

CAUSES OF BURNOUT AMONG POLICE PERSONNEL IN PUNE CITY

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Abstract

Police personnel are key players in the vicinity of law and order, internal security goals in any country. To achieve these objectives, their well-being is important and their issues need to be addressed. Burnout among police personnel is one of the biggest issues which need attention. Burnout is a feeling of fatigue; stumpy enthusiasm and going out of work involuntarily. It can result from prolonged exposure to stress. The intention of this study was to examine the causes of burnout among police personnel in Pune city of Maharashtra state in India. Findings are reported from the sample of 160 police personnel working in 16 police stations in Pune city. This study shows that which factors are responsible for the burnout of the police personnel.

KEYWORDS: Burnout, Police personnel, Pune

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Introduction

The police personnel, in India, are facing number of work-related problems. Maharashtra police force is no exception to this. Maharashtra police have to perform perilous duties. At the same time the hours of work, as compared to other types of labor, are much more in number. They have to work with limited manpower. The organizational hierarchy is such that they have to work under pressure. Under such circumstances, policemen have to maintain law and order in the state. All these things lead to burnout. This has resulted into number of problems such as depression, somatic complaints and psychological disturbances and in some extreme cases suicide also. In view of the above circumstances, it is felt that the burnout of the police personnel in Maharashtra must be studied. What causes burnout among police personnel and the different ways to be used to solve the problems of police personnel and their personal strain level is an essential part of the study.

Police personnel usually undergo a variety of physiological, psychological and behavioral stress effects. It has been recommended that particular attention should be given to the problems faced by them as its latent negative consequences influence society in more direct and critical ways than those stressed in most other occupations. Officers operating under severe and chronic stress may well be at greater risk of error, accidents and overreaction that can compromise their performance, jeopardize public safety and pose significant liability costs to the organization (Institute of Heart Math, 1999; Colwell, 1988; Violanti, 1992; Mathur, 1999; Marshall, 1986). In India, the policeman's work milieu also does not escape from this truth. The presence of stress among policemen is felt but not acknowledged as the major enemy (Mathur, 1995). The media reports of police brutality, indiscipline and the mismanagement are forerunner to the job (Times of India 1993 Jan, The Tribune on Saturday, 2003 August). Dhaliwal (2003) pointed out that the majority of the policemen in India remained overburdened with work and have to stay away from their families and children for extensive periods which often lead to family problems and disputes. Inability to handle domestic tension and job related stress may translate into rude behavior on duty. It has also been observed that officers treat their subordinates in a scruffy and insulting manner. Further, job burnout has also emerged as a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors in the job (Bakkar & Shaufeli, 2000; Burke, Greenglass, Schwarzer, 1996; Carlson & Thompson, 1995).

Freuden Berger (1974) first used the term burnout to describe a syndrome consisting of a combination of long-lasting emotional exhaustion, physical fatigue, absence of job involvement, dehumanization of recipients of one's service, and lowered job accomplishment. Constant exposure to society's interpersonal violence, negative or confrontational interactions with individuals, a sense of personal endangerment, fear of revenge from criminals, and subservience to an ambivalent, watchful public produce negative emotional repercussion that can affect police officers on a chronic basis (Burke, 1994; Sewell, 1983).

Burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and has three key dimensions of overwhelming emotional exhaustion; feeling of cynicism (depersonalization) and detachment from the job; and a sense of ineffectiveness and failure (personal accomplishment) Maslach 1982; Maslach & Jackson, 1986; Maslach & Leiter, 1997).

It is a depressing remark that as of now inadequate attention has been paid to the policemen and their well-being in India with the focus always on the job to be done. People have to last a lifetime and laborious task such as policing eventually becomes too arduous and challenging. While dwelling on performance, organizations must keep in view the physical and mental wellbeing of the employees also.

Hence in view of the above, need for stress and burnout management for police personnel is highly apparent. Since the impact of stress and burnout can be cognitive, emotional, psychological and behavioral, a multidimensional programme maybe the use of multidimensional intrusion for the police personnel of the present study can be regarded as a first affirmative step in this direction.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to investigate the causes of burnout among police personnel in Pune city.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design. The survey design was used to obtain information on police personnel's' perceptions on the causes of burnout. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected, organized, categorized into themes, coded and analyzed using basic descriptive statistics. Results were presented using percentages, tables, pie charts and graphs.

