CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

Banking psychology is concerned with the study of human behaviour in those aspects of life that relate to financial crises, new technologies, new policies, customer satisfaction, accepting and safeguarding of public money and lending it to others for a surplus profit. Now, banking has broader areas of operations, such as the business of trading information related to customers, money-market, risk and risk services. Most people fulfill different roles in various aspects of human life at home, in schools, in social situations, in political activities, in recreational activities. In all businesses satisfying customers and achieving the target are vital for success. When people change, from one role to another, they do not become different individuals. The underlying principles or patterns of behaviour certainly apply across the banking sector too, regardless of what role a person is expected to fulfill at any given time.

But the functions people perform in achieving targets, satisfying customer needs and interacting with peers reveal basic manifestations of behaviour and related problems, which justify a specific study of human behaviour in performing banking-oriented functions. Banking psychology addresses itself to the study of behaviour in these specific domains of life, and to the application of relevant information on human behaviour to the solution of human problems in the banking context.
Occupational stress has captured the attention of both researchers and practitioners on similar times, especially in developed countries. Bankers are not super-humans with little or no problems. They may be financially sound, but are confronted with stressful social issues which demand the involvement of researchers and practitioners. They face marital, family, work, financial, psychological and emotional problems which they often try to keep to themselves.

1.2 HUMAN PROBLEMS IN THE BANKING SECTOR

Most people in the Banking Sector spend one-third to one half of their waking hours in organizational settings, principally at work. Thus, exposure to stress associated with organizational setting and development of technology constitutes a major part of the total stress experienced by bank employees. Organizational settings are also likely sources of stress, because they provide the main context in which society makes demands on people to perform and relate to a broad range of others in specified ways. Some of the organizational characteristics that generate stress, however, may be important for their alleviation too. Considering organizations as ready-made mechanisms of social influences, power and communication can and should be utilized in any large scale effort to reduce stress or improve health. For all these reasons, organizations work settings are important both in the efforts to understand the psycho-social stresses but in attempts to reduce their adverse health consequences too.

1.3 MEANING OF STRESS

Stress is derived from the Latin word ‘Stringere’, meaning to ‘draw tight’. Early definitions of strain and load used in Physics and Engineering ultimately came to influence one’s thought of how stress affects individuals. Under this concept, external factors are seen as exerting pressure and
producing strain upon an individual in an organization. The proponents of this view argue that the stress to which an individual is subjected can be measured in the same way physical strain upon a machine (Hinkle 1973) is measured. While this concept looked at stress as an external stimulus, a second concept defines stress as a person’s response to a disturbance.

Stress can be defined as any state that causes people to lose their equilibrium, whether it is mental, physical or emotional. Mild forms of stress can be beneficial; the stress of being immobile and unable to communicate effectively motivates babies to learn to walk and talk. Peer pressure causes teenagers to learn and function within the basic rules of society.

Bruno (1991) defined ‘stress’ as the rate of wear on an organism. Selye, a Canadian doctor, who was an early explorer of the causes of health hazards arising from stress, defined stress as the sum of all non-specific changes in a human being. From his medical perspective, Selye proposed that the body reacts to psychological reactions with "fight or fright" syndrome (1974) together. Bowes (1999), shows that the human body is "hard-wired" to respond in the course of evolution through a fight or fright response. He defines stress as external or internal pressure to act. Bowes (1999) reveals that stress is the response of the body. By activating a complex system that produces a number of hormones and neurotransmitters, which are planned to help the mind and brain work rather than physiological work, it helps meeting the demands. Herbert (1997) defines stress as a common term that refers to any mental or physical demand, which is outside the norm. Herbert states that stress signals usually a discrepancy between what is optimal in a particular situation and what really exists. Bruno (1991) and Beehr and Newman (1978) define stress at work as "a situation that is characterized by the exchange of people and their jobs and the people who force them to deviate from their normal operations through organizational changes".
Mason (2001) defines stress as the body's reaction to negative influences and explains that “external stress can be positive or negative (cheerful, challenge, divorce, professional responsibility)” (p316). French (1971) defines stress as the result that an individual's ability or skills does not depend on the individual job demand or the working environment to meet to target. Wilkeson (1991) lists four types of stress. From a general perspective, ‘stress’ is defined as a "fashionable" term that refers generally to unpleasant stimuli. Stress also includes the subjective behavioural and physiological responses to stimuli. The four main overlapping types of stress are segregated as acute (an attack), sequential, initiated an event who for a certain period (bereavement); chronic intermittent (conflicts with the neighbors); and chronic (disabling). Miller and Simerglia (1998) define stress as a general sense of uneasiness in the individual excited in response to a traumatic event in life and the accumulation of other problems associated with it. They divide stress into two dimensions viz., Event stress and additional stress. Event (or primary) stress ratio is defined as reactions that are directly linked to a stressful life-event. Additional (randomly contextual) stress is the result of the additional problems and changes that occur simultaneously with the primary event stress.

