



## Effect of Social Work Intervention on Job Stress Among Police Personnel

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### **Abstract**

*In India studies on job stress of police personnel highly support and provide evidence about the impact of job-related stress (Joseph, 1980). Social work profession has large scope to extend support in remedial intervention and coping skill training program (Kapoor 2014). The aim of the study was to find out the efficacy of social work intervention in reducing the stress level of police personnel. Single subject design and cognitive behavioural intervention was used. Post-intervention sessions with subjects reveal that the job stress among police personnel has been decreased and subjects were well prepared psychosocially to cope up their job stress.*

**Key words:** *Group work, Social Work Intervention, Job Stress*

### **Introduction**

Due to urbanisation, migration is increasing day by day and cities are getting overcrowded. Police personnel are unable to meet the demands of the increased population. Police personnel are accountable to government, public and judiciary. They have to perform their roles in the frame work of law and order. Though they perform in multidimensional roles, they have little or no platform to present themselves and their concerns.

Stress is defined as: 'A particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being' (Saxena 2000). Every human being has to deal with stress. Life without stress is impossible. Although stress is mostly known for its negative effects, it also has a positive side. It motivates us, challenges us, and helps us change when change is needed (even if we don't want to change). Overcoming stress can provide personal rewards,

such as feelings of competence, strength and even elation.

Professional social work provides services to enable the person to identify his capacities, qualities and resources to solve his own problems. It also helps the person to learn problem solving skills and techniques in consideration with limitations. Within social work, practice groups are effectively used to support individuals in growth, rehabilitation, personal change and for prevention of personal and social breakdown. A group can also be used for development and change of the group environment, for modifying systems, and for changing some of the institutions of the society. Social science research on groups has produced enough evidence on the effects of groups in influencing individual attitudes and values and achieving goals but not so in influencing or changing the system or societal situation outside of the group. Hence, social workers use groups as medium for variety of objectives with different client group (Siddiqui 2008).



When any individual is not fully satisfied with his work, he/she may not satisfy others. People only look at police department with lot of expectations but overlook their psychological needs and concerns.

### Some Research Findings

Studies of the stress-health linkage have been conducted on different organisations and special occupational groups including the police force (Pestonjee, 1992). An extensive study of the police personnel found evidence for the impact of job-related stresses on dissatisfaction with the job, boredom, depression, anxiety, irritation, and psychosomatic complaints (Joseph, 1980).

**Khan (1983)** Psychology attempts all human activities come within its scope and to the police organization, psychology can be applied profitably. Factors such as fatigue, food, recreation, social, political, economic and psychological inheritance in reaction, to a police functionary need urgent attention.

**Tripathi, Naidu, Thapa. Biswas (1993)** suggested psychosocial prevention program should be introduced with the thrust on enabling vulnerable persons to avoid unchangeable stress and increasing their stress resistance. Police personnel should be encouraged to develop a sense of learned resourcefulness i.e., the belief that they can effectively deal with manageable levels of stress. Investigators focusing on stress management programs/training.

**Channabasavanna (1996)** revealed that family welfare programmes should be started for promoting positive mental health measures and for minimizing stress. Psychologists, psychiatrists or counsellors should be posted in Police hospitals for helping identifying and minimizing stress in the force.

**Siwach (2000)** revealed that police officers experienced significant amount of stress. Family

is being neglected; job boredom, work load, noxious physical environment, role ambiguity and role conflict are the stressors.

**Umranikar (2009)** concluded and recommended measures for reforms in organisation, leadership, supervision, legal frame work, finance aspect, community level. He explained that firm political will, a committed and visionary leadership, motivated force and public support are essential ingredients for successful reforms.

**Borwankar (2009)**, discussed about community partnership and problem solving, compared the methods being followed by Indian Police (State of Maharashtra) and US. Further focuses on necessity of specific need-based practices like constant dialog with the community and address their issues, engagement of long-term relationship with citizens, need of ownership development.

**Kapoor and Karamkar (2014)** found that the majority of police officers are under high stress. Autocratic leadership style largely exists in the police department. Positive and negative factors are effects on their stress. Study also suggests controlling the negative factors like addressing behavioural and attitudinal challenges of officers.

**Karunanidhi (2010)** operational hassles like abusive cases, handling riots, forcible arrest are the major factors leading to job stress. Women police experience stress due to gender bias and poor status of women police in the department. The above research is totally focused on women related stress and development of tool. There is need to compare the stress with that of men. It is necessary to develop module for stress management.

**Sundaram (2012)** concludes that stress is due to insufficient personal time, seeing criminals going free, lack of recognition for good



work, attending court, dealing media personnel, meeting deadlines, working overtime and dealing with crisis situations. Other factors pointed out by the researcher were lack of opportunity for advancement, inadequate salary. Further, the study revealed that age, gender, religion, service, marital status, income and the place of residence had significant association with stress level among police personnel.