The Study Area

This study was conducted in Pune city of Maharashtra state in India. from July, 2014 to December 2014. Pune is considered the cultural capital of Maharashtra state. It has an approximate area of 710 sq kilometers. The city is densely populated with 7100 people per square kilometer as per the 2011 population projection.

Study Population

Pune City Police jurisdiction consists of thirty three police stations, which are divided into two regions, i.e. South Region & North Region .There are four zones, Zone-I & II in South Region and Zone III & IV in North Region.

Sampling Procedure & Sample Size

Stratified random sampling was used to select Police Stations from which police personnel were drawn to ensure proportionate representation of the population in the sample. The police stations were categorized into strata of south and north region police stations. Then Zone-1, 2,3 and 4 as illustrated in Table 1.

A sample of 160 police personnel was selected. Ten police personnel from each sample Police Station filled the questionnaire.

Table 1: Study sample (Police Personnel)

Region	Zone	No. of Police Stations	No. of police personnel
South Region	Zone-1	4	40
	Zone-2	4	40
North Region	Zone-3	4	40
	Zone-4	4	40
Total		16	160

Instruments for Data Collection

Data was collected using questionnaire, document analysis, and observation schedule for police personnel and interview schedule for the some of them. Questionnaire was preferred since it would allow the researcher to get the views, opinions and perceptions of the respondents and also suited the literate population (Kothari, 2004). Questionnaire was designed to collect data concerning police personnel's work related issues and their perceptions on the same. The interview schedule was to provide more clarifications, elaborations and explanations of their work related issues. The observation schedule was to get information related to the police personnel's performance of tasks in relation to professional documents and their perceptions towards the tasks.

Instrumentation

The instruments of the study were developed and the relevance of the instruments was assessed by conducting a pilot study on a sample of twenty five police personnel that did not participate in the actual study. Questionnaires were administered to the respondents and their responses were verified to check if they were consistent and elicited the expected responses. Ambiguities in the tools were corrected.

Method of Data Analysis

The collected data from the questionnaire was coded, classified and tabulated. It was then analyzed using descriptive statistics of percentages and frequencies which were worked out manually by the researcher. Data collected through interviews, document analysis and observation schedule were categorized into themes and patterns, coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics to indicate frequencies and percentages.

Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to find out the causes of burnout among police personnel in Pune city. Factors that were looked at as possible causes were; Late working hours, Leave problem, Unsocial hours, Job Insecurity, Poor supervision, Interference from outside, Work overload, Role Ambiguity, Role Boundary, Poor relations with supervisor, Poor relations with peers, discrimination, Impersonal treatment, Lack of communication from management, Working with the public, Inadequate facilities, Insufficient resources, Neglected family life, Staff shortage, etc.

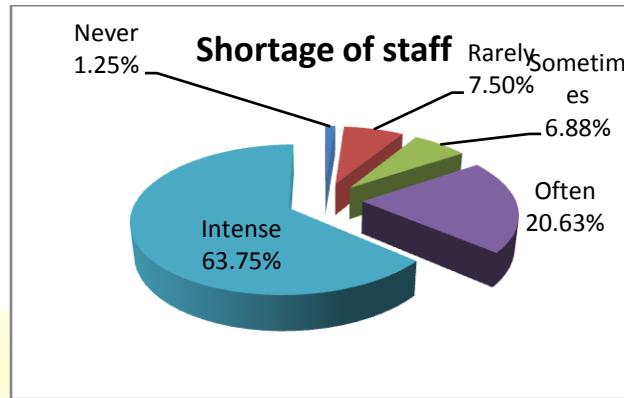
The researchers found the concerning causes of burnout were:

- 1) Manpower shortage

Table – 2

No.	Response	Frequency	%
1	Never	2	1.25
2	Rarely (1-3 times in a month)	12	7.5
3	Sometimes (4 to 8 times in a month)	11	6.88
4	Often (9 to 14 times)	33	20.62
5	Intense (equal or more than 15 time in a month)	102	63.75
Total		160	100

Figure - 1



Observation

63.75% of the police personnel had this feeling at intense level, while 20.62% experienced this feeling frequently in a month, 6.88% experience this problem sometimes while 7.5% police personnel feels this reason rarely and 1.25% police never have this problem.

