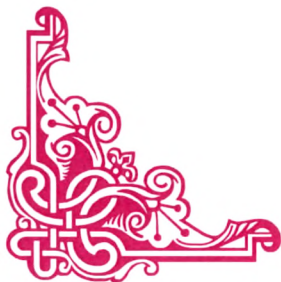




# Chapter 1

## **BASIC CONCEPT OF STRESS ITS MEANING & DEFINITIONS**

- 1.1 Basic Concepts of Stress
- 1.2 Definition and various types of stress
- 1.3 Concepts of Organizational and Occupational Stress
- 1.4 Police Stress
- 1.5 Symptoms of Stress among Police





# CHAPTER - 1

## BASIC CONCEPT OF STRESS ITS MEANING & DEFINITION:

### INTRODUCTION:

*This introductory chapter defines and explains the concept of stress, the terminology, its types, and its impact on organization & individual. The chapter is divided into five sections for the purpose of detailed, sound and scientific enquiry to develop a conceptual understanding about stress and its impact. The first section deals with the basic concept of stress in general followed by the second section which deals with the various definitions of stress and its various types. The third section deals with the concept of organizational stress and its impact on organizations. The fourth section deals with the concept of police stress and its sources, symptoms, impact and the consequences, followed by conclusion.*

### 1.1: BASIC CONCEPT OF STRESS:

The use of terminology “Stress” in our daily conversation has increases. Though we all talk so much about stress but it often isn’t clear what stress really is about all? We are well aware with some terms which are used synonymously for stress. These terms are stress, strain, conflict, burnout, depression and pressure.

Many people consider stress is something that happens to them, an event such as a harm or encouragement. Whereas others think stress is what happens to our bodies, psyche and our behaviour in response to an event. When something happens to us, we as a reflex action start evaluating the situation mentally. We try to come to a decision, if it is threatening to us, how we need to deal with the situation and what skills and strategies we can use. If we come to conclusions that the demands of the situation overshadow the skills we have, then we label the circumstances as “stressful” and need to react it with the classic “stress response”. If we trust that our coping skills prevail over the demands of the situation, then we don’t see it as “stressful”. Some situations in life are stress-provoking, but they are our thoughts about situations that determine whether they are a problem to us or not. How we

look it and perceive a stress-inducing event and how we react to it determines its impact on our health. If we respond in a negative way our health and happiness suffer. When we understand ourselves and our reactions to stress-provoking situations, we can learn to handle stress more effectively. [1]

Stress may be understood as a state of tension experienced by individuals facing extraordinary demands, constraints or opportunities. The pressures of modern life, coupled with the demands of a job, can lead to emotional imbalances that are collectively labeled 'Stress'. However, stress is not always unpleasant. Stress is the spice of life and the absence of stress makes life dull, monotonous and spiritless. [2]

While no definition of stress has been universally accepted, three common classes of definition are as follows: one is a stimulus, an environmental event, usually a threat, that affects the body in complex ways; in this interpretation, stress is referred to as a "stressor", one that evokes complex reactions of the various systems of the body.

A second definition is that stress is a bodily reaction to stressors; consequently, complex interaction of systems of the body can result in deleterious consequences to those systems and organs to the point of a person becoming "stressed out"; and serious illness can follow. This class fits Hans Selye's definition of stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand. The demands, Hans Selye (1978/1956) held, can be positive ones (Eustress) or negative ones (Distress).

A third type is an interactive one between environmental events (stressors) and bodily reactions such that stressors affect systems of the body and the resulting behaviour feeds back to affect the environmental stressors. However, they can also lead in complex ways to a variety of mental or physical problems.

To a scientist, stress is any action or situation that places special physical or psychological demands upon a person, anything that can unbalance his individual equilibrium. And while the physiological response to such a demand is surprisingly

uniform, the forms of stress are innumerable. Stress may be unconscious like the noise of a city or the daily chore of driving a car. Perhaps the one incontestable statement that can be made about stress is that it belongs to everyone to businessmen and professors, to mother and their children, to factory workers. Stress is a part of the fabric of life. Nothing can isolate stress from human beings as is evident from various researches and studies. Stress can be managed but not simply done away with. Today, widely accepted ideas about stress are challenged by new research, and conclusions once firmly established may be turned completely around. The latest evidence suggested (Ogden Tanner, 1979) reveals, some stress is necessary to the well being and a lack can be harmful. Stress definitely causes some serious ailments. Severe stress makes people accident-prone. <sup>[3]</sup>

At one time or another, most people experience stress. The term stress has been used to describe a variety of negative feelings and reactions that accompany threatening or challenging situations. However, not all stress reactions are negative. A certain amount of stress is actually necessary for survival. For example, birth is one of the most stressful experiences of life. The high level of hormones released during birth, which are also involved in the stress response, are believed to prepare the newborn infant to adapt to the challenges of life outside the womb.

These biological responses to stress make the newborn more alert, promoting the bonding process and, by extension, the child's physical survival. The stress reaction maximizes the expenditure of energy which helps prepare the body to meet a threatening or challenging situation and the individual tends to mobilize a great deal of effort in order to deal with the event. Both the sympathetic/adrenal and pituitary/adrenal systems become activated in response to stress. The sympathetic system is a fast-acting system that allows us to respond to the immediate demands of the situation by activating and increasing arousal. The pituitary/adrenal system is slower-acting and prolongs the aroused state. However, while a certain amount of stress is necessary for survival; prolonged stress can affect health adversely (Bernard & Krupat, 1994).

Stress has generally been viewed as a set of neurological and physiological reactions that serves an adaptive function (Franken, 1994). Traditionally, stress research has been oriented toward studies involving the body's reaction to stress and the cognitive processes that influence the perception of stress. However, social perspectives of the stress response have noted that different people experiencing similar life conditions are not necessarily affected in the same manner (Pearlin, 1982). Research into the societal and cultural influences of stress make it necessary to re-examine how stress is defined and studied. [4]

Stress is an individual's response to a disturbing factor in the environment, and consequence of such reaction. Stress involves interaction of the person and environment. To quote a definition: "Stress is an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological and / or behavioural deviations for organizational participants" (Fred Luthans, 1998). The physical or psychological demands from the environment that cause stress are called stressors. They create stress or the potential for stress when an individual perceives them as representing a demand that may exceed that person's ability to respond. How an individual experiences stress depends on (i) the person's perception of the situation, (ii) the person's past experience, (iii) the presence or absence of social support, and (iv) individual differences with regard to stress reactions (Don Hellriegel, et. al., 2001).

Stress can manifest itself in both a positive way and a negative way. Stress is said to be positive when situation offers an opportunity to one to gain something. Eustress is the term used to describe positive stress. It is negative when stress is associated with heart-disease, alcoholism, drug abuse, marital breakdowns, absenteeism, child abuse and a host of other social, physical, organizational and emotional problems. Stress is associated with constraints and demands. The former prevents an individual from doing what he or she desires. The later refers to the loss of something desired. Constraints and demands can lead to potential stress. When they are coupled with uncertainty of outcome and importance of outcome, potential stress becomes actual stress.

To understand and clarify the meaning of stress, it is useful to state what does not constitute stress:

- I. Stress is not simply anxiety or nervous tension.
- II. Stress need not always be damaging.
- III. Stress is not always due to overwork but may also result from having too little to do.
- IV. Stress cannot be avoided.
- V. Stress is body's biological response mechanisms but the body has limited capacity to respond to stressors.<sup>[5]</sup>

People experience different levels of stress which may stem from personal events in their lives (financial problems, health concerns etc.) or at work. The organisation may get negatively affected by work put in by under-stressed as well as over-stressed employees.

Ivancevich and Matteson have defined stress as, "An adaptive response, mediated by individual characteristics and/or psychological processes, that is a consequence of any external action, situation, or event that place special physical and or psychological demands upon a person."

A simple definition of stress with reference to industrial and organizational psychology is as follows: "Stress is a consequence of or a general response to an action or situation that places special or psychological demands or both on a person".<sup>[6]</sup>

## 1.2: DEFINITION AND VARIOUS TYPES OF STRESS:

There are numbers of definitions of stress as well as number of events that can lead to the experience of stress. People say they are stressed when they take an examination, when having to deal with a frustrating work situation, or when experiencing relationship difficulties. Stressful situations can be viewed as harmful, threatening, or challenging. With so many factors that contribute to stress, it is difficult to define the concept of "stress". Hans Selye (1982) points out that few people define the concept of stress in the same way or even bother to attempt a clear-cut definition. According to Selye, an important aspect of stress is that a wide variety of dissimilar situations are capable of producing the stress response such as fatigue, effort, pain, fear, and even success. This has led to several definitions of stress, each of which highlights different aspects of stress. One of the most comprehensive models of stress is the Bio-psychosocial Model of Stress (Bernard & Krupat, 1994). According to the Bio-psychosocial Model of Stress, stress involves three components: an external component, an internal component, and the interaction between the external and internal components.

The external component of the Bio psychosocial Model of stress involves environmental events that precede the recognition of stress and can elicit a stress response. As previously mentioned, the stress reaction is elicited by a wide variety of psychosocial stimuli that are either physiologically or emotionally threatening and disrupt the body's homeostasis (Cannon, 1932). We are usually aware of stressors when we feel conflicted, frustrated, or pressured. Most of the common stressors fall within four broad categories: personal, social/familial, work, and the environment. These stressful events have been linked to a variety of psychological physical complaints. For example bereavement is a particularly difficult stressor and has provided some of the first systematic evidence of a link between stress and immune functioning. Bereavement research generally supports a relationship between a sense of loss and lowered immune system functioning. Health problems and increased accidents are also associated with stressful work demands, job insecurity and changes in job responsibilities (Bernard & Krupat, 1994). Stressors also differ in their

duration. Acute stressors are stressors of relatively short duration and are generally not considered to be a health risk because they are limited by time. Chronic stressors are of relatively longer duration and can pose a serious health risk due to their prolonged activation of the body's stress response.