A stress is any force that pushes a mental or physical factor ahead of its range of stability, producing a strain within the individual. Information related to stress is likely to occur as a threat to the individual and can cause a strain because of what it signifies.

The first scientific method to explain the process of stress-related illness was made by a physician and scholar Hans Selye (1946), who described three stages an individual encounters in stressful situations.

Alarm reaction: A first phase of lowered resistance is followed by counter shock, when the individual’s protection mechanism is active.
Resistance: The stage of maximum adaptation and optimistically successful return to stability for the individual. However, if the stress-agent continues or the defense mechanism does not work, the individual moves on to a third stage i.e., Exhaustion.

Exhaustion: When adaptive mechanisms collapse.

Newer and more complete theories of stress, emphasize the interaction between a person and his or her environment. By looking at stress as resulting from a mismatch between an individual and his specific environment, we can understand why one person seems to flourish in a certain setting, while another suffers.

1.4 CAUSES OF STRESS AT WORK

When the time comes for people to earn a living, they say farewell to the protection of adolescence and school. The demands made them professionally are quite different from those, which they were used during adolescence. They are expected to earn their remuneration. They have to submit to demands that frequently are not of their choice or liking. Whatever they do, they risk being criticized occasionally by their employer or their colleagues. Particularly in large banking sector offices, they may be forced to work with individuals whom they actually dislike. The factors causing stress to an individual are called stressors. The stress common among employees may trigger actions from the individuals, groups and the organization. Individual, group and organizational stressors refer to occupational stress, whereas extra-organizational stressors refer to non-work stressors. According to Aswathappa (1990) Individual-stresses mainly depend on personality traits and constraints of change. Personality traits refer to the character of the individual and the constraints of change refer to changes in the career life of
an individual. The group stresses refer to lack of leadership-support, poor relationship within groups and among groups, lack of group-cohesiveness, lack of social support, inter group conflict, interpersonal conflict and poor relationships with colleagues.

Organizational stressors arise mainly from physical factors, role-factors or job-factors. Role-factors are arise from the inadequacy of role authority, role conflict, role overload, role stagnation and role ambiguity. Job factors refer to the difficulty in performing the job, mismatch between the capability of the individual and the requirements of the job, the feeling of being poorly paid or feelings of inequity. There are also causes arising from environmental factors like noise-levels, poor lighting and ventilation, vibration and temperature levels. Occasionally the nature of work such as work involving shifts, tasks with machines or hazardous environment may also increase stress level. For executives, the stress may arise due to the pressure for achieving financial results or fears of a hostile takeover bid. At the supervisory level, stress arises due to pressure towards quality and customer service, responsibility towards the work of subordinates and numerous meetings. Employees are more likely to experience stress due to low status, resource shortage and anxiety for error-free work. Thus the different types of work, cause different types of stress and strain. The different factors which contribute to stressful situations in the workplace, according to Kunders (1996) are as follows,

i. Unfulfilled aspirations and career goals; failure to receive well deserved promotion, title and salary-raise.

ii. Unclear and ambiguous job descriptions, duties and responsibilities.
iii. Unrealistic, unattainable deadlines and too much pressure to meet them.

iv. Conflict between personal and organizational goals.

v. Unclear mission and objectives – both the organization and the department – and inability to accomplish them.

vi. Organizational climate, work-culture that is not healthy and conducive to work.

vii. Poor and incompetent and unhelpful supervision; unclear and confusing directions, orders and instructions.

viii. Conflict and rivalry between work groups.

ix. Unsatisfactory pay, benefits and job security.

x. Unhealthy competition, politics and misuse or abuse of power at the highest level of management.

