Chapter I

INTRODUCTION
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Introduction

The concept of ‘organization’ is as old as human civilization but the concept of ‘effective organization’ came into light with the pioneer work of Taylor (1911) who visualized the use of new systematic techniques for maximum utilization of human resources for the purpose of maximum level of productivity. Today the pattern of organization is rapidly changing with modern organizations which are being large in size and complex in nature. The word organization has two meanings one is, an institution and the other is the process of arranging, allocating and bringing relationship among men, material and machines. In other terms, organization establishes the relationship among people that collectively contribute to the attainment of organizational goals effectively. It is therefore necessary for the management not only to understand human behaviour properly but to bind that understanding for the good of the organization. In this technical world, employees are more educated than their counterparts who were ten or fifteen years ago. So, the function and principle of management have been undergone a sea change since the announcement of economic liberalization in the country in 1991. Now organizations have initiated intervening strategies for providing prime quality work to enhance well being as well as commitment towards the organization and also to utilize maximum human resources by reducing their stress at job settings. By keeping in mind the above contentions, present study is intended to explore the influence of occupational stress and HR practices on organizational commitment and psychological well-being among bank employees. In the present research endeavour, occupation stress and HR practices have been taken as independent
variables whereas organizational commitment and psychological well-being as dependent variables. A detailed description of the concept, relevance and phenomenon of all variables are given in preceding writing.

**Organizational Commitment**

Liberalization of the Indian organizational environment through modification in the industrial, trade and financial policies by the government has brought in change and competition of a magnitude that was previously unknown to Indian organizations. In the new liberalized scenario, where multinationals and other global players are competing in the domestic market, the management of organizations is expected to be more productive and efficient. More than a decade ago, the western countries faced similar conditions. Cascades of changing organizational structure and changing expectation have forced various departments of the companies to alter their perspectives on their role and function overnight. Companies are strained to make changes in their organization to give emphasis primarily on productivity. In order to “survive”, Indian organizations are being forced to undergo massive changes that may have negative impact on employees, health and commitment especially when employees cannot make necessary technical adjustments, a sense of uncertainty arises about the future, which in turn, creates stress and decline the level of commitment. Hellriegel, Slocum, and Woodman (2001) pointed out that organizational changes can be viewed as the greatest source of stress on the job and perhaps, in an employee's life. Concurring, Schabracq and Cooper (1998) believed that employees' stress level rises because positions and technical skills may be changed or altered. Yu (2009) also stated in this reference that organisational change may produce negative effects such as
ambiguous role, responsibilities, unemployment, a lowering of social status, family and job conflicts.

In this context, it would be important to identify the factors in the organizational environment that have the most positive as well as negative impact on the performance of employees in the organization in order to facilitate the positive and impede negative factors that subsequently will lead the higher commitment among employees toward the organization. Organizational commitment has been taken as first dependent variable in the present research work. Before understanding the concept of organizational commitment it is imperative to understand the term commitment because different thinkers have taken the term in different ways. Commitment represents everything beyond negative attraction and attachment; passive loyalty and support. It is an active involvement with the organization where employees nurture true relationships with the organization per se and willingly give their best to the organization, in order to help their organization prosper and succeed in each and every possible way. It can be contrasted with other work related attitudes, such as job satisfaction and organizational identification. Organizational identification is a form of psychological attachment occurring when employees adopt the defining characteristics of the organization as defining characteristics for themselves (Dutton et al., 1994). When employees perceive that “their” organization acts as a “true corporate citizen”, they form positive images about it and increase their organizational identification. They feel proud to identify with such an organization, develop their self-esteem, form affective bonds with the organization, develop a sense of loyalty, experience higher affective well-being, behave for sustaining/reinforcing such reputation
(e.g., by speaking well about the organization in the presence of outsiders) and make efforts to perform better and to benefit the whole organization (Dutton et al., 1994; Maignan & Ferrell, 2001a). Especially when employees feel that the organization is paying attention and responsible towards them (e.g., improving work-family balance, offering salaries higher than industry average) they tend to reciprocate (Settoon et al., 1996; Eisenberger et al., 2001) with positive attitudes toward the organization, including affective bonds and feelings of loyalty, which form a stronger sense of community feeling that they can satisfy their social intimacy and security needs ultimately experience higher levels of psychological well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Burroughs and Eby, 1998;). These positive emotions can induce people to develop higher affective and normative commitment toward the organization. Employees may also experience a sense of psychological and emotional safety (Brown & Leigh, 1996; Burroughs & Eby, 1998), develop trust in the organization and its leaders and a higher sense of organizational virtuousness (Cameron et al., 2004). In short, when employees feel that the organization is committed to them (Robertson et al., 2007), they tend to develop a sense of duty toward the organization, and are willing to reciprocate with more cooperative and supportive actions with greater loyalty, affective commitment, enthusiasm, work effort and productivity, thus performing their jobs better and contributing to organizational performance (Cameron et al., 2004; Eisenberger et al., 2001; Gavin & Mason, 2004). As Kets de Vries (2001) argues, "Meaningful activity at work becomes a way to transcend personal concerns; it becomes a way to create a sense of continuity. Meaningful work fosters the employees' self-esteem, hope, health, happiness and sense of personal growth
(Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Kets de Vries, 2001) Employees bring their entire self (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual) to the organization, assume work more as a mission than as a mere “job”, which in turn makes them more affectively and normatively attached to their organizations and more committed to improving organizational performance (Gavin & Mason, 2004; Rego & Cunha, forthcoming; Sheep, 2006). In short, employees will develop higher affective and normative commitment when they perceive that their organization acts as a “true corporate citizen”. This happens because they feel identified with their organization, feel the obligation to reciprocate, satisfy their social needs and feel like carrying out meaningful work. It is also likely that they develop continuance commitment. That is to say, they develop “calculative” attitudes in such a way that they feel leaving the organization will imply losing benefits, good working conditions and possibilities to remain employed in an economically healthy organization. Conversely, if employees perceive that the organization is a bad “corporate citizen”, in that situation they do not commit to them, does not allow them to satisfy social needs and to perform meaningful work, their organizational identification, self-esteem and satisfaction decrease, their affective bond with the organization vanish, the sense of loyalty decrease, and the desire to leave the organization intensify (Ashford & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994, Van Schie, 2000). They do only what it is necessary for keeping the job (i.e., avoiding extra-role behaviours), and decrease their affective bonds to the organization and their sense of organizational loyalty. They also feel less prone to remain for calculative reasons, since they “have little to lose” if they leave the organization. And they become less committed to the organization and time after time less productive. So,
to make employees more productive, the very first step is to increase their commitment towards organization.

In today’s global economy, organizations incorporate programs like total quality management, employee involvement, job enrichment, skill-based pay, gain sharing plans to gain a competitive edge. The objective of such interventions is to increase the firm productivity by controlling employee behaviour on the job and actively contribute towards achieving organizational objective, and thus building strong organizational commitment (Lawler, 1986). One of the core objectives of the management is to increase the efficiency by getting maximized productivity at the minimum cost. Job performances are typically determined by the motivation to work hard and high motivation means greater efforts and higher performances (Mitchell, 1982). Thus, it can be said that motivation is to push workers towards improved performance and increased productivity (Tung, 1981). The managements’ concern has also increased for the employees for keep them motivated on the job (Mitchell, 1973). Employers use a wide range of motivational techniques including monetary incentives, goal setting, job enlargement, behaviour modification, participation, award and recognition plans, discipline counselling etc. in order to enhance the commitment of employees towards the organization.

