Chapter I: Introduction

Increasing competition worldwide has led the corporate world to face new challenges and made them realize that their own employees can provide them a sustainable competitive advantage. This realization has come up with an improved focus on management of human resources which have been considered as the driving force behind the survival and success of any organization. However, in this era of uncertainty, complexity and change, an important issue worth attention for such organizations has been the workplace stress which is increasingly becoming a critical problem for employees, employers and the society at large. Emanating from workplace stress, the stress induced due to roles performed by individuals as employees at workplace has been a critical organizational stressor (Kahn et al., 1964; Srivastava, 2007), the outcomes of which have been found to be costly to the organization (Fisher and Gitelson, 1983).

Workplace stress and role stress stem from a wider phenomenon ‘stress’ which is a psychological construct that people may experience everyday (Quick et al., 1997). It is a concept which is hard to avoid. The term stress has evolved over time and has long been recognized as
an inevitable aspect of life. It has been used as a central concept under different names in early theoretical formulations.

1.1 Historical Perspective of Stress

The term stress is not a new one. It is as old as mankind. Since time immemorial various concepts have been developed by ancient Indian scholars, which relate to the phenomenon of stress. The ancient philosophical and religious texts like Ramayana and Bhagwad Gita and various indigenous systems like Samkhya, Yoga and Ayurveda deliberate on native forms of stress. Dukha (pain, suffering), Klesa (afflictions), Atman and Ahamkara (self and ego) etc. have indicated the traces of the origin of stress in Indian thought. Rao (1983) has referred to the Samkhya and Yoga systems to point that klesha have its origin in the root khis which means to ‘torment’, or ‘cause pain’. Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (egoism), Raga (attraction), Divesa (repulsion) and Abhinivesa (lust for life) are the five types of Kleshas which lead to Dukha (Agarwal, 2001). Dukha, which is opposite to well being, includes all negative feeling states of anxiety and discontent. In Indian thought, the life is equivalent to Dukha which indicates that even pleasure and enjoyment of worldly ‘goodness’ can be a source of stress (Srivastava, 1998).
Stress, as a problem associated with the existence of the individual, has been, therefore, accepted and consequently reflected in the Indian thought. Srivastava (1998) also reiterated that the problem of stress is related to the meaning and purpose of life itself and efforts to cope with it must focus on preventing and overcoming dukha.

However, the concept of stress, in its present sense, finds its roots in the field of life sciences. Derived from the Latin word ‘Stringere’, which means – to draw tight, ‘stress’ concept was used in the 17th century to describe hardships or affliction. Eventually, it started to be perceived as a physiological or medical phenomenon. One scientist who has been the inspirational force in the area of research on stress, Walter Bradford Cannon, studied the effects of stress on human beings and animals in terms of the popular ‘fight or flight’ syndrome during early 1900s (Cooper & Dewe, 2004). Giving the concept of ‘Homeostasis’, he revealed that the body has ability to maintain its own consistency, which is relatively stable. He found that under stress an individual may choose to fight the stressor and emerge victorious or flight away from it and placate the situation. This is done by the body naturally which in its own wisdom begins adjustments in the face of a stressor and tries to come back at a steady state (Cannon, 1939).
Similarly, the contribution of Hans Selye to the field of stress is highly acknowledged. He gave the notion of ‘Stress Syndrome’ after experimenting upon the ‘syndrome of just being sick’ in 1936. In the physiological sense, Selye propounded ‘stress’ as a nonspecific response of the body to any demand made on it (Selye, 1956). He theorized that to a broad array of stressors, the body’s way of responding is surprisingly same. It indicates that a wide variety of stressors are capable of producing same stress response like effort, fear, success and fatigue. Elucidating the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), the researcher pointed out that the body’s adaptation energy is finite, and constant stress leads to exhaustion. Selye mentioned that a series of four closely related processes occur under conditions of stress. It is these processes which help in bringing about the ‘flight or fight’ response proposed by the physiologist Sir Walter Canon in 1935.

