

# BURNOUT AMONG PERSONNEL OF DIFFERENT FORCES

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**Abstract:** This study attempts to explore factors influencing Burnout among personal of different forces and evaluate applicability of the scale used for measuring Burnout. Structured interview schedules were used to collect first hand data from a sample of Chandigarh region of volunteer and section leaders (150) of Chandigarh Home Guard, Constable and Head Constable (150) of Chandigarh police and Firemen and Leading Firemen (150) of Fire & Emergency Service of Chandigarh region. The subjects were selected by using purposive method. The study recommends implementing commitment-based management approach and techniques.

**Keywords:** Burn out, home guard, constable, Chandigarh police.

## Introduction

Burn out is characterized by emotional exhaustion and negative attitudes and feelings toward one's co-workers and job role. Burn out is associated with job dissatisfaction, low commitment to the job and absenteeism. It can lead to a number of physical health concerns, including headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, muscle tension, hypertension, more susceptibility to colds and flu, and sleep disturbances. In fact, burn out has been characterized as diagnosable mental health disorder by the world health organization. Psychologists have identified a number of workplace factors that can lead to burnout, including: workload, control, reward, community, social support etc. Job burnout can negatively impact individual officers, the organization that employs the burned out officers, citizens with whom these officers directly interact, and the community more broadly.

The study determined associations that job stress, job involvement, job satisfaction, affective commitment and continuance commitment have with the three dimensions of burnout among Indian police officers. Burnout is a stress syndrome resulting from the individual's inability to deal with occupational stress. It mainly refers to an extreme state of psychological strain and depletion of energy resources arising from prolonged exposure to stressful situations that exceed the person's resources to cope, particularly stressors associated with human resource professions, although it may also develop in other occupational groups. Caring for others and care giving environments are generally considered to be the primary source of burnout syndrome. Human service workers and professionals especially who are highly conscientious are vulnerable to burnout because of the nature of their work

which is characterized by emotional contacts and which play a significant role in determining the extent of burnout (Van Dierendonck et al., 2001).

Burnout basically is a three dimensional syndrome of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization of others and perception of reduced Personal Accomplishment. The concept of burnout has received considerable attention from both systematic researchers as well as the news media. The use of the term burnout began to appear with some regularity in the 1970's in the United States, but the importance of burnout as a social problem was identified by both practitioners and social commentators long before it became a focus of systematic study of researchers. The term burnout was derived at first as non-scholarly "pop psychology" and this non academic origin was more of the liability than an advantage, but given the subsequent development of theoretical models and numerous empirical studies, there emerged a conceptualization of job burnout as a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job.

Job burnout is an integral, negative and psychological strain phenomenon, prevalent in psychosocial/human services as well as technical professionals, resulting from work stress (Pestonjee, 2000; Firth and Britton, 1989; Sonnentaget al., 1994). Pestonjee (2000, p. 25) defined burnout as, the end result of stress experienced but not properly coped with, resulting in symptoms of exhaustion, irritation, ineffectiveness, discounting of self and others, and problems of health (hypertension, ulcers and heart problems)." Further, burnout is a chronic process, involving exhaustion at physical, emotional and cognitive level, leading to reduced involvement in job, especially by individuals who are highly involved in their work (Sonnentaget al., 1994).

Savery (1988) explained three main aspects of burnout, viz., emotional exhaustion (general loss of feeling and concern, trust, interest and spirit), depersonalisation (detaching oneself from the situation by using both verbal and non verbal distancing techniques) and feeling of low personal accomplishment (dissonance between the new employee's goals and the veteran's accomplishments/failure to achieve expectations in the job). In simple words, job burnout is the result of prolonged (long-term) exposure to workplace stress (Caverley, 2005). Johnson (1991) suggested that stressed individuals appearing as coping well with stress and also being able to convince about it to themselves and others, may burnout in this process.

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Furthermore, burnout results in various individual and organisational consequences. Among individuals, it may lead to various psychological and physiological symptoms at different stages, viz., inefficiency, fatigue, sleep disturbances and job dissatisfaction at an initial stage; chronic exhaustion, physical illness, anger and depression at a further stage; severe health problems like peptic ulcers, tension, headaches, chronic backaches, high blood pressure, difficulty in sleeping at an advanced stage; and finally, to exhaustion of individual's adaptation energy marking an end to his professional career at the extreme stage (Pestonjee, 2000).

