

AN ANALYSIS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND ITS REPURCUSSIONS ON HEALTH- A CASESTUDY OF MAHARASHTRA POLICE PERSONNEL

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ABSTRACT

Stress is the uninvited guest which enters our lives as an unavoidable result of our lifestyles. Most prevalent cause of stress in the modern era is occupational stress. This problem becomes more severe when the occupation is as demanding as Maharashtra Police Force. This motivated the researchers to study in depth the repercussions of job stress on the employees of the force. The research was done with the help of primary as well as secondary data. The questionnaire studied parameters impacting both their personal and professional life. The study concluded that Occupational stress is definitely high among Maharashtra Police force. Apart from other findings, one of the surprising finding of the research was that the major stress causing factor rather than risky day to day work was unavailability of planned annual leaves, especially during festival season.

General Terms

Stagnation, Family Life, Superiors, Role, Work Stress, Conflict

Keywords

Occupational Stress, Impact, Personal, professional life, Maharashtra Police Force

1. INTRODUCTION

The job of policing is no doubt a thankless job. The Police are criticized by the Public, ridiculed by the movies, pressurized by the politicians and exploited by the superiors. All this is evident from the newspapers which are full of reports of suicides by the policemen and other disturbing evidences. The occupational stress sometimes climaxes to such a level which eventually forces the policeman to go all against the law and even kill his colleagues, superiors. Such instances are just the tip of the iceberg. It's a volcano slowly erupting and every policeman seems to a timebomb of stress ready to explode over any trigger. These sentinels of the society need a helping hand. The academia needs to make serious efforts to go deep into the matter, study various aspects of occupational stress faced by these guards of our society and find out the remedies for the same.

Maharashtra is one of highly populated state of the country. It attracts job seekers from across the length and breadth of the nation. Its capital, Mumbai, being the commercial hub, is a place which is the ultimate destination of industries and corporate ranging from Tata to Reliance to Indian Film Industry. This in turn also attracts a fair share of criminals. Apart from serious criminals, there is a heavy presence of petty thieves, chain snatchers, local train robbers.

The dense population also demands the continuous and alert policing which inadvertently creates stress for the Maharashtra Police Force. The ever changing pattern of crime, the latest

technology being used by the high profile criminals and political pressure on the system also takes its toll.

This brings out the need of researching the occupational stress among Maharashtra police force and its impact on their personal and professional life. The objectives of the study are as following:

2. OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH STUDY

1. To Study the stress level of Maharashtra Police
2. To find out the causes of stress among Maharashtra Police
3. To study the impact of stress on their personnel and professional life
4. To suggest suitable measure to reduce the stress level on Maharashtra Police and its impact on their personnel and professional life

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is an arrangement of condition for collection and analysis of the data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure.

The study is descriptive in nature i.e., descriptive research. Descriptive research is concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or group. This includes surveys and fact-finding inquiries of different kinds. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; one can only report what has happened or what is happening. Thus, the research design in case of descriptive study is a comparative design throwing light on all the areas and must be prepared keeping the objectives of the study and the resources available. This study involves collection of data from police.

POPULATION SIZE

The universe of the study consists of police constable, officers' total number of 120. Out of the total population data could be collected from 100 persons.

DATA SOURCE

This study involves collection of primary data from the police officers, constables, PI. This survey method is used considering the size of the universe and time factor. Data are collected through structured Questionnaire. Questionnaire has been designed and personally administered.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "stress" as it is currently used was coined by HANS Selye in 1936, who defined it as "the non specific response of the body to any demand for change." One physician concluded in a 1951 issue of the British medical journal that, "Stress in addition to being itself, was also the cause of itself, and the result of itself. Stress was generally considered as being synonymous with distress and dictionaries defined it as, physical, mental or emotional strain or tension or a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.

The stress is defined by Palmer, 'occupational stress, 1989, as under "Stress is the psychological, physiological and behavioral response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands, which over a period of time, leads to ill health."

Health and safety executive, Raymond 2000, stress the Real Millennium Bug has defined that, "Stress is reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them. It crises when they worry that they cannot cope" about police personnel's safety.

The researcher examined the police officers' perceptions of their colleagues, the police organization, other criminal justice agencies, the media, the politicians, and the public toward the use of deadly force against criminals in situations known as encounters, portrayed as spontaneous shootouts between the police and hardened criminals. Interviews with 38 police officers of various ranks in Maharashtra, India, reveal that they perceive an overall sense of approval or complicity for shootouts, sometimes of dubious legality, which made accountability mechanisms more a paper exercise than in actually ensuring compliance with legal and ethical standards. Though the abuse of deadly force is not unique or limited to the police force reported in this study, the perception of police officers that there is general support for, or even apathy toward, shortcut methods to deal with alleged criminals is noteworthy and has implications for policing elsewhere (Belur, Jyoti, 2009).