Inference

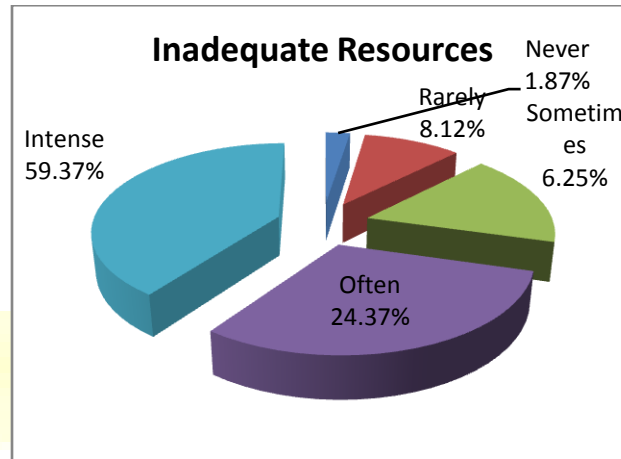
The majority of the police personnel believe that shortage of manpower is an intense cause of their burnout. A very negligible portion of them never feel that shortage of manpower is a cause of their burnout. The researcher found, shortage of manpower is the starting or very basic reason behind the burnout felt on most of the time by police personnel. This is the basic reason of many other causes of burnout among police personnel. Many committees have recommended to increase the police force.

- 2) Insufficient resources

Table – 3

No.	Response	Frequency	%
1	Never	3	1.87
2	Rarely (1-3 times in a month)	13	8.12
3	Sometimes (4 to 8 times in a month)	10	6.25
4	Often (9 to 14 times)	39	24.37
5	Intense (equal or more than 15 time in a month)	95	59.37
Total		160	100

Figure - 2



Observation

Only 1.87% police personnel never have problem of insufficient resources, while 8.12% face this problem rarely in a month, 24.37% police personnel very often face this problem in a month while 59.37% police personnel experience this reason at intense level.

Inference

Very few police personnel don't think that insufficient resources are one of the reasons of their burnout while majority of police personnel feel this at intense level. Great amount of work is always expected from police personnel. But, they are not provided with appropriate resources which are essential for the accomplishment of their tasks.

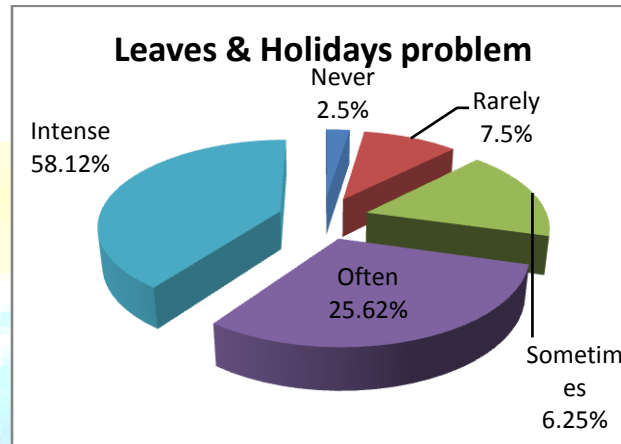
3) Leave and holiday problem

Table - 4

No.	Response	Frequency	%
1	Never	4	2.5
2	Rarely (1-3 times in a month)	12	7.5
3	Sometimes (4 to 8 times in a month)	10	6.25
4	Often (9 to 14 times)	41	25.62

5	Intense (equal or more than 15 time in a month)	93	58.12
Total		160	100

Figure - 3



Observation

2.5% police personnel never feel this as cause for their burnout while 7.5% face this problem rarely; almost 25% police personnel often have this concern while 58.12% consider this as an intense level.

Inference

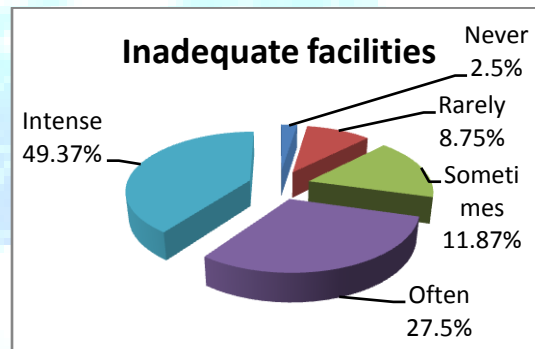
Majority of police personnel face the problem of leaves and holidays. Most of the holidays, they are suppose to work and face great issues while availing leaves. There are very few chances to avail compensatory off against working on holidays or weekly off. Secondly, they get very few amounts as a compensation for working on holidays and weekly off.

