

Organisational Stress and Stress Management Mechanism Among police personnel: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

With varying intensity and dimensions every individual has some extent of stress. Stress has emerged as a critical and most important issue in today's era for the people possessing busy and hectic lifestyle. Organisational Stress (OS) is one which any individual experience because of the factors related to the work in the organisations. Stressors on policemen are not unique as compared to the people working in the society which has become global issue and needs immediate interventions to save lives of police personal. Increasing incidence of organisational stress among police personnel is a great concerned. The evident studies and reports of the Bureau of Police Research and Development have highlighted that a greater number of policemen die every year due to increasing stress as compared to deaths due to other reasons. Thus, this study encompasses various aspects related to organisational stress among police personnel in Satara police and to find out the various stress management mechanisms used by them for relieving their organisational stress.

Keywords: Intensity, Organizational, Police Personnel, Stress, Coping Strategies, Police Culture.

INTRODUCTION

Despite all the shortcomings and limitations police officers play a very significant role in maintaining law and order in the society. There is shortfall in the infrastructure facilities, manpower and periodic training in the police department.

As per the findings of the various committees and commission constituted the Indian Police suffer from several organizational paradoxes. It was also identified that extra-ordinary workload on an average policeman, had adversely affected his efficiency and performance. Being a functionally centralized organization, no efforts have been made to decentralize the police functions.

Police Culture

The impact of formal pressure from police organization and police subcultures often lead to the stress concerned with occupational social and family lives which leads to physical and emotional ailments. Individual organization have a form of culture which is associated with values beliefs and norms. Majority police personal follow a formal organization structure and informal organization structure. Humiliation from the superior, subordinates' society, urgency, political pressure, threat of indiscipline, low wages, less holidays, overburden duties, fear of death, long working hours, inadequate facilities are the factors responsible for the stress. Pandemic situation of Covid-19 and inadequate facilities provided have created great impact on the mind of the police personnel. The people from the society could not understand the pain and suffering of their family members. Carles and Radelet (1999) had decided a typology of seven police stressors that has created an impact on the police

personnel job activity, decision making and organization life. The stressors are, life threatening stressors, social isolation stressors, organizational stressors, functional stressors, personnel stressors, physiological stressors, psychological stressors.

Organisation Stressors

Organizational stressors are the administrative charging policies and procedures morale, job satisfaction, misdirected performance measure There are further specific works and role regarding factors which are found to be responsible for organizational stress such as task demand, role demand, physical demand, rotating shift, lack of participation in decision making, lack of group cohesiveness, lack of social support.

There are further specific work and role regarding factors responsible for organizational stress such as task demands, role demand, role Ambiguity, interpersonal demands, physical demands, rotating Shifts, lack of participation in decision making, lack of group cohesiveness, lack of social support. Depending on the own personal capabilities the police personal handle stressors in variety of ways. The police personal characteristics such as divorce, cigarette smoking, alcohol, drug addict, frequent headache, high blood pressure, stomach disorder is some of the stress indicators. It depends upon the size of the police station strength of administrative staff against the sanctioned post, regulation, salary and incentives hours of duties and rotation in shifts. There are various factors related to the stress reduction at organizational level such as psychological factors which include anxiety, mood disturbance, lowered morale, job satisfaction, reduced quality of working life, depression, and emotional exhaustion.

Stress Management Mechanism

Stress management mechanism as can be called as the Coping strategy which refers to attempt to meet environmental demands to prevent negative consequences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping strategies can be grouped into two main types:

- a) Problem focused coping
- b) Emotion focused coping

The first main approach includes any strategy to deal direct lying with the stressors through over action or through realistic problem-solving mental activities. In these strategies, our focus is on the problem to be dealt with and on the agent that has induced stress. We acknowledge the “Call to action”; we appraise the situation and our resources for dealing with it and we undertake a response that in appropriate for remaining or lessening the threat. In second approach, we do not look for ways of changing the stressful situation; instead, we try to change our feelings and thoughts about it. The strategy is called emotion regulation. It is a remedial, rather than a problem-solving strategy, because it is aimed at relieving the emotional impact of stress to make us feel better, even though the threatening or harmful stressor is not changed.

More specific programs designed to increase effectiveness is coping with police stress such as the enhancement of self-awareness and self-esteem, physical exercise and diet, biofeedback and relaxation, psychological services, and counselling programs.

Torres and Maggard in his study suggested to provide employee assistance programs including services to officers and families, Orientation programs for the new officer’s transition into the police culture, Pre-academy programs that emphasize physical conditioning, teach coping mechanism related to crime, death, boredom.

Mathur in his study has also suggested support systems like psychological screening of new entrants, reassignment of workload, increased employee involvement, effective grievance

redressal machinery, adequate career planning and genuine concern for employee's welfare. Many suggestions have made for reducing stress or learning to cope with stress in the police profession (Fulton, 1999; Waters and Ussery, 2007). Among the most notable suggestions are: screening to weed out those who cannot cope with high stress job, increased practical training for police personnel on stress, including the simulation of high stress situations, training programs for spouses so that they may better understand potential problems, group discussion where officers and perhaps their spouses can "vent" and share their feelings about the job, more supportive attitude by police executives towards the stress related problems of patrol officers, mandatory alcoholic rehabilitation program, immediate consultation with officers involved in traumatic events such as justifiable homicides, complete false arrest and liability insurance to relieve officers of having to second guess their decisions.

Research Methodology

In this study, an attempt has been made to study the organisational stress among police personnel in Satara (Maharashtra). The study focussed on two major issues regarding organisational stress i.e., perception of organisational stress among Satara police, reasons of organisational stress and coping strategies being adopted by them for stress management. For purpose of study, 50 police personnel were selected by random and purposive method of sampling. The respondents were selected from ranks of non-gazetted officers (NGOs) from areas of Police hawaldar to police constable. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The data collection was done with the help of structured questionnaire, interview, and observation method. The questionnaire was designed to assess all aspects of organisational stress among police personnel.

