

OCCUPATIONAL ROLE STRESS AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR BANK EMPLOYEES IN SRI LANKA

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The banking sector in Sri Lanka has been one of the potential avenues of employment especially to the youth. After the independence in Sri Lanka, a set of reforms were introduced in the Sri Lankan economy. Modern changes such as computerization, reduction of government share holding in state banks, introduction of the voluntary retirement scheme for excess staff, etc. are some of these reforms. As the outcomes of these changes, the banks were multiplied in size and numbers and diversified their activities by getting into new products and services. Organisational membership is a dominant source of stress and the changing occupational roles specially in the banking sector are the main causes to reduced quality, productivity, health as well as well being and morale of employees. The primary objectives of this study were 1) to evaluate the Occupational Role Stress of the public sector bank employees with special reference to the State Bank Employees in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, 2) to identify the factors influencing the Occupational Stress among employees of the state banks, and 3) to recommend strategies to mitigate the stress in their jobs. This is an exploratory study and was carried out through a field survey. Though this type of study is more useful to both state and private banks, this particular study covered only two important state banks namely the Bank of Ceylon (BOC) and the People's Bank (PB) functioning in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. The total of 120 employees; 60 from the People's Bank and 60 from the Bank of Ceylon were taken for the study based on stratified random sampling method. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire followed by an open-ended interview with bank employees. Pareek (1983) pioneered work on the role stress identifying as many as ten different types of organisational role stresses. As such, the inter-role distance (IRD), role stagnation (RS), role expectation conflict (REC), role erosion (RE), role overload (RO), role isolation (RI), personal inadequacy (PI), self role distance (SRD), role ambiguity (RA), and resource inadequacy (RI_n) were assessed in this study. Further, in order to find out the level of occupational stress among the employees of the People's Bank and the Bank of Ceylon, Duncan's mean test was conducted. From the data collected from the respondents and the analysis done by the researcher the mean value of the total Occupational Role Stress (TORS) indicated as 89.9. Further, among the ten occupational stressors evaluated in this study, the inter-role distance (Mean value 9.8), role isolation (Mean value 9.5), and personal inadequacy (Mean value 9.6) of state bank employees in Sri Lanka have highly influenced in their occupational stress. Therefore, it has been revealed that there is a moderate – high level of occupational stress among the public sector bank employees in Sri Lanka. The study suggests that both the Peoples bank and the Bank of Ceylon must focus on their brand image and try to reiterate the people that they are the most reliable financial institutions in Sri Lanka through a wide product and promotional mix. Further, they must introduce well advanced technologies which have been used in other well developed financial institutions in the world and train their staff to provide a better service to the public. The state banks can make their employees to be involved in the decision making process and adapt good HR policies and practices.

Keywords: Bank of Ceylon, Occupational Role Stress, People's Bank, Sri Lanka