CHAPTER VI
ANXIETY

Clinical and counselling psychology have contributed immensely to the understanding of the role of anxiety and stress in a variety of adjustmental problems that individuals face in their day to day life. Considerable research related to stress in work life of individuals has surfaced in the last decade. Stress seems to have been considered as a broader concept than concepts such as fear, threat, and anxiety. The writer is of the opinion that while stress can be highly useful as a broader concept, anxiety has to be viewed in a context broader than the laboratory and psychotherapeutic setting. Study of anxiety in a wider setting, such as industrial organization, can prove to be more useful not only in understanding the antecedents of anxiety but also its relation to a variety of organizationally relevant behaviour patterns of individuals. Research along these lines, however, has been scanty.

Anxiety, in the present research, was thought to be a useful construct since a vast amount of laboratory and clinical studies have already established its nature and its relationship with a number of intraindividual and situational variables with fair degree of reliability and
validity. J. E. Marcia (1967), for example, has studied the relationship between anxiety and modes of resolving identity crises. Marcia found that 'moratorium' subjects (those showing the mode of continued engagement in decision making with no firm commitment) were most self-admittedly anxious and 'foreclosure' subjects (showing the mode of firm commitments, often determined by parental example, with no crisis or struggle) least anxious and most authoritarian.

Judi Marshall and Cary L. Cooper (1981)² found that personality was the main cause of high anxiety among the managers. They found that it was the 'calculating' but possibly less able individual, in a job characterized by overload and a lack of autonomy, who was 'at risk' of showing psychological stress symptoms. Studies by Kahn et al (1964),³ French and Caplan (1970),⁴ and Buck (1972)⁵ showed that mistrust of persons one worked with was positively related to high role ambiguity which lead to inadequate communications

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between people and to psychological strain in the form of low job satisfaction, and to feelings of job-related threat to one's well being. These studies are just examples signifying the relationship between anxiety on one hand and organismic variables such as personality, coping behaviour, and role perceptions on the other. A review of such other studies suggested that job anxiety could be understood better in the context of employees' role perceptions in terms of their awareness of their own rights and responsibilities.

Moderate anxiety has been shown to facilitate individuals' performance on various laboratory tasks. Similar such findings are reported about stress. Hans Seyle (1974)\(^6\) distinguished between eustress and distress. Eustress, according to him is a necessary, positive physical reaction which aids individuals in succeeding in daily demands in their lives. Such a reaction occurs typically in situations that place reasonable demands on individuals' capacities and reserves. However, bodily responses that tax individuals' capacities and reserves are characterized by a debilitating reaction, distress. Sterling and Eyer (1981)\(^7\) prefer to

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consider arousal as a reaction to stress. Arousal according
to them is characterized by both bodily reaction and anxiety
as a motivational state. They also describe the use of such
arousal in overcoming problems and difficulties. A review of
such research findings suggested that job enlargement as a
novel learning experience would be understood better in rela-
tion to anxiety as a facilitative affective response.

For the purpose of the present study, job anxiety was
conceived of as having interpersonal and task components.
Interpersonal anxiety was defined as fear, tension, and un-
certainty resulting from anticipated inadequacy of coping
effectively with the interpersonal events occurring in the
context of one's own job. Task anxiety was defined as fear,
tension, and uncertainty resulting from anticipated in-
adequacy of coping effectively with the task related activi-
ties of one's own job.

Pearson r between interpersonal anxiety scores and
task anxiety scores was found to be +.40. The correlation
was found to be significant at .01 level. Significant posi-
tive correlation was only interpreted as an index of a
linear relationship between the two components of anxiety.

High, moderate, and low anxiety limits were determined
by using Q 3, and Q 1 as dividing scores. Employees with
scores above Q 3 were defined as high anxiety group; those
below Q 1 as low anxiety group, and those between Q 1 and
Q 3 as moderate anxiety group.
The limits are given in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: High, Moderate and Low Anxiety Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Anxiety</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Those scoring below Q1 (Q 1 = 82)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Those scoring between Q 1 and Q 3 (Q = 14.5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Those scoring above Q 3 (Q 3 = 111)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 162</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N = 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal Anxiety</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Those scoring below Q 1 (Q 1 = 34)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Those scoring between Q 1 and Q 3 (Q = 6.5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Those scoring above Q 3 (Q 3 = 47)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N = 79</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Task Anxiety</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Those scoring below Q 1 (Q 1 = 34)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Those scoring between Q 1 and Q 3 (Q = 5.5)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Those scoring above Q 3 (Q 3 = 45)</td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 168</td>
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<td>N = 76</td>
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</table>
The data were further analysed in relation to the core, work biographical, and organizational variables.