xi. Lack of encouragement of creativity and innovation, absence of freedom to innovate or authoritarian management policies.

xii. Non utilization or under utilization of talents and abilities

xiii. Stress stemming from being under-qualified or over-qualified for the job.

xiv. Feeling of lack of identification with one’s profession.

xv. Unhappiness arising from comparing one’s abilities, salaries, qualification and achievements with those of peers and friends.

xvi. Difficulty in coping with and satisfying the conflicting demands of the people around.

xviii. Situations in which one is forced to do things against one’s judgement.

xix. A feeling that adequate authority is not given to carry out one’s responsibilities.

xx. Management’s interruption in normal work for other tasks or priorities.

xxi. Constant differences of opinion with the supervisor.

xxii. Job requires extensive travel.

xxiii. Have too little to do; time hanging heavy on one’s hand.

xxiv. Decisions affecting one are made by others without knowledge or involvement.

xxv. Imposition of others ideas without being told the rationale.

xxvi. A colleague being unclear as to what one is doing.

xxvii. Lack of clarity about the scope and responsibilities of one’s job.

1.5 INDIVIDUAL STRESSORS

1.5.1 Personality Characteristics

Lazarus, (1966 and 1971) observed that Personality characteristics leading to stress mainly refer to imbalances between background variables such as age, education, income, experience and nature of work and cognitive affective differences such as in self-esteem, tolerance of ambiguity, authoritarianism, rigidity, the need for achievement, and other similar features.
Persons who have positive thoughts of themselves with a high level of “self-esteem” have more confidence in themselves and can cope with stress successfully. Lyons (1971) describes personality characteristics based on high tolerance of an individual with role ambiguity and role conflict can effectively help coping with stress. Generally ‘extroverts’ are less stressed and more adaptable than ‘introverts’ (Khan et al. 1964). Likewise ‘achievement seekers’ are significantly more independent than job involvement like ‘security - seekers’. Generally, ‘rigid’ and ‘flexible’ types have different types of perceptions of stressful situations (Kahn 1964). Thus the different dimensions of an individual’s personality determine whether he or she is frequently prone to stress or not.

1.5.2 Constraints of Change

Technical up gradation (advancement) leads to frequent changes in the work environment. Transfers, promotions too upset routine life and lead to occupational stress. Kornhauser (1965) reveals that job rotation within the same department can lead to occupational stress, due to uncertainty, helplessness and fear of unknown demands of the task. Meeting the demands arising from competition and the problems involved in satisfying competition need adaptation to changes that are difficult to manage the customer. This may maximize stress due to the demands of the new job, unknown colleagues and unfamiliar environments.

1.6 GROUP STRESSORS

1.6.1 Lack of Group Cohesiveness

Employees are interconnected by a network of individual relationships. The patterns of relationship among groups influence attitudes of employees towards their jobs. A Cordial relationship among the employees of a
group results in motivation, morale and better job performance. French and Caplan (1973) mention a poor relationship with co-workers as linked with low interest, feelings of threat, low trust and low supports.

In an organization where an intergroup conflict exists, may result in negative attitudes towards the job in employees concerned. Occasionally, due to group pressure an employee may be compelled to abuse the policies and procedures framed by an organization. This might cause depression and job stress.

1.6.2 Lack of Leadership Support

Improper leadership styles acts as a source of stress. Due to differences in the existing and expected leadership styles, conflicts and dissonance may arise between the superior and the subordinate which might lead to stress. Present leadership style refers to the style adopted by the leader, whereas expected leadership style mainly refers to the leadership style which is expected by the subordinates to be followed by the leader. A ‘Considerate’ leadership style is facilitating employee participation in decision-making and ensures two-way communication.

Employees expect their leaders to support them and give them helpful guidance during difficult situations. If such leadership support is not forthcoming, employees feel let down and irritated resulting in occupational stress. Burke and Belcourt (1974) have shown how considerate behaviour by leaders has a close relationship with occupational stress or its absence.

Buck (1972) focused on the relationship between workers and an immediate leader and found that where leaders were perceived as “considerate”,
there was “mutual trust, friendship, certain warmth and respect between the leader and followers”. Employees, who feel their leader was low on consideration, reported experiencing more job pressure. Workers, who were under pressure reported that their bosses did not give them helpful or constructive criticism, played favorites and pulled rank and took advantage of them whenever they got a chance.

