

ORGANISATIONAL ROLE STRESS AMONG WOMEN BANK OFFICIALS - A STUDY IN JORHAT CITY, ASSAM

Miss Aditi Kejriwal

Jagannath Barooah College, Jorhat, Assam

ABSTRACT

Stress at work in India has been singled out as an important area of investigation for various reasons: the substantial amount of time most people spend at the workplace and the importance of work as a means of implementing and fulfilling their aspirations, expectations, etc. So, a well-balanced and integrated effort is paramount necessary to conduct certain exhaustive studies incorporating therein all essential dimensions of stress experienced by individuals so as to explore their effect on the organisational and private health. In this backdrop, the current study is proposed. Our current study aims to rank the various organisational role stressors as identified by Udai Pareek among the women bank officials based on the calculation of mean and standard deviation. Further, the correlation coefficient value is ascertained to examine the effect of various role stressors on the various socio-demographic variables such as their age, marital status, educational qualification, monthly income and years of service. Finally, a comprehensive analysis of the major symptoms which women bank officials encounter as a result of their organisational role stress is made, and the most likely coping remedies are analysed.

Keywords: Stress, Organizational Role Stressors, Women Bank Officials.

INTRODUCTION

Concept of Stress

Stress (or tension, as we commonly call it), is a force inside us that creates a charge and is felt in the form of energy- both physical and mental. Similar to the case of overcharging of electrical appliances, so is the case with the human mind. The higher the amount of charge that remains unutilized, the greater are the chances of it bursting out louder. In other words, stress results due to the absence of an answer to a question, lack of return and recognition on one's invested time and endeavour and lack of two-way relationship with the environment. These forces compel an individual to change his environment or to change himself. If the person fails to change the environmental effects forgetting that certain things in the environment cannot be changed, he

feels dejected, and his morale goes down giving him a complex that he is not capable of doing anything. This results in tension, further leading to stress.

The word "stress" is extracted from a Latin word "stringi" which means "to be drawn tight". Being popularised in the 17th century, Stress meant hardships, straits, adversity or affliction. Later in the 18th and 19th centuries stress as used in the physical sciences, equated it with internal force or pressure generated within a solid body by the action of an external force causing rupture or distortion of the body.

Hans Selye, the Father of Modern Stress Research, said in 1956 that stress is not always harmful. It all depends upon how an individual takes it. In 1936, he brought the concept of stress in a medical sense to indicate overloading of the human body.

The popularity of stress concept gradually dwindled in the physiological field, and during the past 40 years, the term "stress" has come into wide use in relation to the work organisations.

In general, stress is a vibrant condition in which an individual is oppressed with an opportunity, restraint or desire related to what he or she craves for and the outcome which is perceived to be both uncertain and important. S.P. Robbins (1999) defines stress as an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological and behavioural deviations in individuals/ members of an organisation.

Concept of Organizational Role Stress

Right from the day of entering into service till the day of retirement, an individual is invariably exposed to various stressful situations for one reason or the other. Organisations are an important place of origin of stress, and employees' workloads and professional deadlines have increased manifold. These advancements have created stress among employees in the form of occupational stress, which Beehr & Newman (1978) defines as a situation wherein job-related factors interact with the workers to change such that a person is forced to vary from normal functioning. Occupational Stress is further defined by Sauter, Lim, and Murphy (1996) as the damaging physical and psychological responses that arise when the demands of a job do not equivelent the worker's abilities, resources, or needs. Workplace stress is thus a harmful physical and emotional response that can happen when there are conflicting job demands of an employee and the amount of control an employee has over meeting his demands.

The insights of the effects of stress on an individual has changed. Stress is not always dysfunctional, and, if positive, can prove one of the most important factors in improving productivity within an organisation (Spielberger, 1980). If not positive, stress has a number of physical and psychological disorders among employees and can be responsible for frustration,

haste, and job dissatisfaction. As a result, the lack of work may cause complacency within the organisation. Stress is, therefore, multidimensional, and its effects depend on whether employees perceive it as a problem or a solution.

