

Banovcinova and Baskovaa (2014) examined the sources of occupational stress and their association with burnout in 100 midwives working in gynaecologic and obstetric clinics. The respondents reported high levels of depersonalization, average level of emotional exhaustion and high personal accomplishment. Death of patients was the most important stressing factor among midwives followed by conflict with doctors. A positive relationship was found between conflict with doctors, co-workers, work overload and personal accomplishment of midwives. Similarly, a strong relationship was found between conflict with doctor, supervisor, other midwives, work overload and emotional exhaustion of midwives.

Brate (2014) suggested that occupational stressors, specific individual differences and coping strategies play a significant role in the perception of the sources of stress and for the awareness and recognition of the effects of occupational stress. Chung and Wu (2013) conducted a study on 927 Taiwanese public transport drivers to measure the association among stress, strain, and health outcomes of occupational drivers. Parallel confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) were applied to evaluate the validity of the ERI (effort–reward imbalance) components. Physical demands, overtime, and stress-induced sleep problems were found to be the primary stressors in occupational drivers. Moreover, the study revealed an imbalance between effort and reward and over commitment levels as strong and independent predictors of strain and health outcomes.

Herrero et al. (2013) analyzed that social support positively contributes to reducing occupational stress levels caused by work demands. The variables studied were demanding work, workday, stress, overwork and social support. The findings showed that social support in workplace and help from supervisors and coworkers often help in preventing occupational stress. The study explains and quantifies the effects of intellectually demanding work, overwork, and workday in occupational stress.

Jain and Cooper (2012) studied a sample of 402 operators from business process outsourcing (BPO) organizations located in northern India to investigate the direct effect of organizational stress on organizational citizenship behaviours. A negative relationship was observed between organizational stress and organizational citizenship behaviours.

Sharma et al. (2012) found that age, salary, education, rewards, locus of control, promotion, appreciation and working spouse significantly impacted role stress experienced by the respondents. A sample of 80 employees working in the banks of Jammu state of India was surveyed. It was also revealed that if given a chance, stressed employees are more willing to avail of a voluntary retirement scheme.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Objectives of the Study

The following were the main objectives of the study.

- To measure the level of stress among employees of banking sector and to identify causes thereof.
- To suggest suitable measures for the management of work stress.

3.2 Hypothesis

Keeping in view the objectives of the study the following hypothesis were formulated.

H1: There is no difference between stress levels of employees of different age groups

H2: There is no difference between stress levels of employees of different genders

H3: There is no difference between stress levels of employees of different years of experience

3.3 Methodology

A survey was conducted among bank employees from all work levels to gain a better understanding of the factors that contribute to occupational stress experienced by the employees in this industry. In carrying out the present research both primary and secondary sources of data were used. The sample population selected for this particular research is the employees of selected banks in Dhanbad and Bokaro.

3.4 Sampling

The sampling frame comprised employees of private and public sector banks of Dhanbad and Bokaro. 150 questionnaires were distributed out of which 80 employees responded. Random sampling was used for data collection. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis, and the respondents were assured that their responses would be strictly confidential. The public sector bank included respondents of State Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Bank of India and IDBI Bank. The private sector bank included respondents of ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and HDFC Bank. The sample included employees of different age groups, hierarchical levels, qualification levels, and experience level.

3.5 Tool of Data Collection

The collection of primary data was done through questionnaire. The ORS scale (Pareek, 1983), was used for measuring the ten role stressors by observing the frequency of behaviours associated with each role stressor. The secondary data was collected from research publications, standard journal and periodicals including the government organizations and from respective records about the job related occurrence.

3.6 Measure

ORS (Organizational Role Stress) Scale comprises 50 items (Pareek, 1983). The respondents rate each item using Likert scale as 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 depending on the item's applicability to their organizational role (0 for never or rarely and 4 for always or frequently). There are various organizational factors that cause stress among employees that can affect organisational efficiency and well-being of employees. These factors may be the demands placed on the employees, the work culture, roles and responsibilities, long hours worked, work overload and pressure, the effects of these on personal lives, lack of control over work and lack of participation in decision making, poor social support, unclear management and work role and poor management style etc. The stress due to organizational factors is also termed as organizational stress. The concept of role and the related concepts of role space and role set have a built in potential for conflict and stress.