In the field of organizational behaviour and industrial organizational psychology, organizational commitment is, in a general sense, the employee’s psychological attachment to the organization. Attraction, attachment, dedication, loyalty and support towards one’s organization are the simplest words to explain organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is thus the psychological
state that characterizes an employee's relationship with the organization and reduces the likelihood that (s) he will leave (Allen & Meyer, 2000), impacting on a broad range of attitudes and behaviours with organizational relevance, such as the intention to leave, turnover, punctuality, organizational citizenship behaviours, attitudes toward organizational change and performance (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000; Meyer et al., 2002). The main components of the construct are the affective (affective attachment to the organization), continuance (perceived costs associated with leaving) and normative (feelings of obligation toward the organization) dimensions. Employees with a strong affective bond stay in the organization because they want to. Those with strong continuance commitment remain in the organization because they feel they have to. Normatively committed employees stay because they feel they ought to. In general, affectively and normatively committed individuals tend to perform their jobs better, and to be more productive (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000; Meyer et al., 2002); continuance committed workers tend to perform less well. Each component also develops independently on the basis of different antecedents and via different processes (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000; Meyer & Allen, 1997; Meyer et al., 2002; Rego et al., 2004). Affective commitment develops when the employee becomes involved in, recognizes the value-relevance of, and/or derives his/her identity from, an association with the organization. Normative commitment develops when people internalize the organizational norms through socialization; receive benefits that induce them to feel the need to reciprocate and/or to accept the terms of a psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995). Continuance commitment develops when the employee perceives that there are no alternatives other than to remain in the organization.
Meyer & Allen (1991) contended that affective, continuance, and normative commitments were components rather than types because employees could have varying degrees of all three. “For example, one employee might feel both a strong attachment to an organization and a sense of obligation to remain. A second employee might enjoy working for the organization but also recognize that leaving would be very difficult from an economic standpoint. Finally, a third employee might experience a considerable degree of desire, need, and obligation to remain with the current employer (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Organizational commitment is a recent addition to organizational behaviour’s literature. Becker’s (1960) “side-bet” concept was the first to define the term commitment, in organizational psychology. He analyzed that the concept enjoyed broad practice with little formal analysis or concrete theoretical reasoning. Becker (1960) defined commitment involving “consistent lines of action” in behaviour that are produced by side-bets. Side-bets link extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity. These side-bets can be lost, if activity is discontinued. Whyte (1956) gave the concept of “the organization man” refers to one’s over commitment to the organization. For him, his ‘organization man’ is a person who works for the organization and possesses a feeling of psycho-belongingness towards the same. Hall et. al. (1970) considered commitment as the process by which the goals of organization and of individual becomes increasingly integrated or congruent. However, Sheldon (1971) stated that commitment is an attitude or an orientation towards the organization which links or attaches identity of a person to his organization. Porter et. al. (1976) opines that commitment is the strength of one’s identification with job and involvement in particular organization, hence,
characterized by, one’s willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of organization and a desire to maintain their membership in it. They perceived commitment as a highly active and positive orientation towards the organization.

Organizational commitment is a universal phenomenon. It is an effect of working condition and organizational climate, other than employee’s work related attitude and behaviour per se. More analytically, organizational commitment is a state in which an employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals, and wishes to maintain membership in the organization (Blau and Boal, 1987). Similarly, organizational commitment is an acceptance of organizational goals and values, willingness to retain membership in the organization (Balaji, 1992). Mottaz (1998) viewed commitment in terms of attitude and called it an effective response resulting from an evaluation of the work situation, which links or attaches the individual to the organization. Venkatachalam (1998) talked about organizational commitment as taking on the organizational identity.

Organizational commitment is to identify with one’s employing organization. So, it is the relative strength of an individual’s identification with the involvement in a particular organization (Mishra and Srivastave, 2001). Whatever may be the words to describe organizational commitment they measure a common concept. They indicate organizational commitment to be a bond or link of individual to the organization. It is a process through which employees of any organization identify and hence make organizational goals. They are desirous of maintaining relationship in the organization. March and Simon (1958) interpreted that real commitment creates an exchangeable relationship in which employees attach themselves to the organization in lieu of rewards or outcomes. The employees who
are truly committed to the goals and values of an organization are more likely to participate in organizational activities. Organizational commitment is a powerful tool, which can be used as an aid to achieve high level of performance. It can also be used to develop and maintain discipline in the organization (Sheldon, 1971). Steers (1977) developed a framework giving antecedents and outcomes of commitment. He divided them into three groups, based on variables which influenced commitment. These are as follows:

Personal characteristics or attachment: age, education, need for achievement and work experience are few variables describing personal characteristics.

Work experience: refers to varied socializing forces which have an impact on attachment with one's organization. It signifies experiences, attitude of individuals, as well as of groups towards their respective organizations.

Job-characteristics: job challenges, opportunities for social interactions, feedback are the determinants, which explain this category.

Increasingly, organizational commitment is also viewed as a process of identification with the goals of an organization's various departments. This also includes its human resources, their top management and also their customers, at large. Here goals and values are focal pivot of commitment. This description of organizational commitment realistically reflects the nature of an employee's attachment with the organization (Rechiers, 1985). An employee's psychological attitude toward his or her organization presents three major psychological foundations. They can be categorized as-
Compliance: It arises when attitudes and behavior are adopted for gaining rewards, not for sharing benefits.

Identification: It occurs when an individual willingly gets influenced by a relationship, in order to be proud of the accepted relation. This is like adoption of values of a group, without really adhering to them as their own.

Internalization: Here influence is adopted due to the induced attitude and behavior, which are like one's own values. The values of group and organization are one and the same (O'Reilly and Chatman, 1986).

Organizational commitment has always been the backbone of any organization. Its spirit is vital for the survival of any organizational set-up. Its importance has heightened due to present pace of development in the world. It has become a great concern for both, the employers as well as the employees. Organizational commitment has thus, become most studied work related behavioural phenomenon, which directly or indirectly influences productivity and effectiveness positively.

**Psychological Well-Being**

Psychological well-being has been taken as another dependent variable in the present study. The concept of well-being is very popular now-a-days, and social scientists are much concerned about the well-being of human mind. The concept of well-being is as old as human civilization. Psychological well-being or subjective well-being deals with people's feeling in their day to day life (Bradburn, 1969; Campbell, 1976; Warr, 1978). These feelings may vary from negative ones (like anxiety, depression, dissatisfaction etc.) to positive ones (like
elation, satisfaction etc.). Well being is one of the most important goals which individuals as well as societies strive for. The term denotes that something is in a good state. It does not specify what the ‘something’ is and what is meant by ‘good’. Well being can be specified in two ways; first by specifying the ‘what’ and secondly by spelling out the criteria of wellness (Veenhoven, 2004). So many terms such as happiness, satisfaction, hope, positive affect, good mental health and well being have been used in the literature synonymously and interchangeably. The word well being is mostly used for specific variety of goodness, for example, living in a good environment, being of worth for the world, being able to cope with life, enjoying life etc.