The first stage of GAS is called ‘the stage of alarm’, as reflected by Figure 1.1, in which the body gears up for the emergency and is characterized by changes in heart beat, breathing, perspiration, etc. This stage starts immediately after the individual perceives a stressor in the environment. The second stage is the ‘stage of resistance’ in which the individual adapts to the stressor. If the stress persists, the individual enters the last stage ‘the stage of exhaustion’ in which his ability to
resist gets depleted and he becomes vulnerable to adverse consequences like disease and sickness.

Figure 1.1: General Adaptation Syndrome

The above discussion acknowledges the roots of stress in the past. This makes it pertinent to examine the concept of stress so evolved.

1.2 Concept

The word "stress" is in such popular use today that it has come to mean different things to different people. It is said that competition is too much "stress" to hassle with, that one works in a "high stress" environment, or that technology "stresses us out". In these contexts, it
can be seen that the word "stress" has evolved to refer to both the source of some event and the reaction to it. Stress is often defined as a threat, real or imagined to homeostasis. In common usage, stress usually refers to an event or succession of events that cause a response, often in the form of ‘distress’ but also, in some cases, referring to challenge that leads to a feeling of exhilaration as in ‘good’ stress. Selye (1936 and 1956) defines stress as a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. Surveying definitions of stress, Cox (1978) has described three classes of definitions. Accordingly, stress can be variously thought of as a response i.e., the stress response to an extreme stimulus; as a stimulus, i.e. as the stressor itself; and as an intervening variable. A prime example of response definitions is the one given by Selye (i.e. a nonspecific response of the body to any demand). Characteristically, such response definitions lack the emotional component usually associated with stress. This emotional component is also lacking in stimulus definitions wherein stress is referred to as the condition causing the body to readapt. In contrast to the response and stimulus definitions, definitions in which stress is referred to as intervening variable come closest to the everyday meaning of the term.
It is the mismatch between the personal resources and environmental demands that leads to the condition called stress. It is a perceptual phenomenon that may arise from a comparison between the demands on a person and his capability to cope with them (Cox, 1993). "Stress", thus, also refers to the broad domain concerned with how individuals adjust to their environments (Quick et al., 1997).

It can also be noted from the above discussion that there is little concurrence as to how exactly the term “stress” should be defined as a result there is no general theory of stress. The main reason attributable to this lack of agreement is that a large number of disciplines with different perspectives are involved in the research on “stress” such as medicine, psychology, sociology, and management (Blanc et al., 2008; Fevre et al., 2003). Each field has defined it differently; however, researchers of different persuasions have suggested stimulus-oriented, response-oriented and psychodynamic approaches for exploring the phenomenon of stress. Pestonjee (1992) throws light on these viewpoints and suggests that as a stimulus, stress is regarded as an external force which threatens to upset the organismic equilibrium. The response-oriented approaches describe how stress is reacted to, and how people function under stress. The research on stress from biological viewpoint is also response-oriented as it measures the reactions of the organism while he adapts
himself to the demands of the environment. The psychodynamic approach to stress considers the external as well as internal events which pose a threat to the equilibrium status of the organism. In this sense, stress may be induced by interpersonal (external) or intrapsychic (internal) factors. It is, hence, important to first establish a common language by distinguishing among the various components of stress: the stress response, stressors, and distress. Quick et al. (1997) has defined it in the following ways:

**Stress Response:** The generalized, unconscious mobilization of the body's natural energy resources in the face of a stressor is defined as the stress response. It is characterized by a biological activation of the hormonal and sympathetic nervous systems, and is often evident in high heart rate, increased respiration and perspiration, and muscle tightening. All of these actions are designed to prepare the individual to fight or run and therefore, stress response is described as the "fight or flight" response.

**Stressor:** Stressors can be considered as antecedent conditions in the person and in the environment that lead to the stress (Lazarus, 1993). Moreover, stressors act as stimuli that evoke a behavioral, psychological, or physiological response (Kahn and Byosiere, 1992). Jex and Beehr (1991) define workplace stressors as the antecedent
conditions within the employee’s job or the organization that require adaptive responses from the employee.