A. Role Space Conflicts: Role space has three main variables: self, the role under question, and the other roles the individual occupies. Any conflicts amongst these are referred to as role space conflicts or stress. Role space conflict has been defined as the dynamic relationship among various roles the individual occupies (Pareek, 1993). These conflicts are:

1. Self–Role Distance (SRD) – This arises due to the conflict of one's values and self-concepts with that of the requirements and expectations of the organisations.
2. Role Stagnation (SR) – This stress arises due to the feeling of being stuck in the same role. In this situation the individual perceives no opportunity for career growth and challenging tasks and preparation for the higher responsibility is absent.
3. Intra–Role Conflict - This stress arises due to incompatibility between various expectations or various functions with the role.

B. Role–Set Conflict: An individual's role is the set of roles that consists of important persons who have varying expectations from the role that the individual occupies. The conflicts which arise as a result of incompatibility amongst these expectations by the 'significant' others is known as role set conflicts.

4. Role Expectation Conflict (REC) – This stress arises when there are conflicting expectations or demands by different role senders.
5. Role Ambiguity (RA) - When individual lacks clarity about what is the expected behaviour from a job or position, the conflict he faces is called

role ambiguity. It may be in relation to the activities, responsibilities, priorities, norms or general expectations.

6. Role Erosion (RE) - When an individual feels that important functions or roles he would like to perform, are being performed or shared by other individuals.
7. Role Overload (RO) – When an individual feels that there are too many expectations from the role he performs and which he is unable to cope with, he experiences role overload. Role overload is more likely to occur where the role occupant lacks power, where there is a large variation in the expected output, and when delegation or assistance cannot procure more time.
8. Resource Inadequacy (RIn) – This stress arises when the resource required by role occupant for performing his role effectively is unavailable or not sufficient. These resources may be information, people, material, finance or facilities.
9. Personal Inadequacy (PI) - This stress arises when an individual feels he lacks adequate knowledge, skills and training to perform the task he is assigned. People who are assigned new roles without enough preparation or orientation are likely to experience this type of stress.
10. Role Isolation (RI) – In a role set, the role occupant may feel that certain roles are psychologically closer to him, while others are at a much greater distance. In case of weak or lack of linkages between the existing and desired linkages of one’s role an individual will experience stress.

Table 1: Test – Retest Reliability of the ORS Scale

S.No	Variables	Coefficient	Levels of Significance
1	IRD	0.58	.001
2	SRD	0.45	.001
3	RS	0.63	.001
4	RA	0.65	.001
5	RO	0.53	.001
6	RE	0.37	.001
7	RI	0.58	.001
8	Total Role Stress (ORS)	0.73	.001

4. Results

Respondents' Profile

The sample consisted of 80 respondents – 45 male (56%) and 35 female (44%) female. Most of the participants belong to age group 36-45 (38%) and 26-35 (36%) and only few belong to age group 46 and above (26%). Most of the participants were either pursuing postgraduate degree or graduates. Refer Table 2 for the demographic composition of the respondents.

**Table 2:
The Demographic Composition of Sample**

Demographic Variable	n	%
Age		
18-25	00	00
26-35	29	36
36-45	30	38
46 and Above	21	26
Total	80	100
Gender		
Male	45	56
Female	35	44
Total	80	100
Experience (years)		
0-5	16	20
6-10	18	23
11-15	24	30
16 years and above	22	28
Total	80	100

The ranking of various stressors obtained in the present study is given in Table 3. The mean score for the total ORS confirms that the bank employees are experiencing moderate to high level of stress. Role stagnation (RS) emerged as the most potent role stressor, with the mean of 3.04, amounting to 12.59% of total ORS. This was followed by Inter Role Distance (IRD) and Role Erosion (RE) with the mean of 2.95 and 2.46 respectively. Role Ambiguity (RA) was found to be the least potent role stressor, with the mean of 2.01, amounting to 1.36% of total ORS. Cronbach's α scores were computed to measure the internal reliability within the variables of each stressor. The Cronbach's α score of variables ranged from .605 to .941 (Table 3) which exhibit strong internal reliability. Cronbach's α score of 0.7 is considered as acceptable (Hair et al. 1998); however in behavioral studies and social psychology research the score of 0.6 or higher is acceptable (Robinson et al., 1991).