One of the pioneers of research on organisational role stress, Pareek (1993) has reiterated that the performance of a role in an organisation has the built-in potential for conflict due to which stress may start rearing its head. Such stress can contribute to various dysfunctional outcomes for the organisation like job-related tensions, job dissatisfaction, lower performance, etc. (Behrman and Perreault, 1984; Singh, 1992; Shahu&Gole, 2008).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine the effect of various role stressors on the multiple socio-demographic variables of the women bank officials.
- To study the significant symptoms faced by women bank officials due to their stress level as well as to analyse the most likely remedies resorted by them to reduce their stress.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Aditya and Sen (1993) compared the level of stress between Indian men and women executives. Results showed that male and female executives differ significantly on role ambiguity, role conflict, inter-role distance, prospects and human relations at work, femininity and masculinity dimensions. The authors discussed the results in terms of greater reluctance to self-disclose among men and different socialisation patterns for men and women.

Sahu and Mishra (1995) had conducted a study to find out the gender differences in context between different kind of stresses experienced by them in different walks of their life. 120 men and 120 women teachers have been selected as a sample for the study. The study revealed a positive relationship between work-related stress and society related stress in the case of males in contrary to females wherein a significant positive relationship had been observed between family stress and society related stress.

In a study conducted by Triveni and Aminabhavi (2002), the results revealed that women professionals experience significantly higher occupational stress as compared to men due to under participation. Tripathi and Bhattacharji (2012), studied the psychological stress among employed women and suggested that housework is exclusively considered as women's work that consequently increased the workload on working women.

Mohsin Aziz (2004) conducted a study to investigate the intensity of organisational role stress among women information technology professionals in the Indian private sector. For this purpose, 264 women were selected as a sample. The results revealed that resource inadequacy has emerged as the most potent role stressor, followed by role overload and personal inadequacy. Further, the research also revealed that the level of education does not appear as a significant differentiator among different stressors.

In order to measure the degree of life stress and role stress among professional women, Anitha Devi (2007) conducted a study wherein 180 women professional from six different occupations were chosen as a sample. The results of the study revealed that younger people experience higher life stress and role stress as compared to older people. Further, it was unveiled that there was a direct relationship between years of experience and role stress, which means that stress increases with the increase in years of experience. And there was an indirect relationship between income and stress level, which means an increase in one will lead to a decrease in other. Finally, it was concluded that younger people are subjected to more stress due to lack of years of experience, and older people are susceptible to stress due to an increase in their responsibility.

Dr Anil Kumar & Meenakshi Yadav (2014) conducted a study to find out that if there is a notable difference between the age of the working women and the various occupational stress faced by the working women. For this purpose, 120 working women have been taken as a sample. The results revealed that working women above 55 years of age face the problems of occupational stress more as compared to the working women belonging to other age groups. Working women from the age group of 35-45 years feel that they are endowed too much responsibility in contrary to working women from different age groups. However, working women in lower age groups least feel that they are having inadequate opportunities and infrastructure when compared with other age groups.

Vemuri Swathi, M. Sudhir Reddy (2016) conducted a study to find out about the working women stress and the factors in the working environment that cause stressful situations among working women. The results revealed working women report more non-fatal but long term and disabling health problems. Further, the review of the literature emphasised that women employees are endowed with many tasks simultaneously, as a result of which they find themselves juggling between family and work responsibilities which leads to more stress in them.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The research paper titled " ORGANISATIONAL ROLE STRESS AMONG WOMEN BANK OFFICIALS - A STUDY IN JORHAT CITY, ASSAM " adopts a descriptive research design

and makes an empirical analysis to make an in-depth study of various role stressors experienced by women officials working in banks in Jorhat city of Assam.

Considering stress as a paramount syndrome among bank officials and due to lack of numerous works undertaken by the researchers to assess the level of stress among the women bank officials particularly in this area, Jorhat city is selected as the region of the study. The total number of 21 public sectors banks and 7 private sector banks are found to be operating in this region. One branch of each bank is selected as a sample based on convenience. The survey revealed that a total of 62 women officials were employed in public sector banks so chosen for the study and a total of 21 women officials were employed in the private sector banks. The study involves a census method in the distribution of the questionnaires to the women officials of the selected banks, and the questionnaire was served to each of the women respondents. Out of the total of 83 questionnaires being distributed to the respondents, 10 responses did not enter in the final analysis due to incomplete information provided in the questionnaire. So, the responses of only 73 respondents were found to be suitable for inclusion in the study.