- 4) Inadequate facilities

Table – 5

No.	Response	Frequency	%
1	Never	4	2.5
2	Rarely (1-3 times in a month)	14	8.75
3	Sometimes (4 to 8 times in a month)	19	11.87
4	Often (9 to 14 times)	44	27.5
5	Intense (equal or more than 15 time in a month)	79	49.37
Total		160	100

Figure - 4



Observation

Almost 50% police personnel face this problem at intense level while 27.5% face it often; 11.87% of the police personnel under the study have this issue sometimes while 8.75% of them face this issue rarely. Only 2.5% people never feel this problem.

Inference

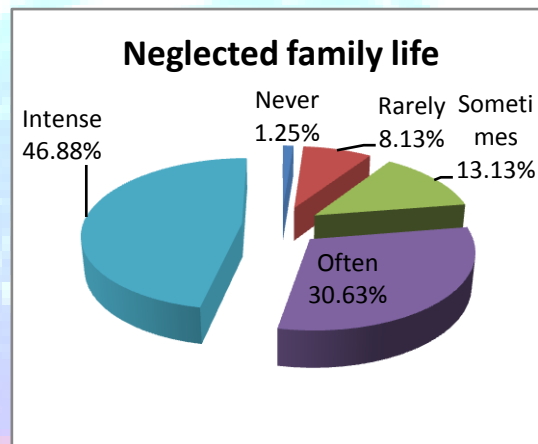
Majority of the police personnel face this problem most of the time. Very basic needs to many important facilities are not available to most of the police personnel. Some of the facilities which are very essential but not provided to them are- proper seating arrangement, sufficient lighting, clean toilets & bathrooms, fresh air, pure drinking water, etc.

5) Neglected family life

Table – 6

No.	Response	Frequency	%
1	Never	2	1.25
2	Rarely (1-3 times in a month)	13	8.12
3	Sometimes (4 to 8 times in a month)	21	13.12
4	Often (9 to 14 times)	49	30.62
5	Intense (equal or more than 15 time in a month)	75	46.87
Total		160	100

Figure – 5



Observation

46.88% police personnel consider this reason at intense level while 30.63% feel this problem often ; 13.13% police personnel face this issue sometimes and 8.13% police have this concern rarely while only 1.25% police personnel never have the problem of neglected family life.

Inference

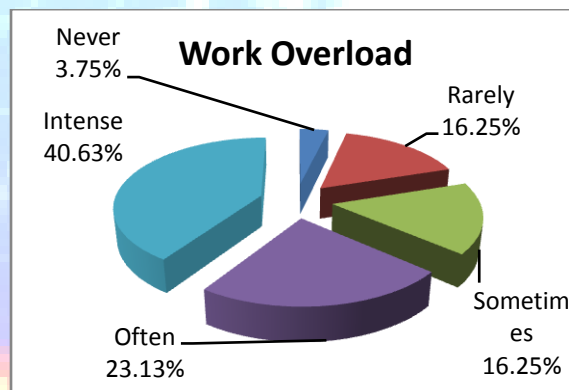
Majority of police personnel under the study face the problem of neglected family life. Because of late working hours, working on holidays and weekly offs many times, leave problems, they can't enjoy their family life at fullest; which is again one of the major cause of their burnout.

6) Work overload

Table - 7

No.	Response	Frequency	%
1	Never	6	3.75
2	Rarely (1-3 times in a month)	26	16.25
3	Sometimes (4 to 8 times in a month)	26	16.25
4	Often (9 to 14 times)	37	23.12
5	Intense (equal or more than 15 time in a month)	65	40.62
Total		160	100

Figure-6



Observation

40.63% police personnel feel overburdened of work at intense level while 23.13% face work overload very often, 16.25% police have work overload at sometimes and rarely while only 3.75% police under the study never face this problem.

Inference

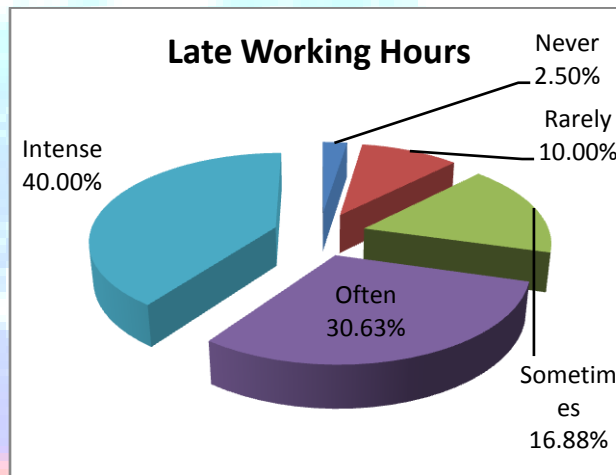
Most of the police personnel under the study, face the problem of work overload. The basic reason of this is insufficient workforce.