1.6.3 Role Overload

Two different types of role overload have been described by researchers: quantitative overload that refers to having too much work to do and qualitative overload that refers to work that is too difficult for an individual (French and Caplan, 1972). In the first case, too much work often leads to working long hours with all its attendant problems. A too heavy work burden has also been connected with increased cigarette smoking.

In a 1973 study, 22 white-collar workers were observed for 2 or 3 hours a day for 3 days (French and Caplan 1972). Two observers recorded data on events occurring in the job environment and heart beat rate responses to these events. The workers wore pocket-sized devices, which assessed their heart rates without interfering with their activities.

The workers also filled out questionnaires describing their role overload, over a 3-day period. The researchers found that those people who admitted to work pressure were observed to be suffering more interruptions from visitors and phone calls. Secondly, these workers suffered significantly more physiological strain through a higher heart beat rate and higher cholesterol levels.
1.7 ORGANIZATIONAL STRESSORS

1.7.1 Role Conflict

Role conflicts arise when an individual is pulled by conflicting demands of the job or by performing jobs he does not want to do, or things, which he does not believe are part of the job. Workers may often feel themselves ragged between two groups of people who demand different types of behaviour or who trust the job entails different functions.

Conflicting situations can clearly act as stress factors upon the individuals involved. Research has indicated that role conflict leads to reduced job satisfaction and higher anxiety levels. Researchers have also shown that role conflicts can lead to risks of cardiovascular illness, such as elevated blood pressure and abnormal blood chemistry (Ivancevich and Matteson 1980)

1.7.2 Role Ambiguity

Role ambiguity arises when individuals do not have a clear picture of their objectives, co-worker’s expectations of them, and the scope and responsibilities of their job. This ambiguity often results, simply because supervisors do not clarify to the employees what their role exactly is. As Warshaw (1979) has observed, “People do not know how they are suitable to the organization and are unsure about the rewards no matter how well he or she may perform towards the job”.

A wide range of events can create role ambiguity. Ivancevich and Matteson (1980) have highlighted these: the first job, a promotion or transfer, a new boss, the first supervisory responsibility, a new company, or a change in the structure of the existing organization – all these events and others, may serve to generate a temporary status of role ambiguity. The stress indicators
found to relate to role ambiguity are de-motivation towards work, depressed moods, lowered self esteem, the intention to leave a job and dissatisfaction with life.

1.7.3 Under-Participation

Under-Participation is also one of the major causes of occupational stress in an organization. An employee experiences under-participation when he/she feels that his/her suggestions are not sought or valued in framing important policies and procedures and in solving organizational problems. Margolis et al. (1974) observe that under-participation in job is significantly associated with low levels of job satisfaction, low levels of motivation towards work, absenteeism and intention to resign. On the contrary, from the work so far studied, French and Caplan (1970) have proved that participation strengthens employee’s positive attitudes towards job and thus, enhances a greater sense of autonomy, responsibility, certainty, control and ownership (Schuller 1980).

1.7.4 Inadequacy of Role Authority

When a person is assigned a particular job, the accompanying the authority and responsibility alone will enable him to promptly discharge his duties otherwise the employee feels insignificant and powerless and unhappy with his/her self-actualization and expression. This aggravates the negative attitude and consequent occupational stress, which result in affecting the mental health of the employee.

1.7.5 Job Difficulty

Job difficulty may arise due to unpleasant and strenuous working conditions, inadequate and improper training, excessive and inconvenient
working hours resulting in stress, ignorance of how to do the job and the necessity to work fast involves a lot of physical and mental effort. Kasl (1978) observed that job difficulty is also experienced by an employee when a job involves repetitiveness or machine regulation of work pace such demands and continuous attention cause occupational stress and result in the poor mental health of employees.

1.7.6 Feeling of Inequity

Atkinson and Feather (1966) view that an employee always strives to achieve an equitable relationship between occupational inputs and outcomes. When an employee perceives that he is getting less salary compared with the quantity of work he does, develops a negative attitudes towards the job and dissatisfaction with the management due to a feeling of inequity and leads to stress (Fine and Lee 1972).