**Distress (Strain):** The adverse outcome of the stress response is termed as Distress (also referred to as "strain"). It refers to the individual's degree of physiological, psychological and behavioural deviation from normal healthy functioning. "Distress", therefore, what is generally meant when one talks about experiencing a high level of "stress". It refers to the adverse reaction which an individual experiences due to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on him (Waters & Ussery, 2007). It is important to note that not all stress responses are unhealthy. "Healthy" stress responses, labelled "eustress" (Selye, 1976), refer to the moderate level of arousal that is required to increase performance. Stress in its evolutionary context of "fight or flight" is one of humans' best assets for managing legitimate emergencies and achieving peak performance in vital tasks and activities (Quick et al., 1997). It is only when the stress response exceeds this optimum level that the load becomes too great and performance is depressed. Recognition that the stress response can be either adaptive or maladaptive leads us to appreciate that "stress is inevitable; distress is not" (Quick et al., 1997).
The above discussion indicates that the term stress has many interpretations. Since Selye’s first encounter with the syndrome of being sick, the term stress has acquired a wider range of connotations. Good or bad, the phenomenon of stress leads to consequences for individuals and organizations.

1.3 Consequences of Stress

In its functional sense, a balanced amount of stress is a stimulus for growth and is vital for life. It indicates that stress is not always bad. Also called as ‘Eustress’, it activates an individual to achieve goals, to respond quickly and forcefully in physical emergencies, it is useful in performing well under pressure, adds zest and variety to life and makes life more meaningful. But the destructive forces of ‘Overstress’ or ‘Hyper stress’ and ‘Under stress’ or ‘Hypo stress’ are a deterrent to growth and healthy living of an individual. Although hyper stress is always undesirable, hypo stress can also lead to problems like boredom, apathy, lack of energy and enthusiasm. These destructive forces lead to all the more treacherous ‘Bad Stress’ or ‘Distress’ which exhibits itself in the form of various psychosomatic and behavioral disorders in the individual like anxiety attacks, mood swings, psychological distress, depression, sleep problems, eating disorders to name a few and various diseases like headache, insomnia, cancer, heart problems, etc. The
impact of stress on health can also be recognized from the fact that the
prescription of drugs especially those which treat stress, for example,
antidepressants, sedatives and related medications have been on the rise
(Sharma, 2005). Due to the dysfunctional aspects of stress, an individual
is prone to increased absenteeism, reduced productivity, increased
intention to leave the job, lack of loyalty and commitment to the
organization. In this sense, not only the individual but organizational
interests are also jeopardized by dysfunctional level of stress. It is a well
known factor for low motivation and morale, decrease in performance,
high turnover and sick-leave, accidents, low job satisfaction, low quality
products and services, poor internal communication and conflicts, etc.
(Shabracq and Cooper, 2000; Murphy, 1995; McHugh, 1993) which
have an effect on overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness
(Chusmir and Franks, 1988). It also affects customer orientation and has
direct and indirect effects on job performance (Knight et al., 2007).

The direct and indirect costs of stress have been demonstrated
(Matteson and Ivancevich, 1987) besides the negative economic
implications resulting there from (Cooper and Cartwright, 1994; and
Edworthy, 2000) which reveal that the task of creating a stress-free and
satisfying workplace is a challenging but significant venture for any
organization. Work stress is recognized worldwide as a major challenge
to workers’ health and the healthiness of their organizations (ILO, 1986; 1992). The occupational ill-health statistics, collected as part of the 1990 Labour Force Survey, also revealed that 55 per cent of the reported cases of stress or depression and half of all reported cases of exhaustion are perceived as being due to work (Bradley and Sutherland, 1994). According to Kalia (2002), an estimate of The World Health Organization Global Burden of Disease Survey shows that mental health disease, including stress-related disorders, will be the second leading cause of disabilities by the year 2020. On account of this, the organizations are turning towards giving some attention to the health of their employees, not only physical but mental also, by undertaking the integration of the individual with the organization as their strategic activity.

Attention has been paid to the causal factors of stress, its manifestations, moderators of stress-strain relationship, and various coping strategies adopted to cope with stress (Pestonjee, 1992) at different point of time in various settings. It has been recognized that one can improve the ability to deal with stress if one reduces the stresses around, changes the life style, or recognizes the part played by his own personality or disposition to respond to stress, among other things (Selye, 1974). In that context, it is not only necessary to identify the
hurdles, incapacities or demands in the roles but also to examine the key role played by various determinants in increasing the complexity and multidimensionality of the phenomenon.

