

## A Comparative Study of Frustration, Depression and Deprivation amongst Trainee and Serving Police Officials

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### **Introduction:**

Characterized by stark cultural diversities and complex social stratification, policing in Indian society appears to be a tough task. Policing along heightened and, often-unrealistic public expectations, becomes a major source of criticism. The police force in India does not assume a positive image. Defined by a rigid bureaucratic cadre, the police personnel have to work not only to see that crime remains under control but also have to face 'systematic' interference from political masters and other influential sectors. On the personal count as well, the police personnel have perennial problems of basic working, living conditions and welfare facilities. Taken together, the job reflects tellingly upon their family and the relationships.

In the face of adverse environment the police personnel tend to become vulnerable to scores of psychological consequences. One of the key repercussions of these situations pertains to psychological outcome. The psychological symptoms viz. dissatisfaction, low job involvement, tension, anxiety, depression, boredom, deprivation, low self-esteem or low self-concept and psychological fatigue etc. are some of the most common manifestations being observed in case of police officials who work in adverse circumstances.

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**The present Study:**

The present paper aims at analyzing some precise symptoms of psychological nature that could be related to various unfavorable aspects of policing. While there can be many consequences worth studying, this paper is limited to focus upon the three parameters- frustration, depression and deprivation amongst the two group of police officials viz., serving police officials and trainee officials

**Review of Literature:**

In the present paper an attempt has been made to document some of the relevant works conducted on the subject under study. Campell (1970) described one of the important sources of frustration in police. He discussed conflicting roles and demand involved in the order maintenance, community service and crime fighting responsibilities of the police. Another study by Manning (1999) argued that police deviance arises from the structure of police work. He observed that the state gives the police broadly defined authority that empowers them to take immediate and decisive action as the occupation demands that can even lead to “overstepping the boundaries of legitimate authorizing” The extent of deviance among the police is not known because of the nature of police work, strong police cohesion and the fact that police do not always recognize their own violation. Depression has been observed to be a critical occurrence in the police population. The depression – linked suicides amongst the police officials have received considerable attention. A study conducted by the New York Police Department concluded that the suicide rates among New York police Department officers (at about 29 per 100000 annually) were considerably higher than among the general United States population (11.7 per 100000 in 1992). The study further indicated that police view inter personnel problems, depression, and the use of alcohol and drugs as the primary reasons for suicide. Of 57 police suicides reported by the New York Police Department between

1995 and mid –1994, relationship problems and depression were the leading factors in cases. Ivanoff (2002) and other experts believe that police suicides are under reported, often classified as accidents in part to spare an officers family from embarrassment, a study on suicide amongst the police concluded that the statistical average of police suicides is much higher than that of the general population, within that average lies a notable increase experienced among older officers and those officers facing suspension. Violanti (1996) suggested that in most cases the police officers do not take behavioral problems and psychological disorders very seriously.

### **Objectives:**

The objectives of the present study are –

- (1) To identify the level and degree of (a) frustration (b) depression (c) deprivation experienced by the police personnel in different situations.
- (2) To make a comparison of the selected psychological parameters in the group of trainee and serving police officials.

### **Methodology:**

The methodology for the present study has been developed according to the prescribed objectives.

### **Sample**

The design of the study needed the two groups of sample –Trainee Police Officials, Serving Police Officials. The idea was to examine whether the serving official, because of their exposure to working conditions, have greater degree of negative psychological experiences as compared to the trainees who do not have any such experience.

Trainee officials (one hundred) were randomly selected (regular order method) from the list of trainee recruits (two hundred fifty) undergoing training at the Jawaharlal

Nehru Police Academy, Sagar in the year 2000. A group of one hundred police officials, who were working in the districts of Tikamgarh, Sagar, Damoh and Chhatrapur have been randomly selected (regular order method) for the purpose of comparison of psychological changes occurred in the personality of police officials. The choice was guided by the fact that this group of officials must have minimum ten years of experience in service. The attempts were made to take these officials from the district corresponding to the other group of respondents. The total sample thus constituted two hundred police officials in both the groups. As mentioned earlier, the basic thrust of the study lied in a hypothetical notion that the police service exerts a definite psychological impact on the policemen. Because of inimitable job conditions and the distinct job requirements, average police officer is exposed to certain strain and stress leading to the genesis of certain psychological symptoms like frustration, depression and deprivation. The changes occurred in the personality profile of the police officials due to their service exposure can only be measured in comparison and in contrast with the police officials devoid of any such exposures. It was therefore desirable to have the two types of groups for making comparison of the presence and absence of psychological variables selected for the study.

#### **Tools and Techniques of Data Collection:**

##### **(1) Reaction to Frustration Scale (RFS)**

Developed by Dr. B.M. Dixit and Dr. D.N. Shrivastave (1987), the Reaction to Frustration Scale (RFS) covers four kinds of reactions namely aggression, resignation, fixation and regression as scientifically described by Maier (1949). It consisted of 40 items out of which each reaction to frustration had 10 items equally divided in to positive and negative items. These items are presented in the simple statements and provide six alternative response options graded on a six – point scale. The scale has the satisfactory reliability coefficient when positive and negative items of each mode of reactions to

frustration are correlated. The reliability and validity scores of the frustration scale were 0.92 and 0.61 respectively.