Table 3: Stressors as per their Ranking

Rank	Stressors	Mean	SD	Mean in %	Cronbach's Alpha
1	RS	3.04	0.64	12.59	.607
2	IRD	2.95	0.64	12.22	.605
3	RE	2.46	0.95	10.19	.838
4	PI	2.40	0.92	9.94	.811
5	RI	2.39	1.05	9.90	.862
6	SRD	2.31	0.98	9.57	.871
7	RIn	2.21	1.11	9.15	.866
8	REC	2.22	1.13	9.20	.906
9	RO	2.15	1.20	8.90	.919
10	RA	2.01	1.36	8.33	.941
Total	ORS	24.14			

H1: There is no difference between stress levels of employees of different age groups

To find the relationship, if any, that may exist between employees of different age groups and stress levels, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was done.

Table 4: One Way ANOVA for Stressors by Age

		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Significant/ Not Significant	Mean
IRD	Between Groups	4.208	2.104	5.679	.005	Significant	B: 2.66 C: 3.09 D: 3.18
	Within Groups	28.531	.371				
	Total	32.740					
RS	Between Groups	.045	.022	.054	.948	Not Significant	B: 3.03 C: 3.04 D: 3.09
	Within Groups	32.135	.417				
	Total	32.180					
REC	Between Groups	27.659	13.830	14.528	.000	Significant	B: 1.51 C: 2.44 D: 2.94
	Within Groups	73.300	.952				
	Total	100.959					

RE	Between Groups	23.021	11.511	18.114	.000	Significant	B: 1.78 C: 2.76 D:3.02
	Within Groups	48.931	.635				
	Total	71.952					2.46
RO	Between Groups	45.036	22.518	25.055	.000	Significant	B: 1.19 C: 2.57 D: 2.92
	Within Groups	69.202	.899				
	Total	114.238					2.15
RI	Between Groups	24.744	12.372	15.283	.000	Significant	B: 1.69 C: 2.68 D: 3.00
	Within Groups	62.332	.810				
	Total	87.075					2.39
PI	Between Groups	14.968	7.484	11.266	.000	Significant	B: 1.88 C: 2.55 D:2.94
	Within Groups	51.152	.664				
	Total	66.119					2.40
SRD	Between Groups	18.196	9.098	12.222	.000	Significant	B: 1.72 C: 2.52 D: 2.87
	Within Groups	57.316	.744				
	Total	75.512					2.31
RA	Between Groups	47.347	23.673	18.418	.000	Significant	B: 1.06 C: 2.32 D: 2.92
	Within Groups	98.971	1.285				
	Total	146.318					2.01
RIn	Between Groups	26.963	13.481	14.909	.000	Significant	B: 1.51 C: 2.41 D: 2.94
	Within Groups	69.625	.904				
	Total	96.588					2.21

As given in Table 4, there appears to be a relationship between the three groups of employees as far as their age is concerned (A=18 years to 24 years; B=25 years to 35 years; C=36 years to 45 years; D=46 years and above) and level of stress. There was no respondent under the age group of 18 years to 24 years.

Role stressors IRD, REC, RE, RO, RI, PI, SRD, RA, RIn were found to be statistically significant (Table 4). Thus, the hypothesis (H1) is *not accepted* for these stressors. It means that there appears to be a relationship between stress levels of employees and the different age groups.

It was also found that *stress level has a direct positive relationship with age*, that is, with rise in age stress level increases (Table 5). This relationship holds good for the different individual role stressors of the ORS scale. Thus, we find that with increase in age, stress due to different stressors increase. However, in case of RS this is not true.