### Research Questions

1. What is the nature, causes and levels of stress among police personnel?
2. How does stress affect the work efficiency of police personnel?
3. Can social work intervention be helpful for managing stress among the police personnel?

### Objectives of the Study

1. To measure and compare the stress levels among the male and female police personnel.
2. To intervene with aid of the social group work method for stress management.
3. To find out the efficacy of social work intervention on reducing level of stress of police personnel.

### Theoretical Framework

Transactional theories of stress (Cox and Mackay 1981) focus on the cognitive processes and emotional reactions underpinning individuals' interactions with their environment; e.g., appraisal is a conscious process of realization that individual is having difficulty in coping with demands and threats to his well-being, and coping is important and the difficulty in coping worries or depresses him.

Cooper (1986) developed Stressor Strain Model. According to this model, strain is

potentially multifaceted manifestation of stress, like psychological disorders, self-destructive behaviors, deterioration of performance, etc.

One of the frameworks used in working with group is the assumption that many people lack the requisite skills and experiences to cope with stresses in their social relationships. The group worker can also help them to learn new life skills to update their competence to cope with stresses and sources of stresses (Siddiqui 2008).

People experience trauma due to variety of reasons. This produces stress and could become traumatic. Reaction to stress may vary such as withdrawal or opting out, depression, loss of control, inability to concentrate, irritability, disturbed sleep or eating patterns, flash backs and emotional numbing (Carll, 1994). This will require a different set of life skills and coping strategies to survive. The studies indicate that emotional support from others who have undergone a similar trauma is helpful (Shelby, 1994).

### Research Design

**A-B:** The basic single-subject design was adapted for social work intervention research study. This design involves one baseline phase and one intervention phase. After establishing a stable baseline social work intervention was introduced. Post intervention data were collected after intervention sessions. To assess the effectiveness of social work intervention, post-intervention data were compared with baseline data.

### Research Instruments

The following research instruments were used in this study:

1. **Interview Schedule:** Researchers developed and used a structured interview schedule to collect primary information related to the socioeconomic background of police personnel.



2. **Stress Scale:** To measure the level of stress, a scale developed by McCreary D. R., & Thompson, M. M (2006) was used.
3. **Eysenck's Personality Inventory (EPI) (Extroversion/Introversion) :** Eysenck's Personality Inventory (EPI) instrument was used to assess the personality traits of police personnel

### Selection of Cases

Considering the wide spread area of Pune city and population of police, the researchers had consultations with senior police officers regarding the cases of mental health problems in general and the problems of job stress among police personnel and requested them to suggest areas / police stations where comparatively more such cases were reported. They suggested the three police stations, namely, Swargate, Dattawadi, and Sahakar Nagar. There were 347 police personnel working in these three police stations. Police Stress Questionnaires (Operational and Organisational) were filled in by 182 police personnel.

Through analysis of scores, researchers could identify 46 police personnel with very high stress (above third quartile value). Further, in the process of establishing baseline only 28 police personnel were able to give five repeated measures of stress test. After this, during the introduction of intervention period 25 police personnel were able to attend the sessions conducted for them and then finally 20 police personnel participated in the five repeated measures of post intervention stress test.

**Establishment of Baseline (Pre-intervention Data) -** Pre-intervention assessment is a systematic appraisal of client's problems, needs and potential solutions. For this, researchers used the scale to measure job stress developed by McCreary D. R., & Thompson, M. M (2006).

To establish baseline, job stress was measured five times with an interval of three

days and group average was calculated. These measurements reflect the status of the client on the dependent variable before the implementation of the intervention.

### Social Work Intervention Strategy

The present study is social work intervention study where researcher used group work method as social work intervention on the job stress of police personnel. The strategy includes set of interventions sessions. The selected police personnel were divided into two groups. Sessions were planned separately for these groups. The group comes under treatment group and the purpose of treatment group is to meet member's socio-emotional needs and enable the members to use their full potential to cope with stress in positive way. The group in the present study was closed group; include only those members selected at the time of group formation. Cognitive-behavioural intervention was used and it was multimodal in nature which included following modalities.

- Relaxation
- Self-monitoring / self-talking
- Assertiveness training
- Problem solving
- Positive Thinking
- Creative thinking /activities
- Healthy family relationship training

Intervention sessions were planned in accordance with operational stress factors. The stressors contained in the stress scale are related to individual perspective, family relationship, police as community concerns and society responses. So, to implement these intervention sessions the health promotion intervention model was used.



intervention) were recorded and given below.

**Data Analysis**

The group average scores (pre and post

**Table 1**  
**Group Pre and Post Intervention Scores (Average)**

No. of Observations	Pre-Intervention Scores (Average)	Post-Intervention Scores (Average)
1	104.45	99.90
2	104.55	93.10
3	104.55	93.00
4	105.05	90.30
5	106.75	85.60
Mean	105.07	
Std. Deviation	.96799	

The table shows overall improvement in the level of stress in each observation. After completing all intervention sessions total 20 police personnel were able to fully participate in research with full consent and active participation despite of their duties and work load.

