

A Study on Stress Management Among the Employees of Nationalised Banks

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Abstract

Organizational life is quite stressful. Work pressures, tight schedules, meetings that never seem to end on time, unhelpful colleagues, critical bosses, incompetent subordinates and a host of other irritating factors may all have a cumulative effect in making the lives of modern-day executives quite miserable. As we all know, stress is the body's reaction to any demand made on it. Perception of events, whether positive or negative, activates stress. Banking, like other services, has become one of the highly competitive sectors in India. The banking organizations, since the beginning of this decade, have been facing greater challenges in terms of technological revolution, service diversification and global banking. Stress is unavoidable on the part of the employees as the systems, procedures; techniques are getting complicated with the use of advance technology. Every employee cannot cope with such rapid changes taking place in the jobs. This will lead to arising of stress among employees. An attempt has been made through this research paper to know the reasons of stress among the bank employees and the ways used by employees to cope with the stress generated at workplace. It is found that maximum number of employees in banks remains in stress. Majority of the employees try to find solution to relieve them from stress. Also the measures are also suggested in the paper to overcome stress that affects their physical and mental health.

1. INTRODUCTION

Stress is derived from the Latin word *stringere*, meaning to draw tight and was used in the 17th century to describe hardship or affliction (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997). Work stress is organized world-wide as a major challenge to workers' health and the healthiness of their organization (ILO 1986; 1992). Work-related stress is the response people may have when presented with challenge their ability to cope. Workers who are stressed are also more likely to be unhealthy, poorly motivated, less productive and less safe at work. Their organization is less likely to be successful in a competitive market.

Stress may be understood as a state of tension experienced by individuals facing extraordinary demands, constraints or opportunities. The pressures of modern life, coupled with the demands of a job, can lead to emotional imbalances that are collectively labeled 'stresses'. Stress can be brought about by

pressures at home and at work. Employers cannot usually protect workers from stress arising outside of work, but they can protect them from stress that arises through work. Stress at work can be a real problem to the organization as well as for its workers.

Excessive and otherwise unmanageable and pressure can be caused by poor work design, poor management and unsatisfactory working conditions. Similarly, these things can result in workers not receiving sufficient support from others or not having enough control over their work and its pressures. Workplace stress is the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when there is a poor match between job demands and the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. These conditions may lead to poor work performance or even injury. Job stress is also associated with various biological reactions that may lead ultimately to compromised health, such as cardiovascular disease. Stress is a prevalent and costly

problem in today's workplace. About one-third of workers report high levels of stress. One-quarter of employees view their jobs as the number one stressor in their lives. Three-quarters of employees believe the worker has more on-the-job stress than a generation ago. Evidence also suggests that stress is the major cause of turnover in organizations.

2. SOURCES/CAUSES OF STRESS

Organizational factors : Discrimination in pay/salary structure, strict rules and regulations, Ineffective communication, Peer pressure, Goals conflicts/goals ambiguity, more of centralized and formal organization structure, Less promotional opportunities, Lack of employees participation in decision-making, Excessive control over the employees by the managers.

Individual factors: There are various expectations which the family members peer, superior and subordinates have from the employee. Failure to understand such expectations or to convey such expectations lead to role ambiguity/role conflict which in turn causes employee stress. Other individual factors causing stress among employees are inherent personality traits such as being impatient, aggressive, rigid, feeling time pressure always, etc. Similarly, the family issues, personal financial problems, sudden career changes all lead to stress. Job concerning factors- Monotonous nature of job, Unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, Lack of confidentiality, Crowding Extra-organizational factors- In today's modern and technology savvy world, stress has increased. Inflation, technological change, social responsibilities and rapid social changes are other extra-organizational factors causing stress.

3. STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress management is the need of the hour. However hard we try to go beyond a stress situation, life seems to find new ways of stressing us out and plaguing us with anxiety attacks. Moreover, be it our anxiety, mind-body exhaustion or our erring attitudes, we tend to overlook causes of stress and the conditions triggered by those. In such unsettling moments we often forget that stressors, if not escapable, are fairly manageable and treatable.

4. STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS

Organizational strategies for managing stress are encouraging more of organizational communication with the employees so that there is no role ambiguity/conflict. Effective communication can also change employee views. Managers can use better signs and symbols which are not misinterpreted by the employees; Encourage employees' participation in decision-making. This will reduce role stress; Grant the employees greater independence, meaningful and timely feedback, and greater responsibility; the organizational goals should be realistic, stimulating and particular. The employees must be given feedback on how well they are heading towards these goals; Encourage decentralization; Have a fair and just distribution of incentives and salary structure; Promote job rotation and job enrichment; Create a just and safe working environment; Have effective hiring and orientation procedure; Appreciate the employees on accomplishing and over-exceeding their targets; Individual strategies for managing stress are The employees should make a "to-do" list daily, prioritize the acts in the list and plan the acts accordingly. Take regular breaks during work to relax you. By effective time management, the employees can achieve their targets timely and can meet work pressures and, thus, avoid stress; Do hard work. Strive to achieve your goals but do not do it to the harm of family, health, or peer; indulge in physical exercises. It helps in effective blood circulation, keeps you fit, diverts mind from work pressures; encourage a healthy lifestyle. Take a regular sleep, have plenty of water, have healthy eating habits. Promote relaxation techniques such as yoga, listening music and meditation; the employees should have optimistic approach about their work. They should avoid connections with negative approach employees; the employees should have emotional intelligence at workplace. They should have self-awareness, self confidence and self-control at workplace; the employees should build social support. They should have close connections with trustworthy peer who can listen to their problems and boost their confidence level. This social network will help the employees to overcome stress; Employee counseling is a very good strategy to overcome employee stress. Through counseling, employees can become aware of their

strengths and how to develop those strengths; their weaknesses and how to eliminate them; and they can develop strategies for changing their behavior.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Most of the employees fear with the fact that lack quality in their work puts stress on them. It is found that maximum number of employees in banks remains in stress. 50% employees feel that they are overloaded with work. 44% employees feel tensed due to their non-achievement of their target of work. 38% employees accepted that they will obey the order of their boss by sacrificing their important domestic function. It indicates fear and stress among employees. 24% employees feel stress due to their family related problems.

It means such employees feel greater level of stress as compared to other employees. Half of the employees accepted that there is conflict among the employees. It is a concern for top management. Only 48% employees feel that strategies used by banks to manage stress of employees are effective. Majority of the employees try to find solution to relieve them from stress. 50% employees use YOGA or other ways to

relieve them from stress. In spite of stress, majority of the employees balance in their social life.

6. SUGGESTIONS

As most of the employees feel that they feel stress at work, banks should take positive steps to make their employees free from stress so that they can work with optimum efficiency and effectiveness. Employees of the banks should be made free from not only fear of quality of performance but also from other types of fear generating in their minds. Guidance and counseling, quality consciousness awareness programs, psychological support can be provided to employees. The concept of five day week working can be implemented in banks so that the employees can give more time to themselves and their family and discharge other social responsibilities. Banks should arrange YOGA camp, meditation camp, entertaining programs etc. The working environment should be made clean and safer. There should be proper work division in all departments. There should be friendly environment from colleagues and especially boss. Employees should try for quality of performance rather than fear from it.

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