



STRESS ON POLICE PERSONNEL IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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Abstract

A police department is both a professional and military organization, and these two aspects oppose each other. As a professional, he is considered to be an expert in his field and is expected to use his expertise for the good of his public. He has much discretion in how he serves the people who call upon him. However, the dangers and complexities of the work require a military structure of the organization and a military leaning in the training. Although some are actually educated, all police Personnel are well trained. Policies, regulations, and procedures cover every facet of police work. Everything is expected to be done by the book with substantial repercussions, including civil and criminal liability, for varying from the expectations of operating procedures. Often the facts of a situation require a course of action that does not follow procedures. If the police personnel follows procedures exactly, he knows he won't fully help the public, and the public will think police personnel is shirking his responsibility. If the personnel follows his own judgment, they are taking a risk. The community and department expect Personnel to use judgment, but when they do, there is a danger they will be disciplined; another unnatural no-win situation engendering chronic stress.

Key Words: Police, Stress.

Introduction: Police Stress

Stress plays a part in the lives of everyone. Some stress is not only inevitable, it can be good. For example, the physical stress of “working out” improves your cardiovascular system, and feeling pressure that causes you to study harder for an exam can improve your score. Police stress, however, refers to the negative pressures related to police work. Police Personnel are not super humans. According to Gail Goolkasian and others, research shows that they are affected by their daily exposure to human indecency and pain; that dealing with a suspicious and sometimes hostile public takes its toll on them; and that the shift changes, the long periods of boredom, and the ever-present danger that are part of police work do cause serious job stress.

Reasons for Police Stress

Police stress arises from several features of police work. Alterations in body rhythms from monthly shift rotation, for example, reduce productivity. The change from a day to a swing, or graveyard, shift not only requires biological adjustment but also complicates Personnel’ personal lives. Role conflicts between the job—serving the public, enforcing the law, and upholding ethical standards—and personal responsibilities as spouse, parent, and friend act as stressors. Other stressors in police work include:

1. Threats to Personnel’ health and safety
2. Boredom, alternating with the need for sudden alertness and mobilized energy.
3. Responsibility for protecting the lives of others.
4. Continual exposure to people in pain or distress.
5. The need to control emotions even when provoked.
6. The presence of a gun, even during off-duty hours.
7. The fragmented nature of police work, with only rare opportunities to follow cases to Conclusion or even to obtain feedback or follow-up information.

Origin of Stress

The origin of ‘stress’ is ambiguous. It is a common term which began life in the 14th century. It meant the experience of physical hardship, starvation, torture and pain. These days, however, the term revolves around the medieval definition, in which ‘stresses simply meant ‘hardship’. The recent scientific developments inform us



that 'stress' is actually good for us. Stress is derived from the Latin word *strangere*, meaning to draw tight, and was used in the 17th century to describe hardships or affliction. During the late 18th century stress denoted 'force, pressure, strain or strong effort', referring primarily to an individual or to an individual's organs or mental powers. Stress is a physiological and psychological imbalance. Stress arises when individuals perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their well being. Stress results from an imbalance between demands and resources. Stress is the body's way of reacting to any situation and it can have serious repercussions on an individual's life. Yet, people fail to realize the importance of stress management in their lives. Effective managers can stay in control of life, without panicking even under stressful situations. They handle stress by planning work, taking regular breaks, and rejuvenating them.

Definition of Stress

The word 'stress' is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "a state of affair involving demand on physical or mental energy". It is a condition or circumstances (not always adverse), which can disturb the normal physical and mental health of an individual.

Hans Selye, (1936) the father of stress has defined stress as a "non-specific response of the body to any demands made upon it". Stress is a psychological reaction to problems, threats, opportunities and challenges faced by an individual when the outcome is both important and uncertain. Everyone experiences stress on a regular basis.

