AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE FACTORS CULMINATING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG INDIAN POLICE OFFICERS (WITH REFERENCE TO THE UTTAR PRADESH POLICE, INDIA)

Dr. Bimal Jaiswal*   Ms. Anshu Dixit   Ms. Ankita Sajjan***

*Assistant Professor, Department of Applied Economics, Faculty of Commerce, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, India.
**Research Scholar, Faculty of Management Studies, Pacific University, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.
***Subject Expert, IMS, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, U.P. India.

Abstract
Stress has become a global health challenge especially for those service providers who are dedicated to the human service sectors. Police is one of the most important and considerable profession as they protect and serve the public. The Uttar Pradesh Police are overburdened with the work pressure existing because of maximum number of cases, as evidenced from the statistics; and that too to justify their duties and responsibilities under heavy political pressure. This study thus explores the responsible factors of stress and its relationship with the demographic factors. It aims at identifying the causes of stress and investigates the demographic factors affecting stress level among police personnel. Here under the study, a sample of 100 police officials was taken from Lucknow district using a convenience sampling method. The Findings revealed that the political pressure, no shift duty, lack of resources, overtime demand of working, negative comments from public and not paid according to work were the major responsible factors of stress among police officials of Uttar Pradesh. It has also been emerged in the study, that stress is more significant among the experienced and the personnel of higher rank. The educated and married personnel seemed to be more dissatisfied and highly stressed. The study, thus finding out the major stressors of police personnel of Uttar Pradesh, suggests the coping strategies viz. training sessions, relief camps etc. as required to be adopted to tackle with the major stressors considering the demographic relationship as has been identified in the present study.

Keywords: Police Officers, Uttar Pradesh, stress, Organizational stress, Occupational Stress.

I. INTRODUCTION

Occupational stress has become a global health challenge, especially for those, who are dedicated to serve the human sector viz. police officials, media personnel etc. Police is considered as one of the most important profession in the world because of the mere fact that they protect and serve the public. They are not superhumans; but they are treated alike. According to Gail Goolkasian and others, it is observed by the research that police officers are affected by the daily exposure of human indecency and pain apart from this, the suspicious and hostile public, shift changes, long period of boredom, and the ever presence of danger creates a hard working environment that leads to a very high amount of job stress. Police officers are the first's line of protection between criminals and society and thus sometimes they also had to face the unexpected situations without any warning which may affect the officials mentally as well as physically. Police stress may arise because of several factors like availability for 24 hours, monthly shift rotation, political involvement, administration problem, organizational issues etc. these all might seem to be minimal issues but make the police job as a most stressful job. Thus the responsible factors acting as stressors in police work may be enumerated as (i) Role conflicts between the job (ii) Health and safety threats to officers' (iii) Responsibility of the lives of others (iv) Continual interaction with the people in pain or distress (v) The need to control emotions even when provoked. The organizational stress factors as been found in previous studies consists of poor communication, , inadequate resources and work overload negative working environment, lack of support, lack of time for family, long working hours, need to take tough decisions, irregular eating habits, torture by seniors, sleepless nights, disturbed personal life, poor living conditions and the dwindling public confidence in the police force (Kop et. al, 1999; McCarthy et. al, 2007; Malach- Pines and Kienan, 2007; Water and Ussery,2007).

The undefined nature of work and negative working environment has made the Police profession to be both ruthless and difficult. The stressed police officer poses a threat not only to themselves but also to their offenders, colleagues, family and to public safety and thus it is a matter of concern. Various studies have been done in the past on the Police stress prevailing among different countries and region world around. According to Alexander (1999), Paton and Violanti (1999) and Anshel (2000), policing is one of the most stressful occupations where staff is exposed to occupational, organizational, and personal stress. Violanti and Aron (1994) has notified four stress factors of police organizations: 1) transactions within the criminal justice system, 2) the organization's characteristics, 3) the inherent nature of police work, and 4. the public. Apart from finding the responsible factors, few studies have did and further suggested to investigate the relation existing between demographic factors and stress level. Like Bhaskar (1982) proposed in his study to explore the relationship existing between behavioural, psychological and health effects of police personnel and its further relationship with his experience of job. Ramchandaran (1989) suggested for the necessity to conduct a more intensive study to depict insights into the behavioral

patterns existing at the hierarchical level. Studying the 4 districts of Uttar Pradesh., Tripathi et al. (1993) recommended for larger and more representative sample in further future study of stress level of police officers.