Storlie (1979) painted a vivid picture of burnout as it occurs in the nurse: burnout is a highly personal happening inside the nurse - the literal collapse of the human spirit. It would be more useful and certainly more compassionate to ask what goes on in a professional nurse that transforms caring into apathy, involvement into distance, openness into self-protection, and trust into suspicion. It has been argued that professions such as police or forces require high levels of commitment and interpersonal involvement and are most subject to burnout. Since burnout is often linked to stress it has also been observed that job of police and other forces in high stress areas experience more burnout. Burnout is described as a state of depletion of a person's resources and energy resulting in apathetic and impassive behaviour towards others, having dysfunctional repercussions on the individual and adverse effects on organizations. The phenomenon of Burnout, a debilitating stress syndrome, was observed and studied in the US and the European countries in the 1980's when these countries faced globalization. India has confronted globalization and liberalization since the 1990's, the effects of which have been experienced by organizations and executives more severely during the past decade.

Freuden berger (1977) described Burnout as physical and emotional exhaustion resulting from excessive demands on energy, strength or resources. He said that when frustration, tension or anxiety persist or increase, stress develops into a syndrome labeled as Burnout. He also noted that sometimes burnt-out people do not see themselves as cynical and depressed. They find fault with everything and everyone around them, complaining about the organization and reacting critically to whatever is suggested by others. Burnout is considered a problem that is found primarily with the helping professions and the major reason for this is the intense involvement with people that is characteristic of these jobs (Paine, 1984).

According to Golembiewski et al. (1996), Burnout has been found to have dysfunctional repercussions on the individual and adverse effects on the organization. It may reflect in a continued dissatisfaction with the situation, ranging from mild boredom to severe depression, irritation, exhaustion, and physical ailment. The experience of too much pressure and too few sources of satisfaction develops into a feeling of exhaustion leading to Burnout.

## Materials and Methods

To obtain the required data with regard to personal information, Occupational stress, Physical activity status and burnout 450 subjects from Chandigarh region of volunteer and section leaders (150) of Chandigarh Home Guard, Constable and Head Constable (150) of Chandigarh police and Firemen and Leading Firemen (150) of Fire & Emergency Service of Chandigarh region. The subjects were selected by using purposive sampling method. To administer the tests selected subject good rapport was formed and were ensured that the collection information will be kept secret and for research purpose only in order to get correct information. Researcher passed the instruction in the group and clarified the doubt of subjects. Bilingual questionnaires were used to cater the needs of subjects. The questionnaires were distributed among the subjects and were collected after they filled it.

### Job Burnout Scale (JBS) Dr. Zaki Akhtar (2016)

The scale comprises of 30 items, each to be rated on the five point scale. Out of 30 items 28 are positive and remaining 2 are negative. The items related to almost all relevant components of the job. The minimum and maximum range of scores is 30 to 150 respectively.

### Reliability

The reliability of the scale was determined by two ways: (i) Test and retest (ii) split half method.

- Test- Retest Method: the scale was administered on a randomly selected sample of 150 personals (75 males +75 females). This sample was re-administered the scale after a gap of 14 days. The correlation of co- efficiencies found was  $r= 0.74$  which is significant at 0 .01 level of significance.
- Split half (odd-even): correlation by spearman Brown Prophecy Formula was +0.76 which significant at .01 level of significance.

### Validity

The validity of the scale was checked by concurrent validity method. It was determined by applying Job-Burn out Inventory of Maslach& Jackson (1986). Both these scale were administered on sample of 150 personnel. The correlation found was +0.69 which significant at .01 level of significance.

### Scoring

Two varying scoring patters had to be adopted as the questionnaire comprised of both positive and negative statements. The guidelines to score the responses for two categories of statements are listed in the table below:

### Types of Statements

Sr.No	Types of Statements	Item wise Serial No.	Total
1	Positive	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,18,19,20,21,22,23,25,26,27,28,29,30.	28
2	Negative	17,24	02
Grand Total of Statements			30

Categories of responses	Scores for positive statements	Scores for negative statements
Always	5	1
Often	4	2
Undecided	3	3
Sometimes	2	4
Never	1	5

### Results

Most of us can relate to feeling stressed about some aspect of our job from time to time, but when we feel stressed at work all the time, it is termed as job burnout. Job burnout is the result of long-term job stress that wasn't recognized and addressed before it spun out of control. It involves mental, emotional, or physical exhaustion, frequently accompanied by an overwhelming sense of hopelessness. Burn out is characterized by emotional exhaustion and negative attitudes and feelings toward one's co-workers and job role. Burn out is associated with job dissatisfaction, low commitment to the job and absenteeism.