The internal component of stress involves a set of neurological and physiological reactions to stress. Hans Selye (1985) defined stress as "nonspecific" in that the stress response can result from a variety of different kinds of stressors and he thus focused on the internal aspects of stress. Selye noted that a person who is subjected to prolonged stress goes through three phases: Alarm Reaction, Stage of Resistance and Exhaustion. He termed this set of responses as the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). This general reaction to stress is viewed as a set of reactions that mobilize the organism's resources to deal with an impending threat. The Alarm Reaction is equivalent to the fight-or-flight response and includes the various neurological and physiological responses when confronted with a stressor.

When a threat is perceived the hypothalamus signals both the sympathetic nervous system and the pituitary. The sympathetic nervous system stimulates the adrenal glands. The adrenal glands release corticosteroids to increase metabolism which provides immediate energy. The pituitary gland releases adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) which also affects the adrenal glands. The adrenal glands then release epinephrine and norepinephrine which prolongs the fight-or-flight response. The Stage of Resistance is a continued state of arousal.

If the stressful situation is prolonged, the high level of hormones during the resistance phase may upset homeostasis and harm the internal organs leaving the organism vulnerable to disease. There is evidence from animal research that the adrenal glands actually increase in size during the resistance stage which may reflect the prolonged activity. The Exhaustion stage occurs after prolonged resistance. During this stage, the body's energy reserves are finally exhausted and breakdown occurs.



Selye has noted that, in humans, many of the diseases precipitated or caused by stress occur in the resistance stage and he refers to these as "diseases of adaptation." These diseases of adaptation include headaches, insomnia, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular and kidney diseases. In general, the central nervous system and hormonal responses aid adaptation. However, it can sometimes lead to disease especially when the state of stress is prolonged or intense.

Richard Dienstbier (1989) questions the emphasis that the GAS places on the role of chronic stress and proposes another model of stress, Physiological Toughening, which focuses on the duration of stressful events. He points out that stressors vary in their durations. Acute stressors are the briefest and often involve a tangible threat that is readily identified as a stressor. Chronic stressors have a longer duration and are not readily identified as stressors because they are often ambiguous and intangible. Because chronic stressors have become a part of modern life, they are taken for granted and can therefore pose a serious health risk if they are not recognized and properly managed.

Physiological Toughening is concerned with the third category of stressors, intermittent stressors. Intermittent stressors are the most variable in duration, alternating between periods of stress and calm. If an intermittent stressor is viewed as a challenge, it may improve one's physiological resistance to stress by causing repeated, periodic increases in sympathetic arousal which conditions the body to better withstand subsequent stressors. This can be seen from research indicating that experienced subjects show few or none of the deleterious effects of environmental stressors. For example, astronauts are trained to have available response sequences, plans, and problem-solving strategies for all imaginable emergencies. Emergencies are therefore transformed into routine situations decreasing the intensity of the stressful situation (Mandler, 1982).

Mandler's (1982) Interruption Theory of Stress provides a transition between the internal component of stress and the interaction component. Mandler defines stress

as an emergency signaling interruption. The basic premise is that autonomic activity results whenever some organized action or thought process is interrupted. The term interruption is used in the sense that any event, whether external or internal to the individual, prevents completion of some action, thought sequences, or plan and is considered to be interrupted. Interruption can occur in the perceptual, cognitive, behavioral, or problem-solving domains. The consequences of the interruption will always be autonomic activity and will be interpreted emotionally in any number of ways, ranging from the most joyful to the most noxious.

The Bio-psychosocial Model of Stress is the interaction between the external and internal components, involving the individual's cognitive processes. Lazarus et. al., (1984b; 1978) have proposed a cognitive theory of stress which addresses this interaction. They refer to this interaction as a transaction, taking into account the ongoing relationship between the individual and the environment. Their theory places emphasis on the meaning that an event has for the individual and not on the physiological responses. Lazarus et al. believe that one's view of a situation determines whether an event is experienced as stressful or not, making stress the consequence of appraisal and not the antecedent of stress. According to this theory, the way an individual appraises an event plays a fundamental role in determining, not only the magnitude of the stress response, but also the kind of coping strategies that the individual may employ in his/her efforts to deal with the stress.

According to the Transaction Theory of Stress, the cognitive appraisal of stress is a two-part process which involves a primary appraisal and a secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal involves the determination of an event as stressful. During primary appraisal, the event or situation can be categorized as irrelevant, beneficial, or stressful. If the event is appraised as stressful, the event is then evaluated as either a harm/loss, a threat, or a challenge. A harm/loss refers to an injury or damage that has already taken place. A threat refers to something that could produce harm or loss. A challenge event refers to the potential for growth, mastery, or some form of gain. Lazarus argues that we cannot assess the origins of stress by looking solely at

the nature of the environmental event, rather stress is a process that involves the interaction of the individual with the environment. These categories are based mostly on one's own prior experiences and learning. Also, each of these categories generate different emotional responses. Harm/loss stressors can elicit anger, disgust, sadness, or disappointment. Threatening stressors can produce anxiety and challenging stressors can produce excitement.

This theory helps to integrate both the motivational aspects of stress and the varying emotions that are associated with the experience of stress. Secondary appraisal occurs after assessment of the event as a threat or a challenge. During secondary appraisal the individual now evaluates his or her coping resources and options. According to the theory of transactions, stress arises only when a particular transaction is appraised by the person as relevant to his or her well-being. In order for an event to be appraised as a stressor, it must be personally relevant and there must be a perceived mismatch between a situation's demands and one's resources to cope with it.

Dienstbier (1989) offers a reformulation of the Transaction theory, which focuses on the emotional consequences of appraising an event as a stressor or as a challenge. He asserts that when an event is appraised as a challenge, it leads to different physiological consequences than when it is appraised as a harm/loss or threat. Dienstbier uses the term stress to refer to transactions that lead only to negative emotions and he uses the term challenge to describe a transaction that could lead both to positive and negative emotions.

A series of studies by Marianne Frankenhaeuser (1986) and colleagues provide some support for Dienstbier's assertion that a stressor evaluated as a challenge should be viewed more positively than a harm/loss or threat event. According to Frankenhaeuser, physiological reactions to stressors depend on two factors: effort and distress. She found that there are three categories of physiological responses to stress. Effort with distress leads to the increase of both catecholamine and cortisol

secretion and results from daily hassles. These stressors are experienced as negative emotions. This category corresponds to Dienstbier's characterization of the negative emotions present in an event appraised as a harm/loss or as a threat. Effort without distress leads to an increase of catecholamine and suppression of cortisol secretion. These stressors are experienced as positive emotions.

This category corresponds to Dienstbier's characterization of the positive emotions present in events appraised as challenging. Distress without effort leads to increase cortisol secretion but not necessarily to catecholamine secretion. This is the pattern often found in depressed individuals.

Traditionally, stress research has been oriented toward studies involving the body's reaction to stressors (a physiological perspective) and the cognitive processes that appraise the event or situation as a stressor (a cognitive perspective). However, current social perspectives of the stress response have noted that different people experiencing similar life conditions are not necessarily affected in the same manner. There is a growing interest in the epidemiology of diseases that seems to rise from stress. It has been noted that the incidence of hypertension, cardiovascular ailments, and depression varies with such factors as race, sex, marital status, and income.

This kind of socioeconomic variation of disease indicates that the stressors that presumably dispose people toward these illnesses are somehow linked to the conditions that people confront as they occupy their various positions and status in the society. Pearlin (1982) observes that individuals' coping strategies are primarily social in nature. The manner in which people attempt to avoid or resolve stressful situations, the cognitive strategies that they use to reduce threat, and the techniques for managing tensions are largely learned from the groups to which they belong. Although the coping strategies used by individuals are often distinct, coping dispositions are to a large extent acquired from the social environment.

The orientation toward stress research is changing as awareness of the social and cultural contexts involved in stress and coping are examined. The bio-psychosocial model of stress incorporates a variety of social factors into its model that influence stress reaction and perception. However, research into the cultural differences that may exist in stress reactions are also needed to examine how various social and cultural structures influence the individual's experience of stress. Culture and society may shape events that are perceived as stressful, what coping strategies are used in a particular society, and what institutional mechanisms we may turn to for assistance (Fumiko Naughton, personal communication).

Pearlin (1982) suggests that society, its value systems, the stratified ordering of its populations, the organization of its institutions, and the rapidity and extent of changes in these elements can be sources of stress. For example, Merton (1957) suggests that society can elicit stress by promoting values that conflict with the structures in which they are acted upon. Merton argues that the system of values in the United States promotes attainment of monetary and honorable success among more people than could be accommodated by the opportunity structures available. As a consequence, many of those individuals who internalize these culturally prized goals are doomed to failure.

As researchers incorporate a social-cultural perspective to stress research, the definitions of stress, which currently incorporate the physiological and cognitive components of stress, need to be re-examined and re-defined to reflect both social and cultural differences. These social and cultural differences may increase our knowledge about stress and how stress can be effectively managed given the constraints imposed upon the individual by the existing values in a particular culture. A re-definition of stress, that would reflect cultural mediation in the experience of stress, might be that "stress is a set of neurological and physiological reactions that serve an adaptive function in the environmental, social, and cultural values and structures within which the individual acts upon." [7]

According to experts, the definition of stress is the body's innate response to a physical, mental or emotional stressors that can either be real or imagined. The stressor can be a stressful event that can either be depressing or wonderful. Stress is powerful because it can affect one's overall health. Its effects can either be negative or positive depending on the types of stress one experience. In simple terms, the definition of stress is, the body's natural defense or survival mechanism to protect itself. It is also called the "flight-or-fight response". Its medical term is neuroendocrine response. When one is stressed most of the time, inflammation can set in inside the body. Chronic inflammation can feed immature or damaged cells in the body. Instead of dying, these cells can turn malignant.

