

Job Stress of Police Personnel in Tripura : An Analytical Study



Medical Science

KEYWORDS : Job stress, Police stress.

* **Santanu Ghosh**

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Tripura Medical College Agartala & Dr. BRAM Teaching Hospital, Agartala. * Corresponding Author

Ganajit Debbarma

Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Tripura Medical College & Dr. BRAM Teaching Hospital, Agartala.

Epsita Ghosh

Post Graduate Trainee, Department of Endodontics, Regional Dental College, Guwahati.

Anjana Bhattacharjee

Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Tripura University.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The job of Police is psychologically stressful which is filled with danger, high demands, and perplexity. The Police encounter human misery and death exposure.

Aims: To assess job stress by police personnel among Constables and Officers of Tripura Police.

Methodology: Community study done in police stations of West District of Tripura, Samples recruited from among the police personnel of different rank of Tripura Police by Systemic random sampling. Sample Size: Group A (Constable=83) & Group B (Officers=33). Inclusion criteria: Policeman in service ≥ 3 years, age ≥ 21 years, with minimum primary school educated. Exclusion criteria: who is unable to comprehend study questionnaire, on leave, exclusively doing clerical job, who are found inebriated. Self-reported questionnaire evaluated.

Tools: Police specific Stress Questionnaire, measures of chronic job stressors.

Results & Conclusion: 1/4th of constables have significantly stressed and 2/3rd of officers are significantly stressed. Positive linear relationship exists between age and stress in both the groups. Tenure of work has positive linear relationship only in officers. Officers are more stressed than constables. Bellow secondary constables are more stressed & Graduate officers are more stressed. No relationship exists between education and stress level. Mean score of neglected family life, job boredom, and quantitative work overload score is more in officers group and noxious physical environment, communication quality and praise is more in constables.

Introduction:

Stress is the mental, physical and emotional reactions one experiences as a result of demands of one's life. The most commonly accepted definition of stress according to Richard S Lazarus is that **stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize**1.

The job of police is psychologically stressful which is filled with danger, high demands, and equivocalness in work. It may encounter human misery and death exposure. The sources of psychological stress in police personnel in the Police work itself. Officers often experience conflict, for example, attempting to apprehend a criminal yet ensuring that none of his or her rights are abridged. Shift work is disruptive to the personal lives of most police officers which brings stress. The police profession contains many elements of danger that affect officers in both obvious and subtle ways. The inability to resolve completely people's problems confronts the police officer daily which invites sense of uselessness. Police personnel are constantly exposed to the inequities and brutalities of life. Such experience must take its emotional toll on even the well-adjusted individuals. At most any time a quick response to a particular condition is required, and such a response is jolting to the officer's physical and mental state. The seriousness of the issues and consequences of police work is both physically and mentally demanding. The source of stress may be the criminal justice system practices and characteristics like officers are alarmed by the habitual relapse rate of criminals who seem to enjoy freedom rather than jailed. Many court decisions are viewed by officers as unfairly increasing the difficulty of police work. Officers may find the adversary system difficult to adjust to, particularly when their testimony is challenged. Delays, continuances, and inconvenient scheduling make courtroom appearances a frustrating experience2.

The effects of work-related stress on law enforcement officers' family members have been recognized for many years. In 1975,

the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office established an eight-week program for spouses of recruits; in 1978, Arthur and Elaine Neiderhoffer published *The Police Family: from Station House to Ranch House*, which examined many of the difficulties faced by spouses (primarily wives) and children of police officers. In recent years, the law enforcement family has received increasing attention. Congress held hearings in 1991 on stress-related problems among officers' families, and the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act included legislation requiring additional support for officers' families2.

Juniper B et al (2010) worked on a new approach to evaluating the well-being of police at Cranfield University with a aim to construct an instrument that measures the work-related well-being of officers and staff within a police force. The nine dimensions extended beyond conventional stress measures and may offer a practical alternative way of assessing the overall well-being status of an entire force using a systematic item selection framework3.

A study on intimate Partner Violence within Law Enforcement Families by Anderson AS & Lo CC (2010) shows how exposure to stressful events on the job affects law enforcement employees' physical aggression toward domestic partners, evaluating the role of negative emotions and authoritarian spill over in mediating the impact of such task-related stress. Significant positive effects on physical aggression toward an intimate partner were found for variables measuring authoritarian spillover and negative emotions4.

Due to the nature of the job they perform, police officers are under severe stress; therefore, to make a study on this respective profession would certainly reveal valuable results for other professions.

Research Methodology

Aims & Objectives: To assess job stress by various police per-

sonnel (as per ranks) in Tripura.

Sample:

The sample has been selected purposively from the police personnel of different ranks of Tripura Police working in West district of Tripura, India who fulfils the inclusion criteria. The selection of samples is based on stratification.

Stratification: Stratification has been done based on positions or ranks of the subjects in to two strata: Constables & Head Constables as one group and assistant Sub-inspectors, sub-inspectors, Inspectors, as another group.