The development of the research instrument was based on the Organizational Role Stress (ORS) scale developed by Pareek (Pareek, 1983) (i.e., the second part of the questionnaire). The first part of the questionnaire has been designed to extract the socio-demographic variables relating to the respondents such as their age, gender, monthly income, years of experience, etc. The third and fourth part of the questionnaire has been framed in such a manner to find out the significant symptoms which occur the most as a result of organisational stress and to extract the techniques resorted by the respondents to reduce their stress level respectively.

To classify the collected data, tabulation is done with the help of self-developed application software, and further analysis is done using SPSS 16.0 version.

The ten stressors, as identified by Udai Pareek used in the study, are as follows:

- a. Inter-Role Distance (IRD): This kind of stress is experienced when there is a conflict between organisational and non-organizational roles.
- b. Role Stagnation (RS): This type of stress is the result of a rift between the desire to outgrow preceding role and to occupy a new role effectively. It is a feeling of being stuck in the same position. It results in the belief that there is no opportunity for one's career progress.
- c. Role Expectation Conflict(REC): Multiple expectations generate this kind of stress by different significant persons about the same role such as conflicting demands originating from colleagues, i.e., superiors, subordinates, and peers in the organisation.

d. Role Erosion (RE): This kind of stress is experienced when the role occupants feel that functions that should belong to his role are being transferred or performed by other roles occupants. It is a feeling of responsibility without adequate power. This also happens when, but the credit for the same goes to someone else.

e. Role Overload (RO): This kind of stress emerges when the role occupants feel that high expectation from the role than what the occupants can cope with. It has two aspects: qualitative and quantitative.

f. Role Isolation (RI): This role stress reflects the lack of psychological interaction between the occupant's role and other roles in the same role group. It is characterised by the feeling that others do not reach out easily, indicative of the absence of a strong linkage of one's role with other roles.

g. Personal Inadequacy (PI): This role stress arises when the role occupants feel that he/she does not have the necessary skills or training for effectively performing the functions expected from his/ her role. This happens when the organisation do not impact regular exercise to enable the employees to match with the rapid changes both within and outside the organisation.

h. Self-Role Distance (SRD): This kind of stress is experienced when there is a conflict between one's values and self-concepts with the demand of the organisational roles.

i. Role Ambiguity (RA): This kind of stress is experienced when there is a lack of clarity about the demands of the role which may arise because of the lack of information or understanding.

j. Resource Inadequacy (RI_n): This kind of stress is evident when there is a lack of availability of resources needed for effective role performances.

This ORS scale is an extensively used instrument to measure these role stressors. This scale contains five questions for each role stressor and a total of 50 statements, and uses a five-point scale, from 0 to 4.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's alpha value	No. of items
.897	10

Table 1 reveals that Cronbach's alpha value for the ORS scale used is 0.897, indicating that the chosen scale is reliable for the study.

Table 2: Ranking of Role Stressors among the Women Bank Officials

Role Stressors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Inter Role Distance	8.81	4.037	1
Role Stagnation	6.89	3.736	3
Role Expectation Conflict	6.11	3.352	7
Role Erosion	5.67	2.958	10
Role Overload	7.15	3.929	2
Role Isolation	6.19	3.455	5
Personal Inadequacy	6.15	3.373	6
Self-Role Distance	6.38	3.483	4
Role Ambiguity	5.38	3.695	9
Resource Inadequacy	5.85	3.303	8

As revealed by Table 2, Inter- Role Distance is the most prominent role stressor experienced by women bank officials followed by role overload and role stagnation, whereas role erosion emerged out to be least stressful role stressor. For further investigation, the ORS Scores has been classified into four categories, namely, Low-stress group (0-5), Medium Stress Group (6-10), Medium High-Stress Group (11-15) and Very High-Stress Group (16-20).