Well-being is an admixture of affective, cognitive, and somatic state of affairs. It is the opposite pole of depression (Joseph and Lewis, 1998). It presents an overall view of subjective well being (Joseph and Lewis, 1998). It also includes motivational experiences of life with subjective feelings of satisfaction. Happiness and satisfaction are the steps to the goal of well-being. They involve multiple life situations as belongingness, creativity, education, familial responsibilities, financial complexities, health, matrimony, opportunities, self esteem and trust in others.

In psychology, the concept of psychological well-being or subjective well-being has started gaining impetus recently, due to hectic work schedules and metro life styles. The concept of well-being has been used in all religious books, such as Buddhism preaches love and well-being for all i.e. not only for the believers but also for the followers of other religions. Christianity's mission is to bring about true well-being for mankind. Hinduism starts with “Sarve Bhavantu Sukhin” (let
all enjoy well-being). Geeta claims well-being to be most important feature of life. This well-being can be attained by emancipation from anxiety producing fixation and attachments. In Islam the holy Quran states “Saber Tawakkul” that is to have patience and to have faith in God and observing patience leads to real well-being.

Well-being is examined as a harmonious satisfaction of one’s desires and goal (Chekola, 1975). Well-being can also be defined as a dynamic state of mind characterized by a reasonable amount of harmony between ‘individuals and abilities’, ‘needs and expectations’ and ‘environmental demands and opportunities’ (Levi, 1987). Three features of subjective or psychological well-being have been identified as follows:

- It is based on subjective experiences, instead of objective conditions of life.
- It has a positive, as well as a negative affect, and
- It is global experience, as opposed to experience in particular domain such a work (Okun and Stock 1987).

Since time immemorial, psychological well-being is a part and parcel of man’s lifestyle. Basically it was studied in philosophy, under the name of ‘Eudoemonics’, which was translated as ‘happiness’. This can be clearly studied in ‘Aristotle Nicomachea’. Later, with the absolute development of human race, socially, the compartmentalization or more precisely specialization began. This led to the concept of psychological well-being to move silently into the discipline of psychology too. And then, it has become a topic of psychology as well as philosophy and theology.
Psychological well being is the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life experiences and of one’s role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness, and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry etc. It emphasizes positive characteristics of growth and development. There are six distinct components of psychological well-being viz; having a positive attitude towards oneself and one’s past life (self acceptance), having goals and objectives that give life meaning (purpose in life), being able to manage complex demands of daily life (environmental mastery), having a sense of continued development and self realization (personal growth), possessing caring and trusting ties with others (positive relation with others); and being able to follow one’s own convictions (autonomy) (Khan 2009). Diener, et. al. (1999) conceptualized psychological or subjective well-being as a broad construct, encompassing four specific and distinct components including (a) pleasant or positive well-being (e.g., joy, elation, happiness, mental health,) (b) unpleasant affect or psychological distress (e.g., guilt, shame, sadness, anxiety, worry, anger, stress, depression), (c) life satisfaction (a global evaluation of one’s life), and (d) domain or situation satisfaction (e.g. work, family, leisure, health, finance, self).

Subjective well being represents people’s evaluation of their lives, and includes happiness, pleasant emotions, life satisfaction and relative absence of unpleasant moods and emotions. In other words, a person’s evaluation of his or her life is based on his/her cognitive and emotional reactions. The psychology well-being aims to help people live more rewarding lives including close relationships, responsibilities to one’s community and enjoyment of one’s life, i.e., to
experience greater subjective well-being. Subjective well-being is a subjective feeling of goodness of an individual while the psychological well-being is the overall goodness including subjective well-being of the individual.

Oshi et al. (1999) proposed “value” as a moderator of well-being. The examination of individual development and cross cultural variations in the process of well-being is a promising pathway to gain insight into the nature of subjective well-being. Subjective well-being centres on the person’s own judgement (Diener, 1984). Good life can be put into words in terms of “subjective well-being” (SWB) and in colloquial terms it is labelled as “happiness”. Subjective is not sufficient for good life, but it appears to be increasingly necessary for it (Diener: Sapita and Suh, 1998). It refers to the people’s evaluation for their life which is both affective and cognitive. People experience abundant subjective well-being when they feel many pleasant and few unpleasant emotions, when they are engaged in interesting activities, when they experience many pleasures and few pains, and when they are satisfied with their lives (Diener, 2000). General well-being is a part of the concept of positive mental health, which is not a mere absence of disease or infirmity (Verma 1988). Psychological well-being is a person’s evaluative reactions to his/her life either in terms of life satisfaction i.e. cognitive evaluations or ‘affect’ i.e. ongoing emotional reactions (Diener and Diener, 1995). Psychological well-being can be described as individual mood in a global sense, and is frequently operationalized as anxiety and depression (Krol et al. 1993). There are many factors that affect the psychological well-being of an individual like family conflicts, peer and family expectations, career tension, work pressure, relationship with friends, supervisors, subordinates etc. Work is the most
important aspect of one’s life. Some of the important factors that affect persons’ psychological well-being at work place are the feeling of accomplishment, feeling of using one’s abilities to the fullest, recognition of work by superiors and peers, promotion opportunities, pay etc. With many other job factors, rapid changes in technology and information processing produce pressure on the professionals. They frequently have to deal with these job pressures that may have adverse consequence on their physical and psychological well-being. Stressful experiences are thought to increase health risk through two general pathways: firstly by stimulating physiological responses that are implicated in host resistance and disease pathology, and secondly by altering patterns of health-related behaviors such as smoking, alcohol consumption, and exercise (Adler, Matthews 1994, Steptoe, Wardle 1994). It is difficult to know exactly the extent to which job factors affect employees’ health and well-being. Majority of job stress models posit a general causal flow from environmental conditions (job stressors) to employee health and well-being (Singh 2007). Jex and Beehr (1991) identified lack of control, interpersonal conflicts, organizational constrains, role ambiguity, role conflict and work load as being potentially important determinants of health and well-being. Among these role variables role-overload have been reported to be dominant (Rogers, et al., 1987, Pflanz & Ogle, 2006). Job strains are adverse reactions that employees have due to job stresses. Jex and Beeehr (1991) discussed three categories of job strains i.e., behavioural, physical and psychological strains. Behavioural strains are things that people do in response to job stressors such as drinking alcohol on the job and staying home from work when not ill. Physical strains are manifestation of health such as disease or physiological symptoms. (e.g.
headache) psychological strains are affective reactions including attitudes (e.g. job dissatisfaction) or emotions (anxiety and frustration). The organizational conditions most frequently identified and researched as stressors are job qualities, roles in the organization and relationship at work. Factors commonly associated with stress at work place are, work overload, role conflict and role ambiguity, poor peer relation, political pressure (Rizvi, 2009). Many researchers have proved that middle level managers feel more stress than front and upper level managers. The middle level managers reported higher job pressure than their counterparts in a number of job areas, including time, dealing with people's problem, dealing with rules and regulations of the company, working long hours and being asked to use new methods (Marshall and Copper, 1978). A large number of studies have reported that occupational stress is significantly related to psychosomatic and health problems. (Mishra and Singh, 2006; Singh, Srivastava and Mandal, 1999; Jamal, 1990). Jeckson et al. (1985) revealed that role ambiguity and role conflict are significantly correlated with physical problems. From the documented evidence, it is clear that as far as work life is concerned extreme stress is so aversive to employees that they will try to avoid it by withdrawing either psychologically (through disinterest or lack of involvement in the job etc.) physically (frequently late coming, absenteeism, lethargy etc.) or by leaving the job entirely (Beehr and Newman, 1978). Many other reviews have been done to examine stressful work conditions and their relationship with physical and mental health and well being. Travers and Cooper (1993) provide evidence that job stressors are related to mental health problems, physical symptoms and depression (Schaubroeck, Ganster and Fox, 1992), alcohol intake (Stify & Laker, 1991)
coronary heart diseases and its risk factor (Caplan & Jones 1975). There is a growing body of evidence from studies in various organizational setting that occupational stress has been increasingly implicated in the aetiology of poor mental health and psychosomatic disease (House et. al. 1979). Occupational stress can reduce productivity, increase mistakes and accidents at work, encourage absenteeism, lower morale, increase conflict with others and cause physical and emotional problems (Pflanz & Ogle, 2006) and finally poor life satisfaction (Pawar & Rathod, 2007). These affect a person’s overall health, and make him passive to enjoy life as the sense of ‘enjoyment of life’ (commonly referred as satisfaction, happiness and joy) or subjective appreciation of life (Veenhoven, 2004) is also conceptualized as an indicator of well-being. One’s conscious sense of happiness-presence of pleasure and absence of pain has two meanings a) state of well-being characterized by emotions ranging from contentment to intense enjoy; and b) emotion experienced when in a state of well-being. The descriptors of contentment are satisfaction, mood (positive) and enjoyment (Khan 2007). Diener (1984) reported that happy people tend to have high self esteem, a satisfying love relationship, a meaningful religious faith and sufficient social activities. Happiness does not appear to be related to age, sex, race, education. Happy people may have greater self- confidence, sociability, or better social relationships and other characteristics of those high in well-being.

