

A STUDY TO EXPLORE THE CAUSES AND IMPACT OF STRESS AMONGST THE PUBLIC SECTOR BANK EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Employees of public sector banks in Haryana, India, are the target of this study, which seeks to understand both the origins and consequences of stress in this demographic. Using an exploratory and descriptive mixed-methods research strategy, this study aims to identify stress patterns, identify workplace characteristics that contribute to stress, and analyze the effects of stress on employee health and organizational performance. 125 workers from several public sector banks in the area made up the research's representative sample. A researcher-administered structured questionnaire with both open-ended and Likert-scale items was used to collect data. This was done to guarantee that the responses were clear and accurate. To supplement and enhance the analysis, a large amount of secondary data was culled from scholarly journals, books, government publications, official bank websites, and previous research studies. High workload, unclear roles, lack of management assistance, and pressure to fulfill targets are major sources of stress for bank staff, according to the study. Reduced job satisfaction, worsening health, decreased productivity, and increased absenteeism are all symptoms of stress. At the end of the study, the authors address the critical requirement of immediate, organization- and person-level actions to reduce stress and foster a stronger, healthier banking workforce. The findings of this study offer important new information for the discussion of workplace health and lay the groundwork for actionable policy suggestions for the public banking sector.

Keywords: Bank, Employee, Stress, Public Sector, Management



1. INTRODUCTION

Stress has grown into a major issue in today's workplaces, impacting workers in all kinds of industries. Employees of public sector banks stand out from the crowd because of the peculiarities of their jobs, the structure of their organizations, and the norms that people hold them to. The increased workload, technological advancements, customer demands, and regulatory pressures are just a few of the many obstacles that public sector banks—which are crucial to a country's economic development—face. Many workers experience high levels of occupational stress as a result of these difficulties, which has negative effects on their health, productivity, and general happiness. The purpose of this research is to better understand the unique stresses experienced by employees of public sector banks, as well as the factors that contribute to and result from stress in their personal and professional lives. A person's physiological response to any demand or challenge that throws them off their equilibrium is known as stress. Although short-term, manageable stress can boost performance, long-term, or extreme stress can have negative effects on mental and physical health. Bank personnel face a high-stress work environment due to the organizational aims, regulations, and customer service standards that they are expected to follow. Bureaucratic processes and strict hierarchies are common in public sector banks, making the responsibilities and expectations of staff even more complicated. All of these things add up to a stressful work environment, which can make workers unhappy, cause them to burn out, and reduce their productivity.

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The ability to recognize certain stressors—which can be roughly classified into organizational, interpersonal, and individual factors—relies on a thorough understanding of the origins of stress in this setting. Interpersonal variables include disagreements with coworkers, bosses, and clients, whereas organizational factors include things like heavy workloads, unclear roles, little autonomy, and insufficient resources. Factors specific to an individual may include their coping strategies, psychological resilience, and the demands of their daily lives. The ever-changing banking rules, new technologies (such digital banking), and fierce rivalry from private and international banks put public sector bank staff under extra pressure. Employees' mental health and the level of service the public receives from banks are both negatively impacted by these stresses. Employee stress in public sector banks has far-reaching effects on business results, going beyond just personal health. Bank efficiency and reputation are harmed when employees are under a great deal of stress since it leads to absenteeism, higher turnover, lower productivity, and mistakes on the job. The significant health consequences of occupational stress are shown by the fact that stress-related health conditions like hypertension, anxiety, depression, and cardiovascular illnesses have been documented among bank personnel. Medical expenditures rise and workers' quality of life declines as a result of these health issues. Public sector banks play an important role in financial inclusion and social welfare, thus it's crucial to address employee stress for the sake of the workforce, the public's trust, and the long-term viability of the banking industry.

Workplace stress is common in the banking industry, according to various research done across the world. Nevertheless, the type and severity of stress are impacted by distinct features that distinguish public sector banks from private sector banks. These features include job security, compensation structure, and organizational culture. Public sector bank employees may feel less job insecurity, but they may still deal with additional stresses like delayed promotion procedures, lack of flexibility, and bureaucratic red tape. Workers at public sector banks already have an extra burden of social and government duties on top of their already heavy workloads. So, to create effective stress management programs for public sector bank workers, it is crucial to thoroughly investigate the causes and effects of stress in this industry. Digitization, automation, and changing consumer expectations have caused the banking industry to undergo fast transformation in the past several years. Bank staff are constantly learning and adapting to these developments, which can be mentally taxing. Employees in public sector banks also have the difficult task of juggling modernization with social responsibility, regulatory compliance, and the need to stay up-to-date with industry trends. The importance of studying the effects of these changes on stress levels and coping strategies for employees cannot be overstated in such ever-changing circumstances.