Table 5: Total Mean

N	Mean	Std.	Deviation
2.00	30	1.8033	.33098
3.00	29	2.6366	.90551
4.00	21	2.9829	.86979
Total	80	2.4150	.87645

Table 6: Total Mean ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19.419	2	9.710	18.118	.000
Within Groups	41.266	77	.536		
Total	60.685	79			

It was also observed from the ANOVA of overall ORS (Table 6) that there is a significant relationship between age of employees and stress level ($F= 18.118$ Sig. $t= 0.00, p>0.05$). The hypothesis is not accepted.

H2: There is no difference between stress levels of employees of different genders

To find out the relationship, if any, that may exist between stress levels of employees and gender, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was done.

Table 7: One Way ANOVA for Stressors by Gender

		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Significant/ Not Significant	Mean
IRD	Between Groups	1.201	1.201	2.970	.089	Not Significant	M: 2.84 F: 3.09
	Within Groups	31.539	.404				
	Total	32.740					2.95
RS	Between Groups	.011	.011	.026	.871	Not Significant	M: 3.05 F: 3.03
	Within Groups	32.169	.412				
	Total	32.180					3.05
REC	Between Groups	1.836	1.836	1.445	.233	Not Significant	M: 2.09 F: 2.39
	Within Groups	99.123	1.271				
	Total	100.959					2.22
RE	Between Groups	.370	.370	.403	.527	Not Significant	M: 2.40 F: 2.54
	Within Groups	71.582	.918				
	Total	71.952					2.46
RO	Between Groups	.631	.631	.433	.512	Not Significant	M: 2.07 F: 2.25
	Within Groups	113.607	1.456				
	Total	114.238					2.15
RI	Between Groups	.416	.416	.375	.542	Not Significant	M:2.33 F:2.47
	Within Groups	86.659	1.111				
	Total	87.076					2.39
PI	Between Groups	.374	.374	.443	.507	Not Significant	M: 2.34 F: 2.48
	Within Groups	65.746	.843				
	Total	66.120					2.40

SRD	Between Groups	.046	.046	.047	.828	Not Significant	M: 2.29 F:2.34
	Within Groups	75.466	.968				
	Total	75.512					
RA	Between Groups	.995	.995	.534	.467	Not Significant	M:1.91 F: 2.13
	Within Groups	145.323	1.863				
	Total	146.318					
RIn	Between Groups	1.572	1.572	1.290	.259	Not Significant	M: 2.09 F: 2.37
	Within Groups	95.016	1.218				
	Total	96.587					

As seen in Table 7, it was identified that no significant relationship exists between the two groups of employees as far as their gender (M = Male F= Female) is concerned and level of stress. All the stressors were found to be statistically insignificant (Table 7). Thus, the hypothesis is *accepted*. That is, there is no relationship between the stress level of employees and the gender.

Table 8: Total Mean

N	Mean	Std.	Deviation
M	45	2.3413	.85717
F	35	2.5097	.90422
Total	80	2.4150	.87645

It was also observed from the overall ORS that the female employees experience more stress (Mean 2.51) than male employees (Mean 2.34) (Table 8). From Table 9 (ANOVA - Total Mean), it is revealed that there is no relationship between stress level of employees and the gender ($F= 0.724$, $Sig. t= 0.397$, $p>0.05$). Hence, the hypothesis (H2) is *accepted*.

Table 9: Total Mean ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.558	1	.558	.724	.397
Within Groups	60.127	78	.771		
Total	60.685	79			

H3: There is no difference between stress levels of employees of different years of experience

To find out the relationship, if any, that may exist between stress levels of employees and years of experience, ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was done.

