

Job-Related Stress: An Analysis on Stressors for Indian Police Force

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Abstract – Stress has become one of the major concerns of present times. Most of the time, we are under stress of some sort or other. Most of the time stress at work, stemming from increasing job complexity and its divergent demands, which has become pervading features of modern organizations. A little amount of stress may be helpful from organizational and personal point of view. It is reported that stress creates as well as promote employee's inclination towards the job, thus enhances the performance and develops positive attitudes among employees.

Keywords: Job Stress, Stressors, Indian Police Force, Stress at Work

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1. INTRODUCTION

Job stress is widely recognized as a major problem for both workers, employers and the organizations that employ them {workers / employees - both}. For workers / employees, stress is frequently a factor contributing to accidents, job dissatisfactions and illnesses such as heart disease, alcoholism and hypertension (Davidson & Cooper, 1982). For organizations, stress related problems result in enhanced company medical expenses, absenteeism and decreased productivity, which lead to the organizations' or employer's downfall as well. Beehr (1985) defined job stress "as condition where in job related factors interact with the worker to change (disrupt or enhance) his / her psychological or physiological condition (mind and body) so that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning".

Marshall and Cooper (1979) devised the following seven sources of organization stress:

- i) Job (working conditions, overload);
- ii) Organizational role (role ambiguity, role conflict, responsibility etc.);
- iii) Relationships at work (relationships with supervisors, relationships with colleagues);
- iv) Career development (lack of job security, status incongruity {the state of being incongruous or out of keeping});
- v) Organizational structure and climate.

2. JOB-RELATED SOURCES OF STRAIN:

Almost all people at some time in their lives experience stress that relates to their occupations. Often these stressful situations are minor and brief and have little impact on the person. But for many people, the stress is intense and continues for long periods of time and is built up inside them. One core element of the model of stress coping is awareness of the events, issues, and objects (including people) that may function as stressors (sources of strain) for individuals. Lazarus and Folkman (1984), have argued that strain occurs when environmental demands or constraints are perceived by a person to exceed his / her resources or capacities. Determinants of strain can generally be grouped into three major categories:

- (i) Job-specific sources;
- (ii) Organizational sources;
- (iii) Individual sources among these sources, "organizational or environmental sources" are most important stressors in work-settings. Under the rubric of "environmental" sources of strain

Cart-Wright and Cooper (1997) have further differentiated six primary job related stressors:

- (i) Factors intrinsic to the job itself;

- (ii) Roles in the organization;
- (iii) Relationships at work, such as those with supervisors, colleagues and subordinates;
- (iv) Career development;
- (v) Organizational factors, including the structure and climate of the organization as well as its culture and political environment;
- (vi) The home work interface.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURES:

As in regard to the rank difference is a root cause of stress as well including somatic symptoms, perception of stressors and coping strategies, subordinate / junior officers have experienced greater symptoms than the other / senior ranks (**Bhaskar, 1986; Dangwal & Gangopadhyaya, 1982**). **Dangwal & Gangopadhyaya (1982)** conducted a survey with inspectors and sub inspectors of State Police Organizations. They reported that police inspectors in the age group of 31-40 showed highest stress levels.

It was also found that higher the qualification higher the stress level is. **Caplan (1985)**, found that closer contact with the gazetted / above the rank of police inspector or station house officer and senior officers, the subordinate officers may be treated like punching bags by their bosses or supervisors. The tension and stress displaced by the seniors may percolate or be thrust down upon the unsuspecting subordinate officers.

The social comparison (with other ranks) may promote perceptions of stressfulness at work. **Rutter & Fielding (1999)** stated that the subordinate officers being directly responsible to the community and the senior officers for their actions and the conduct and efficiency of the subordinates, must directly bear the wrath of both the public and the higher authorities when complaints are made or submitted.

If they make a wrong decision under the pressure of expediency, they will be held accountable for its consequences. In this study, it is further noted that officers, who reported highest levels of job stress had the lowest job satisfaction. The subordinate officers in this study had the highest mean on somatic symptoms also.