#### 1.2.1: Distress (Negative Stress):

Hans Selye (1978/1956) first distinguished between distress and Eustress (positive stress). "Distress" has been used to refer to negative aspects of the body's reactions to stress, such as depression, anxiety, anger, and exhaustion. There is a common notion that a stressor is an effect that is perceived as stressful by an individual, so that what is distressful for one person may not be so for another. When one perceives negative stressful events, a number of complex internal processes follow. First, the entire body is activated in the startle reaction wherein neural impulses reverberate between the striated muscles and the brain; later the autonomic system becomes involved. The pituitary gland releases hormones, principally adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), which acts on the cortex of the adrenal glands to release corticosteroids. The corticosteroids depress the immune system by inhibiting both the action of scavenger cells and various types of lymphocytes (cells from the lymph nodes) as well as their abilities to reproduce. When distress situations are chronic, there is atrophy of lymph node tissue and enlargement of adrenal glands. Distress has been linked with coronary heart disease, the speeding up of aging through hormonal imbalance, nervous conditions, and the development of degenerative diseases.

### **1.2.2: Family Stress:**

A family that functions well is one that draws upon its resources to meet stressors and becomes stronger by conquering problems. A family that does not bring forth enough resources to cope with stressors allows the strain to fragment the group. The healthy family, in contrast to the unhealthy family, develops creative techniques, flexible rules, and mutual support. Family stress uniquely involves intimate interrelationships such that, if one member is under stress, it affects the whole family. The toll on individuals in these highly stressed situations is extremely high. Some research indicates that people who are divorced have higher rates of suicide, homicide, and cancer and are three times more likely to get into car accidents than non-divorced people.

### **1.2.3: Female Stress:**

“Female Stress Syndrome” is a label for what a woman experiences when chronic or excessive social or psychological demands are placed upon her by others or by herself. Early symptoms include Fatigue, loss of concentration, Headaches, and Depression. Extreme cases of female stress can lead to premenstrual tension, loss of menstruation, Sexual Dysfunction (frigidity, vaginismus, etc.), infertility, postpartum depression, and menopausal melancholia, as well as Anorexia, Bulimia, and Anxiety.

### **1.2.4: Management-Induced Stress:**

Many managers may unknowingly contribute to the stress disorders afflicting their employees. They may do this by inefficiently directing their employees’ energies. As a result, the concentration and judgment of the employees can be impaired. The organization’s productivity also can suffer, along with the individual employee. Sometimes managerial-induced stress can increase the likelihood of accidents in the workplace. Common signs of stress among employees are groaning, continual complaining, and frequent shifting of the eyes, an unnaturally high-pitched voice, jumping with alarm at sudden noises, and being highly emotional or anxious. Clenched fists, a tight jaw, and tension in the neck and shoulder area are signs that a person may be trying to suppress an outburst. Resulting chronic, excessive muscular

tension constitutes a serious health problem. It has been linked with high blood pressure, insomnia, gastrointestinal disorders including colitis, gout, headaches, backaches, asthma, and the like. Further, when one is under stress, the immune system weakens.

#### **1.2.5: Mental Health and Stress:**

The association between mental health and stress has been a focus of mental health researchers; that relationship has been especially at the forefront within recent years. As Avison & Gotlib (1994) stated: "Investigators have become aware of the vast array of different experiences that constitute the universe of stressors. Similarly, they have recognized that stressors manifest themselves in a wide range of different mental health outcomes."

Research has considered stressful life events-especially those that are chronic, the vulnerability of individuals to these stressors, and how stressors influence the varieties of health disorders. In fact, the potential influences of chronic stressors on that great variety of mental health disorders are so numerous that we sample here but a few. Mental health disorders are critical problems for untold millions of people in all countries. Perhaps up to one-third of all primary health care visits worldwide are accounted for by Depression and Anxiety disorders. Suicide consistently ranks as one of the most frequent causes of death; in particular, it is among the top two or three causes of death for young people.

#### **1.2.6: Money (Financial) Stress:**

Two conditions that are major stressors for people are (1) having too little money and a poor (or no) financial plan; and (2) having too much money with a bent toward greed. Although the latter is relatively uncommon, it does make our headlines sporadically when multimillionaires gamble huge fortunes and even commit illegal acts in order to further enhance their already sizable finances. Focusing on the first condition, one problem is that many people overburdened with debt are not aware of



such stress; the Los Angeles Consumer Credit Counseling Services published the following signs:

- Pervasive worry about money
- Fighting with spouse about money (80% of divorces are linked to money problems)
- No savings
- Living from paycheck to paycheck (is the month longer than your money?)
- Debts add up to 20% or more of income (add up all monthly debt payments, excluding first mortgage, and divide into net income; the percentage should not exceed 20%).
- Using credit cards for basic living expenses, such as groceries.
- Making only minimum payments on your debt (Markam, 1996, D6)

#### **1.2.7: Police Stress:**

The sources of stress for police are so numerous and commonly known that they will not be elaborated here. The effects of their jobs on their family lives and visa versa are especially deserving of attention.

#### **1.2.8: Pregnancy and Childbirth Stress:**

During pregnancy and childbirth, a woman experiences dramatic physical changes, often with considerable physical discomfort and pain; for example, she will frequently suffer from Fatigue, Backache, weight gain, nausea, swelling, Constipation, Hemorrhoids, leg cramps, and dizziness. Physical changes including fluctuating hormone levels can also lead to changes in body image that can become a psychological stressor. Even successful childbirth can be stressful in the sense of Eustress (positive stress) due to overreaction with excess tension. [8]

### 1.3. CONCEPTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

There is relatively little research on the causes and the implications of organizational stress, and there is no *one* acceptable definition. We consider organizational stress to be the result of those factors in an organization that cause stress for the individual employee, and in turn, have negative organizational consequences. For example, because of organizational needs or changes, factors such as increased workload or changes in reporting relationships may occur. Such changes in the organizational climate or structure may precipitate a stressful environment among the employees. The employees' stress may cause negative consequences, including absenteeism, burnout, lack of trust, performance problems, or an erosion of positive communication and interaction.

#### 1.3.1: Causes of Organizational Stress

There are many causes of stress within an organization including organizational structure, leadership style and quality, the demands of tasks and roles, balancing efficiency of services with high quality standards, the increasing "24/7" mentality, structural changes and changes in business processes, and the quality of communication throughout the organization.

##### 1.3.1a: Organizational Change

Change is difficult for an institution and for its employees. There is uncertainty about the future, about what the organization will "look like," and how the employees feel they will fit into the new structure. While some individuals embrace change, most simply accept it—and with widely varying degrees of willingness. There are those, however, who refuse to change. The subsequent rejection of cooperative progress puts increased stress on supervisors, colleagues, and the institution as a whole.

According to the old adage, "most people do not like any change that does not jingle in their pockets." The typical tendency is to resist it. Yet, in *A Survival Guide to the*

*Stress of Organizational Change*, the authors state, “resisting change is one of the most common causes of stress on the job” (Pritchett and Pound 1995).

Employees frequently become fearful during times of organizational change because of the instability change causes. They question their abilities to perform in an unknown future. There is a tendency to leave what Stephen Covey calls their “circle of influence” and spend significant time in their “circle of concern,” worrying over possibilities outside their span of control (Covey 1989). Ironically, by clinging to the security blanket of what is known to them, employees can increase their stress levels exponentially. The large-scale result is infectious damage to the organization.

#### **1.3.1b: Leadership**

The quality of leadership is a critical factor relative to the stress of the organization. Are organizational leaders viewed as competent, ethical, strategic, approachable, and fair? Do they have reasonable expectations? Do they clearly communicate their vision and directions? If not, the organization will experience stress. True leadership does not come from the position held but rather from creating a vision, setting an example, and inviting participation. An intelligent leader reads and understands books, but a great leader reads and understands people.

As noted by Kouzes and Posner in *The Leadership Challenge*, “Leaders don’t command and control; they serve and support” (Kouzes and Posner 1995). Leaders can create stress if employees do not think they have the good of the institution and its people in their minds...and in their hearts.

#### **1.3.1c: Changes in Roles and Tasks**

Many organizations find it necessary to examine ways in which business is conducted. Whether seen as positive or negative, many colleges and universities are re-examining processes and services, as well as staffing, and are taking on more “business-like” approaches to accomplish their work. This may mean streamlining or

greater use of technology (including less in-person contact and more online interactions). It generally requires employees to learn new skills and commit themselves to continuous learning. While exciting for some, and taken in their stride by many, it is resented or rejected by a percentage of employee populations.

As roles and tasks change, there is a potential for stress-producing ambiguity, placing increased emphasis on the importance of adequate and timely communication. Clarity of job descriptions, reporting relationships, and performance standards are critical in combating the potential stress caused by changes in role and/or tasks.

#### **1.3.1d: Balance in Work and Life**

As technology increases, we are witnessing a struggle—not just with continuous learning and the expectation that the work will be accomplished more quickly, but also with a quality dilemma. For those who provide a service rather than a product, there is inherent stress in balancing process efficiencies with customer expectations for quality and personal hands-on assistance.

Another significant contributing factor to organizational stress is the “24/7” expectation in an increasing number of jobs. Many employees express concern that they do not have a “life outside of work” anymore. Office-related e-mails infringe on employees’ evenings and weekends. With the over use of laptop computers, the expectation seems to be growing that we can work wherever we go. Employees risk becoming resentful and are vulnerable to burnout. Some cease to have the energy and the enthusiasm they had in the past. As they lose their spark and creativity, the organization loses a major resource. <sup>[9]</sup>

The modern world, which is said to be a world of achievements, is also a world of stress. One finds stress everywhere, whether it be a family, a business organisation/enterprise or any other social or economic organization. The extent of stress is, however, a matter of degree. Some organizations are more harmonious whereas

others have greater friction and tension. Stress in organizations has been defined in terms of a misfit between a person's skills and abilities and the demands of his/her job and as a misfit in terms of a person's needs not being fulfilled by his job environment.

