

## **POLICE FORCE IN THE NAXALITE AREA OF CHHATTISGARH – A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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To maintain the law and order police personnel were deployed in every part of the nation. In this case, due to naxalite violence, Chhattisgarh government deployed the police personnel from the central and state level to control the situation. In this process, situation maintained to some extent. However, what is the condition of the police personnel deployed in the service in the region is unknown. Against this background the present study aims to examine occupational stress among the police personnel who is working in the strife prone area of Chhattisgarh. For this purpose a semi-structured interview schedule was constructed to collect the primary information from 120 constables who are working for the past 5 years in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh through random sampling method. To analyse the collected information content analysis method was used. The result reflects that basic facilities; such as sanitation, food, medical, and housing facilities were not provided regularly and the stress level is too high. Finally the study suggests the Chhattisgarh government to provide basic infrastructure facilities and proper system for the performance appraisal to maintain the law and order in the strife prone area.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Naxal movement originally started from Naxalbari village which is located in West-Bengal, in early 1970s, later it spread to Andhra-Pradesh and then Bihar, Chhattisgarh. So up till 1990s the movement was not very strong in Chhattisgarh, but in 2001 when Chhattisgarh became a separate state the situation started becoming critical day by day. Essentially only the state police was maintaining the law and order situation in the state, but gradually as the year passes the situation became more worst and uncontrollable, then the state government deployed Paramilitary force also there to maintain the situation. As we all know that policing is a tough job, particularly when they are working in a strife prone area where they are working under continuous threat for their life. Mathur (1999) said that, people do have high expectations from some occupations like police, people in uniform face life threatening situations every day whether they are on duty or off duty. People see in police personnel a person who can save them from every type of danger, so in doing their job they are going through a lot of psychological and physical stress, which ultimately affects their performance and health (Depue, 1979). Police personnel are not encountering the traditional crime but they do have to face the

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Naxalite problem also, and tackling the terrorism problem is not that much difficult as compare to the problem of Naxalism, because when your enemy is from other country it is easy to fight against them but when the people of your own country become your enemy it is difficult to fight against your own people.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India very few studies were done on the psychological aspects of policing especially those who are working in strife prone areas. If you dealt with the term police stress it encompasses various issues, but in India no government and private organization is working on these issues such as police personnel didn't get proper time for eating and sleeping etc, because of their tough daily routine they are suffering from lot of diseases. **Bhaskar (1986)** said that police personnel are stressed because of long –working hours of duty, no proper time for rest, task-demand was not clear, and lot of physical energy is needed for performing their job. Other than that their relationship with their bosses play a important role because if they are sensitive towards the feeling of their employee they feel less stress as compare to when the relationship is bad. **Pillali (1987)** found that because of long working hours police personnel develops lots of physical diseases, such as backache, stomach-ache and obesity. Other than that they also develop the habit of smoking, to reduce their stress. Ramachandran (1989) reported that the incident of occupational stress was high in those police personnel who completed twenty years of their service. Mathur (1994) found that the most important thing which causes stress is distances from self role, stagnation in job and inter-role distance. Apart from all of this role stress is the major reason for their stress.

In another study Mathur (1995) found some of the stressors which causes stress in police personnel and these were reported by the police personnel themselves. Police personnel said that they are worried about their life because they are working in life threatening situations and the performance appraisal policy is not adequate. Sometime death of fellow colleague gives lot of stress.

M. Misra (1997) reported that occupational stress and assertiveness had no relationship as we move to higher level of police personnel. Singhvi and Mathur (1997) said that the level of occupational stress differs from gazette to non-gazette police officers, they found that in gazette officer role ambiguity is less as compare to non- gazette police officers. Mukhopadhyay (2006) said that when the Naxalite movement was very prominent in the Calcutta the police department circulates a gazette in between the police employees in which they gives the direction to tackle the problem of Naxalism and the basic things that were there in that gazette was a) immediately finish the crisis, b) loss of public property should be less, c) and in the heart of people regain the trust. Punam Sahgal (2007) found that females working in Police department are facing glass-ceiling, because their male counterparts didn't give them due respect and in the decision making process

the role of females were not at all effective, female were not preferred for high level posts.