Table 3: Level of Stress among Women Bank Officials

Role Stressors	Low Stress		Medium Stress		High Stress		Very High Stress	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Inter Role Distance	15	20.5	34	46.6	22	30.1	2	2.7
Role Stagnation	31	42.5	27	37	14	19.2	1	1.4
Role Expectation Conflict	29	39.7	36	49.3	8	11	0	0
Role Erosion	34	46.6	33	45.2	6	8.2	0	0
Role Overload	28	38.4	33	45.2	12	16.4	0	0
Role Isolation	35	47.9	29	39.7	9	12.3	0	0

Personal Inadequacy	28	38.4	37	50.7	7	9.6	1	1.4
Self-Role Distance	27	37	39	53.4	5	6.8	2	2.7
Role Ambiguity	35	47.9	34	46.6	3	4.1	1	1.4
Resource Inadequacy	36	49.3	33	45.2	3	4.1	1	1.4

As depicted by the above table, more than 45% of women bank officials face "medium stress" in all the role stressors except that of role stagnation and role isolation. It can also be observed that no women bank officials face a "very high degree of stress" when it comes to stressors such as role expectation conflict, role erosion, role overload and role isolation whereas only less than 3% of women officials experience a "very high level of stress" in case of other role stressors.

Table 4: Correlation between various Role Stressors and socio-demographic Variable

Variable/ Stressors	Inter-Role Distance	Role Stagnation	Role Expectation Conflict	Role Erosion	Role Overload	Role Isolation	Personal Inadequacy	Self-Role Distance	Role Ambiguity	Resource Inadequacy
Age	-0.240*	-0.161	-0.069	0.063	-0.087	-0.085	-0.028	-0.011	-0.074	-0.018
Marital Status	-0.029	-0.012	0.001	-0.045	0.036	0.057	-0.113	-0.059	-0.132	-0.006
Educational Qualification	-0.073	-0.076	-0.084	0.151	0.139	-0.137	0.069	0.079	0.021	-0.088
Monthly Income	-0.103	-0.167	0.025	0.165	-0.009	-0.011	-0.019	0.043	0.117	0.165
Years of service	-0.13	-0.208	-0.112	0.076	-0.211	-0.193	0.043	0.01	-0.185	-0.088

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (two-tailed)

Table 4 reveals the influence of socio-demographic variables like age, marital status, educational qualification, monthly income and years of service on the various role stressors. For an in-depth analysis, a summarised table is prepared, which classifies the correlation values into four groups:

0 to 0.5 = Weak Positive Correlation (WPC)

0.5 to 1 = Strong Positive Correlation (SPC)

0 to -0.5 = Weak Negative Correlation (WNC)

-0.5 to -1 = Strong Negative Correlation (SNC)

Table 5: Summary of Correlation Matrix

Variable/ Stressors	Inter-Role Distance	Role Stagnation	Role Expectation Conflict	Role Erosion	Role Overload	Role Isolation	Personal Inadequacy	Self-Role Distance	Role Ambiguity	Resource Inadequacy
Age	WNC	WNC	WNC	WPC	WNC	WNC	WNC	WNC	WNC	WNC
Marital Status	WNC	WNC	WPC	WNC	WPC	WPC	WNC	WNC	WNC	WNC
Educational Qualification	WNC	WNC	WNC	WPC	WPC	WNC	WPC	WPC	WPC	WNC
Monthly Income	WNC	WNC	WPC	WPC	WNC	WNC	WNC	WPC	WPC	WPC
Years of service	WNC	WNC	WNC	WPC	WNC	WNC	WPC	WPC	WNC	WNC

The above table reveals that all the stressors are negatively correlated with age except that of Role Erosion. Role Expectation Conflict, Role Overload and Role Isolation tend to have a positive correlation with the marital status of the women bank officials. Some of the role stressors (50%) are positively correlated with socio-demographic variables like educational qualification and monthly income whereas others (remaining 50%) have a negative correlation with them as can be observed from the table. All the role stressors except that of Role Erosion, Personal Inadequacy and Self- Role Distance have a negative correlation with respect to years of service.