Psychological well-being plays a significant role in one’s private and social life; consequently it affects the home environment as well as the work environment of a person. Those high on psychological well-being tend to be in a good mental state and having healthy adjustment with their environment while person low on the
measure of psychological well-being may show unhappiness, poor social relations, and maladjustments with work environment etc. Poor psychological well-being would impair one’s life in various ways. Psychological well-being leads to desirable outcomes, including economic ones. Furthermore economic outcomes do not always lead to positive psychological well-being. In a very intensive research done by Diener (1999) and his colleagues, it has been found that people, who score high in psychological well-being, later earn high income and perform better at work than people who score low in well-being. It is also found to have a positive relationship with physical health. In addition, it is often noticed that what a society measures will in turn influence the attitude of people. If a society takes greater effort to measure productivity, people in the society are likely to focus more on it, sometimes to the detriment of other values. If a society regularly assesses well-being, people will pay attention to it and learn more about its causes. Psychological well-being is therefore valuable not only because it assesses well-being directly but because it is beneficial as a national priority in itself.

**Occupational Stress**

Stress and anxiety have become pervading features of people’s life in modern world. Despite advancement in science and technology, remarkable growths of economy, and sources of luxury, majority of people all over the world, seem to be experiencing moderate to high degree of stress in various spheres of their lives. Consistently increasing rates of psychosomatic, psychological disorders and feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction with life in general reflect the high level
of stress being experienced by people in the present day world (Srivastava 1999). As stress levels have increased, people have faced rising medical bills, more accident insurance claims, increased absenteeism, and declining morale. Due to globalization and liberalization most employees not only in India but also from other countries increasingly complain about rising and high level of stress at work. During the past decade, banking sectors have undergone thorough rapid and striking changes like policy changes, downsizing, privatization, computerization, introduction of new technologies etc. These changes have taken place very quietly because of increased competition and entrance of more private sector banks. The advent of new technologies in all walks of life, coupled with globalization and privatization policies have drastically changed conventional patterns of work and interaction in all sectors. Extensive use of computers in this sector has changed the work patterns of the bank employees and has made it inevitable to downsize the work force. The 1990s saw fundamental policy and structural changes in Indian banks in order to prepare India to cope with a new economic world order. Globalisation and privatisation led policies forced the banking sector to reform and to adopt a competitive frame, to cope with a multinationals led environment. Structure and climate of public and private sector organizations markedly differ, and so are likely to cause different amounts of stress to its members. Evidence from existing literature states that more than 60% of bank employees have one or other problem directly or indirectly related to these drastic changes (Kumar, 2006). The above factors and changes cause occupational stress and related disorders among employees. The first independent variable of this research is occupational stress, hence this term needs some explanation. The concept of stress
was first introduced by Hans Selye into Life Science in 1936. He is regarded by many as the father of stress researches. His book *The Stress of Life* (1956) did much to bring the concept into public domain and his General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) is one of the seminal concepts in the field. According to this concept, there are three phases of response to stress; the first phase is alarm, second phase continues with resistance, and the third, may terminate with exhaustion. These three phases are incorporated in physical and chemical changes which prepare an individual to fight or flee. According to Selye (1979) stress is the non-specific response of the body to any demand on it for readjustment or adaptation. By ‘non-specific’ he means that the same patterns of responses could be produced by any number of different stressful stimuli or stressor and if anybody is unable to adjust or adapt to the environment, the situation would cause stress, depending upon the perception of the individual or how he perceives the situation or environment. Further, Selye (1974) argued that “any kind of normal activity can produce considerable stress without causing any harmful effects”. Stress may refer to “external influences acting on individuals (Selye, 1976), physiological reactions to such influences (Mayer 2000), psychological interpretation of both the external influences and the physiological reactions (Code and Langan-Fox, 2001), and adverse behavioural reactions exhibited in work, or social situations, or both (Richmond and Kehoe, 1999). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined stress as “the result of a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being”. Therefore stress is viewed as residing neither solely in the individual nor in the environment but in the transaction between these
two. So, stress exists when the demands on a person are perceived as taxing or exceeding the person’s adjusting capacity.

Attempts to define stress have been many and varied (Kilty and Bond, 1982) but the most accepted definition of stress states that “Stress is a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand to what he/she desired and for which the outcome is too perceived to both uncertain and important” (Schuler, 1980). Sutherland and Cooper (2000) pointed out that the use of the word stress is now so common that it is used interchangeably to refer to a state or condition, a symptom, or the cause of a state or a symptom. In many ways, stress has become the easy explanation for all ills (a ‘whipping boy’) that serves to obfuscate rather than clarify employee experience of work. Stressors vary and they may be in the form of day-to-day worries, major events, prolonged problematic work situations or they may arise from certain ideas, thoughts and perceptions that evoke negative emotions. For example, the idea that one may not reach the position that one aspires to (Buunk and Janssen, 1992) may lead to stress. This reasoning suggests that many occupations have their own characteristic stressors. Adults spend more time in work than in other activity. It is not surprising then, that job and career are central sources of stress. Some of the factors producing stress in a job setting are obvious; discrimination, extreme overload, role ambiguity, role conflicts, relationship with co-workers, political pressure etc. Stress at work resulting from increasing complexities of work and its divergent demands have become the prominent and the pervading feature of modern organizations. It is associated with impaired individual functioning in the workplace. Negative effects of stress include reduced efficiency, decreased
capacity to perform, dampened initiative and reduced interest in working, increased rigidity of thought, a lack of concern for the organisation and colleagues, and a loss of responsibility (Greenberg and Baron, 1995; Matteson and Ivancevich, 1982). Stress has been associated with important occupational outcomes of job satisfaction, organisational commitment and employee withdrawal behaviour (Naumann, 1993; Sullivan and Bhagat, 1992; Tett and Meyer, 1993; Williams and Hazer, 1986). Researches in this area of organizational psychology and management have used the term ‘job stress’ to denote employee’s mental state aroused by a job situation or a combination of job situations perceived as presenting excessive and divergent demands (Srivastava 1999).