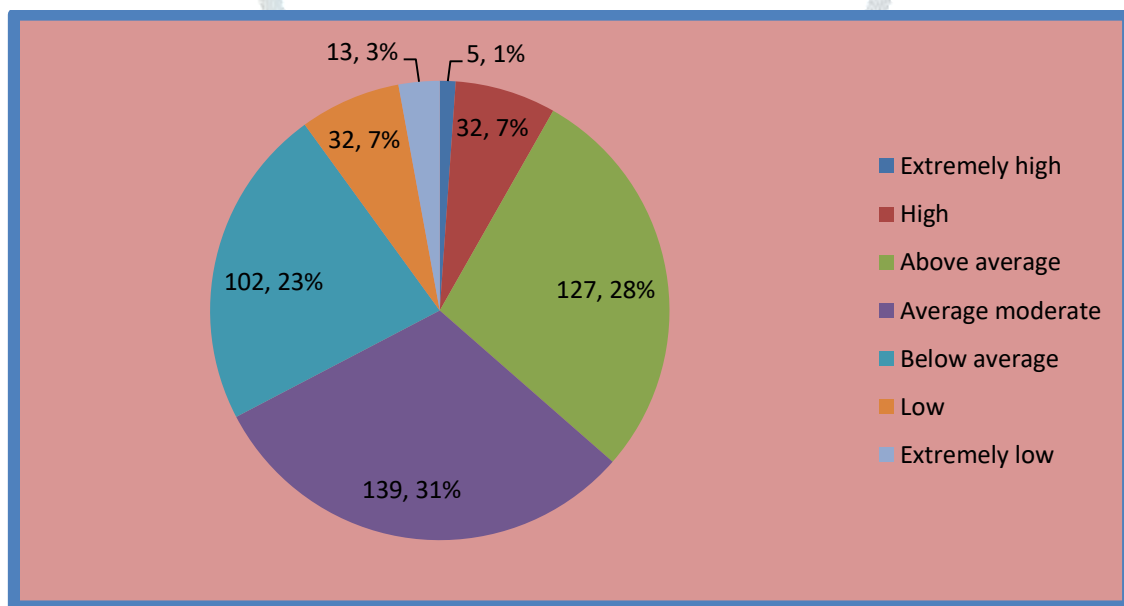
**Table 1**

**Descriptive statistics related to Burnout score among various departments**

Department	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Chandigarh Home-guard	37.0	130.0	86.5	19.6
Chandigarh Police	37.0	133.0	82.0	29.1
Fire & Emergency Service	36.0	135.0	79.2	17.7

Comparison of burnout score in various department in Table 14 shows maximum burnout in home-guard having 86.5 average score compared to Chandigarh police (Mean 82.0) and Fire & Emergency Service (Mean 79.2). On the contrary maximum score (130) was least in home-guard.

**Figure 1**  
**Burnout level among respondents**



Distribution of 450 respondents according to their job burnout level has been shown in Figure 7. The proportion wise division shows most of the respondents had above average 127 (28.0%), average moderate 139 (31.0%) and below average 102 (23.0%) job burnout. Only 5 (1.0%) had extremely high and minimal 13 (3.0%) had extremely low burnout from their job.