Analysis

Police personnel among Satara Police were asked regarding level of stress which they were experiencing due to various activities in their organisation. Also, respondents were asked regarding coping strategies being used to lower their stress continuum. Thus, the analysis was carried out with the help of frequency method by countering number of responses. Further, percentage was calculated, and data has been presented in form of tables. The analysis was further divided into two components. In first part, respondent's level of organisational stress was assessed by asking them about how much they feel stressed due to a particular organisational stressor being mentioned in the questionnaire.

Figure (a)- Stress level against each stressor

Stressor	Low		Moderate		High	
	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)
1 Working overtime	24	48.00%	3	6.00%	23	46.00%
2 Poor working environment	15	30.00%	23	46.00%	12	24.00%
3 Inadequate salary	27	54.00%	6	12.00%	17	34.00%
4 Inadequate equipment	14	28.00%	22	44.00%	14	28.00%
5 Irregular duty hours	32	64.00%	5	10.00%	13	26.00%
6 Insufficient personal time	31	62.00%	5	10.00%	14	28.00%

7	Court proceedings	27	54.00%	6	12.00%	17	34.00%
8	Poor image of Police	31	62.00%	11	22.00%	8	16.00%
9	Lack of opportunity for advancement	31	62.00%	9	18.00%	10	20.00%
10	Lack of motivation	16	32.00%	18	36.00%	16	32.00%

Figure (b)- Type of coping method and the frequency

		Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Drug addiction (drinking, Smoking) to get relief from stress	Never	4	8.00%
	Rarely	11	22.00%
	Sometimes	17	34.00%
	Mostly	13	26.00%
	Always	5	10.00%
Spending holiday time with family	Never	5	10.00%
	Rarely	8	16.00%
	Sometimes	22	44.00%
	Mostly	10	20.00%
	Always	5	10.00%
Communication with Friends & Family	Never	0	0.00%
	Rarely	1	2.00%
	Sometimes	11	22.00%
	Mostly	26	52.00%
	Always	12	24.00%
Physical Exercise to get relief from stress	Never	7	14.00%
	Rarely	17	34.00%
	Sometimes	12	24.00%
	Mostly	9	18.00%
	Always	5	10.00%
Expert Counselling by the department	Never	33	66.00%
	Rarely	11	22.00%
	Sometimes	5	10.00%
	Mostly	1	2.00%
	Always	0	0.00%

From the table (a) among the High-level stress Working overtime is one of the stressor which makes the police personnel more stressful.

Among the moderate level stressors, 44% of respondents mentioned inadequate equipment, 46% of respondents revealed poor working environment and 36% of respondents revealed that lack of motivation and recognition for good work were among those stressors which affected them.

In case of Low stressors, majority of police respondents i.e. 64% of respondents reported regarding irregular duty hours, 62% of respondents reported regarding poor image of police, 62.0% of respondents reported regarding lack of opportunities for advancement, 62.0% of

respondents revealed regarding insufficient personal time, 54% of respondents reported regarding court proceedings, 54% of respondents reported regarding inadequate salary and 48% of respondents revealed regarding working overtime as those stressors which cause low level stress among themselves.

From the overall respondents it was found that to get relief from the stress caused due to various factors 52% of respondents revealed that they seek emotional support from the family and friends.

For stress relief majority (34%) of respondents reported that they sometimes use drug (drinking, Smoking, Tobacco) to get relief from stress.

Regarding relaxation exercises, majority (34.7%) of respondents reported that they rarely perform relaxation exercises for distressing themselves. Regarding taking leave from duty, majority (44.0%) of respondents stated that this was the coping method which was sometimes used by them. When asked regarding expert counselling, majority (66.7%) of respondents denied that they ever sought expert counselling for coping with their stressful job conditions. Findings and Discussion The analysis of data regarding level of organisational stress among police personnel in Chandigarh revealed the findings that they were suffering from some level organisational stress.

Suggestions

Stress prevention strategy and interventions among the police personnel is more important in the present scenario. Some strategy needs to be formulated to reduce the stress.

- (i) Training and refresher courses should be organised by the department at regular intervals for in-service police personnel.
- (ii) Informal gatherings or cultural programmes needs to be organised so that the police personnel can get a chance to present their potential.
- (iii) Motivational programmes should be organised at organisational level because most of the police personnel use self-motivation for coping with stress.
- (iv) Facility of expert counselling by the counsellor to be provided for the police personnel who are distressed.
- (v) Department/District/State level sports tournament to be organised throughout the year to keep the police personnel physically fit
- (vi) Family programmes, felicitation of the meritorious kids of the police personnel to be organised for families of police personnel because family has greater influence on stress level of police personnel.
- (vii) Workshops on yoga, meditation, art of living etc. should be organised in Police departments focussing on different issues of organisational stress.

Conclusion

Though stress is considered as inevitable part of police personnel's life, yet it can be reduced to lower level by various interventions. Proper time management, good personal planning, positive thinking, enhanced self-esteem and awareness, meditation, regular vacations, self-development, goal setting, holistic yoga exercises. Organisation strategies include providing need-based counselling services, recreational programmes, appreciation for achievers and organizing programmes for spouses and family of police personnel are some of the factors which could reduce stress. Efforts should be made towards increasing police-people ratio, reducing workload, clear job description, Good interpersonal relationship between senior and subordinates, sense of mutual trust and cooperation between colleagues, improving image of

police, preventing media from providing harsh and distorted reports regarding police activities can help to a great extent in alleviating increasing stress in police organisation.

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