1.7.7 Environmental Factors in Stress

Environmental factors pertain to four major categories ranging from Micro to Macro categories. They are 1) Stress in Micro System: i.e. Organization of the Smallest size; 2) Meso System stress: i.e., relating to the company or institution or agency; 3) Exo System Stress: due to ecosystems that have a direct impact on the worker and his company or institution; 4) Stress due to Macro System: i.e., The world-wide complex and larger culture.

1.7.8 Role Stagnation and Mid Life Crisis

Role stagnation refers to fewer opportunities for the role of growth and learning, when an individuals career has no scope for further growth, Tensions may arise when there is no further growth possibility in the organization. A promotion may not be possible for all, because higher posts
in a work environment are limited, and therefore employees get disturbed and search for new career opportunities. Unavailability of such opportunities leads to role stagnation causing job stress. In another view, employees who are in the middle age group develop a feeling of obsolescence and experience career stress due to feelings of inadequacy and incapacity to cope with change.

1.7.9 Job Requirement Capability Mismatch

Mismatch of employees to job requirements should be removed through training when their abilities are not utilized in a proper way in an organization, resulting in a mismatch between the requirements of a job and the abilities of an individual. Conversely, individuals may suffer from feelings of lack of coping skills. Such lacking can be met with peer group counseling on formal training. Job requirement capability mismatch leads to “square pegs in round holes” and has to be removed.

1.7.10 Performance Appraisal

The performance appraisal is the process of being evaluated and appraised by superiors may lead to stressful experiences. It must be recognized that performance appraisals can be anxiety-provoking, for both the individual being examined and the person doing the judging and appraising. The supervisor making performance judgments faces the threat of union grievance procedures in some cases, as well as the responsibility of making decisions and interpersonal strains affecting another person’s livelihood.

The way in which an evaluation is carried out can reflect the degree of anxiety experienced. For example, taking a written examination can be a short-term stress factor, whereas continuous and confidential appraisals by supervisors can have a more long-term effect, depending on the structure and climate of the organization.
1.7.11  Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as how an employee feels about his work. It can be defined as a satisfying (or pleasurable) emotional state with one’s occupation, an affective reaction to an individual job, and his attitude towards work. These definitions reveal job satisfaction considering beliefs, behaviour and feelings of an employee. Job satisfaction can be influenced by different factors like, as the quality of the work environment, quality of relationships among employees and supervisor, level of satisfaction in to work, etc. Job satisfaction is important not just because it encourages work performance but also because it increases the work-life balance and quality of life of an employee. Studies have revealed that stress like role-overload, role-ambiguity, role-conflict, and physical environment affect the level of job satisfaction of employees. The results show stress as negatively associated with employee job satisfaction (Caplan 1991 and Keller 1975).

1.7.12  Effect of Stress

Stress is like an electric current. If the power is just right, it can make a bulb light up and provide radiant illumination. Such brightness occurs when stress is properly channeled, ensuing in a reaction of job satisfaction, challenge, creativity, effectiveness and work-life balance. However, if the voltage is greater, it burns the bulb out. Burnout is the harmful effect of stress resulting from, exhaustion, leads to inefficiency, inaction, health deterioration, irritation, and many other problems. Generally, employees with tasks requiring continuous work and direct contact with people (vendors, teachers, trainers, staff roles) experience burnout more than workers with less direct contact with people.

Heavy routine and mechanical roles also produce burnout and stress. Stress occurs naturally. If properly managed, stress helps to improve
the performance of the individual leading growth and development, both at the work place and at home. In contrast, when stress is not managed properly, it can lead to adverse effects on the well-being and health of individuals and organizations. Occupational stress may be positive or negative. If stress is mild or temporary, people can handle it, or at least recover from its effects very promptly. Stress could be long-term, temporary, mild or severe, depending mostly on how long it causes go on, how great they are and how strong the worker’s revival powers are. When High intensity of stress continues for extended time problems may crop up.

Certain types of work situations have positive excitement and challenges, while others are especially anxiety arousing and threatening. Positive stress or “Eustress” is one where the environment offers a challenging opportunity to the employee to improve. In the absence of stress, every individual lacks the ‘edge’ necessary for high performance. When the employee is promoted to a new job, he feels anxious about his new work task and rewards, but he also feels excited and this enables him to face additional challenges. Hans Selye (1956) states a “Eustress” is due to new and uncertain job situations which create positive stress.