Cooper and Marshall (1976) are of the view that occupational stress refers to environmental factors or stressors such as work overload, role conflict, role ambiguity, and poor working conditions associated with a particular job. Caplan et al. (1975) define organizational stress in general and role stress in particular. From the point of view of an individual, two role systems are important: role space and role set.

**Role Space:** Each individual occupies and plays several roles. A person 'X' is a son, a father, an executive, a member of a club and so on. All these roles constitute role space. In the centre of the role space is the self. Role space, thus, can be defined as "the dynamic interrelationship both between the self and the various roles an individual occupies, amongst these roles."

**Role Set:** The individual's role in the organization is defined by the expectations of other significant roles, and those of the individual himself/herself. The role set is "the pattern of relationship between the role being considered and other roles. Pareek (1983) pioneered work on the role stress by identifying as many as ten different types of organisational role stresses. They are described here briefly:

**Inter-Role Distance (IRD):** It is experienced when there is a conflict between organisational and non-organizational roles. For example, the role of an executive versus the role of a husband/wife.

**Role Stagnation (RS):** This kind of stress is the result of the gap between the demand to outgrow a previous role and to occupy a new role effectively. It is the feeling of

being stuck in the same role. Such a type of stress results in perception that there is no opportunity for one's career progression.

**Role Expectation Conflict (REC):** This type of stress is generated by different expectations by different significant persons about the same' role; and the role occupant's ambivalence about whom to please.

**Role Erosion (RE):** This kind of role stress is the function of the role occupant's feeling that some functions which should properly belong to his /her role are transferred to / or performed by some other role. This can also happen when the functions are performed by the role occupant but the credit for it goes to someone else. Another manifestation is in the form of underutilisation in the role.

**Role Overload (RO):** When the role occupant feels that there are too many expectations from the significant roles in his/her role set, he/she experiences role overload. There are two aspects of this stress: quantitative and qualitative. The former refers to having too much to do, while latter refers to things being too difficult and the accountability in the role.

**Role Isolation (RI):** This type of role stress refers to the psychological distance between the occupant's role and other roles in the same role set. It is also defined as role distance which is different from inter-role distance (IRD), in the sense that while IRD refers to the distance among various occupied by the same individual, role isolation (RI) is characterized by the feelings that others do not reach out easily, indicative of the absence of strong linkages of one's role with other roles. This can be geographic or systematic.

**Personal Inadequacy (PI):** This type of stress arises when the role occupant feels that he/she does not have the necessary skills and training for effectively performing the functions expected from his/her role. This is bound to happen when the

organizations do not impart periodic training to enable the employees to cope with the fast changes both within and outside the organization.

**Self-Role Distance (SRD):** When the role a person occupies goes against his/her self-concept, then he/she feels self-role distance type of stress. This is essentially a conflict arising out of mismatch between the person and his/her job.

**Role Ambiguity (RA):** It refers to the lack of clarity about the expectations of the role which may arise out of lack of information or understanding. It may exist in relation to activities, responsibilities, personal styles, and norms and may operate at three stages: When the role sender holds his expectations about the role, when he/she sends it, and when the occupant receives those expectations.

**Resource Inadequacy (Rin):** This type of stress is evident when the role occupant feels that he/she is not provided with adequate resources for performing the functions expected from his/her role. Pareek (1983) developed and standardised the Organisational Role Stress Scale (ORS Scale) to measure the above mentioned role stresses. He noted that until recently research was done on the three role stresses, namely, role ambiguity, role overload and role conflict. However, he found many other role stresses in organizations. The ORS scale is certainly one of the best instruments available today for measuring a wide variety of role stresses. It is worth noting here that role-based stresses not only affect the pleasantness on the job and increase general fatigue but also reduce one's potentiality to perform effectively as they tend to immobilise the person to use the available resource effectively. <sup>[10]</sup>

*Occupational stress* is a term used to define ongoing stress that is related to the workplace. The stress may have to do with the responsibilities associated with the work itself, or be caused by conditions that are based in the corporate culture or personality conflicts. As with other forms of tension, occupation stress can eventually affect both physical and emotional well being if not managed effectively. Stress is an

inherent factor in any type of vocation or career. At its best, the presence of stress can be a motivator that urges the individual to strive for excellence.

However, excess amounts of stress can lead to a lack of productivity, a loss of confidence, and the inability to perform routine tasks. As a result, quality employees lose their enthusiasm for their work and eventually withdraw from the company. When left unchecked, occupational stress can lead to emotional and physical disorders that began to impact personal as well as professional lives. The individual may develop a level of tension that interferes with sleep, making relaxation outside the workplace impossible. Over a time, period of this stress can trigger emotional disorders such as anxiety, depression and in some cases various phobias that further inhibit the ability to enjoy any aspect of living.

During the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, employers began to initiate programs to help reshape corporate cultures in an effort to minimize the amount of productive stress found in the workplace. For many companies, this meant developing an occupational stress definition that was relevant to the individual business and the working environment as it was currently constituted. With the working definition in place, employers began to utilize resources such as confidential reporting methods, professional counselling, and employee committees to identify areas where the corporate climate could be enhanced and reduce stress levels at the same time. Over the years, the tools used to identify and effectively deal with occupational stress have continued to evolve.

Today, there is a standard occupational stress index that is used in many stress management programs to assess the potential for negative stress to undermine one or more employees. There are also various incarnations of an occupational stress indicator listing that can help individuals determine whether general conditions have the potential to lead to unhealthy stress levels.



In response to tools such as the occupational stress scale, counselling and employee training programs often include individual and group counselling opportunities. These programs seek to teach employers and employees how to look at the workplace objectively, then take steps to contain or eliminate factors that are highly likely to undermine the confidence and function of employees. As a result, the company enjoys a higher level of productivity and the employee enjoys a more positive work environment within a company that is more likely to provide employment for many years to come. <sup>[11]</sup>

Occupational (job, work or workplace) stress has become one of the most serious health issues in the modern world (Lu et. al., 2003, 479), as it occurs in any job and is more pervasive than it was decades ago. The domain of work differs considerably from the working environment that was prevalent 30 years ago: longer hours at work are not unusual, frequent changes in culture and structure are often cited, as well as the loss of lifetime career paths (Cooper & Locke, 2000 in Fotinatos Ventouratos & Cooper 2005), which all leads to greater presence and levels of stress.

Occupational stress, in particular, is the inability to cope with the pressures in a job (Rees, 1997), because of a poor fit between someone's abilities and his/her work requirements and conditions (Holmlund-Ryttonen & Strandvik, 2005). It is a mental and physical condition which affects an individual's productivity, effectiveness, personal health and quality of work (Comish & Swindle, 1994, 26). The main components of the work-stress process are potential sources of stress (stressors), factors of individual differences (moderators/mediators), and consequences of stress (strain) (Lu et. al., 2003, 481). Stressors (job-related and extra-organizational) are objective events, stress is the subjective experience of the event, and strain is the poor response to stress. Accordingly, the nature and effects of stress might be best understood by saying that some environmental variables (stressors), when interpreted by the individual (cognitive interpretation), may lead to stress (Dua, 1994, 59). <sup>[12]</sup>

## 1.4. POLICE STRESS

Perhaps one of the most important findings in police stress research is that stress in law enforcement is difficult to measure and cannot be attributed to just one factor. In essence, police stress is a complex formula that has many different contributory factors. Symonds (1970) was one of the first researchers to recognize that the causes of police stress could be divided into different types which he described as (1) the stress experienced due to the nature of police work (i.e., occupational stressors), and (2) stress which is the result of the nature of the police agency (i.e., organizational stressors). With the addition of intra-interpersonal and health consequences, these four categories serve as landmarks for the researcher's journey through the considerable amount of literature that has amassed over the past several decades on this topic (e.g., Anshel, 2000; Brown & Campbell, 1994; Crank & Caldero, 1991; Gersons, Carlier, Lamberts, & Kolk, 2000; Kroes et al., 1974; Martelli, Waters, & Martelli, 1989; Storch & Panzarella, 1996; Symonds, 1970).

### 1.4.1: Intra-Interpersonal Stressors

Some researchers have proposed that there are certain personality factors that make it difficult to perform the essential functions of police work and they are the key contributors to the experience of stress. The objective of this clinically oriented approach has been to determine if certain personality traits predispose an officer to suffer higher levels of stress than others (Burke, 1989; Beutler et al., 1988; Black, 2000; *Area Review 3* Downloaded By: [INFLIBNET India Order] At: 08:28 6 April 2010 Brown & Campbell, 1994; Sarchione, Cuttler, Muchinsky, & Nelson- Gray, 1998; Scogin, Schumacher, Gardner, & Chaplin, 1995).

These factors have included, but are not limited to, levels of self-confidence and self-esteem (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990), optimism/pessimism (Alkus & Padesky, 1983; Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986; Violanti & Aron, 1993), extraversion/ introversion (Costa, Somerfield, McCrae, 1996; Hart et al., 1995; Krohne, 1996), hardiness (Kobassa, 1979; Li-Ping Tang, 1992),

cynicism (Abraham, 2000; Chandler & Jones, 1979; Regoli, Poole & Hewitt, 1979; Wilt & Bannon, 1976), authoritarianism (Coleman & Gorman, 1992; Genz & Lester, 1976; Jensen, 1957), and type A personalities (Davidson & Veno, 1980; Fenster & Locke, 1973; Kirmeyer & Diamond, 1985).

Psychological testing conducted for the purpose of screening appropriate candidates suggests that certain personality aspects are preferable in policing (Murrell, 1998; Murrell, Lester, & Arcuri, 1978). Self-confidence and self-esteem are related but different concepts. The extent to which a person approves of or likes him/herself is defined as his/her self-esteem, whereas self-confidence refers to the level of assurance one has in his/her ability to succeed (Anshel, 2000). Lower levels of self-confidence and self-esteem have been associated with greater job satisfaction in police work (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Officers who are confident in their abilities to carry out tasks effectively and hold themselves in high regard are generally more satisfied with their profession and in turn feel less stressed (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Frost et al., 1990).