Due to the minute difference in the phenomenon of job stress, work stress, occupational stress and organizational stress, experts use these terms interchangeably. Organizational stress arises out of the organizational climate and structure. Job stress is the result of physical working conditions while work stress is experienced during the work performance of the employee. On the other hand, occupational stress is used in a broader sense, which refers to the intrinsic aspects of job, organizational structure and climate as well as the role facets in the organization. Literature on occupational stress revealed that there are a number of factors related to job that affect the behaviour of employees. (Mclean 1974; Brief, Schuler and Vansell, 1998). Occupational stress initially arises from constituent factors of job and its psycho-physical environment; these factors are not inherently stressors. In fact, personal characteristics of the employee and his cognitive appraisal of job factors in the framework of his capacity and resources determine the extent of stress he would experience from a job factor or situation. So,
occupational stress can be defined as negative environmental factors or stressors associated with a particular job and a person's coping capacity. Many experts have defined occupational stress in different ways. Margolis, Kores, & Quinn (1974) have defined occupational stress "as a condition at work interacting with worker's characteristics to disrupt his psychological or physiological homeostasis". According to Beehr and Newman (1978) occupational stress is "a condition wherein job related factors interact with the worker to change (disrupt or enhance) his psychological conditions such that the person is forced to deviate them from their normal functioning". A lot of factors in job setting are known to cause occupational stress in employees. Cox (1993) identified two prominent sources of stress arising from an individual's role within an organization; role ambiguity and role conflict. Burke (1988) takes the view that research on role conflict and ambiguity is extremely homogenous and does not separate the two constructs in describing the variables which correlate with them. Role conflict and ambiguity are correlated positively with tension, fatigue, and absenteeism, leaving the job, psychological and physiological general strain. Role conflict and ambiguity are correlated negatively with job satisfaction, physical withdrawal, supervisory satisfaction, performance, job involvement, decision making, organizational commitment, tolerance for conflict and group cohesion reported influence.

With regard to the sources of occupational stress, three major categories can be identified:

- Organizational characteristics and process;

- Working conditions and interpersonal relationships; and
• Job demands and role characteristics.

Among organizational characteristics that have been suggested as stressful are high degrees of centralization, formalization, and specialization, as well as large size and low rate of upward mobility. Organizational policies and processes that lead to pay inequities, frequent relocation, poor communication, ambiguous or conflicting task assignment, shift work and inadequate feedback on performance also are seen as likely sources of stress.

As far as working conditions are concerned; crowding, lack of privacy, noise, excessive heat or cold, inadequate lighting, glaring or flickering lights and the presence of toxic chemicals and other air pollutants distinguish some working conditions identified as occupational stressors. Interpersonal relationships at work characterized by a lack of recognition, acceptance and trust, as well as competition and conflict, are seen as stress inducing.

Srivastava and Singh (1981) identified twelve factors which cause occupational stress, such as: role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, group pressure, low profitability, under participation, low status, responsibility for people, intrinsic impoverishment, strenuous working conditions, poor peer relations and powerlessness. McGrath (1976) suggested the following six sources of occupational stress—task-based stress (difficulty, ambiguity, load etc), role-based stress (conflict, ambiguity, load etc.), stress intrinsic to behaviour setting (e.g. effect of crowding and under manning, etc), stress arising from the physical environment itself (e.g., extreme hot/ cold, hostile forces, etc), stress arising from
social environment in sense of interpersonal relations (e.g. interpersonal disagreement, privacy, isolation, etc.) stress within the person’s system, which the focal person brings with him to the situation (e.g. anxiety, perceptual style, motivation, experience, etc). In a study, Pestonjee and Singh (1987) noted that managers in private enterprises rated higher on role stress. Similar results were revealed in the study conducted by Singh (1987) who observed that public sector employees experience comparatively less job stress. But in another study Banerjee (1989) observed that public sector employees perceive comparatively more job stress. In an extensive study, Srivastava (1999) examined the effect of overall nature (structure, system, climate, and culture) of the organization on employees’ occupational stress. He pointed out that employees operating in the public and private sector organizations significantly differ with regard to the stress they perceive arising from various components of their jobs. Employees belonging to the public sector organizations experienced markedly higher stress stemming from most of the components of their jobs, such as role ambiguity, role conflict, group pressures, responsibility for person, supervision, and control, under participation, powerlessness, poor-peer relations, unprofitability, low status, strenuous working conditions, and intrinsic impoverishment, but surprisingly no significant difference could be seen between the employees of the two enterprises so far as stress of role overload was concerned and it was also noted that powerlessness, under participation and low profitability were among the predominant job stressors for the public sector employees whereas the private sector employees perceived responsibility for person, low profitability and role overload as prominent job stressors. On the other hand, intrinsic impoverishment, low status and poor peer
relations were rated quite low as job stressors by the employees in both types of organizations.

The nature of severity of occupational stress may be more adequate and conveniently understood by observing physical and psychological symptoms which occur in the employees under the condition of job stress. Beehr and Newman (1976) have outlined three categories of these symptoms:

Psychological Symptoms: These include job dissatisfaction, disliking for the job, depression, anxiety, boredom, frustration, isolation, and resentment. Having these problems, the employee is less able to cope with job problems in a way that would improve his work conditions and enhance his mental outlook.

Physiological symptoms: Though it is difficult to know how much these physical symptoms have been caused by a particular job stress verses other aspect of an employees' life, it has been established that consistent job stress links with certain physical symptoms and diseases. The common physical symptoms of occupational stress are cardiovascular diseases, gastrointestinal problems, allergies, skin diseases, headaches and respiratory diseases.

Behavioural Symptoms: The behavioural stress symptoms of job stress can be classified into two categories. The first category of the symptoms belongs to the focal employees while the other belongs to the organization. The employee-centred symptoms are avoidance of work, increased intake of alcohol or drugs, overeating or under eating, aggression towards co-workers or family members, and interpersonal problems in general. The organization related symptoms of job stress include absenteeism, leaving the job, accident proneness and decrease in
work efficiency. It is difficult to say what precisely the dollar cost of stress to the organization is. The United States Clearing House for Mental Health Information reported that U.S. industry has an annual $17 billion decrease in production capacity due to stress related problems. Others estimate that at least $60 billion is lost annually by organizations solely because of stress related physical illness (Matteson & Ivancevich, 1982). Alexandra (2007) also reported that, according to the American Institute of Stress, the nation's employers spend $300 billion each year as a result of absenteeism, turnover and diminished productivity directly related to stress. 40% of turnover is also related to occupational stress with a price tag of $3,000 to $13,000 to replace one employee. These figures clearly indicate the negative impact of occupational stress on employees.