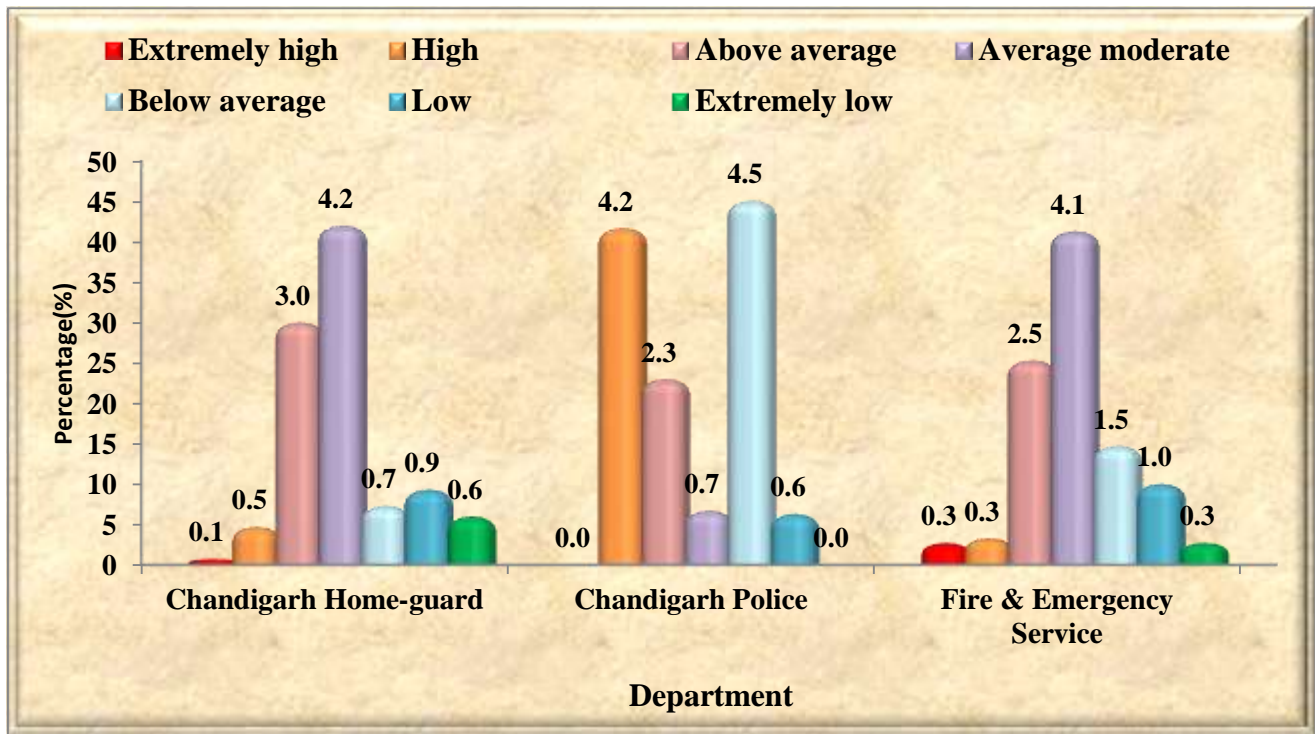
**Table 2**  
**Frequency distribution of burnout level among various departments**

Burnout level	N	Chandigarh Home-guard (n-150)		Chandigarh Police (n-150)		Fire & Emergency Service(n-150)		X <sup>2</sup>	df	p-value
		F	%	F	%	F	%			
Extremely high	5	1	0.7	0	0.0	4	2.7	125.691 <sup>#</sup>	12	0.0001*
High	32	7	4.7	20	13.3	5	3.3			
Above average	127	45	30.0	44	29.4	38	25.3			
Average moderate	139	63	42.0	14	9.3	62	41.3			
Below average	102	11	7.3	69	46.0	22	14.7			
Low	32	14	9.3	3	2.0	15	10.0			
Extremely low	13	9	6.0	0	0.0	4	2.7			

# - Fisher's exact test \* Significant (p<0.05)

Highly significant (X<sup>2</sup> -125.691, p-0001(p<0.05)) difference was observed in job burnout level of employees from three department according to their proportion. In Chandigarh police only 3(2.0%) personnel had low or extremely low burnout compared to 23(15.3%) in Chandigarh home-guard and 19(12.7%) in Fire & emergency service. Burnout in police was quite high as 20(13.3%) police personnel had high to extremely high level of burnout in comparison to 8(5.4%) in home-guard and 9(6.0%) in Fire and emergency service. In Chandigarh police maximum 69(46.0%) had below average burnout level, whereas majority in home-guard 63(42.0%) and 62(41.3%) from Fire & emergency service had average moderate burnout. The proportion of above average burnout level was almost same in all three departments i.e. 44(29.4%) in police, 45(30.0%) in home-guard and 38(25.3%) in Fire and emergency service department. The burnout level among employees of various departments has been depicted in the attached graph in Figure 8.