1.4 Sources of Stress

Stress is ubiquitous and it exists in every sphere of life. It is an inevitable part of life and it cannot be avoided but can certainly be controlled. It is, therefore, important to confront and examine the stressors so that they can be controlled. The sources of stress in today’s era are many and varied. Identification of such stressors is an important step towards finding ways to reduce the adverse impact of stress.

1.4.1 Life and Stress

The stress originates from and with life. For a clear understanding of the phenomenon Pestonjee (1987) classifies ‘life stress’ into primary and secondary system where the primary system consists of family, religious, regional and linguistic groups and the secondary system includes neighbourhood, schools, colleges, technical institutes and work organizations. Both the systems have different functional requirements and role expectations due to which demands made on individual in one system may impact his/her performance in the other. However, both are interrelated and intertwined creating a complex network of stressors.
Among all the constituents of life, ‘work’ occupies a very significant place. It is that important constituent of life which consumes a major segment of life of an individual. It is clearly evident from the lifestyle of the modern individual who works 24*7 and competes for better status, money, comfort through work. It is generally assumed that the whole life can be made good if the work is good. For that reason, they toil hard at work and when faced with constraints and demands which exceed their abilities, skills and resources, they become vulnerable to stress. Therefore, though stress is experienced in almost all spheres of life but work related stress is increasingly becoming a major contributor to overall stress for an individual (Carr, 1994).

1.4.1.1 Work and Stress

In the present times, where every person is a participant in the mad race for sumptuousness and accomplishment and where every one sees each other as an opponent, work is the only area where an individual looks for meaningfulness. Competition in the workplace which frequently promotes self interest can result in diminished feelings of well being and trust. Intense competition reinforced by globalization has resulted into less sheltered employment opportunities exemplified by the ever increasing number of mergers, acquisitions, outsourcing, downsizing initiatives. Not only individuals, but organizations as
artificial human beings are also under pressure to outperform their competitors and attain competitive advantage. Globalization and subsequent quest on the part of the organizations to cut costs to remain profitable has increased the cases of restructuring and downsizing. Sparks et al. (1997) found that the trend for restructuring and downsizing in many organizations has led to an increase in perceived job insecurity, particularly for white collar workers. The growth in non-permanent employment contracts in many countries also led to increased job insecurity. The perceived job insecurity was more prominent amongst the youngest and oldest members of the workforce. White collar workers, who reported high job insecurity, have been found to be less supportive of organizational goals, giving less effort to produce quality work and more actively seeking alternative employment. Due to increasing workloads, job insecurity, and pressures to perform, many individuals are found to be working longer hours. Work overload, resulting in longer hours of work, is linked with stress, indefinite complaints and fatigue. Aside from symptoms of ill-health, long working hours are associated with poor lifestyle habits such as heavy smoking, inadequate diet, lack of exercise, etc. Sharma and Sharma (2008) also opined that the main causes of stress were psychologically demanding work, stressful relationships and excessive working hours.
In the 2000 European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), the second most common job-related health problem across the European Union (EU) member states has been found to be job stress (Blanc et al., 2008). Terming the stress as ‘The Black Plague’ of the 1990s, Chirayath (2006) also reported that “the average employee spends one and a half years of the working life absent from work through stress related illness. Almost 10 per cent of the workforce suffers from work related stress at a point of time. Approximately seven billion working days are lost each year due to work force stress”. CBI Report, 1993 (quoted from Chirayath, 2006) also corroborated that 80 million working days are lost each year due to mental illness. A total of 30 times as many working days are lost as a result of stress related illness as are lost from industrial disputes. Between 30 to 40 per cent of all cases of sickness and absence from work are attributable to mental and emotional disturbance.

Health and Safety Executive statistics show that, for 2006-07, self-reported work stress, depression or anxiety account for an estimated 12.8 million reported lost working days per year in Britain (Health & Safety Statistics, 2006-07). Also, Blaug et al. (2007) indicated that, “After musculoskeletal disorders, stress is by far the largest contributor to the overall number of days lost as a result of work-related ill health in
the UK. Stress is, on average, the costliest of all work-related illnesses in terms of days lost per case”.