Negative stress or “Distress” is associated with emotional problems, alcoholism, marital breakdown, drug abuse, child abuse, absenteeism, heart-disease and a host of other social, physical, organization. For example, when managers are allotted major projects with targets and deadlines, they feel nervous and tense about completing the work on time this leads to negative stress (Davidson, 1997).
1.8  STRESS COPING STRATEGIES

When a person experiences stress, he adopts different ways of dealing with stress as he cannot remain quiet in a state of pressure. A Review of Literature on stress reveals coping strategies with the possibility of being categorized as organizations and individual strategies. Organizational strategies include stress reduction workshops, health maintenance, and leadership training. Individual strategies may be further classified into ‘emotion-focused’, ‘work-focused’, ‘approach’ and ‘escape avoidance’ strategies. At ‘work-focused’ strategies, workers reduce stress by directly changing their work environments or their habits. They may adopt co-operative work strategies or role clarification, drives, “emotion-focused” coping strategies; give task help and involve delegation of work.

Role clarification refers to the explanation of assigned tasks required by superiors. Another technique of coping with stress is effective time management, so that the work can be done more effectively and proficiently.

Role clarity is not possible in all work situations and at all times, in the practical sense of the word. Therefore, In order to reduce stress, it makes more sense to become more tolerant of ambiguity in the work-world. Relaxation techniques like doing physical exercise, meditation and yoga help to reduce stress, strain, heart rate and blood pressure.

The next set of individual strategies is “emotion-focused” coping strategies. These coping strategies may not directly change the working conditions, but help the employees to get relieved from stress more easily. Some of the “emotion-focused” coping strategies are social support, relaxation techniques, bio-feedback, health maintenance, increased tolerance of ambiguity and imperfection. When an individual feels stressed, it helps to
have all supportive relations such as friends and colleagues. Therefore, it is stated that social support reduces stress.

Delegation of work to subordinates may also directly reduce stress. An effective way of dealing with too much of work is getting co-operation from other people in the same situation, that is dividing the work and sharing information. This helps workers to complete their tasks faster without much effort and strain.

Similar health maintenance through, proper diet and proper exercise can keep the body physically fit to deal with stress. Up to 1960’s it was thought that people could not control their nervous systems, which in turn controls internal processes such as brain waves, heartbeat, oxygen consumption and stomach acid flows. Now there is proof of the ability of individuals to control the internal processes through some exercise. Robert and Jack (1978) state biofeedback is where, people under medical guidance can learn from instrument feedback to influence the symptoms of stress like severe headache or heart pain that occurs during times of stress. Biofeedback has been implicated in treating diseases and in decreasing physiological responses associated with stress. Psychological monitoring provides trained people with continuous feedback, so that they can renovate their stressful bodies in a non-stressful condition. Every individual expects to be ‘perfect’ at work even when he is unhealthy or worried with personal problems, this leads to tension. One of the most important sources of stress is the effort taken by individuals to live up to impossible standards of life they have set for themselves. In such a situation, a good way to deal with stress is to avoid unrealistic deadlines.

Expressing one’s feelings, frustration, emotion and fears also make the individual free from stress and feel relaxed. It has been proved that an
individual depending on social and emotional support is able to effectively cope with stress using approach strategies.

Effective methods of increasing physical, mental and creative entertainment such as theatre, music, art, books are called approach or affective coping strategies. Besides this, a wide variety of stress reduction programmes have been experimented with in organizations to help employees deal with stress and strain (Ivancevich and Matteson 1980). In every organization Health maintenance programmes are arranged to monitor the present health of the employee, fitness offer gym facilities staffed with full-time physical education and health care personnel. Other types of stress management programs are leadership training through which a leader teaches/imparts counseling skills, listens to employee’s problems more effectively, communicates job assignments and instructions. Every individual is helped to identify his/her own strength, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges and response patterns are suggested/elicited for changing individual behavior, in order to cope up with stress and strain.

Bhole (1977) has explained the different aspects of Yoga and meditation a stress reducer. Similar studies were conducted by Singh et al. (1977) they throw light on the positive effects of Yogic practices in coping with stress and strain. Healthcare specialists suggest certain changes in living styles as physical exercise, yoga, meditation, breathing regulation, muscle relaxation and nutrition management. One of the emotions focused coping strategies is Relaxation Techniques, which form an integrated set of psychological changes, innately opposed to the flight response of stress. However, it does not directly change the work environment; rather it helps employees to cope with stress more easily. Sahasis (1989) and Nagendra (1988) reveal that some of the Relaxation techniques which have been proved
to reduce stress are yoga, transcendental meditation, progressive relaxation, antigenic training and hypnosis.