**Figure 2**  
Distribution of respondents from various departments according to burnout level



**Table 3**  
Mean comparison of burnout score in various departments

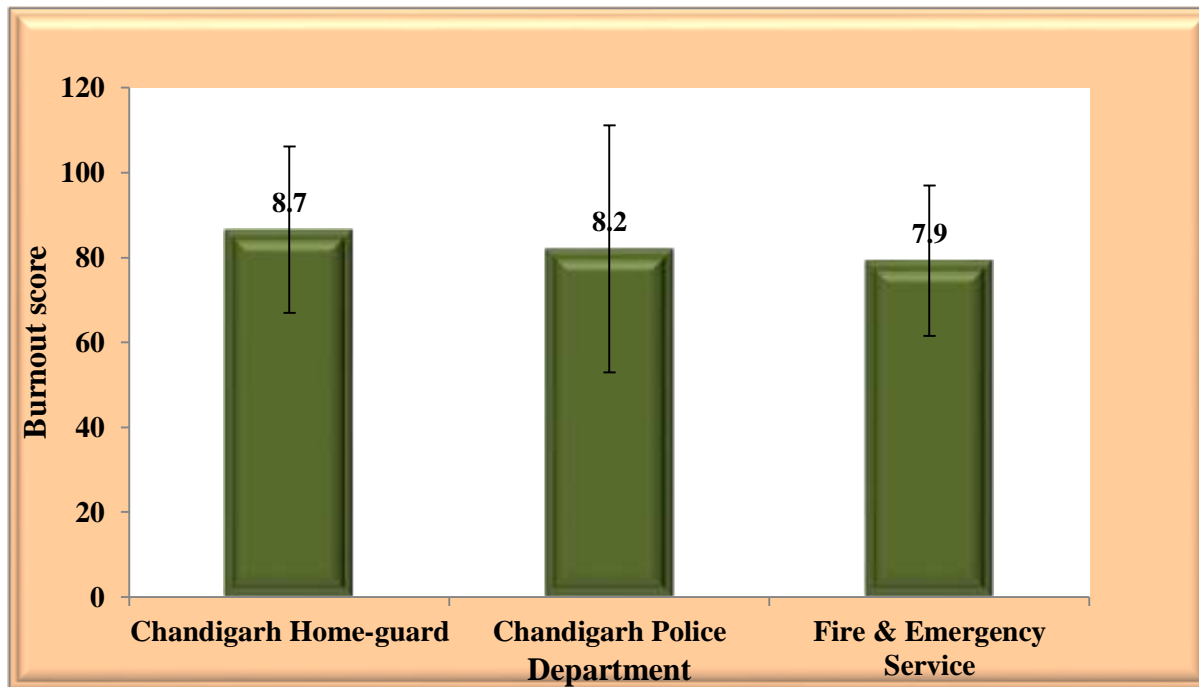
Department	N	Mean	Standard deviation	F	p-value
Chandigarh Home-guard	150	86.5	19.6	4.011	0.019*
Chandigarh Police	150	82.0	29.1		
Fire & Emergency Service	150	79.2	17.7		

\* Significant (p<0.05)

From comparison on the basis of mean job burnout score in Table 16, it can be derived that home-guards had maximum with 86.5 average score and Fire & emergency service had least mean 79.2 burnout score and difference was found to be significant(F 4.011, p-value 0.019(p<0.05)).

**Figure 3**  
Distribution of mean job burnout score in different departments





It can be seen in Figure 9 that mean job burnout score was maximum(86.5) in Chandigarh home-guard, followed by Chandigarh police(mean 82.0) and least(mean 79.2) among respondents from Fire & Emergency service. More Std. deviation (29.1) in police advocated variation in score.

**Table 4**

**Multiple comparison of mean job burnout score among respondents from various departments**

Department	Mean difference	Std. Error	p-value
Chandigarh Home-guard vs. Chandigarh Police	-4.5	2.6	0.244
Chandigarh Home-guard vs. Fire & Emergency Service	7.3	2.6	0.016*
Chandigarh Police vs. Fire & Emergency Service	2.7	2.6	0.871
* Significant( $p < 0.05$ )			

Multiple comparison of job burnout score between department in Table 17 shows that significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) mean difference was observed between home guard and Fire & Emergency service. Mean difference of Chandigarh police with home-guard and Fire & Emergency service department was statistically non-significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

## Conclusions

Significantly majority of employees reported below average to above average job burnout among 450 respondents. Insignificant proportion in Chandigarh police compared to negligible proportion in home-guard and Fire & emergency service had extremely low to low burnout. The proportion of below to above average burnout level was almost same in all three departments. Home-guards had maximum and Fire & emergency service had least mean burnout score. Frequency distribution of job burnout among 450 respondents shows mostly respondents reported above average 127(28.0%), average moderate 139(31.0%) and below average 102(23.0%) job burnout. Only 5(1.0%) had extremely high and minimal 13(3.0%) had extremely low burnout from their job. Raw burnout score of employees varied from 36 to 135 in the range of 30-150. Employees of all three departments recorded below average burnout with Mean  $82.6 \pm 22.9$  score.

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