Acknowledging its presence, in one landmark judgment in Japan in the year 1996, a court placed the responsibility of an employee’s death on the company who actually died due to depression caused by overwork (Reddy, 2006). The work related stress has, therefore, been reported to be a pattern of reactions that occurs when workers are presented with work demands not matched to their knowledge, skills or abilities and which challenge their ability to cope (Houtman et al., 2007). It is also termed as the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them (Beswick et al., 2007). The various organizations have, thus, realized the nature of stress as a *new age killer* because of which a lot of human potential is drained out. It effects creativity and personal effectiveness of individuals and exhibits itself in the form of general dissatisfaction from work and the life itself which is not a good indication for organizations. Therefore, the organizations are turning towards giving some attention to the health of their employees, not only physical but mental also, by examining the process of integration of an individual in the organization.
The integration of an individual within the organization chiefly takes place through a system of roles which according to Hartenian and Hadaway (1994) are a key aspect of employees’ job-related functions.

1.4.1.2 Role and Stress

An organization can be defined as a system of roles. Initially developing from task requirements, roles elucidate specific forms of behaviour pertaining to any position within an organization. In this form, roles can be described in terms of standardized patterns of behaviour required of individuals playing a part in the organization. Though roles performed at personal front also influence and get influenced from each other yet as far as organizational interest is concerned, it is important to understand the dynamics of ‘role’ at work as it is through this ‘role’ that an individual interacts and gets integrated with the system.

Pareek (1983) has defined role as any position a person holds in a system as defined by the expectations of various significant persons in the organization including the expectations which the person himself may have from that position. The organization creates a formal pattern of behavior which is achieved through rule enforcement called roles, sanctioned by norms justified in their turn by values (Juneja, 2008). Thus, at the workplace, where individuals spend most of the time, various roles are to be performed. In the context of an organization,
Scott et al. (1981) describes five important aspects of roles. First, they are impersonal. The position itself determines the expectations not the individual. Second, roles are related to task behaviour. An organizational role is expected behaviour for a particular job. Third, roles can be difficult to articulate. The problem is defining who determines what is expected. Since other people define the roles, opinions over what the roles should be, how one sees his role, how others see the role and what actually one does, may differ. Fourth, roles are learned quickly and can produce major behavioral change. Fifth, roles and jobs are not the same. A person in one job might play several roles.

Each role has its system which consists of the role occupant and those who have a direct relationship with him. These “significant others” having expectations are role senders who send expectations to the role. The role occupant also holds expectations from his role and, thus, he is a role sender too. It indicates that a role is defined by the expectations of the role senders, including that of the role occupant.

Role expectations comprise of the rights and privileges, the duties and obligations, of any occupant of a social position in relation to individuals engaged in other positions in the social structure. Role expectations can be general as well as specific. On the one hand, some role expectations clearly specify the required behavior and the penalty
for non-adherence to it. Such role expectations are termed as formal role expectations which are prescribed formally through contract of employment. On the contrary, some role expectations are general and broad, giving vast room for enactment by an individual but within a wide range of acceptable behavior. Such role expectations are termed as self-established role which can be exemplified by senior members of the organization particularly when formal role expectations are ambiguous. Between the aforementioned two extremes are the informal role expectations which are those patterns of behavior, though not specified yet are expected of the individuals. Schein (1980) describes such expectations as covering a range of rights and privileges, duties and obligations, which do not form a part of formal agreement but still have an important influence on behavior. Individual is, thus, expected to perform multiple roles for performance in a job which increases the complexity at work.

This description of ‘role’ indicates that the individual is not only to satisfy his own expectations from the role but also of various others who may be directly or indirectly related to the role. This inherent requirement in a role makes demands and constraints inevitable, creating a potential for stress. Stress is, thus, built up in the concept of role. To
clearly understand this, Pareek (1993) has postulated the concept of ‘role’ in terms of ‘role space’ and ‘role set’.