Stress Positive, Negative or Neutral

Hans Selye (1936) the father of stress said that stress is the spice of life and absence of stress is death. Without stress, there would be no life. Stress is not always necessarily harmful. He says, "Stress is not necessarily something bad. It all depends on how you take it" Stress can be therefore negative, positive or neutral.

As a positive influence, stress can help and compel us to action. It can result in a new awareness and an exciting new perspective.

As a negative influence, it can result in feelings of distress, rejection anger and depression which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, stomach upsets, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressures, heart disease and stroke.

Stress is a fact of life. But too much stress can breakdown a person's physical, mental and emotional health. Planning can help people to manage stress in their lives. They must begin to make choices that support their values and develop a personal plan to take charge of their lives.

Stress is something that occurs all the time and affects everyone, one way or another, at least some time. Stress can be a good thing. It can be a source of motivation to help get something done or help one to react quickly to a potentially dangerous situation.

Types of Stress

Prof. D.M. Pertonjee (1999) a well known expert on stress research, classified stress into four main categories that people experience. There are four main types of stress that people experience.

Eustress: Eustress or positive stress occurs when your level of stress is high enough to motivate you to move into action to get things accomplished.

Distress: Distress or negative stress occurs when your level of stress is either too high or too low. It causes physical psychological behavioral problems. Distress creates feelings of discomfort and unfamiliarity. There are two types of distress namely.

Acute stress is usually for a short time and may be due to work pressure, meeting deadlines, pressure or minor accident, over exertion, increased physical activity, fearing something you misplaced, or similar things. Symptoms of this type of tension are headache, back pain, stomach problems, rapid heartbeat, muscle aches or body pain. Acute stress can crop up in anyone's life and it is highly treatable and manageable.



Chronic stress is prolonged stress that exists for weeks, months or even years. Someone who is constantly relocating or changing jobs may experience distress. While acute stress can be thrilling and exciting chronic stress is not. This is the grinding stress that wears people away day after day, year after year. Chronic stress destroys bodies, minds and lives. It's the stress of poverty of dysfunctional families of being trapped in an unhappy marriage or in a depressed job or career.

The worst aspect of chronic stress is that people get used to it. They forget it is there. People are immediately aware of acute stress because it is new. They ignore chronic stress because it is old, familiar and sometimes almost comfortable.

Hyper stress: Hyper stress occurs when an individual is pushed beyond what he or she can handle. Hyper stress results from being overloaded or over worked. When someone is hyper stressed even little things can trigger a strong emotional response.

Hypostress: Hypo stress is the opposite to hyper stress. Hypo stress occurs when an individual is bored or unchallenged. People who experience hypo stress are often restless and uninspired.

Symptoms of Stress

For convenience of the study, the various symptoms of stress can be classified into three broad categories viz.

1. Psychosomatic
2. Psychological and
3. Behavioural

Psychosomatic

"Psychosomatic" combines the two words, namely, "psyche" which means mind and 'soma' which means body. The psychosomatic symptoms of stress are physical for which the cause are mental. The physical symptoms are like ulcer, headaches, chest pains, constipation, bronchial asthma etc.

Psychological

Stress also manifests in various forms of emotional disorders. Researchers have found that stress gets its reflection in the form of anxiety, depression, helplessness, hopelessness and anger.

Behavioural

There is a general agreement that a high degree of job stress drives people adopt certain easily, visible behavioural symptoms such as sleeplessness, excessive drinking, smoking, absenteeism, obesity.