Moderate anxiety is shown to facilitate task performance; whereas low and high anxiety have adverse effects on the same. As low and high anxiety are crucial in the performance of employees; an effort was made to work out the Chi squares of those two groups only. However in order to study the impact and importance of moderate anxiety, the Chi squares using three groups also were calculated. This procedure made it possible to isolate the impact of high and low anxiety and interpret the results accordingly.

Anxiety was found to have significant association with four variables namely (1) personality pattern, (2) value system, (3) multi-organizational experience, and (4) hierarchical position.

**Personality pattern**

While studying the relationship between personality patterns and anxiety; Chi squares were calculated first using the middle group and second after eliminating the middle group. The middle personality pattern (ambidirectional) and the moderate anxiety were thought to have moderating effect on the relationship between personality and anxiety. Thus three Chi squares were worked out.

1) Three personality patterns and three anxiety groups (Table 6.2 Appendix D).
2) Three personality patterns and two anxiety groups (extreme anxiety) (Table 6.3).

3) Two personality patterns and two extreme anxiety groups (Table 6.4).

The first two Chi squares were not found to be significant, however, the third did emerge significant at .05 level of confidence.

Findings with respect to anxiety in relation to personality were almost exactly opposite each other in the two extreme personality patterns. Interpersonal anxiety appeared to be a major contributory factor in such a distribution.

Significantly greater proportion of reserved-indisciplined-tenderminded employees (pattern 1) was found to experience low interpersonal, and job anxiety. It may be recalled that greater proportion of pattern 1 employees was found to be aware of relations contextual, personalistic, and loyalty related responsibilities. They were found to show awareness of task content responsibilities as high as that of employees of the other personality patterns. They were also found to show moderate strength of all job enlargement needs except variety which was the low strength need. It is possible that lack of opportunity for building better relationships with others; absence of rewards for honesty, sincerity, and devotion, etc., and compliance to the task expected of them might have resulted in some of them feeling
alienated from work. It appears therefore, that relationship oriented climate of work was perceived by such employees as a prerequisite of better performance.

Significantly greater proportion of outgoing-controlled-toughminded employees (pattern 3) was found to experience high interpersonal, and job anxiety. Employees showing the dominance of this pattern, however, were found to be more aware of task contextual responsibilities. They were also found to show freedom of planning as a high strength job enlargement need followed by feedback, variety, and sociability as low strength needs. Their patterns of awareness of responsibilities and job enlargement needs suggest reasons for more proportion of them showing high anxiety. They were perhaps the outgoing-controlled-toughminded perfectionists who would prefer to relate themselves to others only in terms of task relevant communications and having an individualistic orientation to their own work. It is also possible that they considered influencing others through their task orientation as a useful leadership strategy. Associated with such a conviction perhaps was anticipated fear of failure in task performance and in spoiling their own image in the eyes of others resulting in high anxiety experienced by some of them.

Employees showing ambidirectional personality pattern (pattern 2) however, were found to be almost equally distributed in high and low anxiety groups. It seems that they could withstand the task relevant demands and role expectations from others through greater behavioural flexibility.
They were probably the rational copers as compared to those showing the dominance of extreme personality patterns.

Chronic dissatisfaction with work characterising low or high anxiety can have at its roots the dominance of extreme personality pattern. Perhaps low or high anxiety as a reaction to work stress can be understood better by analysing such reaction in relation to employees' personality pattern. Client centered counselling seems to be the only effective way of altering the self concept of such employees and their understanding of reality.

Value system

In order to study the relationship between value systems and anxiety; Chi squares were calculated first by using the middle group and second after eliminating the middle group. The middle group showing undifferentiated value system and moderate anxiety were thought to have moderating effect on the relationship between value system and anxiety. Thus three Chi squares were worked out.

1) Three value systems and three anxiety groups
   (Table 6.5).

2) Three value systems and two anxiety groups
   (Table 6.6).