Table 10: One Way ANOVA for Stressors by Experience

		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Significant/ Not Significant	Mean
IRD	Between Groups	4.754	1.585	4.304	.007	Not Significant	W: 2.71 X: 2.63 Y: 3.17 Z: 3.15
	Within Groups	27.985	.368				
	Total	32.740					
RS	Between Groups	.750	.250	.605	.614	Not Significant	W: 3.15 X: 2.91 Y: 3.13 Z: 2.99
	Within Groups	31.429	.414				
	Total	32.180					
REC	Between Groups	35.138	11.713	13.524	.000	Significant	W: 1.31 X: 1.64 Y: 2.55 Z: 3.00
	Within Groups	65.822	.866				
	Total	100.959					
RE	Between Groups	26.040	8.680	14.368	.000	Significant	W: 1.65 X: 1.94 Y: 2.93 Z: 2.95
	Within Groups	45.912	.604				
	Total	71.952					
RO	Between Groups	49.517	16.506	19.382	.000	Significant	W: 1.10 X: 1.36 Y: 2.84 Z: 2.79
	Within Groups	64.721	.852				
	Total	114.238					
RI	Between Groups	29.295	9.765	12.844	.000	Significant	W: 1.66 X: 1.72 Y: 2.82 Z: 3.01
	Within Groups	57.780	.760				
	Total	87.075					

PI	Between Groups	19.308	6.436	10.449	.000	Significant	W: 1.89 X: 1.79 Y: 2.76 Z: 2.89
	Within Groups	46.812	.616				
	Total	66.119					
SRD	Between Groups	24.386	8.129	12.084	.000	Significant	W: 1.73 X: 1.66 Y: 2.94 Z: 2.58
	Within Groups	51.126	.673				
	Total	75.512					
RA	Between Groups	55.721	18.574	15.581	.000	Significant	W: 0.98 X: 1.09 Y: 2.71 Z: 2.74
	Within Groups	90.597	1.192				
	Total	146.318					
RIn	Between Groups	33.128	11.043	13.225	.000	Significant	W: 1.54 X: 1.41 Y: 2.67 Z: 2.86
	Within Groups	63.460	.835				
	Total	96.588					

From Table 10, it was observed that there exists a significant relationship between the four groups of employees as far as their years of experience (W = 0-5 years, X= 6-10 years, Y= 11-15 years, Z= 16 years and above) is concerned and level of stress. All the stressors were found to be statistically significant except IRD and RS (Table 10). However, ANOVA of overall ORS shows that (see Table 12) there is a relationship between the stress level of employees and the years of experience ($F= 15.237$, $Sig. t= 0.00$, $p>0.05$). Hence, the hypothesis is *not accepted*. It is also observed that as the experience in the job increases the stress level also increases (see Table 11).

Table 11: Total Mean

N	Mean	Std.	Deviation
1.00	16	1.7713	.32553
2.00	18	1.8156	.31701
3.00	24	2.8517	.85768
4.00	22	2.8973	.91746
Total	80	2.4150	.87645

Table 12: Total Mean ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.792	3	7.597	15.237	.000
Within Groups	37.893	76	.499		
Total	60.685	79			

5. Findings and Discussions

Various studies on occupational stress have emphasized the need for understanding the effects of stress on both the organization and the employees (Bohle and Quintan, 2000; Caplan et al., 1975; Decenzo and Robbins, 2002; Gillingham, 1998; Greenberg, 2002; Greenberg and Baron, 2003; Kruum, 2001; Murray, 1993; Perrewe and Anthony, 1990; Quick, 1993; Smith 2003; Smither, 1998). The literature has also revealed that bank employees such as administrators, managers, supervisors and operatives of bank tellers are recognized as stressful positions. As cited in a press report, due to the 2008 global credit crisis banks such as Citigroup, HSBC, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and Barclays slashed jobs in their Indian operations due to slowing down of operations (The Economic Times, Jan 26, 2012). The loss of a lucrative job created tremendous stress among employees leading to psychological problems like anxiety, frustration, and depression thereby affecting the performance of the bank employees which may ultimately affect growth of the banking sector.