Stress puts police Personnel at increased risk for:

1. High blood pressure
2. Heart problems
3. Insomnia
4. Suicide
5. Post-traumatic stress disorder
6. Depression
7. Anxiety disorders
8. Infection caused by immune dysfunction

Review of Literature

Kohan and Mazmanian (2003) assessed 1999 Canadian police officers' perceptions of daily work experiences and the nature of their associations with burnout and pro-organizational behaviour. It was concluded that uplifting organizational experiences were appraised as being more uplifting than operational ones, regardless of the type of work officers performed. **Margaret Francis (2007)** in her empirical study has made comments on "**Stress Personality Relationship**" Stress had been a noted problem among students for it evokes negative thoughts and feeling in a person. There has been a study of how personality influences stress which led to the finding that significant differences exist between low and high categories of stress. Low extraversion, high



anxiety, etc., leads to higher stress. Thus study proves that personality factors have an impact on stress. 16 PF Personality Test and perceived stress scales were used as a guidance and support to publish their research. **Niharika Gaur (2008)** has inferred his observations after he had made a study on “**Stress, Social support, Job Attitudes and Job Outcome across gender**” among 240 information systems professional. He emphasizes a significant difference between male and female professionals on stress and on social support. His finding led to conclude that Men have higher job satisfaction, and commitment than Female professionals, but Female professionals have higher turn over intention. **Max Kashefi (2009)** refers to the above title “**Job satisfaction and / or Job stress**”. Many scholars in sociology and psychology have in the last three decades paid attention to the psychological consequences of working in high performance, work organization. This has specially lead to specifically the issues of job stress and job satisfaction. The findings reveal the raised job satisfaction as well as the increasing job stress due to the adoption of internalization strategy. The reason for job stress is because of the internalization strategy that speeds up work pace, develops conflicting demands and intensifies conflicts between work and family.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the personnel and organizational details of police personnel in Andhra Pradesh.
2. To measure the prevailing job stress among the police personnel and the influence of work hazards, conflict at work, job requirements and work load and opportunity on stress among the police personnel.
3. To analyze the coping strategies and stress management of employees in Andhra Pradesh police department.
4. To examine effectiveness of stress and stress management of individual police employees as well as the organization.
5. To find the influence of personal and organizational details of police personnel on the causes of the stress, stress management and organizational effectiveness.

Research Methodology

The study is conducted using both analytical and descriptive type of methodology. The study primarily depends on primary and secondary data. This study is based on both analytical and descriptive methodology and it depends upon primary data as well as secondary data. The Survey is conducted among the Police in Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh hosts a number of Police stations making the study realistic and meaningful. The city consists of top, medium and operational level as well. The primary data is collected through a well structured questionnaire more appropriate and suitable to collect responses from police personnel in Andhra Pradesh. The Questionnaire consists of four parts namely, socio – economic profile of respondents, organisational factors like work environment, social environment causing stress among the police personnel. The third part consists of impact of stress and fourth part aims at ascertaining measures of stress management. After the review of national and international literature the research is able to use appropriate scales Likert’s - 5 point scale where ranges from strongly agree and strongly disagree. Besides this standard scale the research particularly used the 5 points scales like Rarely, Occasionally, Sometimes, Farley often and Very often. The questionnaire used comprises both optional type and Statements in Likert’s 5 point scale. The responses of these sections are obtained from the employees of Andhra Police in the 5 point scale, which ranges from 5 – Strongly agree 4 – Agree 3 – Neutral 2 – Disagree 1 – Strongly Disagree

Secondary Data

The research collected the secondary data from Journals, Magazines, Publications, Reports, Books, Dailies, Periodicals, Articles, Research Papers, Websites, Company Publications, Manuals and Booklets

Data Analysis

1. The frequently distribution and percentage analysis are used to describe the primary data.
2. The parametric ‘t’ test is used to exactly identify the opinion of the police personnel regarding causes effects and management of stress.



3. Factor analysis by principal component method is found more appropriate to determine the predominant factors causing stress among the police personnel.
4. K–Means cluster analysis is used to classify the respondents based on the perception towards stress in the department.
5. The non–parametric chi–square analysis is exploited to find the association between clusters, organizational and demographic profile of the respondents.
6. On way analysis of variants is found suitable to measure the influence of independent variables on dependent variables.
7. The multiple regression analysis is used to find the influence of factors causing stress and stress management.