3) Two value systems and extreme anxiety groups
   (Table 6.7).
The second Chi square was found to be significant with respect to task and job anxiety; whereas the third Chi square was found to be significant with respect to interpersonal, task, and job anxiety. Findings with respect to the two extreme value systems were almost exactly opposite each other.

Significantly greater proportion of employees dominant on post-industrialism value system (system 3) were found to experience low interpersonal, task, and job anxiety. It may be recalled that employees dominant on post-industrialism value system were found to show greater awareness of content rights namely participation, autonomy, responsibility, and recognition as discussed earlier in Chapter 3. They were also found to show relatively stronger job enlargement needs as shown in Chapter 5. Persistent nonfulfilment of such expectations perhaps resulted in low anxiety in case of several of them, and high anxiety in some. Extreme mechanization and programming of human activities typical of post-industrial era; and perhaps lack of dynamism in organizational objectives resulting in routinization of work can be cited as possible reasons of nonfulfilment of content rights and task related needs of such employees. Persistent frustration of high task relevant expectations of these employees might have resulted in experience of low anxiety.

Mechanization and programming of work related activities and routinization of work influenced employees dominant on industrialism value system perhaps in a different way.
Significantly greater proportion of employees dominant on industrialism value system (system 1) were found to experience high interpersonal, task, and job anxiety. Their awareness of content rights and strength of job enlargement needs being moderate; adjustment to persistent task relevant demands from organization was a problem for them. Achievement, self control, independence, and mechanistic management characterizing their dominant industrialism value system were themselves their goals rather than the means for self development resulting in stress to which high anxiety was perhaps their consequential reaction.

Employees showing undifferentiated value system (system 2) showed greater strength of various job enlargement needs than those dominant on industrialism value system though not as high as those of post-industrialism value system. Their pattern of awareness of rights and responsibilities was not found to be significantly different from that of the employees of extreme value systems. It appears therefore that these employees were in a state of transition towards post-industrialism value system.

The discussion above may leave the impression that post-industrialism value system is more desirable than the industrialism value system. However, as low and high anxiety are equally detrimental to organizational effectiveness; it may be suggested that it is necessary to arrive at a judicious balance of both. It may lead to increased organizational
effectiveness. The antecedents of low and high anxiety can be traced to the employees' value system. Analysis of value system of employees may enrich our understanding of job dissatisfaction, frustration, anxiety, and stress.

Multiorganizational experience

Significant differences in the proportion of employees experiencing low and high interpersonal anxiety were found in relation to multiorganizational experience. No such differences however were found in task, and job anxiety as shown in Table 6.10, and Table 6.11. Task anxiety perhaps played a moderating role as a result of which relationship between job anxiety and multiorganizational experience did not work out to be significant.

Greater proportion of employees of relatively less varied experience (group 1) was found to show high interpersonal anxiety. High interpersonal anxiety of some of them perhaps was due to their awareness of contextual and content rights which was as strong as that of their senior counterparts. Salary, security, participation, and promotion were those among other rights of which they showed as high an awareness as that of their seniors. They perhaps considered these goals as attainable through building good relationships with others. In this context it may be recalled that they showed more awareness of relations contextual and personal- istic responsibilities.
Varied experience up to 10 years (group 2) perhaps resulted in attainment of their goals in case of some of them resulting in reduction in high anxiety. At this stage, they thought of concentrating on their tasks for further advancement. This tendency was evident from the fact that they showed greater strength of various job enlargement needs than their immediate junior and senior counterparts as shown earlier in Chapter 5.

Varied multiorganizational experience to the extent of 11 to 15 years (group 3) perhaps did not bring challenging opportunities resulting in reduction in the strength of their job enlargement needs. Low interpersonal anxiety experienced by greater proportion of these employees can be attributed to their alienation from work. It may also be recalled that significantly less proportion of these employees showed awareness of task contextual, and personalistic responsibilities. They perhaps considered such responsibilities less functional in convincing others of their task relevant needs and potentials.

