

# OCCUPATIONAL STRESS EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN EMPLOYEES IN BANKING SECTOR

(WITH REFERENCE TO THIRUVARUR DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU)

<sup>1</sup>Dr.R.Prakash Babu, <sup>2</sup>K.Vembu

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, AVVM Sri Pushpam College (Autonomous), Poondi, Thanjavur.

<sup>2</sup>Asst.Professor, S.T.E.T. Women`s College, Mannargudi.

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**Abstract:** Women in India have saved a lot after independence, From just a experienced homemaker, women today have gained skills and potential of not just being a homemaker but being at parity with their male counterpart. Moreover varying roles of working women, they have preserved the conventional work culture of household. Now a day the Banking sector are thriving towards high rate that the women have to work for longer hours to sustain the standard of living and accomplish their basic needs. In spite of having the recent technologies and services, women feel to be work loaded and stressed.

**Keywords:** Banking sector, Women Employees, Occupational Stress.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive market, survival and prosperity of business will depend critically on the ways in which an organization manages its resources, especially the human resources. Today human resources occupy, more than ever, the center stage of all economic activities. It is alarming time for all those organizations that wish to be successful in global markets to gear up and implement a desired shift in their prevailing human resource management practices and leverage their human resource along with the other resources. Also to become more flexible and innovative, organizations need to adopt new ways of attracting, retaining and motivating employees who are keen to learn and can contribute to the growth and development of the organization.

With the ushering in the new millennium, experts are of the view that the internal customer i.e. the human resources would be playing a major role in driving the 21<sup>st</sup> century organization. To cope with the shift in external environment business organizations have to put themselves to litmus test to check the objectivity of the prevailing human resource practices. In the present era of computerization, organizations that are planning to operate in global scenario will have to prepare their employees accordingly. An organization can flourish by chalking out well-meditated strategic implementation plan for using information technology in making the human resource function globally competitive.

## II. IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE STRESS

Both physical and psychological stressors have a tremendous impact on not only the employees' health, but also the organization's wealth. Some of the impacts of employee stress are:

### 2.1 Absenteeism

One of the grave impacts of employee stress is absenteeism. Employees under stress do not feel motivated to work and therefore take more number of leaves citing different reasons. As more and more employees cite ill health as the reason,

the cost would all be added to the organization as medical reimbursements. Employees might be absent from work to use it as a coping mechanism against stress. Frequent employee absenteeism not only costs millions to the organizations, but it also affects the overall productivity.

### **2.2 Loss of Judgment**

A stressed out employee loses focus on his work. Due to this, the employee misses out vital information signals leading to ineffective decision making. Further, various research studies have proved that stress also slows down the thinking process. According to researchers, the enzyme - endorphins released under stress, slow down the ability to think and affect the ability of judgment in an individual.

### **2.3 Employee Conflicts**

Stress also might have an impact on the interpersonal relationships at workplace. A person under stress tends to be easily irritated leading to troubled relationships with his colleagues.

### **2.4 Workplace Accidents**

Stress results in poor concentration and pre-occupation of the mind leading to workplace accidents. It is generally reported that in their drive to attain deadlines and accomplish tasks, employees tend to ignore safety rules leading to accidents. According to a research conducted by Workers' Occupational Health Services conclude workers under stress are thirty per cent more likely to be involved in accidents than those experiencing low levels of stress. In addition to all the above mentioned problems, organizations would also face high turnover rates of employees, high replacement costs, loss of intellectual capital and increasing grievances. Many organizations have realized the serious impacts of employee stress and have started taking steps to combat it. The responsibility of making a workplace employee friendly and healthy lies with both the employer and the employees.

## **III. CAUSES OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS IN SERVICE SECTOR**

### **3.1 Profile Of Indian Overseas Bank**

Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) a leading commercial bank based in Chennai, India was established in 1937. IOB had the distinction of commencing operations simultaneously in three branches at Karaikudi, Chennai, and Yangon (Myanmar). IOB aimed to encourage overseas banking and foreign exchange operations. So, it soon opened its branches in Penang and Singapore.

IOB was the first bank to venture into consumer credit, as it introduced the popular Personal Loan Scheme. In 1964, the Bank started computerization in the areas of inter-branch reconciliation and Provident Fund accounts. Indian Overseas Bank was one of the 14 major banks which were nationalized in 1969. After nationalization, the Bank emphasized on opening its branches in rural parts of India. In 1979, IOB opened a Foreign Currency Banking Unit in the free trade zone in Colombo.

Today, Indian Overseas Bank boasts of a vast domain in banking sector with over 2303 domestic branches and 6 branches overseas. Indian Overseas Bank has an ISO certified in-house Information Technology department, which has developed the software that 2303 branches use to provide online banking to customers.

The bank has achieved 100 per cent networking status as well as 100 percent Core Banking Solution status of branches with a total number of 2303 CBS branches and 6 Extension Counters. IOB also has a network of about 1300 ATMs all over India and IOB's International VISA Debit Card is accepted at all ATMs belonging to Cash Tree and NFS networks. IOB offers internet Banking (E-See Banking) and is one of the banks that the Government of India has approved for online payment of taxes.