Age, gender, level of education, and length of service are some of the demographic factors that this study hopes to shed light on in relation to stress. Depending on their individual and collective work and life experiences, various employee groups may react to stress in unique ways. For instance, stress may be more prevalent among younger workers because they are still learning the ropes of their jobs, whereas older workers may be more burdened by health problems and managerial obligations. Women workers may experience extra difficulties juggling work and home responsibilities due to gender disparities in stress perception and coping mechanisms. The study's overarching goal is to provide a thorough picture of stress among public sector bank personnel by examining these components; this will allow for more focused interventions. The significance of efficient stress management in the setting of public sector banking cannot be emphasized enough. Companies who take stress in the workplace seriously and try to alleviate it see an uptick in employee happiness, productivity, and health. Counselling, time management, and relaxation techniques are examples of individual-focused stress management interventions. Job redesign, supportive leadership, and enhanced communication channels are examples of organizational-focused changes. With their large workforces and high levels of public oversight, public sector banks are in a prime position to develop and implement comprehensive stress management programs that boost the health of employees, the quality of services provided, and the resilience of the institution as a whole.

There are many different aspects to the complex problem of stress among workers at public sector banks. Internal factors such as organizational structure, job demands, interpersonal dynamics, and personal traits contribute to stress. Not only does stress have an effect on the well-being and output of workers, but it also has an effect on the effectiveness and efficiency of banking operations and customer service. In an effort to better understand stress, its effects, and how to manage it, this study sets out to investigate all of these factors in depth. A healthier work environment, more employee involvement, and a greater impact on the nation's economic and social development can be achieved by public sector banks through proactive stress management.

1.1. CAUSES AND IMPACT OF STRESS AMONGST PUBLIC SECTOR BANK EMPLOYEES IN INDIA

Causes of Stress Amongst Public Sector Bank Employees in India

1) Excessive Workload

Employees in public sector banks are often burdened with high volumes of work due to staff shortages and increased customer expectations. The pressure to meet performance targets and deadlines contributes significantly to work-related stress.

2) Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict

Many employees experience confusion regarding their responsibilities, especially when job roles are not clearly defined. Conflicting demands from different levels of management also lead to mental strain and anxiety.

3) Bureaucratic and Rigid Organizational Structure

The hierarchical and inflexible nature of public sector banks limits employee autonomy. Slow decision-making processes and excessive red tape increase frustration and reduce job satisfaction.

4) Technological Changes and Adaptation Pressure

The shift towards digital banking and automation has introduced additional stress, particularly among older employees who may struggle with new technologies or fear redundancy due to digital transformation.

5) Customer Handling Pressure

Dealing with high customer footfall, grievances, and diverse demands, often with limited resources, creates significant emotional and psychological stress for frontline employees.

6) Inadequate Managerial Support

Lack of encouragement, poor communication, and unsupportive leadership styles contribute to employee dissatisfaction and increased stress levels.

7) Frequent Policy and Regulatory Changes

Regular implementation of government schemes and compliance requirements adds to the workload, increasing stress due to the constant need to update procedures and documentation.

8) Personal and Family Pressures

Employees may also be managing family responsibilities, health issues, or financial concerns, which, when combined with work pressures, exacerbate stress.

1.2. IMPACT OF STRESS AMONGST PUBLIC SECTOR BANK EMPLOYEES IN INDIA

1) Health Issues

Chronic stress leads to various physical and mental health problems such as insomnia, hypertension, depression, anxiety, and fatigue. Over time, it may contribute to serious medical conditions requiring treatment or time off work.

2) Reduced Job Performance

Stress impairs concentration, decision-making, and productivity. Employees may become less efficient, make more errors, and struggle to meet their targets or perform to their full potential.

3) Low Job Satisfaction

Continuous stress contributes to dissatisfaction with one's role, work environment, and organization. This can lead to decreased morale and lack of commitment to organizational goals.

4) Absenteeism and Turnover

Stressed employees are more likely to take frequent leaves or seek transfers and resignations. High absenteeism and attrition disrupt daily operations and increase the workload on remaining staff.

5) Poor Customer Service

Employee stress negatively affects interactions with customers. Tired or frustrated staff may struggle to maintain patience, politeness, and problem-solving ability, leading to poor service experiences.