The present study examined occupational stress in banks in Dhanbad and Bokaro. The purpose of the research was to find out the degree of occupational stress for different groups of people as regards their age, gender and their experience. The survey revealed that Role Stagnation (RS) was the most prominent role stressor. This stressor is so strong that it dominates in each one of the three different categories viz. age, gender and experience. Employees felt that they were stuck in the same role for many years and they perceived no opportunity for career growth. A possible reason for high RS among bank employees can be attributed to the nature of job. Banking sector is marked by monotonous jobs, where an individual performs the same role repetitively for a long period of time and sees no change in future. In such a situation, an individual's potential is not utilized and there is no new learning. Challenging tasks and preparation for higher responsibility is absent. It is observed that even after promotions, many of these professionals were carrying out more or less the same functions which they were performing earlier. The change in the designation without any new challenges causes role stagnation and a feeling of frustration among these professionals.

The influence of age and gender on role stress has been reported by a number of researchers (Bhattacharya & Basu 2007, Dasgupta & Kumar 2009). It was found that as the age level of employees was increasing the stress level was increasing. One reason for this may be that as age increases, an individual is exposed to not only to on the job stressors but also off the job stressors related to family and society thus, increasing his/her overall stress. However, it was also found that there is no relation between age and the stress emanating from role stagnation. This may be because the employees become more familiar with the nature of job and as years pass by, they become used to the monotony of the job.

It was also noted that employees falling under the age group of 46 years and above experienced more stress than those in the lower age group may be because they are pressurized workaholics experiencing higher demands, higher level of conflicts, and lower degree of social support from peers. It is observed that even after promotions, many of these professionals were performing more or less the same functions which they were performing earlier. The change in the designation without any new challenges causes role stagnation and a feeling of frustration among these professionals. In such a situation individual's potential is not utilized and there is no new learning. Challenging tasks and preparation for higher responsibility is absent.

It was found that there is no relationship between the gender of employee and the stress level. Male or female, both experienced stress because they have to perform the same job in the organization and face the same competition. However, when individual mean scores of both the genders were compared it was revealed that the females experienced more stress than the males because of the need for maintaining work and family balance. IRD was found to be the most potent stressor for females may be because they were experiencing greater role conflict between the organizational and non-organizational roles. Further, it was observed that there is a significant relationship between years of service and stress level. However, it was also found that there is no relationship between stressors IRD and RS and stress level. Employees having experience of 16 years and above were found to be the most stressed among all the categories.

Role Erosion (RE) emerged as the third most potent role stressors after RS and IRD. Role Erosion arises due to the subjective feeling of an individual that some important roles that he/she would like to perform are being shared or performed by others. Professionals in insurance sector work in various teams. These project-based teams are formed depending upon the experience, skill and availability of various resources. All projects do not require same capability and skills. Many-a-times due to wrong job-person fit or due to non-availability of other project and effective utilization of an employee, these professionals have to work on

project which do not require the skills and talents which they possess. Not been assigned a favorable project and performing at a low end where once the incumbent had successfully performed a high-end job leaves him/her with stress arising due to role erosion.

Personal Inadequacy (PI) was reported as the fourth most important cause of organizational stress. This arises due to lack of knowledge, skill and training or due to time required for the preparation of a new role. This industry faces contrasting problems. Being low-ended destinations for the back office work, much of the work is very monotonous. High personal inadequacy can also be attributed to the stage of the development of this industry. Since salaries are linked to performance, it forces professionals to outperform each other. Moreover, due to lack of proper training and high pressure of the job, the stress due to personal inadequacy was observed.

Role Isolation (RI) emerged as the fifth most potent role stressor. A possible reason for role isolation may be that since the work is routine based and monotonous, the professionals do not find their work to be meaningful and are hence not able to form strong linkages with their work.

Self Role Distance (SRD) emerged as the sixth most potent stressor. The professionals working in this sector are highly educated, drawn from good institutions, but due to unemployment many employees join this sector unwillingly. Performing low-end back-office jobs or monotonous jobs cause conflict between the self-concept of the individual and those of the requirements and expectations of the organization.

Resource Inadequacy (RI) and Role Expectation Conflict (REC) were reported as seventh and eighth most important causes of organization stress. Role Overload followed by Role Ambiguity (RA) was found to be the least contributors of organizational stress.