Cooper, Davidson & Robinson (1982) suggested that supervisory police officers may be at a greater risk of coronary heart disease than the general public. This study reinforces the view that senior officers are having a lot of stress though the sources and level of stress differs from the subordinate ranks, it has found that officers of different ranks differ both quantitatively and qualitatively in their experience of

stress {oi = means sign of exclamation here}; the less senior officers appear to experience greater level of stress.

Further they reported that the subordinate officers had the highest scores on stressors such as job boredom, quantitative work overload and lack of praise and relatively high scores on noxious physical environment, communication quality, decision latitude and role ambiguity. These factors perpetuate, the difficulties encountered by the subordinate officers. The subordinate officer is a victim of the sandwich syndrome-being squeezed on both sides by often conflicting expectations of seniors and subordinate officers, facing pressure from above and below / both ends. The lack of personal control, lack of participation in decision making, lack of opportunity to communicate, lack of recognition and promotion prospects and ambitious position in relation to the upper as well as lower ranks of the ladder contribute stress into subordinate officers (**Mathur, 1999**). On the basis of the study of 2015 subjects comprising 1208 police constables, 332 head constables, 83 police sub-inspectors and 382 wives of police personnel, it is highlighted that the stressors of police personnel vs. court cases (*including frequent appearance and leniency to the accused by courts*) lack of administrative backup (*including lack of support in different situations*), lack of support from public, lack of career development opportunities, inadequate rewards, excessive paperwork, ineffective measures against criminals, distorted press reports, poor pay and working in isolation. It was further noted that higher stress was found in the case of head constables, followed by wives of police personnel, constables and police sub-inspectors. It is, based on the sample of police personnel studied found that sub inspectors and inspectors group was the most stressed ones. It is found significant differences in the experiences of stress and strain by gazetted and non-gazetted police officers as a matter of their different working set-up. The other ranks had significantly higher means than the Deputy Superintendent of Police or gazetted police officers, who were reported least stressed group in the study.

The communication quality, procedural justice, decision latitude, role ambiguity and role conflict were among the major stressors for other ranks, where this group scored highest means. Distributive justice, lack of support from superiors, unfriendly leave and promotion policies including little or no participation in decision making seem to cause stress to this group (**Pragya 1999**).

4. STRESSORS FOR INDIAN POLICE FORCE:

The stress experienced by policemen has their roots in the imbalances between demands and workloads, which society places on them and the resources at their disposal. In India, the policeman's work

environment also does not escape from this reality. The presence of stress among policemen is felt, but not recognized as the major enemy (Mathur, 1995). The media reports of police brutality, indiscipline and the mismanagement is harbinger to the job (Times of India 1993 Jan. The Tribune on Saturday, 2003 August). Based on the survey conducted on 390 male police personnel Bhaskar (1986) worked out the relationship between job stresses and personality variables among police officers and constables.

He {Bhasker, (1986)} reported that a majority of policemen are hard working and conscientious. However, their job inequality leads to mental stagnation, psychological fatigue, growth of personality in one direction, dehumanizing working conditions, task pressures, lack of proper training including professional and personal obligations, which produce anxiety and mild to severe stress. Further, he noted that personality, as well as family background variables play a significant role in the precipitation of job stress.

Mathur (1989), has succinctly {in a brief and clearly expressed manner} put it "constant stress and strain of hazardous police duties are the causes of frequent moves at short notice, inadequate housing and unsatisfactory working conditions, redressed machinery, long hours of work and inadequate educational facilities for children."

Chaudhary (1993) examined the occupational stress of police officers and discusses that inter-role distance and role-erosion have been reported as the major stressors, whereas role ambiguity caused minimum stress. Further it was found that Rajasthan Police Service (RPS) officers experienced more stress than Indian Police Service (IPS) Officers.

Tripathi, Naidu, Thapa & Biswas (1993), conducted a study for the Bureau of Police Research and Development and identified stressors encountered by police, atmosphere of mistrust at all levels, negative public image, negative self-image, increased incidence of stressful life events and daily hassles, indications of suicidal ideation and depressive problems, negative health outcomes due to the life style characterized, by hostility, maladjustment and unhappiness arising from frustration of goals and feeling of guilt, inadequate housing / security for the family, irregular work hours, inadequate provisions for children's education, lack of medical services and inconsistent policies regarding evaluation, accountability, promotion and transfer as the major reasons for stress among the police personnel.