Jones (1984) cited the following cost figures derived from research completed by the National Safety Council, the College of Insurance, and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. According to him approximately 75 to 85 percent of all industrial accidents are caused by an inability to cope with stress, and in recent years such accidents cost U.S. companies $32 billion. As for as health is concerned, National Safety Council pointed out that the heart diseases associated with stress were responsible for an annual loss of more that 135 million work days. Stress related headaches are the leading cause of lost work hours in American Industry, psychological or psychosomatic problems contribute to more than 60 percent of long term employees’ disability cases, and $26 billion is spent annually on disability payments and medical bills. This shows a direct relation of stress to health.
One study in this regard conducted by Karasek et al. (1981) on 1461 employed men found that low decision latitude, expressed as low intellectual discretion and low personal freedom, was associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease. And one more study carried out by Karasek et al. (1990) on 1600 Swedish working men found that 20% of workers, who described their work as both psychologically demanding and low on a scale measuring latitude to make decisions, reported heart disease symptoms. Similarly, Ivancevich (1979) found in a study of 154 project engineers with 'management-level responsibilities' that participation in decision-making correlated negatively with physical symptoms like job tension, role conflict, role ambiguity and fatigue. Work and non work problems both affect the employee's health simultaneously. In this context, Mind (1992) conducted a study on 109 British companies in which 63% of the companies surveyed said that they believed that problems at work caused equal or more stress than personal problems.

In the present field, one useful model has been developed by Marshall and Cooper (1979) who located workplace stressors under six broad categories comprising: factors intrinsic to the job; role in the organization; relationships at work; career development and achievement; organizational structure and climate; and the home-work interface. Factors such as accidents, low productivity, absenteeism and increased tardiness may disrupt the operation of an organization. Employees under stress often display behavioural changes. Sleep disorders, overeating, smoking, substance abuse, hostility and burnout are found in workers experiencing job stress (Raj et. al., 2006). Both the employees and the organizations are affected by these occupational stressors.
There is considerable amount of occupational stress making the employees less productive, but researchers have identified various techniques to prevail over it. The employee can reduce occupational stress by considering the person-environment (P-E) fit theory, proposed by French et al. (1974). According to this theory, poor fit or misfit between employee and his work and environment results in psychological stress and health strain. This theory is based on the assumption that people vary in their needs, expectations and abilities just as jobs vary in their requirement, demands and incentives. When there is poor fit between the characteristics of the employee and of the job, P-E fit theory predicts that the employee’s well-being will be affected. In this theory the fit is not unilateral. It is rather bilateral fit between employee and his job. Both should satisfy each other’s demands or expectations. Poor or insufficient supply from either side would cause stress. One form of fit involves the discrepancy between the need and aspiration of the employee and supplies in the job and environment to meet his needs and goals. A good P-E fit occurs when the supplies in the environment (i.e., money, support from supervisors and colleagues, opportunity to satisfy needs for affiliation, power and achievement) are sufficient to satisfy the motives of the employee.

Second form of fit involves the relationship between the requirements and demands on the job and the abilities of the employee to meet those demands. If the demand of the job exceed the abilities of the employees or does not match with the temperaments and interest of the employees, it will cause stress and result in psychological strain. If supplies for the motives of the person are threatened by discrepancies between demand and abilities, the individual will experience stress. P-E fit theory emphasises the causal relationship between misfit and strain. The
exact contents and process of relationship of misfit is determined by following factors: (1) needs which are not being satisfied, (2) abilities to meet the job demands, (3) the genetic and socio-cultural background of the employee, (4) defence and coping predispositions, and (5) situational constrains on particular response.

In fact, the degree of P-E fit can be determined objectively and subjectively. Objective P-E fit refers to the fit between the objective person and the objective environment i.e., fit independent of individual’s perception of P-E fit. P-E fit represents the interaction of the person and the environment rather than an outcome which each cause. The central theme of the theory was that misfit to either kind results in stress and threat to well-being of the focal employee. Harrison (1976) also accepted and proved validity of the P-E fit model of job stress. Following steps would be utilized to avoid job tension at individual level:

- Recognize the interaction to job role
- Maintain perspective
- Keep a balance between work and recreation and
- Identify and accept emotional needs

Stressors at the individual level have been studied more than any other category. Role conflicts, role ambiguity, role overload and under load are widely examined as individual stressors (Mc Grath 1976; Newton and Keenan, 1987). It is also reported by many researchers that low job satisfaction is associated with high stress (Hollingsworth et al., Abdul Halim, 1981; Keller et al., 1975; Leigh et al., 1988).
At initial organizational level, selection of suitable personnel and their proper training in the framework of the job requirements can largely help in preventing or mitigating the job stress likely to be caused by a misfit between employee and his job demands and from job difficulty. Managers should also identify the potential sources of stress in work environment and make efforts to remove, correct or control them to the maximum possible extent through effective corrective interventions.

Structure and climate of the organization largely influence job behaviour of its members as well as its overall effectiveness. A variety of stress can be easily prevented or mitigated by improving organizational structure and creating a congenial climate in the organization. Ross and Altmaier (1994) have mentioned three interventional strategies for dealing with stress arising from inadequate organizational structure and climate i.e., decentralization, participative decision making and climate survey. Undoubtedly, list of potential occupational stressors is lengthy. Occupational stress is, to a degree, a condition that can be managed or controlled.

**Human Resource Practices**

The second independent variable of present research is human resource practices. Organizations are made up of people and function through people. Without people organizations can’t exist. The resources of men, money, materials, and machinery are collective, coordinative and utilized through people. These resources by themselves can’t fulfil the objectives of an organization. They need to be united into a team. It is through the combined efforts of people that material and
monetary resources are effectively utilized for the attainment of common objectives. Without united human efforts no organization can achieve its goal. All activities of an organization are initiated and completed by the persons who make up the organization. Therefore, people are the most significant resource of any organization. This resource is called human resource and it is the most important factor of production. Of all resources, man power is the only resource which doesn’t depreciate with the passage of time. From the national view point, human resources may be defined as the knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents and aptitudes obtained in the population. From the view point of an organization, human resources represent the people at work. They are sum-total of inherent abilities, acquired knowledge and skills as exemplified in the talents and aptitudes of its employees. According to Jucius (1973), human resources of human factor refer to a “whole consisting of inter-related, interdependent and interacting physiological, sociological, and ethical components”. Thus, human resources represent the quantitative and qualitative measurement of the work force required in an organization.

Management is concerned with the accomplishment of organizational objectives by utilizing physical & financial resources through the effort of human resources. The term Human Resource is quite popular in India with the institution of Ministry of Human Resource Development in the Union Cabinet.

According to the Leon (1977), the term human resources can be thought of as, “the total knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents and aptitudes of an organization’s workforce, as well as the value, attitudes and beliefs of the individuals involved.” The term human resources can also be explained in the sense that it is a resource
like any other natural resource. Though the definition of Leon seems to be comprehensive, it suffers from some minor deviations as compared to the modern context.

Human resources play a crucial role in the development process of modern economies. Arthur Lewis (1965) observed: "there are great differences in development between countries which seem to have roughly equal resources, so it is necessary to enquire into the difference in human behaviour." It is often felt that, though the exploitation of natural resources, availability of physical and financial resources and international aid play prominent roles in the growth of modern economies, none of these factors is more significant than efficient and committed man power, as Rajiv Gandhi (1986) in his speech at Amethi has reported that 'real strength of a country lay in the development of human mind and body'. A nation with an abundance of physical resources will not benefit itself unless human resources make use of them (Leon 1972). Human resources are solely responsible for making use of physical and natural resources and for the transformation of traditional economies into modern and industrial economies. In essence, "the difference in level of economic development of the countries is largely a reflection of the differences in quality of their human resources. The key element in this proposition is that the values, attitudes, general orientation and quality of the people of a country determine its economic development (Ginzherg, 1980)."