Those who tend to have a more positive outlook on life and feel hopeful about their abilities and their future are generally happy individuals (Scheier et al., 1986). Similarly, officers who have a positive sense of self, tend to be more hopeful about the future and therefore are more optimistic and satisfied in their work (Alkus & Padesky, 1983; Burke, 1989; Violanti & Aron, 1993; Scheier et al., 1986).

A related characteristic that has been associated with stress among police officers is introversion versus extroversion. This trait has been linked to social support seeking (Anshel, 2000), which is a concept that is highly linked to job satisfaction (e.g., Crank, Regoli, Hewitt, & Culbertson, 1995; Kaufmann & Beehr, 1986; Cherniss & Egnatios, 1978). Researchers have found that optimists tend to concentrate on the positive aspects of a situation, they tend to remain stable under pressure, whereas pessimists tend to catastrophize events and feel significantly more bothered by anxiety provoking aspects of situations (Anshel, 2000; Scheier et. al.). Optimism has also been

related to the concept of hardiness in police officers (Lefcourt, 1992; Li-Ping Tang & Hammontree, 1992).

Kobassa (1979) states that hardiness is associated with one's level of commitment, perceived control, and the degree to which he/she enjoys being challenged. Hence, officers who are hardy tend to be more optimistic, have higher self-esteem and self-confidence, and experience less strain in a stressful event (Lefcourt, 1992; Li-Ping Tang & Hammontree, 1992; Kobassa, 1979). Cynicism in police officers has also been identified as prevalent and problematic (Brown & Campbell, 1994; Lotz & Regoli, 1977). Although cynicism is believed to be unsettling with respect to police-community relations, it has also been recognized as a means of coping with stressful situations (Anshel, 2000; Brown & Campbell, 1994; Byrne, 1961). Related to this concept is the authoritative personality of police officers that has been well researched in the literature (e.g., Coleman & Gorman, 1982; Jensen, 1975). The authoritative officer tends to have poorer relations with the community and expects adherence to his/her demands (Wilt & Bannon, 1976). He/she may tend to be more of a perfectionist (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991) and experience greater frustration in stressful events (Anshel, 2000; Brown & Campbell, 1994).

The aforementioned characteristics are consistent with the type A personality. Although empirically inconclusive, this personality type is believed to be more prevalent in police officers as compared to the general population (Kirmeyer & Diamond, 1985; Davidson & Veno, 1980).

Those who are classified as type A personalities tend to have higher expectations for themselves, be more competitive, strive for perfection, and have higher demands (Kirmeyer & Diamond, 1985; Davidson & Veno, 1980; Friedman & Roseman, 1974). Such individuals are more likely to experience adverse psychological and physical effects of stressful situations (Cooper & Marshall, 1976). Despite efforts to discover the "police personality," research in this area has yielded inconclusive results. Additionally, studies that have attempted to determine the characteristics of police

personality contain some methodological errors (Brown & Campbell, 1994). In his review of the police personality studies, Lefkowitz (1975) stated that many of the conclusions proposed in this area are based on subjective interpretations of law enforcement "experts," making the generalizability and validity of the research questionable. Several other studies have hardly found any significant difference between police officers and the general population (Davidson, 1979; Gudjonsson & Adlam, 1983; McLaren, Gollan, & Horwell, 1998).

In addition, there have also been arguments regarding the maladaptiveness of these characteristics. Some have argued that although these characteristics may not be desirable attributes, they are not necessarily the cause of adverse occupational defects (Davidson & Veno, 1980; Reiser, 1976).

#### **1.4.2: Occupational Stressors**

Although personality styles are believed to contribute and/or interact with the inherent demands of police work, resulting in poor work performance and/or burnout; the concerns regarding the relationship between and stress the tasks performed as a police officer have led to a second area of police stress research (e.g., Anshel, 2000; Brown & Campbell, 1994; Crank & Caldero, 1991; Kroes, 1979; Kroes et al., 1974a; Kroes et al., 1974b; MacLeod & Paton, 1999; Martelli et al., 1989; Storch & Panzarella, 1996; Stephens & Long, 2000; Symonds, 1970).

There is little debate that policing is, at times, traumatic and stressful. The occupation of policing involves various tasks that are potentially harmful and life threatening. What has been the subject of debate is whether or not policing is a uniquely strenuous profession. Nonetheless, officers are often exposed to disturbing images and are forced to encounter circumstances that most other occupations can avoid (Stephens & Long, 2000). Hence, the external stressors that may give rise to the stress of a police officer include a variety of entities. Research has identified a series of work related stressors and some have attempted to rank officer reported stressors (e.g., Kroes, et al., 1974; Stephens, Long, & Flett, 1999; Violanti & Aron, 1994; Violanti,

1994). The most commonly identified stressors in the literature have been classified into six primary factors that are briefly outlined in the following paragraphs. These stress factors include: (a) dealings with the judicial system; (b) public scrutiny and media coverage; (c) officer involved shootings; (d) encountering victims of crime and fatalities (particularly children); (e) community relations; and (f) encountering violent/unpredictable situations.

Dealing with the judicial system has been identified as a source of stress in police work (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Kroes, 1974a; Kroes, et al., 1974b; Stratton, 1978). Officers have reported that court proceedings and dealings with judicial system personnel such as prosecutors and defense lawyers are an aggravating component of the job (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Kroes, 1985). Some officers feel that the judicial system is too lenient on certain criminals. They feel that their hard work in capturing a suspect and gathering evidence against him/her is wasted when plea bargains are offered or when suspects are released due to technicalities (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Kroes et al., 1974b; Stratton, 1978).

The media has elicited public scrutiny that has also been identified as stressful in policing (Violanti, 1994; Kroes, 1985; Kroes et al., 1974a). Many police departments have had to withstand public humiliation by the media. The Los Angeles Police Department and the New York City Police Department are prime examples of police agencies that are all too familiar with public scrutiny. Distorted reports by the media about incidents of police "disappointments" damage the organization's public image (Eisenberg, 1975). These criticisms by the media bring disrepute to the police organizations and subsequently affect the morale of the institution (Davidson & Veno, 1980; Eisenberg, 1975; Kroes & Gould, 1974; Kroes et al., 1974b; Violanti, 1994). Officer-involved shootings such as killing someone in the line of duty, a fellow officer being killed, or being shot at by a suspect have all been identified as stressful encounters in police work (Violanti, 1994; Gersons, 1989; Coman, 1987; Coman & Evans, 1991; Stratton, Parker & Shibbe, 1984; Sewell, 1983; Kroes & Gould, 1974; Kroes et. al., 1974).

As a result of these types of incidents, officers may experience posttraumatic symptoms (Gersons et. al., 2000) and other personal problems (Alkus & Padesky, 1981). If these traumatic events are not dealt with appropriately, the officer's symptoms may persist leading to poor job performance and severe psychological or physical ailments (Anshel, 2000; Stephens & Long, 2000; Paton & Smith, 1999). The nature of police work can, at times, require officers to put themselves in dangerous and unpredictable situations. Officers are frequently dispatched to calls where there is little information available about what is occurring on the scene.

As a result, officers must be prepared to face danger, assaultive individuals, or even catastrophes (Blau, 1994). The constant threat of being in danger can be strenuous to the officer (Wells, Getman, Blau, 1988). Officers have reported that responding to a scene where things are unpredictable and the potential for danger is unknown, is even more stressful than actually knowing that there is definite danger awaiting, such as an armed robbery in progress (Blau, 1994; Kroes, 1979; Kroes & Gould, 1974; Kroes et al., 1974b; MacLeod & Paton, 1999; Stratton, 1980).

As part of their job, officers often have to face difficult situations such as encountering victims of crime. Many officers have reported that they feel a great deal of psychological distress from dealing with victims of crime and fatalities, particularly children (Violanti, 1994; Alexander & Wells, 1991; Duckworth & Charlesworth, 1988; Durham, McCammon & Allison, 1985; Kroes, 1985; Kroes et al., 1974b). Studies have found that officers who encounter these types of situations sometimes experience posttraumatic stress symptoms and often feel guilty. (Duckworth & Charlesworth, 1988).

Studies have also found more extreme symptoms such as severe anxiety and depression experienced by officers who have been exposed to these types of traumatic events (Alexander & Wells, 1991). When a crime occurs, police officers are usually the first to be called out to the scene, having to face victims of crime and

brutality. Officers have revealed in several studies that encountering victims of crime is difficult for them (e.g., Kroes & Gould, 1974; Kroes et al., 1974b; MacLeod & Paton, 1999; Violanti, 1994; Sewell, 1983). Many a times, officers are called out to scenes where they have to face abused or injured children (Martin, McKean, & Veltkamp, 1986; Violanti, 1994).

Many police officers have reported that encountering victims of crime, particularly the vulnerable, is particularly disturbing (Violanti, 1994). In addition to confronting victims of crime, it has also been reported that officers are anguished by encountering victims of accidents and natural disasters (Duckworth & Charlesworth, 1988; Durham, McCammon, & Allison, 1985). Scholars have argued that repeated exposure to such traumatic events causes the officer to question the notion of a “just world” (Young, 1989), causing grave psychological damage.

However, others have argued that police officers do not share the same assumption of a “just world,” merely by the nature of their occupation which forces them to witness crime, violence, and injustice everyday (Brown & Campbell, 1994). Another form of police stress identified in the literature is that of community relations (Brown & Campbell, 1994; Kroes, 1985; Kroes & Gould, 1974; Kroes et al., 1974b; Violanti & Aron, 1993; Violanti, 1994; Wilson, 1968).