Procedure for sample collection:

Ethical Permission was taken from the institutional ethical committee of Tripura Medical College following Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guideline. Throughout the entire procedure, Purposive sampling technique for sample selection has been applied. The complete questionnaire consisting of brief introduction addressed to the participant, personal data sheet & measures of all variables in the study has been used for the purpose of data collection. The questionnaire has been prepared from the scales mentioned in the chapter tools used in assessment. The questionnaire is also prepared in Bengali language. The validity of the translated version was done by translating it by 2 persons and then back translation in to English. A pilot study was done on 10 policemen who were not included in the study sample. Instruction has been given in detail for each particular measure. The subjects have been instructed to "Read instructions carefully & answer accordingly. Please do not have any item unanswered". The policemen were given the questionnaire depending upon their choice of language (English/Bengali). In the next meeting they return the filled up questionnaire.

Inclusion criteria: 1) Policeman in service ≥3 years at the time of the study. 2) Police personal >18 years of age. 3) Police personnel of either sex irrespective of marital status. 4) Police personnel with qualification of at least primary school. **Exclusion criteria:** 1) Police personnel who is unable to comprehend the study questionnaire. 2) Subjects who are on leave at the time of the study. 3) Police personnel exclusively involved in clerical job. 4) Subjects who are found inebriated at the time of interview. 5) Police personnel with any history of major physical and mental illness

Tools Used in Assessment: Socio demographic schedule: A semi structured interview schedule focused on Personnel characteristics -age, education, rank, tenure of service, marital status, type of family (rural/urban), has been used which was prepared by Ghosh, S & Bhattacharjee, A, (2014). Police specific Stress Questionnaire (Savery, Souter & Weaver, 1993): These questionnaires were developed after reviewing the literature of Pragma Mathur Kumar (1999) which had identical occupational stressors for police. There are 13 items in the questionnaire The score ranges from 0 to 52 The samples are categorized according to the stress level as: Insignificant stress (0-13), Average stress (14-25), Significant stress (26-41) and Extreme Stress (42-52). Measures of chronic job stressors include the following sub scales/items: 5 : This scale measures different domains of police job . These are- neglected family life, job boredom, quantitative work overload, noxious physical environment, communication quality and praise.

RESULTS

Log transformation was used as necessary to approximate the normal distribution for parametric analysis. Comparison between groups done with T-test after testing for equality of variants and ANCOVA for adjusted comparisons. Statistical analyses was done with SPSS version 22, MedCalc software.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics

Variables	Group A(Constable)		Group B (Officer)	
	No. of samples N=83	%	No. of samples N=33	%
Age (Years)	41.711 ±6.947	71.55	50.03±6.27	28.45
<36	15	18.07	1	3.03
36-45	48	57.83	4	12.12
>45	20	24.09	28	84.85
Marital Status				
Unmarried	4	4.82	2	6.06
Married	74	89.16	31	93.94
Separated	5	6.02	0	0
Rank	Nayak : 9 Constable : 71 Head Constable : 3	10.84 85.54 3.61	ASI : 15 SI : 17 I : 1	45.45 51.51 3.03
Education Level				
Bellow Secondary	8	9.64	0	0
Secondary	55	66.27	10	30.30
Higher Secondary	15	18.07	8	24.24
Graduate	5	6.03	14	42.42
Post graduate	0	0	1	3.03
Tenure of work (Years)				
<10	5	6.02	1	3.03
10-20	30	36.15	4	12.12
>20	48	57.83	28	84.85

ASI= Assistant sub Inspector, SI= Sub Inspector, I= Inspector

Figure 1: Graphical presentation of distribution samples according to degree of stress in Group A (Constable) & Group B (Officer)

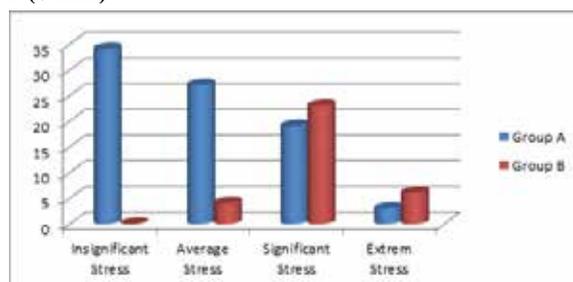
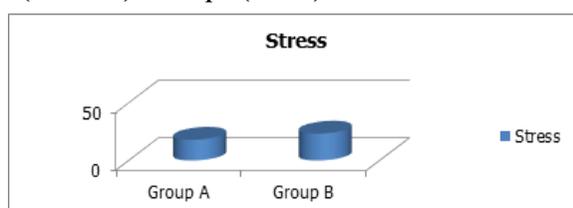


Table2: Comparison of stress index score between Group A(Constable) & Group B (Officer)

Variables	Stress Index Score				
	Mean	SD	t-value	DF	P-value
Group A	18.0	11.3	-2.38	63	0.021*
Group B	23.3	10.5			