OBJECTIVES

The major objective of this study is to explore the major stressors responsible for the creation of stress among the Uttar Pradesh police officers and rank them accordingly, along with the investigative impact of demographic factors; So as to verify the stress scale (questionnaire) developed to measure and analyze the stress level of Uttar Pradesh police officers in my further P.hD research.

II. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The data for the study has been collected from the two categories of the police officers hierarchy viz. Police Inspector (PI) or Police Sub Inspector (PSI) and Head constable or Constable. A total sample data of 100 police officers of Lucknow districts were collected with the help of a convenience sampling method. And for this purpose, a structured questionnaire was used, which consisted of the questions related to stress which has been classified under three categories viz. demographic information, organizational stress and political involvement; as the factors of stress.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic variables

The sample of the study consisted of 64.17 per cent of Police Inspector (PI) & Police Sub inspectors (PSI's) and rest comprised of the category of constables and head constables. Majority of sample perceived to be falling under the category of 50 years and above making it to be 46.26 per cent of the total sample, followed by 23.8 per cent under the category of 20-29 years of age. Out of which 83.5 per cent are found to be married. The educational profile of police department surveyed, consisted of graduate level at maximum, succeeded by the Post graduate level with 44.77 per cent. About 55 per cent of the respondents are found to be possessing the experience of more than 50 years. As there is no shift work clause for Uttar Pradesh police officers, they had to work for 24 hours which has been seen as the major demographic factor of stress for Uttar Pradesh police officials.

 B. Causes of stress

 The factors of stress have been classified under the study into two separate categories viz. organizational stress and political involvement as a reason of stress. The first head comprises of various questions based on organizational factor and part II i.e. political involvement comprised of questions which may be the reason for the prevalence of stress due to the political factors or pressure involved in the duty.

The factors responsible for stress has been presented in the table 1 below, depicting the percentage of contribution made by each factor towards the creation of stress among the police officials. Based on the answers of respondents, we have further calculated the average mean of the factors of organizational stress and as well as the factors of political involvement, and although the questions comprised under political head are less than the organizational head, the calculated average mean of the factors of political involvement has been find out to be 2.45 per cent which is only less by 0.2 per cent from the value measured under the organizational head i.e. 2.67 per cent.

Table 1:- Contribution of organizational and political factors towards the prevalence of stress among police officials

	Factors responsible for Stress	Percentage
	I. Organizational Stress	
1	working alone at night cause stress	2.59
2	Over-time demand of working causes stress	2.92
3	Risk of being injured on the job causes stress	2.81
4	Work related activities on days off (e.g. court, community events) causes stress	2.80
5	Traumatic events (e.g domestics, death, injury) happening at the job causes stress	2.85
6	Managing your social life outside of work causes stress	2.64
7	Paperwork causes stress	2.45
8	Constant changes in policy / legislation causes stress	2.62

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9	Staff shortages causes stress	2.79
10	Lack of resources causes stress	2.95
11	Unequal sharing of work responsibilities causes stress	2.85
12	Occupation-related health issues have causes stress.	2.81
13	Lack of understanding from family and friends about your work causes stress	2.48
14	Upholding a "higher image" in public causes stress	2.62
15	Negative comments from public cause stress.	2.89
16	Feelings like you are always on the job.	2.68
17	Not finding time to stay in good physical condition.	2.68
18	Not enough time available to spend with friends and family	2.80
19	It is difficult to make friends from outside the job	2.65
20	Your job has caused limitations to your social life (e.g. who your friends are, where you socialize)	2.75
21	Friends / family feel the effects of the stigma associated with your job	2.57
22	Feeling discrimination between the people on job	2.80
23	Not paid a fair amount for the work I do.	2.86
24	When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	2.44
25	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.	2.38
26	Those that do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.	2.43
27	I feel burnt out because of my work.	2.48
28	My work frustrates me.	2.33
29	I feel worn out at the end of the working day.	2.64
30	I am exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work.	2.70