### **3.2 Causes of Occupational Stress in Service Sector**

Occupational stress may be caused by a complex set of reasons. Some of the most visible causes of workplace stress in public sector banks can be grouped as (a) Individual level stressors and group level stressors and organizational stressors which are detailed in the following pages.

### **3.3 Individual Level Stressors**

These stressors relate directly to a person's personality and job responsibilities. The most common bank employee's individual level stressors depend on the type of personality, role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity.

#### **3.3.1 Personality type**

Personality characteristics such as authoritarianism, rigidity, masculinity, femininity, extraversion, supportiveness, spontaneity, emotionality, tolerance, locus of control, anxiety and need for achievements are particularly relevant to individual stress.

#### **3.3.2 Role overload**

Too much work causes stress to an employee. Excess workload has become the norm these days. Due to technology, more public sector banks have reduced their work-force and restructured work, leaving the remaining employees with more tasks and fewer resources of time to complete them.

#### **3.3.3 Role conflict**

Role conflict occurs where employees face competing demands. There are two types of role conflict in the banks. Inter-role conflict occurs when an employee has two roles that are in conflict with each other. Personal conflict occurs when personal values clash with organizational goals.

#### **3.3.4 Role ambiguity**

Role ambiguity exists when employees are uncertain about their responsibilities, functions, performance expectations and levels of authority. This tends to occur when one enters new situations, such as newly recruited employees or transferred employees joining the banks or taking new assignments, because they are uncertain about tasks and management and customers expectations.

#### **3.3.5 Task characteristics**

Task characteristics are also individual –level stressors. Tasks are more stressful when they involve decision making, monitoring equipment or exchange information with others. These can be chronic gynecological problems for women. Mental symptoms can be so severe that a stressed employee working long hours can almost be unmanageable.

The employees working long hours will be more vulnerable to stress of sleeping patterns, emotional problems and family commitments while juggling a varying work timetable, sometimes with little social support.

#### **3.3.6 Economic problems**

Economic problems created by individuals over extending their financial resources are another set of personal troubles that can create stress for employees and distract their attention from work.

### **3.4 Group Level Stressors**

Group level stressors are caused by group dynamics and managerial behavior. Managers create stress for employees by

- (i) Exhibiting inconsistent behavior,
- (ii) Failing to provide support,
- (iii) Showing lack of concern,
- (iv) Focusing on negatives while ignoring good performance,
- (v) Sexual harassment is yet another group level stressor. Sexual harassment refers to unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that affects the job related performance of an employee adversely.
- (vi) Lack of group cohesiveness
- (vii) Lack of management and customers support
- (viii) Conflict with co-workers and customers

### **3.5 Organisational Stressors**

There are many causes of stress within an organization including organizational structure, leadership style and quality, the demands of tasks and roles, balancing efficiency of services with high quality standards, the increasing "24/7" mentality,

structural changes and changes in business processes, and the quality of communication throughout the organization. The major organizational stressors are;

### ***3.5.1 Job Insecurity***

Organized workplaces are going through metamorphic changes under intense economic transformations and consequent pressures. Reorganizations, takeovers, mergers, downsizing and other changes have become major stressors for employees, as public sector banks try to live up to the competition to survive. These reformations have put demand on everyone, from a chairman to a mere sub staff.

### ***3.5.2 High Demand for Performance***

Unrealistic expectations, especially in the time of corporate reorganizations, which, sometimes, puts unhealthy and unreasonable pressures on the employee can be a tremendous source of stress and suffering. Increased workload, extremely long working hours and intense pressure to perform at peak levels all the time for the same pay can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained. Excessive travel and too much time away from family also contribute to an employee's stressors.

### ***3.5.3 Technology***

The expansion of technology for practicing e-banking in the public sector banks has resulted in heightened expectations for productivity, speed and efficiency, increasing pressure on the individual employee to constantly operate at peak performance levels. Employees working with computers for long hours are under constant stress. There is also the constant pressure to keep up with technological breakthroughs and improvisations, forcing employees to learn new software all the times.

### ***3.5.4 Competition***

The limited number of positions available for promotions some time causes employees to compete excessively for the positions. As organizations restructure and remove layers of management, especially middle management, there are fewer positions available for career advancements.

### ***3.5.5 Lack of Participation in Decision Making***

Managers have traditionally not allowed subordinates to participate in decision making. Consequently, employees typically feel that they have little control of the work environment in their lives.

### ***3.5.6 Empowerment***

The empowerment of employees offers advantages to the banks and its employees. Some employees appreciate the greater responsibility and decision-making authority and empowerment. But employees who have no interest in empowerment and responsibility may experience greater level of stress. Some people find group work stressful and their work may suffer when they work in a team setting.

### ***3.5.7 Conflict with other people***

Organization, by their very nature, requires people to work with one another. The current trend is for employees to be assigned to work teams where they are more dependent on one another. The interaction with more people provides more opportunities for conflict between fellow employees. Some people like to work in teams, but there are others who feel that the interaction with others would inevitably result in conflicts.