The Efficacy of Multidimensional Intervention over only Relaxation Intervention in the Reduction of Anger-out Scores of Police Personnel:

The treatment related changes on anger-out scores have been analyzed by repeated measures of analysis of variance of three factor mixed design with repeated measures over trials.

Source	SS	df	MS	F value	P value
Total	23684.44	159	-	-	-
Between Subject	15926.944	79	-	-	-
Rank	191.719	3	63.906	.307	.820
Treatment	262.656	1	262.656	1.263	.265
Rank x Treatment	494.919	3	164.973	.793	.502
Error	14977.65	72	208.023	-	-
Within Subject	7757.5	80	-	-	-
Trial	6.006	1	6.006	.061	.805
Trial x Rank	181.769	3	60.590	.619	.605
Trial x Treatment	79.806	1	79.806	.815	.370
Trial x Rank x Treatment	439.269	3	146.423	1.495	.223
Error	7050.650	72	97.926	-	-

All the post hoc comparisons have been made by Newman Keul's Multiple Range Test. The summary of RPMANOVA is reported in Table.

{RPMANOVA revealed the efficacy of multidimensional intervention in reducing job stress, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization score from pre to post assessment trials, regardless of the ranks of police personnel. All these findings have been interpreted and suggestions for future research have also been put forth.}

Gautam (1993), observed that boredom of monotonous duties, too much work load, exposure to adverse and extreme environmental conditions, unsatisfactory career prospects, poor pay and allowances, have been the major reasons for creating stress in the police force. Mathur (1993), found that working conditions, work overload, lack of recognition, fear of severe injury / being killed on duty, short term high intensity stressful events, inadequate equipments, shooting someone in the line of duty, anti-terrorist operations, complaints against police officers by police officers, confrontation with public, and internal investigations are considered as stressors for police force. Further, five most stressful events as staying away from family and children, dismissal / removal / suspension from service, severe injury / loss of limb, death of colleague on duty or in the line of duty and departmental inquiry were added by her in this study. Mathur, (1994), observed the sources of stress to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Boarder Security Force (BSF) personnel as traumatic events like witnessing deaths and seeing dead bodies of their colleagues or innocent people, separation from their families and children, irregular grant of leave and refusal of grant of leave (taking days off from job), inadequate resources and inequities in pay and job status, job overload, non-

recognition, constant threat to life and subsequent tension. **Mathur (1995)**, reported the major stressors for gazetted police officers {*considered as supervisors ranks start from Deputy Superintendent of Captain or above the ranks of inspector or station house officer*} as supervision, suspension, facing departmental inquiries, death / severe injury to colleague in the line of duty, arresting a criminal, use of weapon, facing an ambush, close to retirement time and performing unofficial work as directed by boss and for the other ranks (as carrying out anti-terrorist / naxalite (semi terrorist acts) operations, personal injury / illness, staying away from the family, financial crisis) providing safety and security during elections, neglecting family due to work overload, participating in police bandobast {*guarding and providing safe heaven*} during festival periods, handling communal riots and non-grant of leave. **Channabasavanna, Chandra, Gururaj, Chaturvedi &, Subbakrishna (1996)**, highlighted the stressors of police personnel as too much responsibility, lack of time, less time for family, behaviour of senior officers towards the juniors {*ill treatment/poor treatment*}, less salary and perks, less leave facilities {*days off*} and lack of facilities for family and the police personnel himself as well as to his family members.

CONCLUSION:

It has pointed out that most of the policemen remained overburdened worked and must stay away from their families and kids for long periods of time, which often leads to family problems and disputes. Inability to handle domestic tension and job-related stress may translate into rude behaviour on duty. It has also been observed that officers treat their subordinates in a shabby and insulting manner. There are officers who habitually abuse their subordinates. Rarely the subordinates are offered chairs by seniors in their offices. Junior officers need to keep standing after saluting to their seniors and when ordered the junior officers need to just leave the office upon ordered. Need for holding extensive programs that have been demanded by senior police officers in order to put police personnel in the normal mode of functioning

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