II. Political Involvement		
1.	There is discrimination among the people on work (i.e. relatives of sourced persons etc.)	2.29
2.	Officers solving cases of high societal people feel a lot of political pressure	2.60
3.	Officers are sometimes forced to ignore the truth and make decisions against the plaintiffs.	2.55
4.	Honest Officers faces the maximum transfers during the duty period.	2.61
5.	Have you ever been removed from the cases you are close to get the result?	2.32
6.	You feel political pressure while making case related decisions	2.52
7.	Has your decision even been changed without taking your permission?	2.36
8.	Have you or your family ever been threaten for the case related issues?	2.33

The main cause of stress as has been perceived by the respondents are lack of resource (2.95%), overtime demand of working (2.91%), negative comments from public (2.89%) and low salary i.e. not paid fair amount for the work (2.86%). Apart from this, other factors like traumatic events (2.85) and unequal sharing of work responsibilities (2.85%) stood up at rank 5 in the top ten schedule of ranking, as presented in the table 2 below.

Table 2 : Top 10 stressors responsible for the prevalence of stress among police officials

Factors responsible for Stress	Percentage	Rank
Lack of resources causes stress	2.95	1
Over-time demand of working causes stress	2.91	2
Negative comments from public cause stress.	2.89	3
Not paid a fair amount for the work I do.	2.86	4

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Traumatic events (e.g domestics, death, injury) happening at the job causes stress	2.85	5
Unequal sharing of work responsibilities causes stress	2.85	5
Risk of being injured on the job causes stress	2.81	6
Occupation-related health issues have causes stress.	2.81	6
Work related activities on days off (e.g. court, community events) causes stress	2.80	7
Not enough time available to spend with friends and family	2.80	7
Feeling discrimination between the people on job	2.80	7
Staff shortages causes stress	2.79	8
Your job has caused limitations to your social life (e.g. who your friends are, where you socialize)	2.75	9
I am exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work.	2.70	10

C. Relationship between Demographic Factors and organizational and political Stressors of Police Personnel
The result of the study indicated that there is more prevalence of stress among those police personnel's who are more experienced (>50 yrs), more educated (graduate and post graduate), and more experienced (>21years). The Political factors are found to be as a major reason of stress for higher rank police officers as compared to lower one. Apart from this, the officials married and living with their families are found to be more stressed as compared to the one who are single.

IV. SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION
The present study suggests the coping strategies as a measure to minimize the stress level causing to police officers of Uttar Pradesh. As the study has identified and ranked the responsible stressors so as to determine the major reasons causing stress to police personnel of Uttar Pradesh; among them, the lack of resource has topped the list followed by overtime demand of working, negative comments from public, not paid fair amount for the work, traumatic events, unequal sharing of work responsibilities etc. under the top ten category of stressors. Also, there seems to have a significant relationship between the stress factor and demographic profile of officials which has been seen very well in the study depicting that higher experience and officials of higher age are more stressed as compared to the lower age and unmarried officers. Apart from this, 24 hours of duty has been found as the major responsible factor on the part of human resource practices for the prevalence of stress in police officials of Uttar Pradesh along with the lack of resources and infrastructure as making it out to be the major stress factor.

Thus the study suggests fulfilling the resources (including infrastructure) requirement and also to make the provision of shift duties in Uttar Pradesh Police department, as is happening in other states of India. Apart from this in order to tackle the stress among police officials, there should be regular stress – relief camps, yoga sessions, training programs, counseling and medical checkups to be organized periodically. Taking care of career of police officials, their health, leave, housing, working hour, transfer and family needs should also be given due importance. Further there should be created the awareness among the family members and the community about the occupational stress of police men and ways to cope with it so that it can be minimized to the least. The findings of the study gives the researcher a future scope by proving it out clearly that the identified factors of stress can be easily used to formulate a accurate stress scale for analyzing the prevalence of stress level among police officials of Uttar Pradesh.

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