7) Late working hours

Table - 8

No.	Response	Frequency	%
1	Never	4	2.5
2	Rarely (1-3 times in a month)	16	10
3	Sometimes (4 to 8 times in a month)	27	16.87
4	Often (9 to 14 times)	49	30.62
5	Intense (equal or more than 15 time in a month)	64	40
Total		160	100

Figure - 7



Observation

40% of police force intensely considers late working hours as one of the major causes of their burnout, while 30.63% sense this problem often; 16.88% police employees have this issue sometime while 10% face this very rarely, and only 2.5% police personnel never have this issue.

Inference

Again, most of the police personnel under the study have to face the problem of late working hours. Again, the root cause of this is insufficient manpower and work overload while provided inadequate facilities and resources.

8) Other Causes

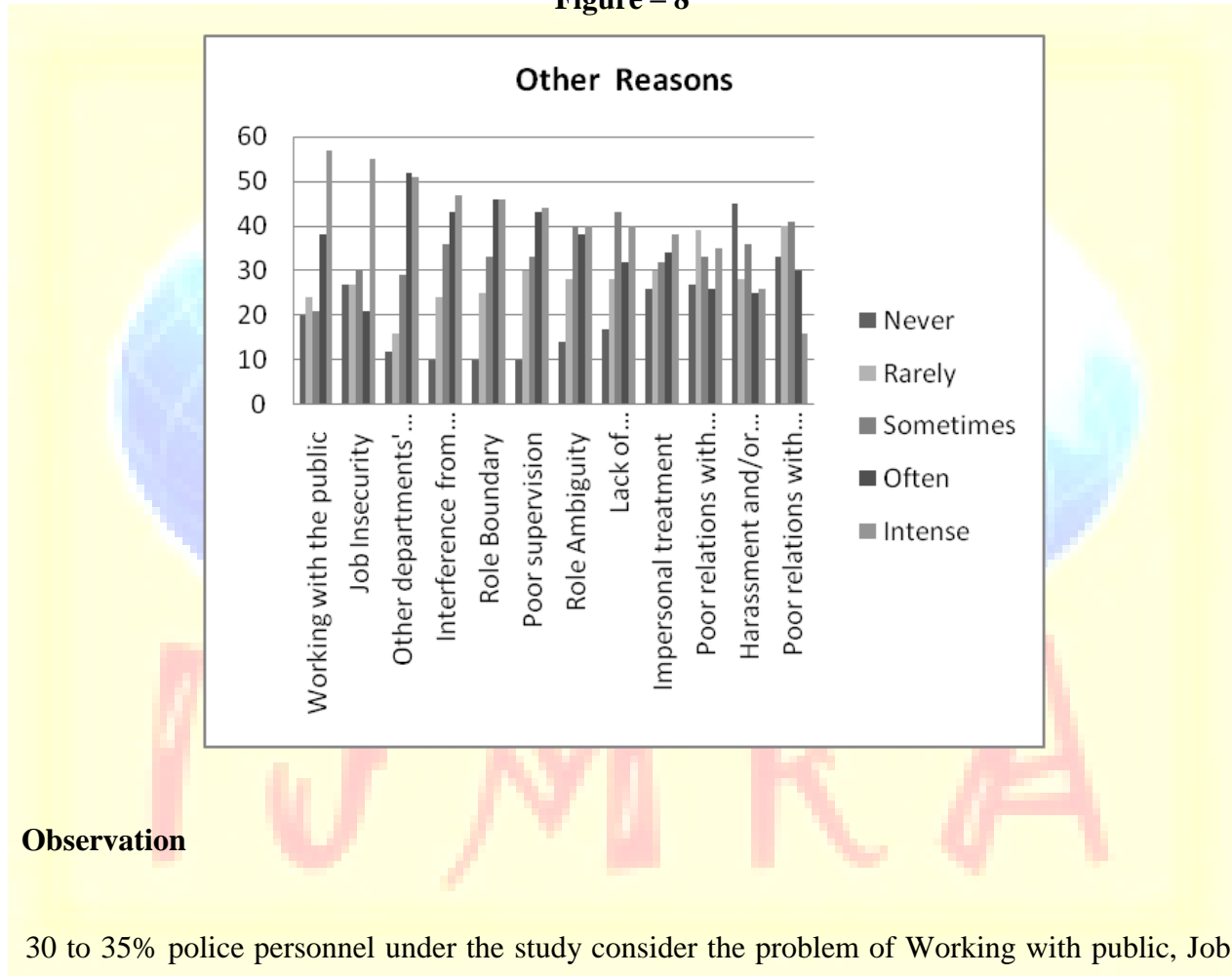
Other causes of burnout of police personnel under the study are as follows:

Table - 9

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Intense	Total
Working with the public	20 (12.5%)	24(15%)	21(13.12%)	38(23.75%)	57(35.62%)	160(100%)
Job Insecurity	27(16.87%)	27(16.87%)	30(18.75%)	21(13.12%)	55(34.37%)	160(100%)
Other departments' work	12(7.5%)	16(10%)	29(18.12%)	52(32.5%)	51(31.87%)	160(100%)
Interference from outside	10(6.25%)	24(15%)	36(22.5%)	43(26.87%)	47(29.37%)	160(100%)
Role Boundary	10(6.25%)	25(15.62%)	33(20.62%)	46(28.75%)	46(28.75%)	160(100%)
Poor supervision	10(6.25%)	30(18.75%)	33(20.62%)	43(26.87%)	44(27.5%)	160(100%)
Role Ambiguity	14(8.75%)	28(17.5%)	40(25%)	38(23.75%)	40(25%)	160(100%)
Lack of communication from management	17(10.62%)	28(17.5%)	43(26.87%)	32(20%)	40(25%)	160(100%)
Impersonal treatment	26(16.25%)	30(18.75%)	32(20%)	34(21.25%)	38(23.75%)	160(100%)

Poor relations with supervisor	27(16.87%)	39(24.37%)	33(20.62%)	26(16.25%)	35(21.87%)	160(100%)
Discrimination	45(28.12%)	28(17.5%)	36(22.5%)	25(15.62%)	26(16.25%)	160(100%)
Poor relations with peers	33(20.62%)	40(25%)	41(25.62%)	30(18.75%)	16(10%)	160(100%)

Figure – 8



Observation

30 to 35% police personnel under the study consider the problem of Working with public, Job Insecurity, Other departments' work, Interference from outside at intense level while 6 to 12% feel it rarely.

Nearly 20 to 28% police personnel face the problem of Role Boundary, Poor supervision, Role Ambiguity, Lack of communication from management, Impersonal treatment, Poor relations with supervisor often or at intense level while 15 to 30% face these issues sometimes or rarely.

Only 15 to 20% of police personnel face Harassment or discrimination, Poor relations with peers frequently or intensely while 20 to 45% have these problem sometimes or very rarely

Inference

Most of the police personnel under the study believe that working with public, Job Insecurity, Other departments' work, Interference from outside are also another sources of their burnout.

Under several situations, they have to deal with the anger of the people, in which they face verbal as well as physical mischief from the angry people. They are always expected to do the work of other departments. This happen on so regular basis that other people consider this extra work as police department's own responsibilities. Interference from outside especially influential people like politicians. Some of them believe that the social activists' organizations raise hurdles in their work.

Many of the police personnel face the problem of Role Boundary, Poor supervision, Role Ambiguity, Lack of communication from management, Impersonal treatment, Poor relations with supervisor. It is found that though a lot many responsibilities are given to police personnel, a very few rights are given to them. While performing their duties, many times they cannot proceed only because of the limited authority. Some of them suppose that their superiors not provide required guidance. Many times they don't know what exactly is expected from them. It happens because of the lack of communication between superiors and subordinates.

Some of the police personnel consider discrimination and poor relations with peer are also the causes of their burnout up to some extent.

Conclusion

After conducting this analysis, interpretation and discussion, the following conclusions were arrived at:

The present research investigation explored that Staff shortage, inadequate resources, Leave problem, inadequate facilities, Neglected family life, Work overload; late working hours are the major causes of burnout of the police personnel under the present study. Besides these, Working with the public, Job Insecurity, Other departments' work, Interference from outside, Role Boundary, Poor supervision, Role Ambiguity, Lack of communication from management, Impersonal treatment, Poor relations with supervisor, Harassment and/or discrimination, Poor relations with peers are also the sources of their burnout which should not be overlooked.

Recommendations

Basing on this study findings, it is recommended that police personnel's workload should be reduced by employing sufficient number of employees. Ways of reducing burnout can be proper communication between superiors and subordinates, providing opportunity to open up, granting essential leaves, motivation through appreciating their accomplishments of tasks, providing essential facilities and resources and giving them proper relaxation time.