*= P- value <0.05

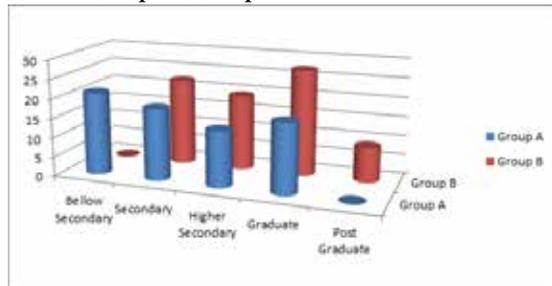
Figure 2: Graphical presentation of level of stress in Group A(Constable) & Group B (Officer)



Level of education & stress

This is depicted in Table No: 12. Bellow secondary educated Group A responders show mean stress score of 21.25±9.69. Secondary educated Group A responders show mean score of stress 18.5±11.1 vs. 22.30± 9.73 of Group B (P value >0.05). Higher secondary educated Group A responders show mean stress score of 14.4± 10.6 vs. 19.4±10.9 of Group B (P value >0.05). Graduate responders in Group A show mean stress score 18±14 vs. 27.3±10 of Group B (P value >0.05). Only Post graduate responder is Group B shows stress index score of 9.

Figure 3: Graphical presentation of level of education with stress in Group A & Group B



Rank & stress

Analysis of variance(ANOVA) between ranks of Group A and stress index score in Table 13 shows mean stress in Nayak is 21.2222, Constable is 17.4085 and in Head Constable is 23.3333 (F- ratio: 0.787, P = 0.459). Analysis of variance(ANOVA) between ranks of Group B and stress index score is shown in Table 14 shows mean stress in Assistant Sub- Inspector is 22.8667, Sub-Inspector is 24.0000 and in Inspector is 18.0000 (F- ratio: 0.167, P = 0.847).

Table3: Comparison of variables chronic job stressors in Group A (Constables) & Group B (Officers)

Variables	Group A N=83		Group B N=33		t- Val- ue	DF	P-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Neglected Family Life	9.00	3.82	10.79	3.61	-2.37	61	0.021*
Job Boredom	10.63	2.77	11.55	3.87	-1.24	45	0.220
Quantitative Work Over-load	9.70	2.86	11.21	2.64	-2.72	63	0.008**
Noxious physical environment	13.80	4.26	12.36	4.12	1.67	60	0.100
Communication quality	10.88	2.55	10.24	2.86	1.11	53	0.270
Praise	7.77	1.54	7.64	1.71	0.39	53	0.696

* = P value <0.05, **= P value <0.01, Significant at 95% & 99% confidence interval respectively

DISCUSSIONS

The mean age of officers is more than constables. Approximately half of the constables are belong to 36-45 years age groups. More than two third population in officer group belong to >45 years age group. The gender distribution is not done as very less number of female policemen is working in West district during the time of the study. Whatever number of female policemen is present either they do not fulfill the inclusion criteria or they are missed due to random sampling. Nearly all policemen in both the groups are married. So correlation of stress level with marital status is not done. Nearly two third populations in Group A

is constable & almost half of populations in officer group are Assistant Sub-Inspector & Sub-Inspector each. More than half of the population is constable group has crossed 20 years in police job. The corresponding figure in officer group is more than 80%. Nearly one quarter of constables has significantly stressed and in officer group two third of them are significantly stressed. Officers are more stressed than constables. The stress level between Nayak, Constables & Head Constables is not statistically different. On the other hand the stress level between Assistant Sub-Inspector & Inspector is not statistically different. There is a positive linear relationship between age and stress index score in both the group. That means with the increase in age stress level increases. Tenure of work has linear relationship in officer group but in constable group it does not reveal so. The constables who are bellow secondary level educated are more stressed in comparison to the other qualification in the same group. On the other hand graduate officers are more stressed than others in the same group. There is no statistical relationship between level of education and stress level. The assessment of components of chronic job stressors shows mean score of neglected family life, job boredom, quantitative work overload score is more in officer group. On the other hand the mean score of noxious physical environment, communication quality and praise is more in constable group. In quality of life assessment, the mean score of all the domains i.e. physical health, psychological health, social relationships & environmental status in constable group is higher than officers.

CONCLUSION

The perceived stress is more in officers although within the same group the difference is not much significant.

Limitation of the study: 1) The study cannot say anything regarding policewomen as the number of female participant is negligible. 2) False reporting, if at all present in the response of this study, could not be prevented.

REFERENCES

1. Mind Tools Ltd. Job stress management resource. London. [Cited 2010 Nov21]. Available from. www.mindtools.com/stress/UnderstandStress/StressPerformance.htm.
2. Peter Finn and Julie Esselman Tomz. U.S. Department of Justice-National Institute of Justice.Developing a Law Enforcement Stress Program for Officers and Their Families. U.S. Govt. New York. [December 1996] .Available from www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/163175.htm
3. Juniper B, White N, Bellamy P. A new approach to evaluating the well-being of police. *Occup Med (Lond)*. 2010 Oct;60(7):560-5.
4. Anderson AS, Lo CC. Intimate Partner Violence Within Law Enforcement Families. *J Interpers Violence*. 2010 Jun 28.
5. Mathur P.Perceptions of police stress: An empirical study of stressors and coping response among police personnel in India, *Indian journal of criminology*, 23 (1),9-19, 1995.