Low interpersonal anxiety experienced by greater proportion of employees having highly varied experience of 16 years or more (group 4), however, does not appear to be a pathological symptom in the light of their awareness of rights and responsibilities and strength of their job enlargement needs. Significantly greater proportion of them were found to be aware of task content rights namely right
to have greater responsibility, status, and challenging work as shown earlier in Chapter 3. They were also found to have highly strong job enlargement needs namely knowledge of company policy, task identity, freedom of planning, and freedom of pace. Highly varied experience perhaps resulted in a shift of their emphasis from interpersonal relations to optimizing their task relevant potentials. This does not mean that they disregarded better relationships with others; since they were also found to be aware of relations content responsibilities and showed moderate but not low strength of feedback, and sociability as job enlargement needs. It appears that by virtue of their long standing varied experience they had developed confidence in their potential to establish appropriate interpersonal relationships in the organization. The results suggest that they can prove to be effective leaders. The real challenge for them however, would be to motivate their immediate juniors who were showing low interpersonal anxiety, and the beginners showing high anxiety.

Hierarchical position

Managers, engineers, supervisors, clerks and assistants, and trainees were not found to differ from each other significantly with respect to the degree of interpersonal, task, and job anxiety experienced by them as shown in Table 6.14.
Managers, engineers, and supervisors have a major responsibility of getting the work done from their subordinates. Clerks and trainees, by virtue of their position, on the contrary, just have the responsibility of doing the work and not getting the work done. From this point of view, the data were analysed separately for these two groups (see Table 6.15). Differences in positionally ascribed responsibilities were assumed to be associated with differences in the percentage of employees experiencing low and high anxiety. The results show that relatively greater percentage of managers experienced low job anxiety; and relatively greater percentage of engineers, and supervisors experienced high job anxiety. No such differences were found among clerks and assistants, and trainees.

It may be recalled that greater percentage of managers was found to be aware of relations content responsibilities, and loyalty to the organization as a responsibility. They were also found to show greater awareness of autonomy, authority, benefits, and guidance as rights. Freedom of planning, and task identity were found to be their high strength needs. The pattern of their awareness of rights, and of their needs suggests that they assumed themselves in the role of key figures in the organizations who were supposed to facilitate the growth and development of others in the direction of accomplishing the organizational goals rather than individual goals. It is likely that the subordinates
did not very much appreciate the "organization man" approach of managers. Thus, the "nonresponsive" subordinates perhaps failed to reinforce managers' role concept; leading to reduced involvement of managers in carrying out their roles effectively.

Engineers were found to show pattern of awareness of rights almost similar to that of managers but considered relationship related responsibilities more important. It may also be recalled that their overall strength of various job enlargement needs was stronger than those at other hierarchical positions. Engineers perhaps gave equal importance to the development of their own task maturity and to building effective relationships with others. The resulting cognitive strain perhaps made some of them highly anxious. The strain might have been experienced by engineers due to the fact that majority of organizations foster psychological climates which demand task rather than relationship orientation of employees.

The universally observed critical position of the supervisors, facing conflicting role expectations, needs a special mention in the context of anxiety. It is a well known fact that supervisors are a crucial link between the management and the blue collar employees. Neither can they alienate themselves from either of the groups nor can they affiliate with any one of them. It may be recalled that greater proportion of supervisors were found to be aware of
rights namely security, participation, responsibility, recognition, and promotion. Larger percentage of them was also found to be aware of relations related responsibilities. Their pattern and strength of job enlargement needs was also almost similar to that of engineers. Nonfulfilment of their rights probably might have made some of them highly anxious. Pressures from their superiors for getting the work done from their subordinates on one hand and their own style characterised by relationship orientation probably made some of them more anxious of carrying out their responsibilities successfully. Noncompliance to superiors' expectations also brought little rewards to them in terms of recognition and participation. Opportunities for promotion were probably perceived to be low by them because of the very limitations of organizational structure, and their limited education. The combined result of such forces probably was high job anxiety experienced by them.

Differences in the distribution of employees experiencing low, moderate, and high anxiety with respect to other variables were not found to be significant. It may therefore be said that variables namely personality pattern, value system, multiorganizational experience, and hierarchical position need to be concentrated upon in making use of human resources in organizations. Problems regarding job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, frustration, stress, anxiety, and the resulting inefficiency can be understood better by
studying these variables. Introducing change in personality and value system will be a difficult and long term process. Introducing change at the behavioural level may however lead to increased motivation and job satisfaction. Planning and organizing work across different levels of hierarchy by taking into consideration the factors responsible for generating differences in proneness to low and high anxiety can be an effective strategy. Finally, introducing changes in employees' work itself so as to fulfil their task relevant expectations may prove to be a better policy for maintaining adequate motivating conditions in organizations.