Tripath, Thapa and Biswas (1993) reported that police personnel were in stress because of political interference they are always facing transfer problem, because of that they do have to shift their homes too and they cannot able to give sufficient time to their families. Chhanna Basvana (1996) found that long-working hours, no housing facilities and educational facilities for their children and confusing orders from the boss gave them lot of stress, leave facilities is not there, salary is not adequate and medical facilities are not there.

Zhao and Lovrich (2002) found that it all depends on our perception, they found that those police personnel who were viewing their job as good or positive their level of stress is low as compare to others. Clinton (1981) reported that police personnel are stressed because the Indian judicial system is very lenient after putting so much effort at the end the victim gets free, other than that no proper training was provided to police personnel ,the task demands were not cleared and the continuous threat for life is there. Violanti (1983) also supported the above finding, he also reported that police personnel sometimes feels that that the situation is not in their control , or sometimes they felt stress because of the quasi –military type structure of police organization and sometimes because of the Judicial system. After ten years of services police personnel develop police stress syndrome (Violanti and Aron, 1995). After reviewing the existing literature , researcher found that not a single study is conducted on the topic of stress of those police personnel who are working in Naxalite area . So for covering this research gap researcher conducted a study to measure those psychological aspects which causes stress in police personnel those who are working in the strife prone area.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study aims to examine occupational stress among the police personnel who is working in the strife prone area of Chhattisgarh. For this purpose a semi-structured interview schedule was constructed to collect the primary information from 120 constable who is working for the past 5 years in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh through random sampling method. Further, the researcher also conducted in-depth interview among the police personnel to examine the psychological factors behind their stress. To analyse the collected information content analysis method were used.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The researcher made a semi structured interview schedule to get an insight in to different motivational, attitudinal and other factors that affect the life of these people. The constables were asked about their occupational life: like why they join the police force?, what motivates and de- motivates them?, How they dealt with the

political pressures? And what were their view points towards the problem of Naxalism?. Extra organizational source of stress consisting their personal life & financial problems, was a point of enquiry physical factors including questions related to atmospheric conditions like too much of heat ,cold & wind etc were asked. Other factors were career development, relationship at work place, facilities, perception of society towards the police organization and personality & behavioral factors, on which constables gave their view point. These are our findings from interpersonal interaction and it was observed that these employees not only lead a stressful life, but there were many other social, extra organizational sources of stress, personality & behavioral factors, and infrastructural problems, which compound their negative experiences . Here are the findings.

They joined the police force mainly because of two reasons the first being unemployment and the second one avoid to joining the Naxalite force. They get motivated when they receive cash prize or appraisal from their seniors, and they get de -motivated when they were posted in interior areas, and where they were deprived of proper food and medical facilities. Whenever they need leave it was not granted. They had to do household work at their senior's resident, because of which they feel undignified. They felt demoralized when they see families of their Martyr colleagues struggling to get Martyr compensation. The facilities were not adequate, which they received from the police department .They reported that the sanitation facilities in the interior thanes were not adequate, number of quarters per constables was less, also the travelling allowance was not adequate, and the salary amount was very less, due to which they faced difficulties to meet out the educational & medical needs of their family, and also the martyr amount was also very insignificant.

Relationship with their seniors was depending upon the nature of seniors, as if the senior was cooperative they shared their problems with them otherwise could not.

In the career development of constables, they reported sycophancy of the seniors was the hurdle.

The answer was in negative when asked whether female exploitation was happened or not and the response on the issue of fake encounters most of them reported that it doesn't happened ,but few of them said that, some people did it for the promotion.

The nature of their job was to deal with the public issues and so that they had to act harshly with the public, because of which people perceived them negatively and also the public had very high expectation from the police personnel.

Police personnel have both the occupational and family duties, and they felt bad because they were not able to provide sufficient time to their families. Like all the parents they also want to be with their children in their growing age. Family members of the police personnel were very cooperative, as they understand the

nature of the job, they hardly complain, and manage the family responsibilities very well.