**Role Space**

An individual occupies and plays many roles concurrently. He can be an employee, a club member, a union member, a father, a husband, a son and so on at the same time. All such roles, played by an individual, together constitute role space for an individual who is also at the centre of the role space. Thus, role space is the dynamic interrelationship between the individual and the various roles he occupies, and amongst all these roles (Pestonjee, 1992).

**Role Set**

As the expectations of other significant roles and those of the individual himself define the individual’s role in the organization, the role set is the pattern of relationship between the focal role, i.e. the role being considered, and other roles.

Role stress can be managed if the role occupant and the role are properly integrated which can be achieved when role expectations are clearly articulated and agreed to. However, such expectations have a potential of generating role stress as, for example, when they are conflicting and ambiguous. Therefore, role and its interface with the individual, has the probability for generating stress for a person (Aziz,
Role stress not only affects the interpersonal relationships but also psychological and physical well being of an individual as well as his role performance. Taking into view the repercussions of role stress, researchers have applied role-theory to understand stress problems at work and to examine how role pressures contribute to occupational stress (Gupta and Adhikari, 2008).

**1.4.1.3 Sources of Role Stress**

Work-related role stress is one of the most interesting constructs in organizational behaviour. Many activities involved in various roles performed by the individual make roles very complex in nature. The complexity multiplies if the individual is implicated in more than one role sets. Such nature of roles creates conflict and stress. Organizational researchers, in the international arena, have usually defined role stress as the aspects of conflict and ambiguity associated with a specific work-related role (Boles & Babin, 1994). The works of Rizzo et al. (1970), on this front, has been greatly referred to. They have focused on two aspects of role stress, namely, role conflict and role ambiguity. The degree to which an individual perceives incompatibilities in role requirements is termed as role conflict and role ambiguity refers to unclear performance expectations as compared to self and others’ role expectations. Kahn et al. (1964) in their comprehensive and integrated
model of stress, acknowledging role stress as a specific type of stress, also delved on constructs like role conflict, and role ambiguity. Role conflict and role ambiguity have been found to have significant effects on personal and organizational outcomes (Fisher and Gitelson, 1983; Jackson and Schuler, 1985).

In India, Pareek in 1983 has also worked on organizational role stress (Aziz, 2004). He found that role space and role set have inherent problems which may lead to various forms of stress. Role space stress arises when the three variables of a role, i.e. role, self and other roles occupied by the individual, are under conflict. As a result, self-role distance, inter-role distance, and role stagnation may take place. The other kind of role stress is the role-set conflict which results when there is incompatibility amongst the expectations of self and significant others. It may result into role expectation conflict, role erosion, resource inadequacy, role ambiguity, role overload, personal inadequacy, and role isolation. A brief description of the aforementioned role stresses is given below:

a) Inter-Role Distance: The conflict between organizational and non-organizational role represents inter-role distance.
b) Role Stagnation: The feeling of being pigeonholed in a role is termed as role stagnation. It arises when the individual perceives a lack of growth opportunities.

c) Self-Role Distance: This kind of stress results when the individual perceives a mismatch between self and his role.

d) Role Ambiguity: A lack of clarity of the role expectations due to lack of information or understanding leads to role ambiguity. It may be pertaining to activities, responsibilities, personal styles and norms and may operate at three stages, that is, when the role sender makes his expectations about the role, when he sends it and when the occupant receives those expectations (Pestonjee, 1992).

e) Role Expectation Conflict: Contradictory expectations of the significant others like superiors, subordinates, peers about the same role and the consequent difficulty faced by the role occupant in satisfying such contradictory expectations lead to this type of conflict.

f) Role Overload: Too may expectations which give rise to quantitative or qualitative or both kind of burden on the role occupant cause role overload.
g) Role Erosion: This type of stress happens when the role occupant feels that the functions which should have been a part of his role are being performed by other role occupants or other role occupants are getting the credit for functions performed by the individual in his role.

h) Resource Inadequacy: Lack of adequate resources required to fulfill the expectations in a role creates resource inadequacy.

i) Personal Inadequacy: It results when the individual in a role feels that he does not have the necessary skills, expertise and training for effectively and efficiently perform the functions expected of him in his role.

j) Role Isolation: The psychological distance between the focal role and other roles in the same role set produce role isolation.