Police officers report that when the community has negative impression of them, it infuriates poor relations, which makes their work difficult. Figley (1999) describes a phenomenon called “Compassion Fatigue” which is the emotional toll that policing takes on the officer (as cited in Brown & Campbell, 1994). He states that the lack of appreciation displayed by the public towards police officers causes them to become cynical towards the community. With the trend towards community policing, this source of stress becomes particularly important as the officer’s interaction with the neighbourhood increases (Brown & Campbell, 1994).

#### **1.4.3: Organizational Stressors**



The third category in which police stress literature can be classified is organizational stressors. Although these types of stressors are commonly cited as contributing to police stress (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Crank & Caldero, 1991; Evans & Coman, 1993; Kroes, 1979; Kroes et al., 1974b; Storch & Panzarella, 1996; Violanti & Aron, 1994; Violanti & Aron, 1993), exploration of the topic as an instrumental factor remains limited and relatively underdeveloped.

This is partly because those observations tend to be somewhat cursory, as the topic has not been well researched and mentioned as a peripheral contributory factor. Nevertheless, the existence of stressors generated by the police agency is irrefutable and thus warrants a closer examination. The following is a discussion of the most commonly cited organizational stressors in policing. First, every major study designates shift work as a major stressor. Because policing is round-the-clock, many officers are forced to work early mornings, late evenings, or swing shifts.

Although shift work can be viewed as an occupational stressor, having to work extensively long hours and rotating shifts are enforced by the organization (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Crank & Caldero, 1991; Sewell, 1981; Stratton, 1978). Some organizations have implemented 4/10 work schedules (4 days a week, 10 hour days) in an effort to alleviate the stress of five day work week schedules. Second, officers often report inadequate supervision and poor relationship as stressful. Supervisors who are judged to be unskillful, incompetent, and unfair are identified as variables within the organization that give rise to the stress of subordinates. Unfair practices include negative discipline, lack of due process, unjustified disciplinary action, unfair performance evaluation, and unfair promotion practices characterized by little opportunity for achieving higher rank (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Eisenberg, 1975; Kroes & Gould, 1974; Kroes et al., 1974b).

Third, lack of input into policy and decision-making is a major source of stress for line staff officers. Unable to provide input regarding decisions that directly affect them and discouraged to express their feeling to their supervisors, these officers feel

helpless and stressed (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Kroes, 1985; Violanti & Aron, 1993). Lack of recognition and insufficient administrative support is the fourth area of internal stressors. Officers often feel that their work goes unappreciated and unrecognized for good work. They feel that they are only confronted when problems arise.

If an incident occurs (i.e., a shoot out), line officers believe that they lack the support of administration and are sometimes used as scapegoats in the interest of public relations (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Kroes, 1985; Violanti & Aron, 1994). Excessive paperwork is cited as another organizational stressor. Although many officers understand the need for paperwork, they perceive some of the documentation to be excessive, unnecessary, or feel that there is a lack of clerical support in completing them (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Crank & Caldero, 1991; Violanti & Aron, 1994).

Insufficient pay and poor resources are also reported as organizational stressors. Officers have disclosed feelings of frustration with regard to wages and benefits. Moreover, lack of proper equipment and shortage of personnel are present within many law enforcement agencies and are seen as contributors to stress (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Davidson & Veno, 1980). Role conflict and ambiguity is also faced by many police officers. The department's goals and objectives may be unclear or contradictory causing doubt and fear for line staff officers while on duty (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Brown & Campbell, 1994). Officers are frequently forced to play a double role, that of a law enforcer and a social worker.

Many of the calls they respond to each day require them to counsel either victims or family members, while trying to maintain order. Furthermore, the challenge of facing departmental demands may at times be in direct conflict with the job objectives (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994). The next widely referenced area of organizational stress is isolation and/or boredom. This is seen as performing repetitive work, understimulation as a result of not having enough to do on the job, and physical inactivity (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Kroes, 1985; Kroes et al., 1974b).

Finally, Reiser (1974) reported the internal discipline structure within a police department as very stressful. A police officer often feels that he/she is in double jeopardy in that he/she is not only liable criminally and civilly for a misdeed, but is also very likely to face punishment within the department. It is almost as though he/she is expected to maintain personal and moral standards at a level higher than is necessary for the general public (Reiser, 1974). The aforementioned findings clearly point to some significant aspects of police work that are related to stress experienced on the job, the argument that it may or may not exceeds that of other professions.

Several studies have attempted to rank the stressors prevalent in police work (e.g., Brown & Campbell, 1990; Crank & Caldero, 1991; Kroes et al., 1974; Kroes & Gould, 1974; Violanti & Aron, 1994). Notwithstanding personality factors and specific job tasks, the literature appears to indicate that organizational components within law enforcement are better predictors of burnout. Storch and Panzarella (1996) found that although some officers report discomfort related to the nature of police work, the key stressors in this profession appear to be more related to organizational factors than to the dangerousness of the work or encounters with human misery.

Crank and Caldero (1991) sought to measure stress based on self-report, as it was perceived by a group of officers. They categorized the responses into five "domains of content" and found organizational stressors as most frequently cited. Using an open-ended questionnaire, Sewell (1981) identified 144 events as stressful in the professional life of a police officer. Many of the commonly reported stressors experienced were related to the organization. Court appearances, writing a routine report, making a routine traffic stop, making a routine arrest, working on a holiday, and changing work shifts were identified frequently. Some of the less commonly reported experiences identified as stressful were death of a partner, dismissal, murder committed by a police officer, taking a life in the line of duty, and suicide of an officer who is a close friend (Sewell, 1981).

Kroes et. al., (1974b) conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with the entire police force. Four major questions regarding stress were asked. These questions inquired about: (1) what does the policeman consider bothersome about the job, (2) what the policeman thought was bothersome to other policeman regarding the job, (3) from a list of stressors, what the interviewee found bothersome, and (4) what was it like when the interviewee was last uncomfortable in his/her job? The authors reported that the most significant stressors for the policemen appear to involve those situations or circumstances which produce a threat to his/her sense of professionalism and are highly related to the organization (Kroes et. al., 1974b).

#### **1.4.4: Health Consequences of Police Stress**

Police stress may lead to adverse consequences such as physical and psychological ailments at various levels. Routine stressors such as shift work, job overload, and management styles, as well as traumatic incidents such as a death of a partner, officer-involved shootings, or suicide of a colleague are all reported by police officers as being psychologically stressful as well as physically taxing (Brown & Campbell, 1990; Brown & Campbell, 1994; Brown et al., 1999; Crank & Caldero, 1991; Kroes et al., 1974b; Sewell, 1981; Storch & Panzarella, 1996; Violanti & Aron, 1993).

Among the psychological problems, diagnosable disorders such as depression, anxiety, drug and alcohol abuse (Dietrich & Smith, 1986; Violanti, Marshall, & Howell, 1985), posttraumatic stress disorder (Carlier, Voerman, & Gersons, 2000; Gersons, Carlier, Lamberts, & Kolk, 2000; Reiser & Geiger, 1984; Robinson, Sigman, & Wilson, 1997), suicide (Arrigo & Garsky, 1996; Baker & Baker, 1996; Cantor, Tyman, & Slater, 1995; Violanti, 1995a; Violanti, 1995b), and personal problems such as high rates of divorce (Terry, 1981) have been reported. The physical health problems reported include an array of illnesses (Milham, 1983; Gularnick, 1963) and high mortality rates (Violanti, Vena, & Marshall, 1986). Increasing reports of disease, morbidity, and morality of police professionals are present in the literature (Sparrow, Thomas, & Weiss, 1983; Violanti et al., 1986).

Gularnick (1963) found police officers to have significantly greater incidence of heart disease, diabetes, and suicide. Milham (1979) indicated that police officers have an increased mortality risk for diseases such as cancers of the colon and liver, diabetes, and heart disease (as cited in Violanti et al., 1986). Kroes et al., (1974b) compared a group of Cincinnati police officers with a sample of civilians. Over 32 percent of these officers reported digestive disorders, while 24 percent reported headaches. These numbers are considerably higher than the 14 percent reported by the civilian population. Richard and Fell (1975) examined hospital and mental health center records in Tennessee. They found that between 1972 to 1974, police officers were treated with more health problems such as digestive and circulatory disorders than any other occupation.

Grenick and Pitchess (1973) found that police officers had high cholesterol levels and were also more overweight than normal. These findings indicate that police officers have a higher risk for developing coronary heart diseases (Grenick & Pitchess, 1973). Franke, Collins, and Hinz (1998) compared cardiovascular disease morbidity among a group of Iowa police officers, comparing them with a cohort of Iowa civilians. After taking into account several conventional risk factors such as tobacco use and age, they found that police officers display higher rates of cardiovascular disease than their counterparts (Franke et al., 1998). Violanti et al. (1986) conducted a longitudinal study (using archival data from a previous study) involving 2,376 police officers in a large metropolitan area. The researchers found that the overall mortality from all causes of death among these officers are comparable to the expected rate in the country (white male general population).

However, the rates of death due to cancer were significantly higher than the general population; specifically, cancer of the digestive (esophagus and colon) organs. Mortality from heart diseases typically increased with increasing years of service for the police officer (Violanti et. al., 1986). It is likely that high mortality rates because of cancer and greater risk of death from heart diseases among police officers is related to police occupational factors, as well as lifestyle. (Violanti et. al., 1986). The stress

related to work environment, irregular hours, poor eating habits, and lack of exercise are not unique to only police officers. These factors clearly contribute to ill health (Violanti et. al., 1986).

Unfortunately, research is sparse in the area of common physical illnesses and police personnel. This scarcity makes it difficult to assume that the presence of these disorders among police officers is due to their occupation. Thus, generalization in this area needs to be made with caution. Nonetheless, research indicates that officers may be at risk from diseases that can contribute to higher mortality rates, common physical illnesses, and the like. Similarly, another notable factor that contributes to the higher rates of mortality among law enforcement is that of suicide. Some researchers argue that the stress endured by police officers often leads to unhealthy coping mechanisms, the ultimate being suicide (Arrigo & Garsky, 1996). Researchers have argued that the inherent stressors present in police work, the lack of support from administration, and the lack of ample family support are all related to suicide among police (Arrigo & Garsky, 1996). Generally, research has been inconclusive regarding suicide in law enforcement.