The shift from manufacturing to service and the increasing pace of technological changes make human resources the key ingredient to the nation's well being and growth. In service-oriented industries like banking and others' the quality, quantity
and utilization of human resources become all the more important (Levitan et al., 1972). The world economic order is changing rapidly. Evolutionary changes are taking place at revolutionary speed, largely pushed by strong external forces, arising out of a desire in increasing competitiveness and efficiency (Geringer et al., 2002). The current liberalization and economic improvements pronounced by the government has thrown up many challenges and opportunities to the industry with the explosion in the information technology, increased global competition, rapid changes in marketing etc. Not surprising, therefore, the HRM concepts and practices being produced and carried out in our day are also increasingly different from those of the past.

In India Kautilya (1956) provides the beginning of Management of Human Resource by providing a systematic treatment of management of human resources as early as 4th century B.C. in his treatise entitled “Artha Shastra”. Management of human resources involve all management decisions and practices that directly affect or influence the people, or human resources, who work for the organization. Human resources are significant strategic levers and the sources of sustained competitive advantage. Therefore, Human Resource Management practices should be central to the organizational strategy (Barney, 1991). Lado and Wilson (1994) suggested that HRM practices can contribute to sustained competitive advantage through facilitating the development of competencies that are firm specific, produce complex social relationships and generate organizational knowledge. HR practices can develop the human resources by making them able to acquire or sharpen their capabilities, by discovering their inner potentialities, by maintaining
their relationships with co-workers etc. and the practice of human resource is only possible by considering the management of human resource.

Successful management depends upon the ability to predict and control human behaviour. Among other things, if a company is economically successful, it means, the management has been able to manage human resources effectively (McGregor, 1971).

Human resources are the active force in industrialization, strategies for development should concentrate particularly on their enhancement. Management of human resources includes guiding human resources into a dynamic organization that attains its objectives with a high degree of morale and to the satisfaction of those concerned with it. Dale (1965) views management as the process of getting things done through other people. In fact, it is said that all management is personnel management as it deals with human beings. Although there are different functional areas of management like production management, marketing management, financial management, materials management, all these are to be performed by human resources. And, though there are separate personnel managers, all managers have to manage human resources of their respective departments to get effective results through and with the people. Thus, all executives must unavoidably be personnel managers (Flippo, 1976).” In short, all managers are personnel managers and all management is essentially human resource management. Human resources management is known by different names, such as, personnel management, manpower management, personnel administration, staff management, etc. Human resource management may be defined as a set of policies, practices and programmes designed to maximize both
personal and organizational goals. It is the process of binding people and organizations together so that the objectives of each are achieved.

The term human resources at the macro level spells the total sum of all the components (like skills, creative abilities) possessed by all the people (employed, self employed, unemployed, employers, owners, etc.) whereas the term personnel even at the macro level is limited to only employees. Human resources even at the organizational level include all the resources of all employees from rank and file to top management including the employers. In short, it includes the resources of all the people who contribute their services to the attainment of organizational goals and others who contribute their services in order to create hurdles in the attainment of organizational goals. Further, human resources also include human values, ethos etc.

Thus, the term human resources is a much broader concept compared to the term personnel both at the components level in coverage (at organizational level) or even at the macro level. Human resources management at organizational level does mean management of the dynamic components (resources) of all the people (owner or employed or directly or indirectly related) at all levels in the organizational hierarchy round the clock and throughout the year.

As stated earlier, the term human resource refers to the knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents, aptitudes, values and beliefs of an organization's work force. The more important aspects of human resources are aptitude, values, attitudes & beliefs. But, in a given situation, if these vital aspects remain same, the other aspects of human resources like knowledge, skills, creative abilities & talents play an important role in deciding the efficiency and effectiveness of an organization's
work force. However, enhancement of utilization of human resources depends on improvement of the human resource aspects such as knowledge, skills, creative abilities & talents and moulding of other aspects like aptitude, values, attitudes & beliefs in accordance with the changing requirement of groups, organization and society at large. This process is the essence of human resource development. It is clear from this interpretation that human resource development improves the utilization value to an organization.

The effective performance of an organization depends not just on the available resources, but its quality and competence of its employees as required by the organization from time to time. The difference between two nations largely depends on the level of quality of human resources. Similarly, the difference in the level of performance of two organizations also depends on utilization value of human resources. Moreover, the efficiency of production process and various areas of management depend to a great extent on the level of human resources development.

The concept of Human Resource Development was formally introduced by Leonard Nadler in 1969 and he defined HRD as, "those learning experiences which are organized, for a specific time, and designed to bring about the possibility of behavioral change." Among the Indian authors Rao (1985) worked extensively on HRD. He defines HRD in the organizational context as, "a process by which the employees of an organization are helped in a continuous and planned way, to:
- acquire or sharpen capabilities required to perform various functions
  associated with their present or expected future roles;
- develop their general capabilities as individuals and discover and exploit
  their own inner potentials for their own and/or organizational development
  purpose; and
- develop an organizational culture in which supervisor subordinate
  relationship, team work, and collaboration among sub units are strong and
  contribute to the professional well being, motivation and pride of employee.

According to Edwin (1984), Human resource management is “the planning,
organizing, directing and controlling of procurement, development, compensation,
integration, maintenance and reproduction of human resources to the end that
individual, organizational and societal objectives are accomplished”.

In the words of Jucius (1980), personnel management may be defined as “the field
of management which has to do with planning, organizing and controlling the
functions of procuring, developing, maintaining and utilizing a labor force, such
that the (a) objectives for which the company is established are attained
economically and effectively; (b) objectives of all levels of personnel are served to
the highest possible degree; and (c) objectives of society are duly considered and
served”.

HRD from organizational point of view is a process in which the employees of an
organization are helped/motivated to acquire and develop technical, managerial &
behavioral knowledge, skills & abilities and mould the values, beliefs, attitudes &
aptitudes necessary to perform present and future roles by realizing highest human
potential with a view to contribute positively to the organizational, group, individual & social goals.

Narayanan (1989) feels that HRD attempts to able people to overcome their defects and develop their productive potentials so that they are able to contribute to the ethical and harmonious growth of society, fulfil their individual needs, desires and with pleasure too.

According to Dayal (1994) “HRD implies that the organization wants to enhance overall capabilities of its employees to develop their potential in the directions best suited to them” He also mentioned three aspects that are important in HRD:

- ways to better adjust the individual to his job and the environment;
- the greatest involvement of an employee in various aspects of his work;
- the greatest concern for enhancing the capabilities of the individual.

Pathania (1997) enumerated HR practices as “an effort to develop capabilities and competencies among employees as well as creative organizational environment conducive to the employee’s development.” The analysis of above definitions further show that there are three aspects viz.: (i) Employees of an organization are helped/motivated...; (ii) Acquire, develop and mould various aspects of human resources; and (iii) Contribute to the organizational, group, individual and social goals. The first aspect of above definition may be called ‘Enabling Factors’ which include: organization structure, organizational climate, HRD climate, human resource practices, HRD knowledge & skills to managers, human resources planning, recruitment and selection. The second aspect deals with the techniques or methods which are the means to acquire develop and mould the various human
resources. These techniques include: performance appraisal, potential appraisal, career planning and development, training, management development, organization development, social & cultural programmes, and worker participation in management and quality circles. The third category includes the outcomes of the HR practices and developmental process to the goals of the organization, group, individuals and the society. On the basis of the definitions given above, the following features of human resource management practices can be identified:

I. Comprehensive Function- HR practice is concerned with managing people at work. It covers all types of people at all levels in the organization. It applies to workers, supervisors, officers, managers and other types of personnel.