Given the above sources, the empirical research on the theme of role stress has paid attention to its various dimensions (Pestonjee, 1992). Pareek (1982) and Pestonjee (1992) has pointed out the part played by personality, coping, organizational climate, etc. in determining the phenomenon of role stress. The phenomenon of role stress is reported to influence a number of issues relevant to both individual and organizations, too. Studies have shown that the absence of clarity and
predictability in the role is negatively correlated with efforts toward quality and involvement in the job (Beehr et al., 1976). Role stress is also found to impact employee performance, attitude, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, etc. (Shahu & Gole, 2008; Choo, 1986; Anderson, 1976; Schlenkar and Gutek, 1987; Pestonjee and Singh, 1982; Dubinsky & Yammarino, 1984).

1.4.1.4 Dynamics of Role Stress

In the present times, it is highlighted that the advent of technological revolution in all walks of life coupled with globalization, privatization policies has drastically changed conventional role patterns in all sectors. The banking and financial services sector is also traversing a period of major change resulting from globalization and market deregulation, which has led to substantial restructuring, both in industrialized and developing countries (ILO, 2001). Increased competition, both domestically and internationally, has resulted in organizations introducing cost-cutting and productivity improving strategies, which have given way for increasing role demands on employees (ILO, 2001). In banking sector, new products and ways of delivering service and new entrants are competing with traditional banks (Sisson and Marginson, 2000). Consequently, workers employed in this sector are now required to carry out a multitude of roles, tasks and
possess multiple skills. Furthermore, increasing time pressures and levels of monotonous work, and decreasing levels of individual control have resulted in more incidents of psychosocial stress, job dissatisfaction and musculoskeletal complaints (Toivanen et al., 1993; Levoska and Keinanen-Kiukaanniemi, 1994; Smith et al., 1999). The frontline employees of commercial banks face even greater pressure as one of the major challenges faced by the banks is meeting the ever increasing customer expectations (FICCI, 2010) which are forcing the employees to routinely engage in highly demanding interactions with customers. Demanding, repetitive and stressful work roles are the resultant of the customer interactions leading to role stress (Wetzels et al., 2000), which impacts customer orientation of these employees and their job performance (Flaherty et al., 1999). Modekurti and Chattopadhyay (2008), Sankpal et al. (2010), Boles and Babin (1996), Brown and Peterson (1993), Kahn et al. (1964) have also highlighted that role stress occurs in employee jobs that involve direct interaction with customers and such employees experience relatively greater level of role stress. Efforts may be required at both the individual and organizational levels to ensure that favourable working conditions, free of stress, are maintained, and that individual workers’ right to a healthy working environment are adequately protected.
With this backdrop in mind, the present study has been undertaken to assess the role stress dynamism at commercial banks. With the purpose to prepare a micro level, pragmatic and empirical case for role stress, the study concentrated on a specific part of the country. This has enabled to analyze different dimensions, determinants and patterns of role stress of employees of public and private sector banks. This way, in the present study, primary survey has been conducted for the front line employees of public and private sector commercial banks of Jammu and Kashmir State of India.

1.5 Chapter Scheme

In order to analyse the various aspects of the study, it has been arranged into eight chapters which begin with the present one under view. The chapter one makes an introduction to the topic of role stress by highlighting the concept of stress, work stress and later role stress. The chapter two has been framed to explore the previous studies on the phenomenon of organizational stress, in general, and role stress, in particular. On the other hand, the third chapter deals with need and objectives of the study, methodology, and the limitations. Role stress and its underlying factors have been discussed in the fourth chapter with insights into differences between public and private sector commercial banks. The fifth chapter makes an investigation into coping strategies
used by the employees and differences in coping strategies among employees of public and private sector banks. The sixth chapter discusses the results of segmentation of the employees on the basis of role stress experiences at workplace. This chapter also presents the findings of an attempt to identify the determinants of role stress based employee segments. The seventh chapter proposes a comprehensive model of role stress. Lastly, the eighth chapter summarizes the findings of the study and discusses its theoretical and policy implications. This chapter also throws light on the future directions of research emanating from the study.