Violanti (1995b) found that although there may not be higher rates of suicide among police, there is a trend towards increase suicide rates during the past two decades. Baker and Baker (1996) also agree that police die increasingly because of their more rapidly at their own lifestyle than at the hands of criminals. On the other hand, Cantor et al., (1995) found that there were methodological errors in studies that examined suicide among police personnel and concluded that there appears to be a general decline rather than increase in suicide rates. Nevertheless, the issue of suicide among law enforcement calls for great concern. Some researchers have stated that the effects of duty related stressors on police officers leads to Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (Robinson et al., 1997), which has been one of the leading cause of suicides in law enforcement (Carlier et al., 1997). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is one of the most researched areas in policing (Gersons et al., 2000; Carlier et al., 1997; Carlier et al., 2000; Carlier et al., 1996; Reiser, 1984; Robinson et al., 1997).

In "police officer as victim," Reiser (1984) provided a thorough discussion of posttraumatic syndrome among police officers. After having experienced a highly traumatic incident, a police officer may shift into an altered state of consciousness (Reiser, 1984). This shift can affect all five senses, resulting in tunnel vision, distortion in hearing, hyperawareness, and the individual may dissociate from his/her environment. If these symptoms continue without intervention, the officer may develop posttraumatic stress disorder (Sims & Sims, 1998).

Reiser (1984) suggests that police agencies need to understand that officers who have been involved in a traumatic incident suffer crisis. They will be emotionally unstable and depending on the nature of the intervention, they will either improve or deteriorate (Reese, 1982). Thus, police departments need to remain sensitive and treat the traumatized officer as a victim, not a suspect (Reiser, 1984). Another study examined internal and external risk factors for PTSD symptoms in 262 traumatized police officers at the three- and twelve month trauma (Carlier et. al., 1997). They found "introversion, difficulty in expressing feelings, emotional exhaustion at the time of trauma, insufficient time allowed by the employer to come to terms with trauma, dissatisfaction with organizational support, and insecure job future" (Carlier et. al., 1997, p. 498) to be present at this stage. At the twelve-month-post trauma stage, Carlier et al. (1997) states that "posttraumatic stress symptoms were further predicted by lack of hobbies, acute hyperarousal, subsequent traumatic events, job dissatisfaction, brooding over work, and lack of social interaction support in the private sphere" (p. 498). Virtually all studies suggested that intervention techniques offered by the department can greatly reduce the duration and intensity of trauma (Carlier et. al., 2000; Gersons et. al., 2000). The misuse of alcohol by police officers, has been extensively examined in the literature as well (Dietrich & Smith, 1986; Violanti et. al., 1985; Unkovic & Brown, 1978). These forms of unhealthy coping mechanisms appear to be quite prevalent in law enforcement (Violanti et. al., 1985; Unkovic & Brown, 1978). Research has also noted that drinking is not only practiced

by off-duty law enforcement personnel, but many officers admit to using alcohol while on-duty (Van Raalte, 1979).

Dietrich and Smith (1986) reported a thorough investigation of the literature pertaining to nonmedical drug use including alcohol among police officers. They found that officers appear to be influenced by a number of factors: the police culture, occupational deviance, occupational demands of the police officer, and coping functions (Dietrich & Smith, 1986). Work cultures such as the police organization appear to foster expectations of drinking, applaud it, and even belie its existence (Fine, Arkabas, & Bellinger, 1983; Dietrich & Smith, 1986). Also, due to the traditionally male-oriented environment of police settings, drinking is accepted for socializing and stress reduction (Babin, 1980; Dietrich & Smith, 1986). Drinking with colleagues is a phenomenon that symbolizes loyalty, trustworthiness, masculinity, and often reinforces the bond members share (Dietrich & Smith, 1986; Van Raalte, 1979). Drinking is viewed as an opportunity to engage in occupational deviance; in other words, a chance to violate rules. This phenomenon is a result of workplace experiences and is often reinforced by peer groups (Barker, 1978; Dietrich & Smith, 1986). Additionally, occupational demands of police work have been identified as related to alcohol use (Dietrich & Smith, 1986; Van Raalte, 1979; Violanti et al., 1985). Officers often indicate that drinking is regarded as a socially acceptable coping alternative (Violanti et al., 1985; Dietrich & Smith, 1985). Researchers have noted that as officers experience more stress on the job, their tendency to use alcohol as a coping method increases (Violanti et al., 1985).

Van Raalte (1979) conducted an informal survey involving 30 sworn police officers. He found that the evening shift has the highest rate of alcohol consumption, with reasons for drinking varying from social grounds to coping with stress. The results also indicate that many officers drink while on duty. Van Raalte (1979) also gave examples of individuals who have experienced serious repercussions as a result of drinking.



Violanti et al. (1985), state that alcohol consumption among police is underestimated. These researchers sought to discover the relationship between police job demands, stress, coping, and alcohol use, and their impact on the police officer. They measured psychological stress, police job demands (emotional dissonance), and police coping responses (cynicism) of 500 officers. The researchers found that stress has a strong effect on the use of alcohol, while the effects of emotional dissonance and cynicism were small (Violanti et al., 1985).

Relatedly, stress has also been linked to various personal problems within the police department. Although research has been primarily inconclusive about divorce rates among law enforcement personnel (Kroes et. al., 1974a; Reiser, 1973), many agree that the demands of the job can be taxing on one's family life (Ayres & Flanagan, 1994; Brown & Campbell, 1994; Violanti, 1981). Studies have indicated that marital problems among police officer's families may be attributed to shift-work and the psychological demands of the job that results in undesirable attributes that contribute to marital discord (Arrigo & Garsky, 1996; Brown & Campbell, 1994).

When dealing with a complex organization such as a law enforcement agency, where multiple factors contribute to the employee's experiences, it is difficult to locate the exact antecedents of stress. In examining the relationship between job satisfaction and psychological burnout, Wolpin, Burke, and Greenglass (1991) agree that the recognition of the specific stressors is the most important factor in successfully dealing with job burnout. As indicated in the above review, this has been a challenging task for scholars who study police stress. <sup>[13]</sup>

## 1.5. SYMPTOMS OF STRESS AMONG POLICE

Police stress research in India has dealt with variables like Type – A personality, anxiety, irritation, depression, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, alienation and burnout. However, if individually focused analyses are given undue emphasis they may have the major disadvantage of diverting attention away from organizational dysfunctions and toward individual faults (Handy, 1998). With broader social concern in focus, greater emphasis is being placed on the differing perceptions of organizational demographic groups with reference to stressors, differing incidence of somatic symptoms (strain) and differing use of coping strategies. Perceptions of policemen would throw light on the extent to which different groups experience the various job stressors. This study included some chronic occupational stressors in order to assess the police perceptions of the work environment.

### 1.5.1. Neglected Family Life:

The policeman's family life deserves more attention than it has received so far in studies related to the police. A heavy toll is exacted from the wives, children, and relatives of police personnel by the stressful aspects of police work. Chronic family bickering and strife, the disruptive effects of irregular work schedules on family centered activities, delinquency, promiscuity, school and adjustment problems among children are a heavy price paid by the police family. Kroes et. al., (1974) in their survey of 81 married police officers found that 79 of them felt police work had an adverse effect on their home life. In a detailed British study by (Cain, 1973) reported that police wives from both rural and urban areas felt that their children suffered from constantly changing shifts as they rarely saw their fathers. Changing work schedules, emotional exhaustion, negative public image, overprotecting the spouse and family, hardening of emotions, identity problems and problems with the children are inherent in the law enforcement career. (Territo and Vetter, 1981) A recent study (Kumar, 1995) reported insufficient time for the family as the top ranking stressor mentioned by 55 policemen of Hyderabad city. It is important to

recognize that the spouse and family are significant contributors to the success or failure in a law enforcement career. Marital and family strife, discord and unresolved emotional problems can negatively influence the police officer's development, motivation, productivity and effectiveness. Problems and frustrations encountered on the job may be brought home to the family. Conversely, an unsatisfactory home life can adversely affect the job performance and dealings with the public. In the US, law enforcement administrators have devised programmes for solving or at least reducing, marital problems within their organizations (Territo and Vetter, 1981). An urgent need to identify and overcome difficulties leading to marital discord and conflict among police personnel in India exists. Marriage, family and personal counselling services could also supplement other programmes. A study of police (Channabasavanna et. al., 1996) reported 52 per cent of personnel in Delhi do not stay with their families. Such findings reinforce the inclusion of this variable in the current study.

#### **1.5.2. Job Boredom:**

Law enforcement has often been characterized as entailing much boredom (Kroes, Margolis and Hurrell, 1979). Patrol work primarily involves routine, boring tasks or interventions which can lull an officer into complacency. Long periods of physical inactivity and repetitive work may induce boredom. However, boredom may be interrupted by unpredictable periods of high demand. Kroes (1976) described the price of this hypervigilant state due to unpredictability of potential danger: ".....though crisis may be relatively infrequent, the cop's body is acting as if they are constant. In this way, being in a constant state of peak preparedness tends to wear the officer down as much as if he were in actual danger. Cooper and Marshall (1976) emphasized the vital interaction of the job with the employee and that measures of overload and under load stem from the worker's perceptions....."