6) Decreased Organizational Efficiency

Widespread employee stress lowers overall productivity, hampers teamwork, and creates a negative work environment. This can ultimately affect the bank's image, financial performance, and public trust.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Yaqoob, J et al., (2022) to prevent employee turnover and hold on to the most valuable workers who can propel the company forward, management practices put a focus on developing methods to reduce stress on the job. The effect of stress management strategies on staff retention at Guaranty Trust Bank was investigated using descriptive and inferential statistics in this research. It used a model for staff retention based on questionnaires randomly chosen from four GTB offices in Ibadan city, Oyo State, Nigeria, to collect primary data from eighty (80) respondents. As shown by the correlation value of $\rho = 0.576$ and p-value 0.201 more than 0.05 significant level, the research discovered a good association between work stress management and personnel retention at the GT bank. Regression results also showed that workers' dissatisfaction with their jobs increased their stress levels at work, with a positive slope of 0.031. The results of the study supported the theoretical assumption that stress management at work increases employee retention at GT Bank in Ibadan, Oyo state, and they suggested several countermeasures to workplace stress that would help the company reach its objectives.

Issac, Renji & Krishnaveni, V. (2018). Workplace stress is a universal problem that affects all sectors of the economy. Domains of stress include, but are not limited to, the following: demands for inter-role performance, expectations for such performance, conflicts between roles, role erosion, role overload, isolation, personal inadequacy, role ambiguity, distance between roles, and inadequate resources. Working under pressure in the banking business is a real thing, and it's all down to how well you know your job, your coworkers, your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and dangers. Fifty bank workers from the Kottayam area in Kerala participated in a gender-based research. For this research, gender served as an independent variable, whereas stress was considered a dependent variable. The research looked at the standard operating procedure in the business, which includes turbulence, hefty workloads, and extended working hours. A decrease in personal health, interactions with coworkers, and life happiness as a whole were all consequences of stress, which in turn reduced efficiency and production. Results showed that both men and women had issues with workload, responsibility, inactivity, excessive job pressure, bad peer relations, inherent poverty, low status, difficult working circumstances, and poor outcomes.

Deshmukh, Pooja. (2017). these days, stress management is all the rage, especially in the banking and insurance industries. A work devoid of stress does not exist. As they carry out their responsibilities, every employee is subject to stress and worry on the job. The country's economy relies on the banking business, which is not particularly remarkable. Working in banking requires constant, one-on-one contact with customers at all levels, which may be a very monotonous profession. The current research sought to determine what factors contribute to stress in the workplace for banking industry leaders. The data was collected from 100 executives in Aurangabad City using a self-administered questionnaire that included questions on respondents' personal information as well as issues linked to work stress. The conclusion has been drawn via graphical presentation.

Anthony Raj & Julius, Sheeba. (2015). Managing stress is a hot topic right now, especially in the banking and insurance industries. Hard effort never ends. Tension and anxiety are commonplace in the workplace for a variety of reasons. The banking sector, vital to every economy, is far from unique. Employees in the banking industry deal directly with customers and process their money, which may be a highly monotonous profession. The researchers set out to identify the most common sources of stress for bank workers in both the public and private sectors. Three hundred and thirty-six people working for banks in the Karaikal District of India's Union Territory of Puducherry provided the data. Employees of public and private sector banks reported similar levels of occupational stress, according to the study's results. Workers in the banking industry are experiencing high levels of occupational stress, according to this study's results.

Mageswari, S & Prabhu, Dr. (2014). Presently, stress management is gaining a lot of traction, especially in the business world. Working conditions that do not cause any level of stress are quite rare. While he completes his tasks, everyone around him experiences stress, annoyance, and worry thanks to him. In the best interests of the state, businesses, and consumers alike. Growing the Indian economy is a top priority for banks and bank workers. Bank workers, according to popular belief, may not have it bad compared to other types of workers. "Occupational Stress - a

study with reference to Bank Employees in Chennai" was the name of the study the researcher used to see if this concept held water. Research comparing the working conditions of four types of banks in Chennai: nationalized, private, SBI, and cooperative.