**(2) IPAT Depression Scale**

The IPAT depression scale was developed by Dr. S.E. Krug and Dr. J.E. Laughlin. The construction of the test represented a careful blend of two distinct validation strategies: factor analysis and empirical keying. As a result, the test conforms to our best understanding of depression as a factorial distinct trait and shows practical validity with respect to the diagnostic criterion. The reliability of the scale, evaluated for a variety of clinical on normal groups totaling more than 2000 cases is high with internal consistency estimated averaging about 0.93. The validity of the test was also found to be quite satisfactory on all counts.

**(3) Prolonged Deprivation Scale (PDS)**

The scale consists of 96 five-point scale items found to be significant in indicating the degree of prolonged deprivation. The prolonged deprivation scale developed by Dr. G. Mishra and Dr. L.B. Tripathi has 15 areas of deprivation were they consisted of (1) housing condition, (2) home environment, (3) economic sufficiency, (4) food, (5) clothing (6) educational experiences, (7) childhood experience, (8) rearing experiences, (9) parental characteristics, (10) interaction with parents, (11) motivational experience, (12) emotional experiences (13) religious experiences, (14) travel and recreation and (15) miscellaneous quasi-cultural experiences. This scale has adequate level of reliability and validity score.

**Discussion and Analysis:**

The statistical analysis of data was carried out with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The multidimensional tables incorporating *Chi-square test*,

*Coefficient of Contingency, Rank Correlation (tau-c) MH test, Cramer's V, Somer's D and t – tests* have been extracted. In the present section, an attempt has been made to discuss and highlight the comparative different in the profile of respondents in respect of variables selected for this study. The objective is to look in to whether the two groups of respondents showed any statistically significant differences with respect to different psychological traits.

The level of frustration amongst the trainee and serving police officials was an important aspect studied in this exercise. The results show that the level of “Average Frustration” was found to be 96 percent amongst the trainee respondents while this was only 16 percent in case of serving police officials. Further, “Very High Frustration” was found to be nil amongst the trainee respondents and this was 11 percent in case of serving police officials. The level of “High Frustration” was rather pronounced (73 percent) in case of serving police officials. This was only 4 percent amongst the trainee respondents. The resume of Table 1 would make it clear that the trainee and serving officials had considerable differences on the score of frustration scale. To study the statistically significant differences, certain statistical tests have been applied. The calculated value of *Chi-square* and *Mental – haenszel tests* are 129.77 and 114.4 respectively. These are significant at the level of 0.01. The other *Chi – square* based statistical tests have also been applied. The values of Contingency (0.62) and *Cramer's V* (0.80) are significant at level of 0.01. The t – value of the paired comparison was also found to be significant. The responses indicate a trend significantly different from equal probability. The mentioned interpretation shows that the frustration levels varied significantly amongst the trainee and serving police officials.

The study of experience of depression in case of police officials has a remarkable significance. The job expectations and pressures on the police officials place them under a

definite depression. Many studies have confirmed that the level of depression has been rising in case of police in India.

Table 2 clearly shows that the total similarity in the degree of depression in respect to both the scores of respondents. The experiences of depression in serving officials may be due to job pressures and working conditions. While the case of trainee police officials needs further probing as these subjects should not have had this much level of depression during the training period. Since the two groups had virtually no differences on the test scores, the statistical tools showed zero differences and total interrelationship.

The trainee and serving police officials had higher level of deprivation. The output of results in Table 3 depict that the serving and trainee police officials scored (69 and 60 percent respectively) on “High Deprivation”. The “Average Deprivation” was found to be 24 and 13 percent respectively amongst both the groups of officials. The levels of “Very High Deprivation” were 17 and 14 percent respectively amongst the trainee and serving police officials.

The experiences of “Low” and “Very Low Deprivation” were negligible and nil amongst the two groups officials. The findings confirm that the trainee and serving police officials had almost equal scores on the statistical tests. The police in the present times have to face increasing crime and violence, international terrorism, narcotics, and the form of order disturbances. Unfortunately, despite the tremendous challenge, the police to day are isolated and deprived from friends and society. The police force practically suffers a problem of not just a “no image” or “low image” situation but also a highly negative image among the public. The general image of the police are, a man donning the Khaki uniform is perceived as a corrupt, brutal person given to frequent use of violence

and torture (Chavigny, 1995). This negative image of the policeman among the public cause a sense a “worthlessness” of them. (Sing, 1996).