Table 6: Ranking of the major symptoms which women bank officials face as result of their organizational role

Major Stressor	Frequency		% (Yes)	Rank
	Yes	No		
Faster Heartbeat	21	52	28.8	6
Back pain	68	5	93.2	1
Headache	66	7	90.4	2
Poor-Judgement	16	57	21.9	7
Frustration	42	31	57.5	4

Depression	41	32	56.2	5
Restlessness	50	23	68.5	3

As can be seen from the table, almost 93% of the women bank officials suffer from back pain followed by headache (90.4%) as a result of their role in the organisation. Poor Judgement followed by faster heartbeat is the least experienced major symptoms among women.

Table 7: Ranking of the Stress Relief Techniques among Women Bank Officials

Stress Relief Techniques	Frequency		%(Yes)	Rank
	Yes	No		
Yoga	41	32	56.2	7
Morning Walk	46	27	63	5
Entertainment	57	16	78.1	3
Positive Thinking	59	14	80.8	2
Laughing	55	18	75.3	4
Meditation	45	28	61.6	6
Sharing the problem	60	13	82.2	1

Table 7 reveals that more than three- fourths of the respondents' resorts to positive thinking, different entertainment means and laughing therapy to reduce their stress level. Compared to other stress relief measures, yoga and meditation are found to be the least resorted techniques by women bank officials.

CONCLUSION

Our study has led us to the conclusion that inter-role distance is the most prominent stressor experienced by the women bank officials, whereas role erosion ranks last in the order. On analysing the effect of the various socio-demographic variable on different role stressors, it was found that some stressors have a positive correlation with respect to the selected variables such as age, marital status, educational qualification, monthly income and years of experience. Further, the analysis of the significant symptoms faced by women bank officials due to their stress level reveals that back pain followed by headache ranks first and second in the order respectively and the majority of the women bank officials feels 'sharing their problem' as the preferable stress relief technique available before them. In a nutshell, to reduce the stress level among the women bank officials, it is expected that the bank organisations should initiate adequate interventions to maintain work-life balance among them.

REFERENCES

- Aditya, S.M, Sen, A.K. (1993), "Executives under Stress: A Comparison between Men and Women". *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*. Vol. 19, pp. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*.
- Aziz, M. (2004), "Role stress among women in the Indian Information Technology sector", *Women in Management Review*, Volume 19, Issue 7
- Beehr, T. A., & Newman, J. E. (1978). "Job stress, employee health, and organisational effectiveness: A facet analysis model and literature review". *Personnel Psychology*, 31(4), 665–699.
- Devi, Anitha S 2007, 'Occupational Stress: A Comparative Study of Women in Different Occupations', *Prajnan*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 61-74
- Kumar, Anil & Yadav, Meenakshi (2014), "Occupational Stress among Working Women: An Empirical Analysis", *Journal of Management Research*, Volume 3, Issue 1, October 2014
- Pareek, U. (1983). *Role Stress Scale: ORS scale booklet, answer sheet and manual*. Ahmedabad: Naveen Publications.
- Sahu, K. and Mishra, N., 1995, Life stress and coping styles in teachers. *Psy. Stu.*, 40(3): 115-119
- Sauter, S. L., Lim, S.-Y., & Murphy, L. R. (1996). Organizational health: A new paradigm for occupational stress research at NIOSH. *Japanese Journal of Occupational Mental Health*, 4, 248–254.
- Selye, H. (1936). A syndrome produced by diverse noxious agents. *Nature*, 138, 32–35.
- Spielberger, C. (1980). *Preliminary manual for the state-trait anger scale*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida.
- Tripathi, P., & Bhattacharjee, S. (2012). "A study of Psychological Stress of Working Women." *International journal of multidisciplinary research, Zenith*, 2(2).
- Triveni, S., & Aminabhavi, V.A., (2002). "Gender difference in occupational stress experience among professionals and non-professionals." *Journal of Community Guidance Research*, 19, 1-7.

Swathi, V., & Reddy, M.S., (2016), "Stress Among Working Women: A Literature Review",
International Journal of Computational Engineering & Management, Volume 19, Issue 4,
July 2016