1.9 OVERVIEW OF INDIAN BANKING SECTOR

The Indian banking system consists of 26 public sector banks, 20 private sector banks, 43 foreign banks, 56 regional rural banks, 1,589 urban cooperative banks and 93,550 rural cooperative banks, in addition to cooperative credit institutions. The Indian banking sector’s assets reached US$ 1.8 trillion in FY14 from US$ 1.3 trillion in FY10, with 70 percent of it being accounted for the public sector.

Total lending and deposits increased at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.7 per cent and 19.7 per cent, respectively, during FY07-14 and are poised for further growth, backed by demand for housing and personal finance. The total asset size of banking sector assets is expected to increase to US$ 28.5 trillion by FY25. Deposits have grown at a CAGR of 13.6 per cent during FY05–15 to an estimated US$ 1.48 trillion in FY15. Deposit growth has been mainly driven by strong growth in savings, consequential rising disposable income levels.

Indian banks are increasingly focusing on adopting an integrated approach to risk management. They have already embraced the international banking supervision accord of Basel II. According to the RBI, a majority of banks has already met the capital requirements of Basel III, which has a deadline of March 31, 2019. Most of the banks have put in place the framework for the asset - liability match, credit and derivatives risk management.

Rising incomes are expected to enhance the need for banking services in rural areas and thereby propel the growth of the sector;
programmes like NREGA have helped in increasing rural income aided by the recent Jan Dhan Yojana. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has relaxed its branch licensing-policy, thereby allowing banks (which meet certain financial parameters) to set-up new branches in tier-2 to tier-6 centers, without prior approval from the RBI. It has emphasized the need to focus on spreading the reach of banking services to the un-banked population of India.

1.10 BRIEF HISTORY OF BANKING IN INDIA

The origin of western type commercial Banking in India dates back to the 18th century. The story of banking starts from Bank of Hindustan established in 1770. It was the first bank in Calcutta under European management. It was liquidated in 1830-32.

From Bank of Hindustan in 1770, the evolution of banking in India can be divided into three different periods as follows: Phase I: Early phase of primitive Indian banks to Nationalization of Banks in 1969 Phase II: From Nationalization of India banks in 1969 up to the advent of liberalization and banking reforms in 1991 Phase III: From Indian Financial and Banking Sector Reforms 1991 onwards In 1786 the General Bank of India was set up. Since Calcutta was the most active trading port in India, mainly due to the trade of the British Empire, it became a banking center.

Three Presidency banks were set up under charters from the British East India Company- Bank of Calcutta, Bank of Bombay and the Bank of Madras. These worked as quasi central banks in India for many years. The Bank of Calcutta established in 1806 immediately became Bank of Bengal. In 1921, the 3 presidency banks merged to form the Imperial Bank of India. Imperial Bank of India was later renamed in 1955 as the State Bank of India. Thus, State Bank of India is the oldest Bank in India. In 1839, there was a fruitless effort by Indian merchants to establish a Bank called Union Bank. It
failed within a decade and Allahabad Bank, was established in 1865 and is working even today.

Allahabad Bank is one of the oldest public sectors Bank in India having branches all over India and serving the customers for the last 145 years. It is also known as one of India’s oldest joint stock Banks. However, the oldest joint stock bank of India was Bank of Upper India established in 1863, but it failed in 1913. The First Bank of India with limited liability to be managed by an Indian Board was Oudh Commercial Bank. It was established in 1881 at Faizalabad. This bank failed in 1958. The first bank entirely managed by Indians was the Punjab National Bank, established in Lahore in 1895. The Punjab National Bank has not only survived till date but is one of the largest banks in India. However, the first Indian commercial bank which was wholly owned and managed by Indians was Central Bank of India which was established in 1911. So, Central Bank of India is called India’s first truly Swadeshi bank.