The article reports on the impact of the Maharashtra terrorist attacks in November 2008 on the morale of the Maharashtra police force. It recounts that despite the existence of 42,000 police officers, they failed to stop the attacks of 10 terrorists equipped with assault rifles and grenades in the Taj Mahal Palace & Tower. Ratio of police to civilians in India is said to be 100,000 people to 125 police officers, according to the National Crime Record Bureau. Effects of the incident on the opinion regarding the police are also highlighted (Bellman and Eric, 2008).

The researcher done the empirical study of work attitude, role efficacy and stress experienced in a high reliability professional group was undertaken using a sample of 52 Indian Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) working in the Maharashtra Airport. Results showed that ATCs experienced role stress with regard to inter- role distance, role isolation, resource inadequacy, role erosion and role stagnation. ATCs maintained high confrontation or problem solving skills in their role followed by helping relationship, perceived integration with the job and managing well their inter- role linkages. Results further showed significant relationships between work attitude and role efficacy dimensions. Regression analysis within respective canonical variable sets revealed role stress being a significant predictor of attitude towards supervisors and management, while role efficacy dimensions (role making, role centering and role linking) showed significant explanatory power equally strongly with respect to attitude towards work, working conditions, co-workers, supervisors,

The researcher explored the working conditions of the street vendors in Maharashtra in relation to the concept of "decent work." The study highlights the vendors' working conditions, their social

security, and the collective bargaining by membership-based organizations aiming to provide them with a decent working life. The present research is based on mixed methods. The study is exploratory in nature, showing that the street vendors depend on moneylenders especially for social security purposes but also for their economic activity. The study shows that they are forced to borrow money at an exorbitant rate of interest (amounting to 5-10% per month), which in turn leads them to fall into a "debt-trap" situation. The current working hours of the vendors and the safety and security conditions in their workplace, together with the illegal activities of local authorities, are contributing to a deteriorating working environment and the deprivation of the workers (Saha, Debdulal, 2009).

5. DATA ANALYSIS

To identify the stress level among police constables, there were four ranks given which were supposed to be given to the statements. In total, six statements were given which can be identified as the stress. They were the interference in family life, lack of support from superiors, stagnation in the role, tension due to nature of work, lowering self esteem and lack of sleep which intensifies the stress.

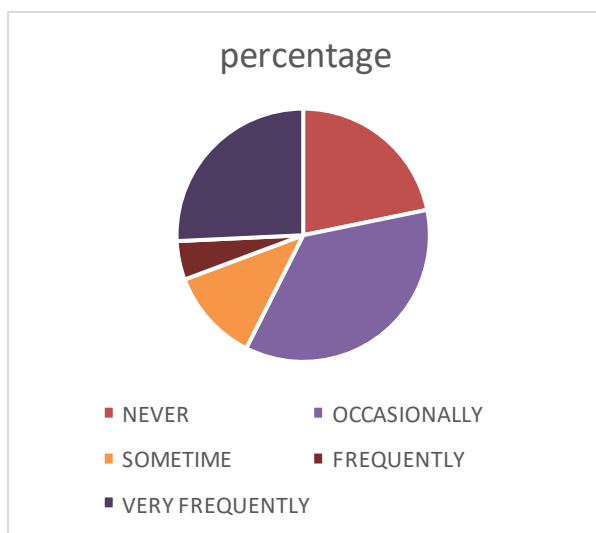
The analysis of the responses is summarized in following table:

Factors creating the stress among police constables and officers

TABLE NO:1

The job tends to interfere with my family life

SR.NO	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	NEVER OR RARELY	22	20.79%
2.	OCCASIONALLY	36	35.65%
3.	SOMETIMES	12	11.88%
4.	FREQUENTLY	5	4.9%
5.	VERY FREQUENTLY	26	25.74%
TOTAL		101	100%

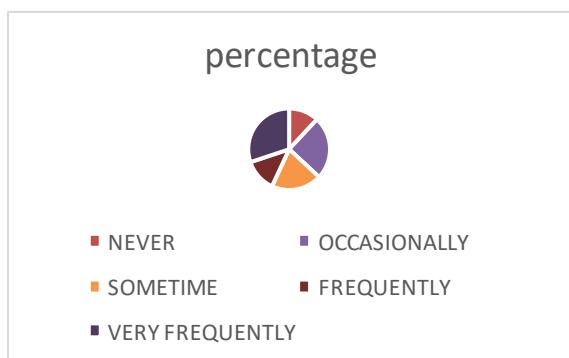


From the above table it is clear that 36% of the police employees have strongly agreed that their job interfere their family life, followed by 25.74% of the respondents who agreed that very frequently job affected their family life, 22% of the respondents have responded as never, 12% of the respondents sometimes and 5% of them said occasionally. Police officers said that they don't get holidays and during festivals they are on duty which affects their family and personnel life.