6. Conclusion

An individual's motive for working may vary according to the nature and potency of the unsatisfied portion of his/her individual hierarchies of needs. It is evident that individuals do not join a bank and insurance company only for fair compensation and employment. Instead, they also look for job security, ease of working in flexible timing and career advancement. They look to satisfy multiple levels of needs simultaneously and aspire for a job which offers a good mix of primary, social and esteem needs.

From the findings of this study and the general overview of the literature reviewed, it can be concluded that stress has become a major problem in an organization and the focus has shifted not only to identify the potential stressors and cordoning them off but also increasing stress tolerance level of the employees because it is realized that stress is inevitable and one must learn to live with it. The expression stress tolerance denotes an individual's ability to cope with stress. It is thus the ability of a person to handle emotionally-charged situations adeptly and to resist burnout, in demanding environments. (Ram & Soumya, 2010). Four factors have been said to affect the stress tolerance level (Pestonjee, 1999). These are anger, anxiety, depression, and "Type A" personality. There are number of factors that cause the physical and psychological problems for these employees.

Numerous authors, Cooper Sloan and William, Huczynski and Buchanan, Krumm, and Yerkes and Dodson have stated that extreme levels of stress, either very low or very high do not work at their optimum. A very low level of stress undermines people's alertness or resource activation and a very high level of stress may lead to anxiety, depression and various mental and physical illnesses. This explains that optimum level of stress is associated with superior performance. Maintained at moderate levels, stress can be stimulating. Therefore, it is necessary to pay heed to stress in the work environment.

Such research is needed in many parts of India. The present study, which is an empirical investigation into stress in the banking sector in a small area of Jharkhand (Dhanbad and Bokaro), needs to be carried out in other regions as well. There is still a dearth of investigations into occupational stress and its causative factors and more research needs to be carried out. This study can be used as a stepping stone by future academic researchers for further exploratory research toward defining stress and its effects. It may be useful in helping the banking industry manage organizational stress well.

7. Recommendations

From the result of the present study and the general overview of the related literature, it can be concluded that stress is a major hazard for the organization and may affect not only the performance of employees but also their health (Kazmi et al., 2008). Therefore, it is important for the management to play an interventionist role as far as stress management programme is concerned. (Baron, 1989; Benson, 1992; Greenberg & Baron, 2003; McGrath, 1976).

Company-sponsored health-promotion programmes for managing workplace stress and increasing the stress tolerance level may help employees deal with

stress through prevention and confrontation (Greenberg, 2002; Hanson, 1993; Kreitner, 1982; Kruum 2001; McGrath, 1976; Murray, 1993; Robbins, 2002). However, prescriptions from highly institutionalized agencies or professional Yoga Gurus offering services to reduce management is often responsible for creating the culture of the organization which in turn affects the personality of the employees that may increase or decrease the vulnerability towards stress. Sometimes, employees themselves due to their own unique personality characteristics become stress prone. Thus, any effort related to stress management has to take into account the fact that the culture and the employees are the main focal points. It is important for the management to understand that it has to play an interventionist role as far as stress management is concerned. Individuals by indulging themselves in simple techniques may beat the stress to a great extent. For example relaxation, deep breathing, laughter, healthy diet, meditation provide both physiological and psychological rest (Benson, 1992; Clarke, 1989; Huczynski & Buchanan, 2001). Realistic goal setting, time management, redesigning work, employee participation, increasing feelings of personal accomplishment, balancing home and work life and becoming more self efficacious may aid in ameliorating stress management process (Greenberg, 2002; Huczynski & Buchanan, 2001; Kruum, 2001; Mauer & Pierce, 1998; Robbins, 2002). Also, the use of cognitive approaches to stress management assists him/ her to change the way he/she appraises the stressful event thereby changing the perception of the stressful situation (Lazarus 1981; Billings & Moos, 1991).

8. Limitations of the Study

This study has limitations which open up the opportunity for further research. Considering the time constraint the study is conducted only at Dhanbad and Bokaro. The same or similar kind of study can be done on a much larger population or different work settings. The opinion elicited from the research study cannot be taken as the opinion of the whole population.

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