Michailidis, Maria & Georgiou, Yiota. (2005). The literature on occupational stress stresses the significance of identifying and addressing stress in the workplace. Research on the negative mental and physiological impacts of stress on people and businesses has been extensive in various regions of the globe. Nonetheless, this kind of study is in its infancy in other parts of the world. Stress in the banking industry is the focus of this research. The study's sample size was 60 bank workers, representing a range of educational levels and organizational positions. The Occupational Stress Index (OSI) was used for data collecting. The data analysis revealed that there are several ways in which the educational level of workers impacts the amount of stress they feel. When dealing with issues like job bias, favoritism, delegating, and competing priorities, bank workers simply do not have time to "wind down" and relax. Employees' educational background, family support, and free time all play a role in the study's findings about the extent to which certain workers carry work-related issues home with them (and family problems to the office). Lastly, it was shown that the workers' alcohol use significantly influenced the levels of occupational stress.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population

Employees of Haryana's public sector entities make up the study's population. There was a human touch to the distribution and collection of questionnaires.

Research Design

This study is using an exploratory research design.

Sample Size

The research drew its sample of 125 participants from several public sector bank branches in Haryana.

Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** A structured questionnaire developed for this research was used to gather the main data. Numerous components of occupational stress and associated workplace variables were the subject of the questionnaire's closed-ended and Likert-scale questions. For more precise results and clearer comprehension, the researcher gave the survey face-to-face.
- **Secondary Data:** The chosen public sector banks' official websites, as well as pertinent scholarly publications, books, government reports, and prior research studies, were combed through for secondary data. The findings from the analysis and interpretation of the original data were supported by this data, which gave context.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 Gender of the respondents

Particular	Frequency	Percentage%
Male	85	68%
Female	40	32%
Total	125	100

Source Primary Data

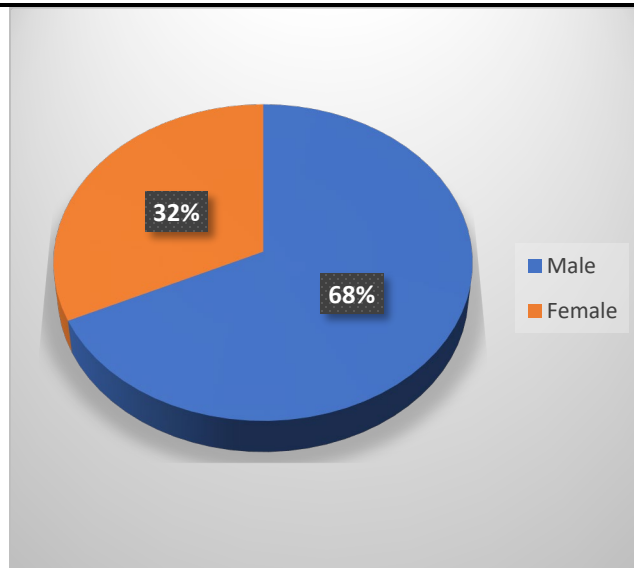


Figure 1 Gender of the respondents

The gender breakdown of the study's respondents is shown in Table 1. Of the 125 people who filled out the survey, 85 were men, making up 68% of the total. Female responders accounted for 32% of the total, with 40 total.

Nearly two-thirds of the people who took part in the survey were men, suggesting that men make up the majority of the group. The gender gap might be a reflection of the gender breakdown in Haryana's public sector banks or it could be a result of respondents' availability or unwillingness to participate in the survey.

Table 2 Causes of Stress of the respondents

Particular	Frequency	Percentage%
Work overload	15	12%
Lack of Acceptability	10	8%
Time Management	25	20%
Lack of Support	15	12%
Feeling of Inequality	8	6.4%
Job Difficulty	12	9.6%
Inadequacy of Role Authority	10	8%
Impatient customer	12	9.6%
Stress due to technological problem	18	14.4%
Total	125	100