To know whether the intervention effects are statistically significant, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was administered. The results are shown in Table 2.

**Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test**

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
POST-INTERVENTION SCORES - PRE-INTERVENTION SCORES	Negative Ranks	17 <sup>a</sup>	14.29	243.00
	Positive Ranks	8 <sup>b</sup>	10.25	82.00
	Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>		
	Total	25		

- a. POST AVERAGE < PRE AVERAGE
- b. POST AVERAGE > PRE AVERAGE
- c. POST AVERAGE = PRE AVERAGE

**Test Statistics**

	POST-INTERVENTION SCORES - PRE-INTERVENTION SCORES
Z	-2.166a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.030

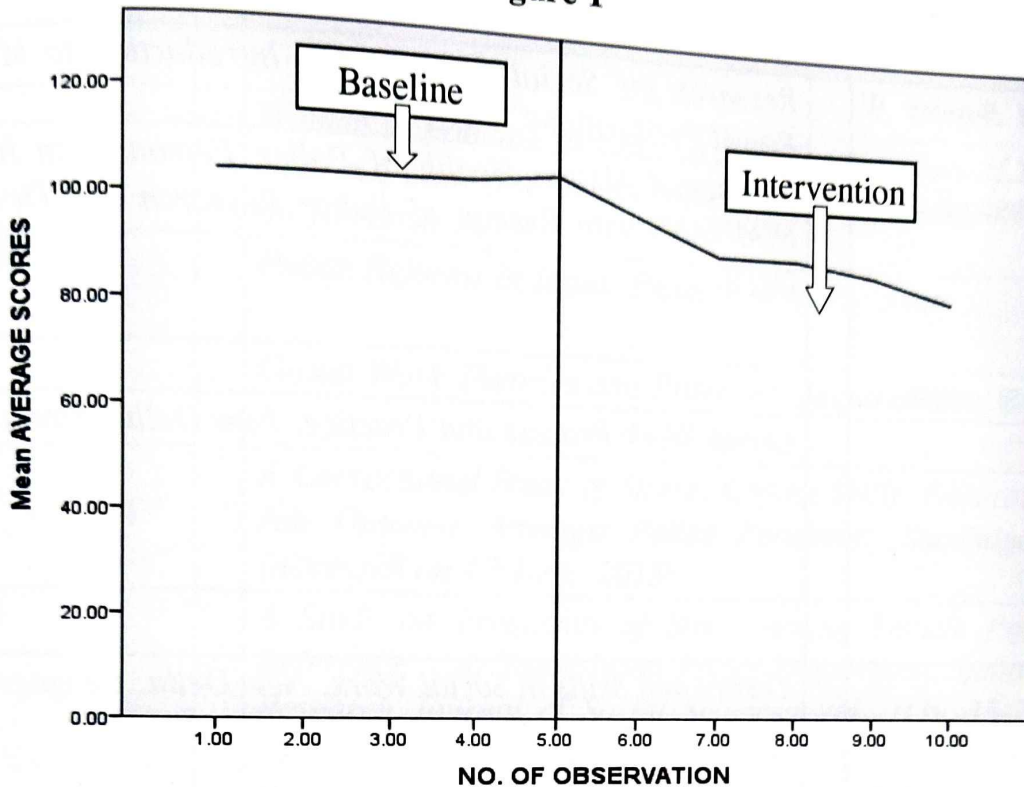
- a. Based on positive ranks.
- b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

The results of the test show that the difference in pre and post intervention scores was statistically significant (p = .030).



Pre and post scores obtained by group are presented in graphical form in Figure 1.

Figure 1



The graphical representation of the pre and post intervention group average scores clearly shows a decreasing trend in the post intervention phase. This indicates that the social work intervention was effective.

To know whether the intervention effects shown by the graph in Figure 1 are statistically significant Two Standard Deviation Method was used. The results are shown below:

$$\text{Mean Score} = 105.07$$

$$\sigma = .96799$$

$$2\sigma = 1.94$$

$$\text{Range} = \text{Mean Pre Intervention Scores} \pm 2\sigma$$

$$= 105.07 \pm 1.94$$

$$= 107.01 \text{ to } 103.13$$

In the case of group of subjects as a single subject all the post intervention scores are below,

the lowest value of the range (103.13). Hence, we can infer that the intervention with the group was effective. In other words, we can say that the intervention (treatment) has made significant change in the stress level and brought down the stress level of subjects to normal functioning.

### Conclusions

Statistical test results and our post-intervention interaction sessions with subjects reveal that the job stress among police personnel has been decreased to an extent in which the subjects were well prepared psychosocially to cope up their job stress. Hence, it is concluded that social work intervention was effective with police personnel who were under high job stress. Researcher noticed a positive change in the behaviour, attitude, and thinking of the subjects. There was a decrease in levels of irritation, negativity and anger etc. after the social work intervention. Police personnel were able to try to adjust better in the family, relationship and work



environment.

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