1.11 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stress at work can happen to anyone in any position in the Banking sector. Stress can affect different types of employees with different problems such as gastrointestinal disorder, addiction to drugs asthma, diabetes, peptic ulcer; hypertension, coronary heart disease, depression. These problems affect organizational performance by causing to low productivity and high turnover of staff. The present study focuses on a factor that causes stress for employees in the banking sector and stress coping strategies adopted by banks to improve employee performance and job satisfaction.
1.12 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Bankers are under a great deal of stress due to many antecedents of stress, such as Occupational Stress, Role ambiguity, Role Conflict at work, under participation, Role Overload, Intrinsic Impoverishment, Recent periodic events, Poor peer relations among the employees, Group and Political Pressure on the working environment.

Stress among employees contributes to a reduction in organizational performance, decreases employee performance and leads to an overall decrease in the quality of work, high turnover of staff and job dissatisfaction. This study examines the impact of stress and the effort of coping strategies in enhancing job satisfaction and employee’s performance in public sector Banks. The causes of stress in public sector Banks are identified and suitable coping strategies designed by the banks to improve performance and job satisfaction of the employees are also analyzed.

1.13 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Stress causes fluctuations in behavior, temperament, and Neuro-physiological functioning. Banking is a fast growing service industry and hence high staff performance is imperative to deal with customers. In the present study, the researcher has made an attempt to analyze the connection between work-related stress and job satisfaction among middle level employees in public sector banks.

1.14 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study aims to specify the kind of stress that is least harmful in terms of outcome and therefore affordable to people and organizations. This research provides a comprehensive analysis of Stress and
Coping strategies to enhance job performance and job satisfaction among the employees in public sector banks. It helps the employees to identify the coping strategies that can help to reduce stress and to improve the level of job satisfaction and performance in their job.

1.15 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on a thorough study of previous literature related to stress, the research gap has been identified and a model developed with the following objectives and hypotheses to examine the impact of stress and coping strategies for improving employee performance and job satisfaction in public sector banks.

1. To analyze the socioeconomic profiles of the respondents and their association with variables of stress.
2. To examine the major factors causing stress among middle level employees in selected public sector banks.
3. To examine the job difficulty and the role conflict
4. To find out the impact of stress coping strategies in an employee’s performance
5. To identify the role of stress coping strategies promoting employee job satisfaction
6. To formulate a model of stress coping strategies to enhance job satisfaction and employee’s performance.

1.16 METHODOLOGY

The research design chosen for the study is descriptive. Primary data were collected with the help of a structured questionnaire administrated to a sample of 1315 middle level employees under the designation of
Manager, Assistant Manager, Training Officer, Cashier and Clerk of top three leading public sector banks, namely State Bank of India (SBI), Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bank of Baroda (BOB) in four top level population density districts Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu. A multistage sampling technique was adopted.

Multistage sampling refers to sampling plans where the sampling is carried out in stages using smaller sampling units at each stage. Sample size for the study is 1315 respondents totally collected since 460 from State Bank of India, 435 from Punjab National Bank and 420 from Bank of Baroda respectively, and it was used for analysis after deletion of biased and non responsive questionnaires were deleted.

1.17 STATISTICAL TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY

Statistical tools like multiple regression and Reliability tests have been used in the study. The data collected have been organized, classified and analyzed using a wide range of appropriate statistical tools like Mean Score, Chi-Square, ANOVA, Post Hoc Test, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Multiple Regression, Correlation using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Structural Equation Modeling Using AMOS Package.

1.18 CHAPTER SCHEME

Chapter 1 makes a brief introduction of Stress, Causes of stress, effects of stress and coping strategies, Banking system in India is briefly outlined and the Proposed research model explained, Problem Statement, Significance, Scope and Objectives.

Chapter 2 deals with the theoretical concepts related to stress, factors causing stress and coping strategies. A review of selected literature in
the area of study has been furnished. Both Indian and Foreign studies related to the topic have been reviewed in this chapter.

**Chapter 3** includes the hypothesis with an explanation of the Proposed research model, methodology highlighted, the research instrument, the pilot study, the results of the pilot study, the reliability test, method of data collection, sampling technique and statistical tools used.

**Chapter 4** forms, the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the respondents in tune with the objectives of the study.

**Chapter 5** includes a summary of findings, suggestions and conclusion based on the analysis and interpretation of the data. This chapter also highlights the Managerial implication, limitation of the study and scope for further research.