II. People-oriented- HRM practice is concerned with employees as individuals as well as groups and with human relationships within an organization. It is the process of achieving the best fit between individuals, jobs, organizations and the environment. It is the process of bringing people and organizations together so that the goals of each are met.

III. Action-oriented- HRM practices focus on action rather than on record keeping or procedures. It stresses the solution of personnel problems to achieve both organizational objectives and employees personal goals.

IV. Individual-oriented- Under HRM practices, every employee is considered as an individual so as to provide services and programmes to facilitate employee’s satisfaction and growth.
V. Development-oriented- HRM practice is concerned with developing potential of employees so that they get maximum satisfaction from their work and give their best efforts to the organization. It takes into account the personality, interest, opportunities and capacities of employees for this purpose. It seeks to help the employees to realize their full potential.

VI. Pervasive-Function- Personnel management is inherent in all organizations and all levels. It is not confined to industry alone. It is equally useful and necessary in government, armed forces, sports organizations and finance, research, etc. Recruitment selection, development and utilization of people are an integral part of any organized effort. In big organizations, there is generally a Human resource department. But this department only provides expert staff, advice and assistance concerning personnel matters. The authority to take decisions on these matters lies with the operating executives.

VII. Responsibility- Human resource management practice is not something which can be turned over to personnel department as it is the responsibility of all managers. When a personnel department is created other managers are not relieved of this responsibility. This department only advises and assists line managers. According to Scott et al. (1976), “personnel management is a responsibility of all those who manage people as well as being a description of the work of those who are employed as specialists. It is that part of management which is concerned with people at work and with their relationship within an enterprise.”
VIII. Continuance Function- HRM practice is an ongoing or never-ending exercise rather than a ‘one shot’ function. In the words of Terry (1988), “it cannot be turned on and off like water from a faucet; it cannot be practiced only 1 hour each day or 1 day a week. Personnel management requires a constant alertness and awareness of human relations and their importance in everyday operations”.

IX. Future-oriented- HRM practice is concerned with helping an organization achieve its objects in the future by providing competent and well motivated employees. It attempts to obtain willing corporation of people for the attainment of the desired objectives.

X. Challenging Function- Managing HR practices is a challenging job due to the dynamic nature of people. People have sentiments and emotions so they cannot be treated like machines. It is, therefore, necessary to handle them tactfully. It is not simply managing people but administrating a social system.

XI. Science as well as Art- HRM practice is science as it contains an organized body of knowledge consisting of principles and techniques. It is also an art because it involves application of theoretical knowledge to the problems of Human resources. In fact handling people is one of the most creative arts.

XII. Staff Function- The function of HRM practices is advisory in nature. Human resource managers don’t manufacture or sell goods but they do contribute to the success and growth of an organization by advising the operating departments on personnel matters. Like the director of a movie, their performance can be judged from the success of the total organization.
XIII. Young Discipline- HRM practice is of comparatively recent origin. It started in the last part of 19th century. It is a relatively new and specialized area as compared to manufacturing and marketing.

XIV. Interdisciplinary- HRM practices involve application of knowledge drawn from several disciplines like sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, etc. In order to deal with human problems effectively, a manager must depend upon such knowledge. In modern times, Human resource management has become highly specialized job.

XV. Nervous System- HRM practice is similar to the nervous system in the human body. The nervous system is not an adjunct to the body but is inherent in the whole body and intimately associated with its every movement. Similarly, human resource management is not an extraneous element to the organization structure. Rather it lies embedded in the structure, is inherent in its functioning and an integral part of the process of management itself. Human resource management can’t be separated from the basic management function.

Every organization has some objectives and every part of it should contribute directly or indirectly to the attainment of desired objectives. Objectives determine the character of an organization and serve as the basis for Voluntary Corporation and coordination among employees. Objectives also provide bench marks or standards of evaluating performance.

Objectives of human resource management practices, is derived from the basics objectives of an organization. In order to achieve organizational objectives integration of employer's interest and employee's interests is necessary. In this
light the objectives of human resource management practices, it may be summarized as follows:

(i) To help the organization to attain its goals by providing well-trained and well-motivated employees.

(ii) To employ the skills and knowledge of employees efficiently and effectively, i.e., to utilize human resources effectively.

(iii) To enhance job satisfaction and self-actualization of employees by encouraging and assisting every employee to realize his/her full potential.

(iv) To establish and maintain productive, self-respecting and internally satisfying working relationship among all the members of the organization.

(v) To bring about maximum individual development of members of the organization by providing opportunities for training and advancement.

(vi) To secure the integration of all the individuals and groups within an organization by reconciling individual/group goals with those of an organization.

(vii) To develop and maintain a quality of work life (QWL) which makes employment in the organization a desirable personal and social situation.

(viii) To maintain high morale and good human relation within the organization.

(ix) To help maintain ethical policies and behaviour inside and outside the organization.

(x) To manage change to the mutual advantage of individuals, groups, the organization and the society.
(xi) To recognize and satisfy individual needs and group goals by offering appropriate monetary and non-monetary incentives.

In brief, human resources management practices seek to (a) attain economically & effectively the organizational goals, (b) serve to the highest possible degree the individual goals, and (c) preserve & promote the general welfare of the community. Maximum individual development, developing desirable working relationships & effective utilization of human resources are the primary goals of human resources management. According to the Indian Institute of Personnel Management (1973), “personnel management aims to achieve both efficiency and justice neither of which can be pursued successfully without the other. It seeks to bring together and develop into an effective organization, the men and women who makeup an enterprise, enabling each to make his or her own best contribution to its success both as an individual and as a member a working group. It seeks to provide fair terms and conditions of employment and satisfying work for those employed.”

To sum up, human resource management seeks to accomplish societal, organizational and individuals goals. The requirements for attaining the above objectives are as follows:

(i) Recruiting the right personnel possessing necessary skills and attitudes.

(ii) Developing clearly defined objectives and policies through common understanding and mutual consultation.

(iii) Communicating and explaining the goals to be achieved and the contributions expected of every member of the organization.
(iv) Dividing the tasks properly with clear cut authority, responsibility and relationship of one position with another.

(v) Maintaining sound industrial and human relations so as to secure the willing corporation of all.

(vi) Providing suitable monetary and non-monetary rewards for the contribution of employees.

Human resource management practices, therefore is a philosophy, a strategy, and an approach to enhance and maintain organizational effectiveness through the management of human resource practices. Emerging organizations around the world have a strong belief in the HR practices philosophy and utilize it as a strategy to build organizations which are more efficient, provide employees’ satisfaction, and make a significant global impact.

Having elaborated the concepts of IVs and DVs of present research work it is much important to mention here that the present study is a most relevant piece of research which can fruitfully contribute in enhancing the organizational commitment and psychological well-being among bank employees by developing the human resources and declining occupational stress.