

STRESS MANAGEMENT AND WORK LIFE BALANCE – A STUDY ON SOME SELECTED BANKS IN NAGALAND, INDIA

Sanjay Sinha,

Lecturer,
Department of Management
ICFAI University Nagaland, India

ABSTRACT

Stress from a layperson's perspective, can be described as feeling tensed, anxious or worried. Stress can be a positive attribute if taken at the right proportion but if it starts to increase and a person is incapable to handle it, it will lead to the negative impact on the performance of an individual. Stress is present in every person and every situation; the only difference is the level of stress and the capability of an individual to withstand the stress. With the change in life style, the working environment and the development in various fields the level of stress is seen to be increasing. The level of stress is not same for all; it varies from place to place and person to person depending upon the situation. This study has been undertaken on the bank employees of some selected banks in the city Dimapur, in the Indian state of Nagaland to understand stress management and on work life balance. Bank employees have been taken as the target respondent for the purpose of this study as they have to confront huge financial risks on daily basis along with various customer dealings which makes their job challenging and stressful.

Keywords: *Stress, Bank employees, Stress management, work life balance, financial risk.*

Introduction:

The word "Stress" comes from the Latin word 'Stringere' which means hardship. Stress in general term applied to the pressures people feel in life. Stress is an ability to cope with demanding situation; it is inevitable and is an integral part of our life. The word stress means many things in modern life. In Physics, it is a force which acts on a body to produce strain. In Engineering, stress produces strain on a bridge when a heavy truck drive across it, stress in the response of the bridge to the truck's weight. In Physiology, the various changes in response to evocative agents denote stress. In Psychology, it refers to a particular kind of state of the organization of the human mind from some interaction between him & the environment.

According to Stephen Robbins (2001) "Stress is a dynamic condition, in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related, to what he/she desires and for which the

outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important." Stress occurs due to: work overload, a nagging boss, technological problem, time deadlines, downsizing, mergers, poorly designed jobs, financial crises and accelerating rate of change.

We generally use the word "Stress" when we feel that everything seems to have become too much –we are overloaded and wonder whether we really can cope with the pressures placed upon us. Stress plays an integral part in the productivity of an employee, it is important for an organisation to have an effective stress management system. Stress management refers to the wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's levels of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of improving everyday functioning. Stress produces numerous physical and mental symptoms which vary according to each individual's situational factors.

In this present scenario of competitive age, the presence of stress is high. There are ways and methods to reduce stress but we find so little step is taken to

manage this stress both by individuals and organisation. Development has taken place in so many fields but it has also lead to various other problems, whereby stress been one. Managing stress should be emphasis for the betterment of the employees and the organization in the long run. Stress, if managed well can show positive output else lead to the downsizing of the employees and the organization.

The study of Stress and its origin is an area of interest for organizations, as it is the root cause of all mental and physical illness, which hampers productivity. The turnover rate of employees is high in many organizations due to lack of proper or no stress management system. Managing stress is important, as when there is no stress, job challenges are absent and performance tends to be low but if stress becomes too great, it turns into a destructive force. Constructive stress is a healthy stimulus that encourages employees to respond to challenges.

The study is carried out to understand, meaning of stress management, its importance, the measures available and its effects, so as to have a healthy environment inside/outside the workplace.

Literature Review:

Bashir. U. and Muhammad I. R (2010) in their research "*Impact of stress on Employees Job Performance, A study on Banking sector of Pakistan*" Points out that bankers are under a great deal of stress due to many antecedents of stress such as, Overload of work, Role ambiguity, role conflicts, responsibility for people, participation, lack of feedback, keeping up with rapid technology change. It state that stress can be understood more comprehensively as, it is a condition which happens when one realizes the pressures on them, or the requirements of a situation, are wider than their recognition that they can handle. It states that management supports helps in reducing or increases stress in employees, (Stampes & Johlke, 2003) apparent organisational assistance, management support work as a cushion which acts positively in decreasing work related stress in employees.

Karunanithy.K & Ponnampalam. A (2013) in their research "*A Study on the effect of Stress on Performance of employees in Commercial Bank of Ceylon in the Eastern Province*" stated that stress as a complex & dynamic concept. The undesirable level of stress effects overall performance of the organization. Thus stating the organization or manager should properly manage the level of stress by identifying it. It also found out that positive stress add anticipation and excitement to life. In was also observed that most of the women suffer more than men in Eastern province. This occurs as women are expected to bear the duties & responsibilities of home as well as the working place, that lead to work, family conflict. It state that proper strategy should be made regarding working hours, interpersonal relationship & supervision of bankers to

reduce stress and to better manage the performance of employees in banking sector. It was also seen that the lack of span of control over the work environment, low acceptance for the work done, rigid organizational structure, high unpredictability in job pattern, departmental variation in administration support, inadequate monetary reward & personal issues are causes of rising stress level in employees, which ultimately affects their job performance negatively.