Source Primary Data

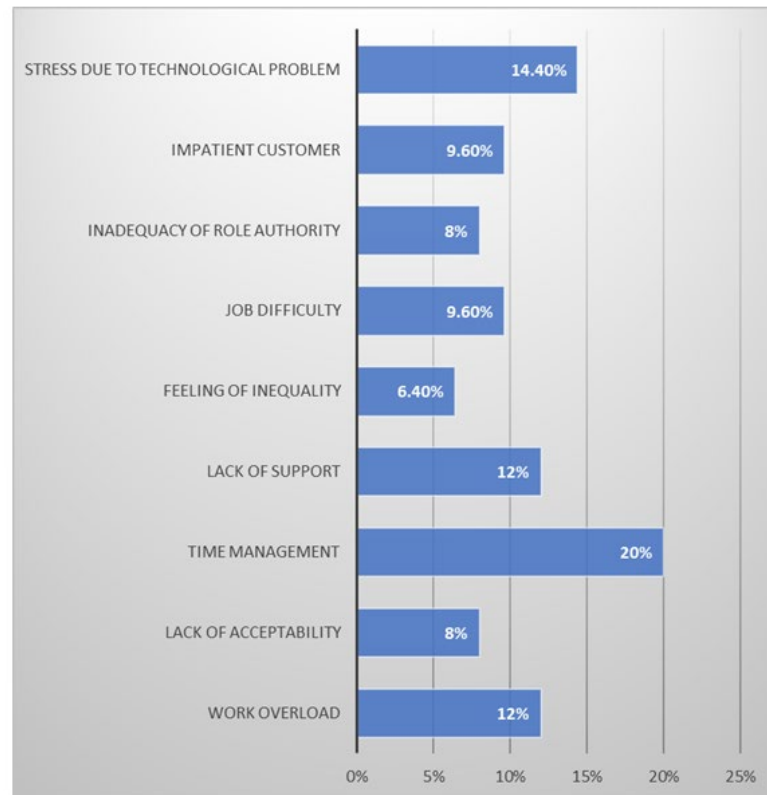


Figure 2 Causes of Stress of the respondents

Based on responses from 125 employees at Haryana's public sector banks, Table 2 lists the main sources of stress in the workplace.

Time management was listed by 25 respondents (20%) as the most prevalent cause of stress, suggesting that many employees find it challenging to efficiently manage their time in the face of professional expectations.

Stress from Technological Problems was the second most common reason, given by 18 people (14.4%), indicating that dealing with or adapting to technological challenges is a major source of stress in the banking industry.

Fifteen people (12%) said they were under a lot of pressure from work and that they didn't have enough support from their bosses or coworkers.

Twelve respondents (9.6%) listed impatient customers and job difficulty as significant sources of stress, while ten respondents (8% each) listed insufficient role authority and lack of acceptability.

While just 8 respondents (6.4%) cited a "Feeling of Inequality" as the reason, it does highlight a problem with workplace justice.

According to the research, stress in the banking industry is caused by a mix of organizational, interpersonal, and technological variables. Of these, the two biggest are problems with time management and technology.

Table 3 Various Attributes of Stress

Particular	Frequency	Percentage%
Communication Gap	16	12.8%
Lack of skills	10	8%
Work Life Imbalance	48	38.4%

Work Environment	23	18.4%
Unmatched Expectations	13	10.4%
Economic Status	10	8%
Resource Inadequacy	05	4%
Total	125	100

Source: Primary Data

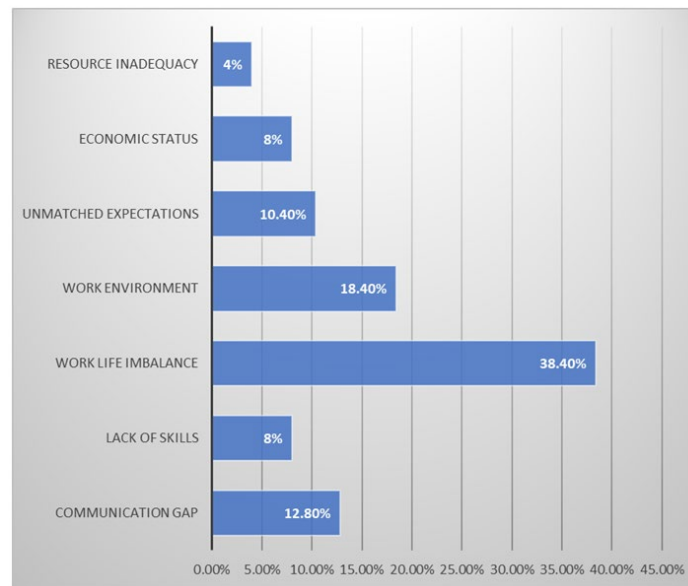


Figure 3 Various Attributes of Stress

The 125 respondents from Haryana's public sector banks are shown in Table 3 along with the various factors that contribute to stress. Work-Life Imbalance was the most commonly mentioned attribute, with 48 respondents (38.4%) reporting it. The fact that a large number of workers find it difficult to maintain a healthy work-life balance is a major source of stress for them.

With 23 mentions (18.4%), "The Work Environment" is the second most common source of stress in the workplace. This suggests that factors like physical layout, organizational culture, and interpersonal interactions all have a significant impact on work-related stress.