**Findings:**

- (1) The degree of frustration in the serving police officials was more pronounced than those under training. The aforesaid hypothesis proved to be correct in the present study. The degree of frustration amongst serving officials was significantly higher as compared to the other group ( $X^2 = 129.97$   $p < 0.01$ ,  $MH = 114.44$   $p < 0.01$ ; Cramer's  $V = 0.80$   $p < 0.01$  and  $t = -19.48$   $p < 0.01$ ). The incidence of frustration in the police assumes serious proportions. Some shades of police behavior are conveniently traceable to the patterns of reaction to frustration. The police officials tend to feel that their problems do not receive due attention of the authorities. This sense of frustration reflects in their misbehavior, use of filthy language and unwarranted harassment to the ordinary persons (Filer, 1952). The continue accumulation of this sort of experience gives rise to the typical ways of police responses.
- (2) The degree of depression was significantly higher amongst the serving police officials as compared to trainee police officials. The equally surprising are the results. The two groups had equal degree of depression ( $x^2 = 0.00$   $p < 0.01$ ;  $MH = 0.00$   $p < 1.0$ ; Cramer's  $V = 0.00$   $p < 1.0$  and  $t = 0.00$   $p < 1.0$ ) There was not any significant relationship between both the groups. The depression in the serving police officials is understandable because of obvious reasons, but the same cannot be said about the other group. The police officials appear to be accustomed to depression. The pressures and a contradictory role performance are likely to push the policeman in to the situation.



- (3) The serving officials experienced greater degree of deprivation than the trainee officials. The generated in the present study do not support the hypothesis, as the differences in the two groups were not significant. Contrary to the popular belief, the trainee police officials reported themselves to be more deprived (86 percent). This number was 74 percent in case of serving police officials. The craving and striving for power, position and authority normally stem from the deprivation. This invariably gives rise to what be call the objectionable aspects of police behaviour.

**Suggestions:**

The present study has following suggestions:

- (1) The police officials in the present study showed critical psychological developments hence; there is a definite need to deal the problem.
- (2) To address the problem of depression, frustration and the symptoms like deprivation, there is also need to improve the quality of vertical communication in the police hierarchy.
- (3) The resource crunch in the police setup instills a sense of deprivation. It is therefore suggested that the policeman specially working in rural and remote areas must be provided with necessary support.
- (4) The study especially highlighted the presence of certain undesirable psychological symptoms in the training officials too. This is a disturbing trend. The sources of such type of manifestations in the trainee officials required to be located carefully. While recruiting the persons to the police force, a comprehensive psychological assessment would be desirable.

- (5) The police departments normally do not have any full time departmental psychological counselor. The suggestion is to have at least one psychologist in each police districts.

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**Table – 1**

**Degree of Frustration Cross – tabulated by status of Police Officials**

<b>Police Officials</b>	<b>Very High Frustration</b>	<b>High Frustration</b>	<b>Average Frustration</b>	<b>Low Frustration</b>	<b>Very low Frustration</b>	<b>Row Total</b>
Trainee	0	4	96	0	0	100
Serving	11	73	16	0	0	100
Column Total	11	77	112	0	0	200

**Output of Tests**

		<b>Value</b>	<b>Significance</b>
1	Pearson	129.97	0.01
2	Mantel – Haenszel test	114.44	0.01
3	Contingency Coefficient	0.62	0.01
4	Cramer’s V	0.80	0.01
5	Kendall’s tau – C	-0.80	
6	Somer’s D	-0.77	

*Showing paired samples test and paired differences amongst Trainee and Serving Police Officials Regarding Frustration.*

<b>Police Officials</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Standard error</b>	<b>t – value</b>	<b>2 – tailed Sig.</b>
Trainee					
Serving	- 0.91	0.55	0.05	-16.48	0.01

**Table – 2**

**Degree of Depression Cross – tabulated by status of Police Officials**

<b>Police Officials</b>	<b>Very High Frustration</b>	<b>High Frustration</b>	<b>Average Frustration</b>	<b>Low Frustration</b>	<b>Very low Frustration</b>	<b>Row Total</b>
Trainee	83	17	0	0	0	100
Serving	83	17	0	0	0	100
Column Total	166	34	0	0	0	200

*(No tests were relevant due to equal frequency distribution)*

**Table – 3**

**Degree of Deprivation Cross – tabulated by status of Police Officials**

<b>Police Officials</b>	<b>Very High Frustration</b>	<b>High Frustration</b>	<b>Average Frustration</b>	<b>Low Frustration</b>	<b>Very low Frustration</b>	<b>Row Total</b>
Trainee	17	69	13	1	0	100
Serving	14	60	24	2	0	100
Column Total	31	129	37	3	0	200

### **Output of Tests**

		<b>Value</b>	<b>Significance</b>
1	Pearson	4.52	0.21
2	Mantel – Haenszel test	3.21	0.07
3	Contingency Coefficient	0.14	0.21
4	Cramer's V	0.15	0.21
5	Kendall's tau – C	-0.12	
6	Somer's D	-0.12	

*Showing paired samples test and paired differences amongst Trainee and Serving Police Officials Regarding Deprivation*

<b>Police Officials</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Standard error</b>	<b>t – value</b>	<b>2 – tailed Sig.</b>
Trainee					
Serving	-0.16	0.89	0.09	-1.79	0.07