Constables posted in Naxalite area of Chhattisgarh were physically and mentally stressed. Physical stress was due to the long working hours which affect their health, as they become prone to high B.P, headache and also because of this they became less focused . The levels of stress also vary according to the areas, means in the interior areas they reported more stress as compared to city and sub interior areas. This stress also very according to different categories of constables. It appeared that the auxiliary constables reported very high level of stress as compared to other two categories, because most of the time they went for the field operations, due to which the maximum casualties also happened with them, and they get least facilities and salary in comparison to other two categories. Chhattisgarh armed force, reported second highest level of stress. They were stressed because they had to move all over the Chhattisgarh whenever the need arises, they lived in camps all the time, but at least they were getting better salary as compared to other two categories, and the third one was District armed force, they were in better condition as compared to other two categories. They reported lowest level of stress as compared to others, and the reason was that they rarely had to go on field operations, and also they avail better housing facilities. All of them dealt with their stress differently; it shows that the coping mechanism differs from individual to individual. Some of them express it outwardly and some keep it internalized, it depends mostly on the personality of an individual. For example most of them show aggressive behavior, and few of them engaged themselves in to recreational activities like playing, writing, or listening music etc. Majority of them drink alcohol and smoke cigarette to combat their stress.

After doing job for long time they felt that their language got changed and the usage of abusive words was also got increased.

Role of activist, politician, and Human Rights Commission in Naxalite affected areas of Chhattisgarh: Police personnel's had to face the Human Rights Commission, Social activist, NGO's and also the politicians. Even if they shoot the Naxalite in self defense, the Human Rights Commission enquired for the action taken against them, and also asked for the credential of the Naxalite background, but if police personnel died it hardly matters to them.

Nonetheless the political leaders raise confusing questions of "why did you not killed them and also why did you kill them." All of these things creates difficult environment. The activists working for the NGO's are interested in their own developments, as they don't care to understand the real problem faced by the police personnel posted there and the localities. The activist's who were from the metropolitan cities like Delhi, visited the affected areas, they were unaware of the real situations. They filed up case against the actions of police department, but in the real scenario quite a few NGO's did social work in the affected areas other than them ,most of the NGO's were working for the Naxalites.

Role of government in Naxalite affected areas: The government did not want to solve this problem, as the fund release for the tribal development was not utilized for the tribal's and as a consequence politicians and Naxalites used up the funds. The Naxalites helped the political parties during the election time, as they received money from them.

Role of Naxalite leader's in Naxal affected areas of Chhattisgarh: In fact the Naxalite leaders have now themselves forgotten the real spirit of their mission. They destroyed the roads, schools & hospitals. They even bully they tribal people for money and happily live upon them.

Reason behind the failure of police force & CRPF: In the Naxalite affected areas, when the constables were on the way back from long operations, they got easily targeted by Naxalites, because at that time they were weak and tired as they lack proper food and water. It can be counted as one of the reasons, behind the failure of police force. Another important reason behind the failure of police department was lack of communication between the police and local people, localities gave information to Naxalite about the movement of police force, and also in the police department they were having very few informers. Another reason was that the Naxalites were trained in jungle warfare techniques, in which very few police personnel were trained. Naxalites have better weapons as compared to police departments. The significant reason behind the failure in field operations, was that the police officer who was duty in charge of the field operations, did not brief the plan of action to the personnel, and did not debrief the shortcomings when they returned from the field operation. Very few officers went with their subordinates on field operations. As the Naxalites bombarded the road and destroyed the telephone wires, the only way to communicate was through satellite phone's which were very less in numbers.

The main reason behind the failure of CRPF personnel's was that they did not trust upon the police, other reason was that they could not walk for a long period, and also they were not familiar with the local language.

Regarding the Solution to the Naxalism problem and the question Is the army a solution to the problem? . They replied that Army is not the solution to that. If the Army is deployed then the local people would get suffer the most, instead of that the police should be given some autonomy to solve the problem. Distribution of free medicine from the police personnel will make the villagers trust to some extent the police. Strong police and military actions which would not eradicate the Naxalism problem, but also effective measures need to be taken to alleviate the political, social, economical deprivation and injustice to the tribal.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the present study, it was observed that the living condition of police personnel those who were posted in to that area were sub- human. In that area it was observed,

that the basic facilities; such as sanitation, food, medical, and housing facilities were not available. So the finding of present study shows the need for a proper system through which the basic needs of the police personnel were addressed. From the analysis of the qualitative findings of the research it was apparent that the majority of the police personnel were complaining about the promotion procedures, so there should be a proper system for the performance appraisal, means of promotion must be put in place.

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