Shukla.H & Garg. R (2014) in their research, "*A Study on stress management among the employees of Nationalised Bank.*" Stated that stress management as the need of the hours as however hard one try to go beyond a stress situation, life seems to find new ways of stressing us out and plaguing us with anxiety attacks. It was found out that most of the employees are in fear with the fact that lacking quality in their work puts stress on them and that stress is mostly related with work and few percentages due to personal related problems. Proper stress management strategy is needed so that the employee can balance their work and personal life.

Nayak. J. & Swakar P. S. (2008) in their research, "*Factors influencing Stress & Coping Strategies among the degree college teachers of Dharwad City, Karnataka*" stated that stress disturbs the equilibrium of the body. It affects physically, emotionally and mentally. When individual experience stress or face demanding situation, they adopt ways of dealing with it, as they cannot remain in a continued state of tension. How the individual deals with stressful situation is known as 'Coping'. Coping refers to person's active efforts to resolve stress & create new ways of handling new situation at each life stage (Erikson. 1959). On studying, it found out that majority of the teachers revealed that their stress was basically due to their laziness and also they were happy with fewer responsibilities. Lack of affectionate behaviour from their colleagues was reported as cause of stress.

Objective of the study:

- To identify the stress level of bank employees.
- To identify the reason for stress among the employees.
- To identify the effects of stress on the employee's work performance.
- To identify the measures to reduce the stress.
- To identify the impact of stress management on work performance.

Limitation of the study:

1. The study is confined to the Dimapur City only.
2. Lack of proper cooperation from bank employees due to their busy schedule.
3. Subjectivity and personal biasness among respondents while answering the question may also be considered as a limitation.

Reasons for Stress:

In order to develop an effective stress management programme it is first necessary to identify the factors that are central to a person controlling his/her stress, and to identify the intervention methods which effectively target the factors. High demand levels load the person with extra effort and work.

Most Common Stressors:

1. The way employees are treated by their bosses or supervisors or company
2. Lack of job security
3. Company policies
4. Co-workers who don't do their fair share
5. Unclear expectation
6. Poor Communications
7. Not enough control over assignments
8. Inadequate pay or benefits
9. Urgent deadlines
10. Too much work
11. Long hours
12. Uncomfortable Physical condition
13. Relationship conflicts
14. Co-workers making careless mistakes
15. Dealing with rude Customers
16. Lack of cooperation
17. How the Company treats Co-workers

Stress Management Strategy:

There are many healthy ways to manage and cope with stress, but they all require change. One can either change the situation or change one's reaction. When deciding which option to choose, it's helpful to think of the four As: avoid, alter, adapt, or accept.

Since everyone has a unique response to stress, there is no "one size fits all" solution to managing it. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different techniques and strategies.

Some of the strategies are:**1. Avoid unnecessary stress**

Not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. One may be surprised, however, by the number of stressors in one's life that one can eliminate.

2. Alter the situation

If it is not possible to avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what can be done to change things so the problem doesn't present itself in the future. Often, this involves changing the way one communicates and operates in daily life.

3. Adapt to the stressor

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

4. Accept the things you can't change

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you can't change.

5. Make time for fun and relaxation

Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by nurturing yourself. If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors.

Don't get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that you forget to take care of your own needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity, not a luxury.

6. Adopt a healthy lifestyle

You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health. Exercise regularly, Eat a healthy diet, Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. Don't avoid or mask the issue at hand; Get enough sleep.

Research Methodology:

The proposed study is based on both qualitative and quantitative research. To achieve the said objectives of the study, both primary and secondary information have been used. To obtain the primary data, questionnaire (close and open ended) and personal interview method used. Whereas for secondary data journals, internet/website resources, books and past related worked done referred.

The target respondents for the study was based on bank employees of some selected private and public sector banks in Dimapur, taking into account a maximum sample size of 100 respondents. In selecting the sample, non-random sampling method was used.

Data Analysis:

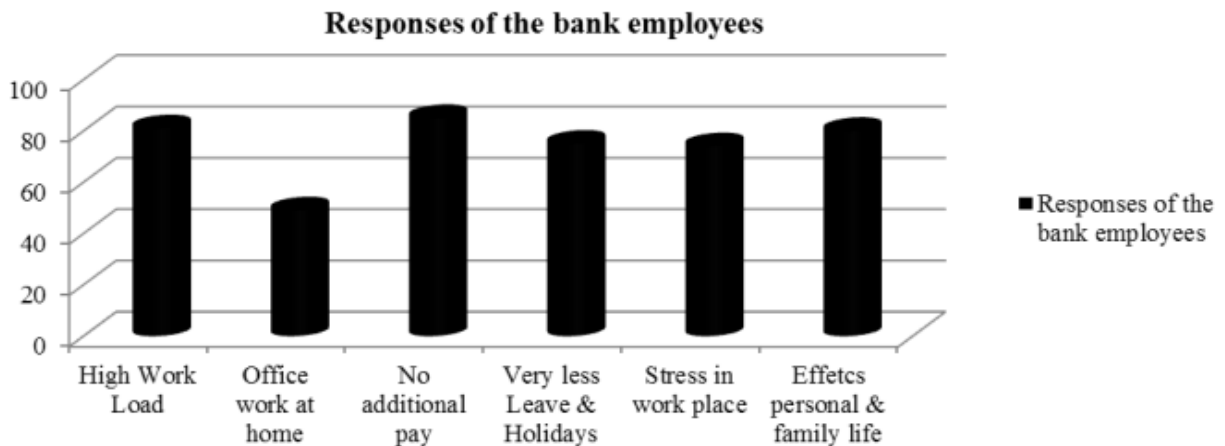
In order to collect data, six questions were asked to the target respondents. The first question was asked "How do you rate your workload in the organization? And they have asked to rate on five point rating scale where 5 stands for very high work load, 4 stands high workload, 3 stands for moderate workload, 2 stands for minimum workload, 1 stands for no workload. The second question was asked "Do you take your office work at your home? And the respondent have been asked to rate on five point rating scale where 5 stands for Always, 4 stands for very often, 3 stands for sometimes, 2 stands for seldom and 1 stands for Not at all. The third question was asked "Do you get additional pay for additional work? And the respondent have been asked to rate on five point rating scale where 5 stands for Always, 4 stands for very often, 3 stands for sometimes, 2 stands for seldom and

1 stands for never. The fourth question was asked Do you avail sufficient leave and holidays to spend time with your families? And the respondent have been asked to rate on five point rating scale where 5 stands for Always, 4 stands for very often, 3 stands for sometimes, 2 stands for seldom and 1 stands for never. The fifth question was asked “How often do you face work related stress situation in your organization? And the respondent have been asked to rate on five point rating scale where 5 stands for Always, 4 stands for very often, 3 stands for sometimes, 2 stands for seldom and 1 stands for never. The sixth question was asked “Does your work stress affect your personal and family life? And the respondent have been asked to rate on five point rating scale where 5 stands for Always, 4 stands for very often, 3 stands for sometimes, 2 stands for seldom and 1 stands for never. Data collected were analyzed using sample percentage method.

Research Findings:

Base on the survey conducted upon the bank employees in and around Dimapur and data gathered and analyzed. Following findings have been made:

1. The level of stress among the bank employees is high.
2. Stress is seasonal and depends upon the situation or environment one is in.
3. Stress is developed when there is uncertainty in work allocation, unsuitable working environment, shortage in staffs, customer demand, personal attitude toward stress, etc.
4. Employees do not get sufficient leave and holidays and this become one of the primary reasons for stress.
5. Stress affects employees’ personal and family life.
6. Stress when manage properly gives a positive



Source: Data analysis of primary data3

Data interpretation:

Data collected through primary survey and analyzed by using sample percentage method and it has been found that about 81% of the target respondents said that they have high work load all throughout the year and the work load tends to very high during financial year ending i.e. during the month of January, February and March. 49% of the respondents said that they have to take their pending work to their home and which affects their personal and family life. 85% of the target respondents said that they are not getting any additional pay for their additional work. 75% of the respondents said that they have less number of leave and holidays but even though they can not avail sufficient leave and holidays due to heavy work pressure. 74 % of the respondents said that they usually face stress in work place. 80% of the respondents said that this work stress affects their personal and family life. They are unable to give sufficient time to their family.

effect in the performance and achieving the target but when it’s beyond ones capability to handle produce a negative impact.

7. Stress Management yield positive result in the performance of the employees if monitored well and executed well.

Recommendations:

Base on the study conducted on stress management, following recommendation is made:

1. Stress management should be present in every organization for better performance and for better working environment.
2. It is the duty of the supervisor to monitor and minimize the stress level of the employees.
3. Work should be properly allocated among the employees. So that a single employee should not get over burdened with work load.
4. As the study is carried out in a general sense further in-depth study can be made on stress management taken into particular organisation and a particular level of employee.

Conclusion:

Stress Management plays a curtail role in motivating and increasing the performance of any. The level of stress depends on the individual capability to cope with stress. Taken into the different level of stress handling capability, stress management technique is to be implemented. The level of stress of the employees varies upon the culture and environment it is in, its expectation and level of tolerance upon a given situation. Stress management if manage well will yield positive result and enrich the working environment and improve the performance of an individual. On the other hand it can bring a negative impact if not manage well. Study should be made well before actually implementing it for the right stress management system. There is no rigid rule for stress management it all depends upon the individual, higher up or the organization in how to manage the stress with the increasing work load or otherwise. Creativity is needed.

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