Findings

The police department is facing more work pressure due to time constraints but the employees are paid less salary which results to restless in work and health problems. The police employees accept that there prevails professional jealousy in their department but they have mutual trust, optimistic cooperation, nepotism and favoritism among themselves. The stress in job of the police employees results to satisfaction /dissatisfaction in job. This in turn results to professional jealousy, noncooperation and free hand form colleagues that gives rise to nepotism and favoritism, health setback and restlessness in job.

The police employees in work influences them to adopt entertainment as stress managing strategy as they face unsafe environment, workplace anxiety, strainful family life, Non-cooperation , free hand (Non-Interference) , nepotism and favoritism from colleagues results to health setback, restlessness in work .

More work pressure from the higher officials creates restless in work, unsafe environment, workplace anxiety, and strainful family life of the police personnel. The monthly income received is not sufficient for the risk taken in life. Therefore in order to cope up stress the employees adopt optimistic approach.

Frequent deviation from work, authoritarian attitude of superiors, and work pressure/time constraint in work place creates restless, unsafe environment, professional jealousy resulting to health setback of the employees that enable them to take adequate rest to reduce stress in them.

More stress among the police employees in their job helps them to adopt temporary relaxation techniques to reduce health problems and regain energy to concentrate in their job.

The authoritarian attitude of superiors is the main cause expressed by the police employees that creates stress in their job and makes them adopt diversion for work as a stress coping mechanism Deviation of work among the employees, non-cooperation from colleagues and higher superiors creates unsafe environment in job and ill health resulting them to adopt Decentralization methods as a stress technique.

Suggestions

Police employees experience frequent and ongoing stressors in their work. While these stressors are inherent and accepted by the police personnel, they need not necessarily lead to burnout or other psychological problems, marital problems, anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress disorder.

The working conditions of law enforcement officers are not likely to change given the realities of the current economy. But there are things that officers can do to control it. For example, officers can control how they choose to react to stressful incidents and must acknowledge that fatigue plays a direct role on personal stress levels. Officers will react as they have been trained when they are properly rested and alert.

It is the responsibility of elected officials and senior law enforcement officers to bring reasonable balance through policies that are supported by research. Till recent studies have proved that police culture supports the mentality that working more is better for your career, despite the fact that chronic fatigue causes serious performance and health issues.



Stress cannot be taken out of police work but it can be recognized and by providing help to the police personnel and their family, stress caused by the organization itself can be reduced.

The department must create a non-punitive atmosphere and communicate four clear messages: “1) Seeking help will not result in job termination or punitive action. 2) All information will be respected and kept confidential. 3) Other ways exist for dealing with the situation; no matter how hopeless it seems at the time. 4) Someone is available to help them deal with their problems.”

The police employees should avoid bringing too many personal issues to the attention of co-workers as it will cause them to spend too much time talking about the problems to others. This in turn will reduce the productive working environment.

The stress in police work can be recognized by helping the officers in three areas. First, they can provide help to individual officers. Second, family life can be helped. Third, the stress caused by the police organization itself can be reduced.

Stress managing techniques programs conducted on individual’s police personnel often help reduce departmental stress. Care should be taken from the top levels by having a psychologist in the department.

The police department needs to have policies for transferring the police personnel temporarily for reducing stress in job. The police personnel should be taught about the symptoms and effects of job stress. Proactive training helps ward off stress when officers encounter it.

Family life which is the one of the major responsible of every police personnel can be helped in several ways. Counseling through the psychologist should be available for family members of the police personnel. Orientation seminars for spouses will let them learn about the department first hand. Appreciation and awards for best works should be conducted for motivating the police personnel and their family members that give them a chance to sit down in a congenial atmosphere with the people who appreciate them.

Poor communication causes stress. The department can improve by having a consultant design for a complete system of communication. A simple well-written newsletter for information, not propaganda, bridges the communication gap. In short, the police department needs to remove its own problems before pointing at individual police personnel and officers and putting all the blame on them.

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