Fifteen people (12.8%) said there was a communication gap, which could mean that stress at work is a result of people not being able to effectively communicate with one another or with management. The pressure that workers feel when their job demands beyond their perceived abilities or recognition is shown in Unmatched Expectations, which affected 13 respondents (10.4%).

Ten respondents (8%) further indicated that employees' stress levels were impacted by factors such as economic status and lack of skills. Resource inadequacy was the attribute with the fewest mentions, with only 5 answers (4%). This suggests that while having limited resources can be stressful, it is not a big deal for the majority of participants.

The results highlight the necessity for improved organizational support, more flexible work policies, and a healthier work culture in public sector banks, as work-life imbalance and a bad work environment are the most significant stress factors.

Table 4 Initiatives for Handling the Stress Levels of The Bank Employees

Particular	Frequency	Percentage%
Good Ambience	30	24%
Recognition	20	16%
Continuous Training	15	12%
Effective Communication	17	13.6%
Programme on stress management	18	14.4%
Meditation	25	20%
Total	125	100

Source Primary Data

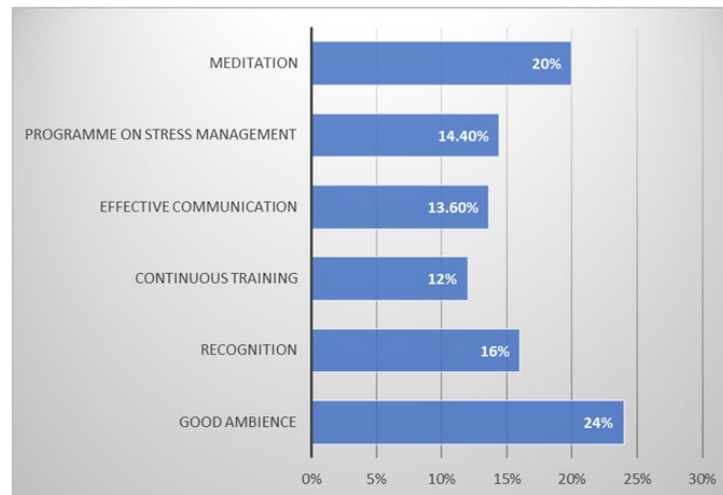
**Figure 4** Initiatives for Handling the Stress Levels of The Bank Employees

Table 4 shows the different programs that respondents said helped public sector bank employees deal with stress. The provision of a Good Ambience was the most desired initiative of the ones listed, according to 30 respondents (24%). This suggests that having a pleasant and relaxing place to work is highly regarded as an important component in lowering stress levels at work.

The next most common method for reducing stress, according to 25 respondents (20%), is meditation. As a result, it appears that many workers find that mental health practices and relaxation techniques help them deal with the stresses of the job.

Twenty people (or sixteen percent) mentioned receiving recognition for their work, demonstrating the power of positive reinforcement in elevating spirits and alleviating pressure. Staff members' interest in organized initiatives and formal interventions to manage stress is mirrored by the 18 respondents (14.4%) who mentioned Programmes on Stress Management.

The importance of open and honest communication in lowering workplace tension and misunderstandings was highlighted when 17 respondents (13.6%) chose Effective Communication. Finally, fifteen respondents (12%) brought up continuous training, which raises the possibility that chances for skill growth and learning can empower workers and alleviate stress caused by ambiguity or anxiety about performance.

Environmental changes, mental health practices (such as meditation), recognition, and skill advancement help relieve stress among bank employees, according to the research. Based on these results, it's clear that stress management efforts need to be more comprehensive and incorporate tactics for both individual and organizational growth.

5. CONCLUSION

Stress is a major problem for public sector bank personnel, according to this study. Workers' stress levels are on the rise due to a number of causes, according to the report. These include, but are not limited to, excessive workloads, deadline pressure, ambiguity about job responsibilities, and a lack of workplace support. Work performance, happiness, and efficiency are all negatively impacted by this stress, in addition to their bodily and mental health. According to the results, banks and management should be aware of these problems and do something about them to alleviate stress. A more supportive work atmosphere, better management of workloads, better communication, and counseling services are all examples of what may fall under this category. Public sector banks can benefit from a healthier and more engaged staff, which improves service delivery and overall organizational performance, if they take steps to alleviate stress. All things considered, the findings of this study can aid businesses and their workers in their efforts to establish a more harmonious and fruitful workplace.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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