### ***3.5.8 Workplace Culture***

Adjusting to the workplace culture can be intensely stressful. Making oneself adapt to the various aspects of workplace culture such as communication patterns, hierarchy, dress code, workspace and most importantly working and behavioral patterns of the branch managers as well as the co-workers can be a lesson in life. Maladjustment to workplace cultures may lead to subtle conflicts with colleagues or even with superiors. In many cases office politics or gossips can be major stress inducers.

### 3.5.9 Personal or Family Problems

Employees going through personal or family problems tend to carry their worries and anxieties to the workplace. When one is in a depressed mood, his unfocused attention or lack of motivation affects his ability to carry out job responsibilities.

### 3.5.10 Job stress and Women

Women may suffer from mental and physical harassment at workplaces, apart from the common job stress. Sexual harassment in workplace has been a major source of worry for women, since long. Women may suffer from tremendous stress such as `hostile work environment harassment`, which is defined in legal terms as `offensive or intimidating behavior in the workplace`. This can consist of unwelcome verbal or physical conduct. These can be a constant source of tension for women in job sectors. Also, subtle discriminations at workplaces, family pressure and societal demands add to these stress factors.

### 3.5.11 Objectives of the Study

- 1.To discover the work place stressors among the women employees in the Banks.
- 2.To identify degree of the stress among the women employees in the Banks.

## IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As we witness an increasing number of women work force in the public sectors Bank. This study focus on women employees in public sectors banking in the Thiruvarur district. The women executives experience a lot of stress due to various problems like glass ceiling, lack of training and development opportunities, sexual harassment at workplace and soon. They also face same problems like work, family, conflict, hostile environment at home, children and elderly care etc.

## V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to determine the degree of stress faced by women employees in the banking sector in the district of Thiruvarur. The data's relating to the women employees were collected from public sector banks. The researcher random selected 100 women employees from the banks and the details are shown in the table below.

**Table 1.** Level of Stress among Women employees in the Banks.

S.No.	Stress level	Respondents	Percentage
1.	High	65	65
2.	Normal	35	35
3.	Low	----	----
	Total	100	100

**Table 2.** Level of work overload

S.No	Level of Workload	No,of respondents	Percentage
1.	High	45	45
2.	Normal	55	55
3.	Low	----	----
	Total	100	100

**Table 3** Lack of participation in decision making

S.No	Lack of participation	No,of respondents	Percentage
1.	Strongly agree	60	60
2.	agree	35	35
3.	disagree	05	05
	Total	100	100

**Table 4** Technological changes

S.No	Technological changes	No,of respondents	Percentage
1.	Strongly agree	70	70
2.	agree	30	30
3.	disagree	----	----
	Total	100	100

**Table 5** Does women employees in banking sectors have behavioral effects due to stress

S.No	Level of Workload	No,of respondents	Percentage
1.	Strongly agree	80	80
2.	agree	20	20
3.	disagree	----	----
	Total	100	100

**Table 6** poor working conditions, rotating workshift,role ambiguity which is mostly affect the employees

S.No	Causes of stress	No,of respondents	Percentage
1.	Poor working condition	25	25
2.	Rotating shifts	25	25
3.	Role ambiguity	50	50
	Total	100	100

**Hypothesis:**

Ho: There is no significant association in the stress level of the banking employees and level of work load.

H1: There is a significant association in the stress level of the banking employees and level of work load.

Observed value:

Level of work load	Level of stress		Level of stress
	High	Normal	
High	30	15	45
Normal	35	20	55
	65	35	100

Expected value:

$$45/100 \times 65 = 29$$

Expected value

Level of work load	Level of stress		Level of stress
	High	Normal	
High	20	16	45
Normal	36	19	55
	65	35	100

### Applying $\chi^2$ test

O	E	O-E <sup>2</sup>	O-E <sup>2</sup> /E
30	29	1	0.0286
35	36	1	0.0222
15	16	1	0.1111
20	19	1	0.0909
			<u>0.2528</u>

$$X^2 = 0.2528$$

$$\text{Degree of freedom} = (c-1)(R-1) = (2-1)(2-1) = 1$$

Degree of freedom at

Table Value = 3.841
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The table value of  $\chi^2$  for degree of freedom at 5% level of significance is 3.841. The calculated value of  $\chi^2$  is 0.2528. The calculated value of  $\chi^2$  is greater than the table value. So the hypothesis is rejected. There is significant association between level of stress in public sector banking women employees and this level of workload.

## VI. CONCLUSION

1. The researcher concludes that there are various stressors among women employees in public sector Banks such as poor working conditions relating work shifts, worth overload, role ambiguity, lack of participation in decision making, in appropriate leadership style, lack of social support, transfer, poor working relationship and technological changes in the organization.
2. Excessive stress may result in bodily disturbances like peptic ulcers, migraine, headache, fever etc.,
3. High level of stress may affect self confidence, lower self-esteem, lack in concentration and reduce job satisfaction.
4. By testing the hypothesis, the researcher concludes that high level of stress is experienced by women employees due to factors like role ambiguity, role overload, lack of supervisory support, Technological changes.