TABLE NO:2

I hardly get any support from my superiors.

SR.NO	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	NEVER OR RARELY	12	11.88%
2.	OCCASIONALLY	25	24.69%
3.	SOMETIMES	20	19.80%
4.	FREQUENTLY	13	12.87%
5.	VERY FREQUENTLY	30	29.70%
TOTAL		101	100

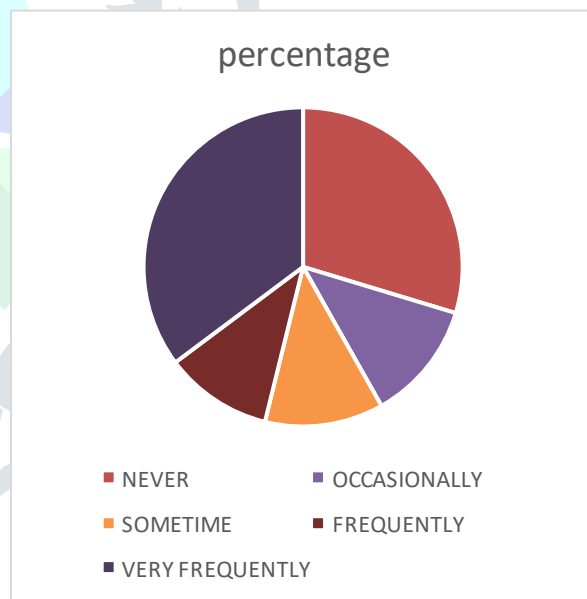


From the above table it is clear that 30 to 25% of the police have strongly agreed that they get support from their superiors, followed by 20% of the respondents who agreed sometimes. 12% of the respondents are said they never get support which causes stress among the constable and officers. In a highly demanding job like policing, support from superiors can be a valuable input in reducing stress.

TABLE NO:3

I feel stagnant in my role

SR.NO	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	NEVER OR RARELY	27	26.87%
2.	OCCASIONALLY	10	9.9%
3.	SOMETIMES	11	10.87%
4.	FREQUENTLY	10	9.9%
5.	VERY FREQUENTLY	32	31.68%
TOTAL		105	100



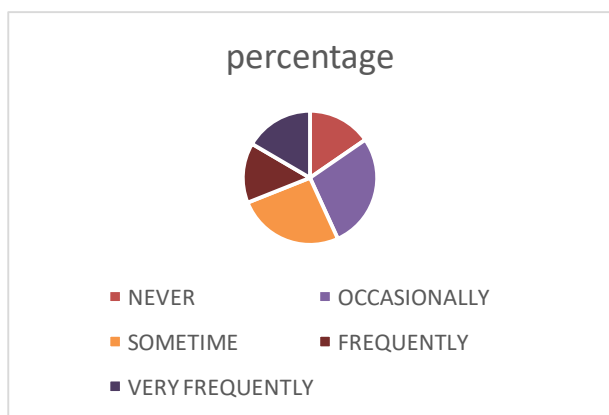
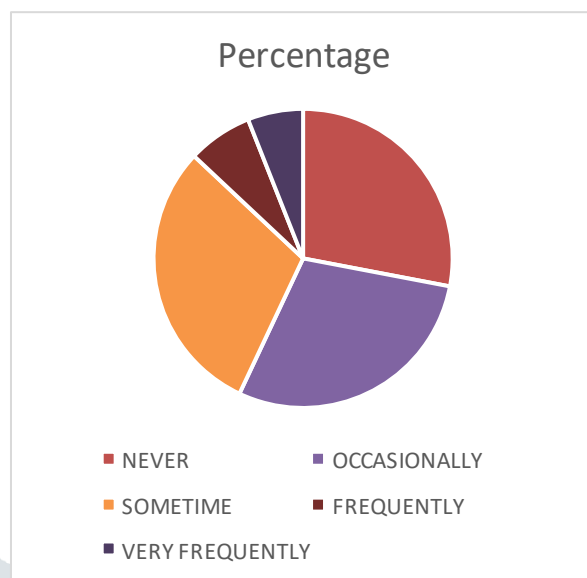
Whether 31.68% polices constable and officers are said they always feel stagnant in their role which causes stress among them. 27% of them feel they never feel stagnant in their role. Feeling stagnant reflects lack of growth potential and positive changes in the job.

TABLE NO:4

I often feel tensed because of the nature of my work.

SR.NO	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
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1.	NEVER OR RARELY	15	14.85%
2.	OCCASIONALLY	27	26.73%
3.	SOMETIMES	25	24.87%
4.	FREQUENTLY	14	13.86%
5.	VERY FREQUENTLY	16	15.84%
TOTAL		101	100



From the above table it is clear that 30% to 29% occasionally and sometime they feel that they do such thing which lowers their esteem. But 28% said that they don't do such thing which cause stress because of such thing which lower their esteem. Lowered self-esteem can be a major source of stress for any human being.

TABLE NO:6

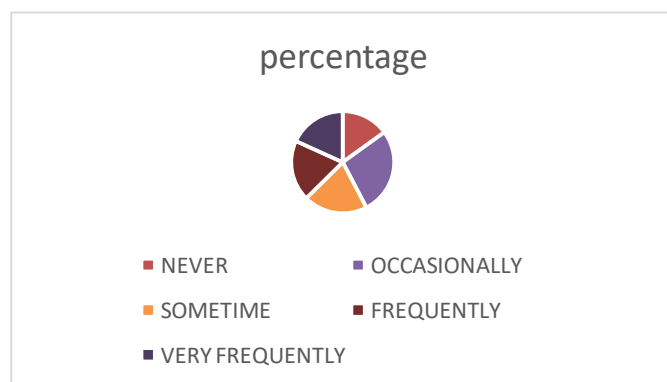
I cannot sleep because of the problems related to my work

From the above table it is clear that 27 to 25% of police officers feel they are tensed due to their work and 15% of them said they never feel tensed because of their nature of work. A high number of police employees have conceded to the fact that job is a major cause of stress in their lives. Most of these employees accept being stressed one time or other in their jobs.

TABLE NO:5

At times I have to do such things which lower my esteem.

SR.NO	Opinion	No. Respondents	Percentage
1.	NEVER OR RARELY	16	15.88%
2.	OCCASIONALLY	27	26.84%
3.	SOMETIMES	20	19.9%
4.	FREQUENTLY	19	18.89%
5.	VERY FREQUENTLY	18	17.88%
TOTAL		101	100



SR.NO	Opinion	No. Respondents	Percentage
1.	NEVER OR RARELY	28	27.84%
2.	OCCASIONALLY	29	28.87%
3.	SOMETIMES	30	29.88%
4.	FREQUENTLY	7	6.9%
5.	VERY FREQUENTLY	6	5.9%
TOTAL		101	100

From the above table it is clear that 27% to 30% police said that they cannot sleep because of problems related to their work, which increase the stress level. Most of police officer said it will tend to

create health issues and few of them 16% said they don't feel like that. Health issues from sleeplessness can range from drowsiness (which can be risky in a police job), headache, Blood Pressure, Diabetes etc.

6. CONCLUSION

In this research section, researcher analyzed the outcome of the research results which are based on primary and secondary data. During the research study, the researcher found the families of the police are generally not worried and they expect to have better accommodation/ quarters. The police are only asking for one requirement to be met and that is annual leave when asked or planned by the personnel. Most of policemen said that they don't get holidays during festivals, which tends to create family issue. The personnel are at times under severe stress due to leave constraints. The constraints are due to vacant a post, which causes uneven or unscheduled duty hours.

The role of police is definitely undergoing a drastic change in modern society. In the city like Mumbai in Maharashtra, it is becoming more challenging. The shifting of role from law and order keeping to community policing requires the basic change in the value system of police staff at police station level. It requires a desired change in the mindset of police staff, political leaders and public in general. The leadership at top level plays a significant role in bringing desirable reforms in police department by shaping a healthy work culture. Only recruiting more police is not sufficient. Effective training and motivation at lower level is must. Better human resource and human relationship management will remove the hindrances in creating healthy work culture. It was found that head constables have more stress than others like police naiks and police constables. There is more stress among male members than women police constables in some areas. The model was developed by the researcher to identify the stress in police department and the effects of stress on police employees.

7. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The suggestions and recommendations are drawn by the researchers on the basis of analysis of primary and secondary data. Review of literature also provided the inputs for suggestions and recommendations. The informal discussions with the staff at police station level and interviews with the Constables, Head Constables, Sub Inspector, and Inspectors also were taken into account while providing valuable suggestions and recommendations. Suggestions are provided in general and specifically in important areas of work culture at higher and lower level police force as well as on gender and designation basis.

Suggestions include the following that a policeman can do at individual level.

1. Time management
2. Good personal planning
3. Networking regular vacations
4. Enhanced self esteem and awareness
5. Positive thinking
6. Self development
7. Goal setting
8. Meditation
9. Holistic yoga exercises
10. Mind stilling practices

11. Medication
12. Other relaxation as individual stress coping mechanism

At organizational level, the following strategies may help.

1. Programme for spouses
2. Counselling
3. Job enrichment
4. Job rotation
5. Revamping of criminal justice system
6. Appreciation

Researchers have also suggested support systems like

1. Psychological screening of new entrants
2. Reassignment of workload
3. Increased employee involvement
5. Adequate career planning
6. Genuine concern for employee's welfare

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