### **1.5.3. Quantitative Work Overload:**

In a survey of stress in police personnel, Pragya Mathur (1993) reported work overload as the second highest ranking job related stressor mentioned in a police sample. Among the job related stressors identified by the Psychological Services Unit of the Dallas Police Department, job overload was one. In India, the strength of police personnel per unit population of 1000 was observed to be 1.4 according to the NCRB (1994). The National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (Bangalore) submitted a report (1996) to the BPR & D on mental health problems among police personnel. Almost three fourths of the policemen pointed out that dependence on alcohol and intoxicating substance abuse is a necessary evil for them since they have to toil for more than 12 hours daily, without any weekly offs. Stratton (1978) also mentioned excessive paper work found within the law enforcement agencies as internal stressor. The excessive amount of paper work, the disproportionate number of cases handled per police station and the quantitative overload is too well known in India to deserve lengthy discussion here. As compared to the US and UK a policeman in India carries a burden much heavier than he is trained or expected to.

### **1.5.4. Noxious Physical Environment:**

The physical work environment of the police exposes them to dangerous equipment (firearms, etc.), high levels of air pollution (traffic police, tear gas squads, etc.), temperatures that are too hot or too cold (regular duty in extreme weather conditions), exposure to excessive noise (riots, mobs, traffic, etc.) and these have also been included in the present study as stressors.

According to a study conducted by Central Road Research Institute and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (1990), traffic policemen exposed for long hours to auto exhaust gases suffer from lung disorders, reduced breathing capacity, excessive carbon monoxide in blood and several other ailments. It was found that traffic policemen were subjected to as much as 200 to 500 percent larger quantities of individual noise pollution than the allowable normal in a 24 hour day. The experts

held that those policemen working constantly in adverse and extreme environmental conditions suffer damage to health and efficiency in the short as well as long run. (Hindustan Times, 13.12.90) Policemen are a high risk group exposed to a physical working environment which also deserves greater attention than it has received so far.

A "hazard allowance" maybe a good idea given the harmful effects on health and well being. Out of a total of 585 police personnel killed on duty during 1994, 24 were killed in dacoity operations or other raids, 16 by riotous mobs, 161 by other criminals, 17 on border duties and 367 in accidents. It is surprising that researchers in India have overlooked this important aspect of the police job environment as a potential stressor.

#### **1.5.5. Communication Quality:**

Relations with superiors, complaints about administration such as policy concerning work assignments, procedures and personal conduct and backing / support of patrolmen including the relationship and rapport between the patrolmen and administrators (Kroes, Margolis and Hurrell, Jr. 1974) are included in the area of communication quality. The quality of interaction and exchange of information play a key role in the world of work of a police officer. Styles of supervision / communication vary tremendously. Clarity of communication regarding job expectations defines the communication quality. Trouble with superiors at work was the most frequent stressful event experienced by over 100 British police officers in a study reported by Gudjonsson (1983).

Other researchers have also mentioned the importance of relationships at work (Bhaskar, 1986); poor channels of communication (Tripathi et al. 1983); lack of support from senior officers (NIMHANS Study, 1986). In an important study reported by Pragya Mathur (1995), trouble with the boss and trouble with subordinates was reported by more than 50 per cent of the police officers in the sample.

#### **1.5.6. Praise:**

Recognition and compensation, incentive or reward for well done work is extremely limited in law enforcement. One can count on being reprimanded for poor performance, but good performance somehow stands as the norm or expected behaviour. Most of the behavioural monitoring system is negative in nature and as such generates stress. Inadequate / low levels of pay (Kroes et. al., 1974); (Terry 1981); lack of personal recognition and frustration of ambition (Cooper et. al., 1982), inadequate reward or reinforcement (Eisenberg, 1976) have been reported as stressors for law enforcement personnel.

Policing appears to be a thankless job with more than its share of brickbats and few bouquets. Lack of recognition was ranked third as a stressor in a survey of police personnel in India (Mathur, Pragya 1993). A negative public image, insensitive handling and complaints against the police by the public further compound the issue of lack of recognition. The low salary, the facilities & perks made available to the personnel, the treatment meted out by senior personnel provides derisory compensation for the high stress job done by the ordinary policeman. Personal effort is rarely accorded due recognition and outstanding performance rarely receives any attention from the administration.

#### **1.5.7. Procedural Justice:**

The policies and procedures of the police organization have been known to cause discontent and dissatisfaction among personnel. Frequent transfers, suspension / suppression, delayed promotions, refusal of leave on time, departmental inquiries, lack of grievance redressal machinery are some of the stressful aspects of the police occupation (Mathur, 1995). Inadequate housing or security for the family, inadequate provision for children's education, lack of medical services, inconsistent policies regarding evaluation, accountability, promotion and transfer (Tripathi et. al., 1993) have been identified as major problem areas. Discontent with promotion prospects and career structure (Terry, 1981); autocratic management (Cooper et. al., 1982);

organizational practices and procedures (Swanson and Territo, 1983) and absence or lack of career development opportunity, offensive administrative policies (Eisenberg, 1976; Reiser, 1974) are included under procedural justice. Kroes, Hurrell, Jr., and Margolis (1974) found complaints about the policies and procedures were more frequent than those about the lack of support from higher echelon administrators. The greatest number of complaints concerned excessive paper work and red tape. A newspaper report (Hindustan Times, 31.12.92) highlighted the plight of policemen due to procedural policies. "In the last 11 months, 288 vigilance inquiries have been initiated against Delhi cops; 41 were suspended; 67 transferred and departmental inquiries initiated against 77, thus making it apparent that one slip may cost him his job." Delayed or irregular promotions and inconsistent leave policies are also rampant. Symonds (1970) also described problems concerning law enforcement, promotions, interdepartmental orders, assignments, tours of duty, etc.

#### **1.5.8. Decision Latitude:**

The extent to which the respondent's work environment allows control over job related decision making has been reported to be an important aspect of the job situation. Complaints about the lack of voice in decisions that directly affected the administrator's job were reported in a survey by Kroes, Hurrell, Jr., and Margolis (1974). Lack of participative management (Reiser 1974) is a stressor. Kroes (1976) felt that police administrators exacerbate the stress on officers by not letting them provide input into the policies and decisions which directly affect them. Like the soldier, the policeman is "not expected to question why but simply to do and die," Lack of participation in the decision making process may create frustration : A large number of studies suggest that increased participation in decision – making about conditions of work increases mental health and productivity of the employee (Caplan, 1985). This variable has not been studied by police researchers in India and is being explored in this study.

#### **1.5.9. Reward Inequity or Distributive Justice:**

Most policemen believe that what they do is important, but they are also very conscious of their low social status and the public's opinion of them (Territo and Vetter, 1981). Given the amount of effort both in terms of time and energy, a policeman gets inadequate reward. Kroes (1976) cited a study in which he compared the police with 23 other stressed occupations and found that the police showed the greatest degree of dissatisfaction with their pay. He emphasized that a key to understanding this dissatisfaction lies in "being paid too little for one's work." In addition to being in a job that can call for putting one's life on the line, the police officer develops special skills and plays a multitude of roles which deserve appropriate compensation. Complaints about poor salary may be related to a larger issue of inadequate reward / reinforcement system (Eisenberg, 1975). The fairness of allocated organizational outcomes in relation to the input leaves much to be desired. Davidson (1970) reported that 64 per cent of Northern Territories policemen maintained that, their pay was less fair than other comparable occupations and 55% were, dissatisfied with their pay. In a recent study reported by NIMHANS (1996), it was found that only 27 per cent in Bangalore and 18 per cent police personnel in Delhi were satisfied with their jobs.

#### **1.5.10. Role Ambiguity:**

Most of those who have analyzed the police role have noted that on the surface level the job is fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies (Skolnick, 1986; Wilson, 1968). For a detailed study of the Indian Police: its Role and Challenges, a book by the same title authored by K. M. Mathur (1994) is an excellent reference. Role ambiguity exists when a worker has insufficient information about the expected work role, that is, there is uncertainty about the scope and responsibilities of the job and the expectations, of coworkers. Except for general statements like : enforce the law and maintain order, the duties of the police officer depend upon such diverse, factors as the oath of office, the law, court decisions, departmental policy, informal quota systems, the political climate, community pressures, commonsense, and



personality of the chief of police (Ward, 1971). However, policemen on the street find that legalistic solutions are frequently more appropriate.

Many police personnel are genuinely confused and mistaken about the nature of the job. In National Sample Survey Research (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek and Rosaenthal, 1964) found that role ambiguity was associated with high job related tension. McGrath (1976) noted that a job may be stressful if there is ambiguity in terms of how to go about it. This is perhaps a very prevalent form of task based stress in organizations because many organizational tasks are assigned in the form of statements of goal, of "ideal states" rather than the form of operational procedures to be followed. Role ambiguity has featured prominently in police research in India. (Chaudhary, 1990; Pragya Mathur, 1994) and expects different job behaviour, role conflict exists. Kroes (1976) cited conflicts between the expectations of immediate supervisors, top brass, city hall and the line officer who is at the bottom of the chain of command. He noted that conflict may arise when officers must enforce laws that they may personally question or ones which they are required to enforce, but which the public wishes that the police would discreetly ignore. A police officer's role in contemporary India is rather paradoxical in nature.

The law enforcement officer is called upon to act as a friend, helper and protector of life and property while at the same time wield a lathi or use a firearm at any moment to control agitated demonstrators or dangerous desperadoes. Fulfilling the expectations of the public, demands of the family and obligation to his organizational role poses a very difficult situation causing stress to the individual officers (Mathur, 1994). Role conflict has been described as the simultaneous occurrence of two or more sets of pressures such that compliance with one would make it more difficult to comply with the other. The policeman's job involves a lot of tightrope walking and role conflict is among the major stressors.

The emphasis in this study is on stress which results from the officers' perceptions of their working environment. The work environment exerts a causal influence on

mental and physical health, including both short term outcomes and long term impairment particularly cardiovascular disease (Jackson, 1983; Karasek, Jackson and Clegg, 1986). Findings from these studies also illustrate a process whereby perceptions of the work environment mediate the effects of objective work characteristics on health related outcomes.

Stress is the reason identified time and again by researchers of occupational hazards as the major debilitating factor in the police officer's job (Goodwin, 1975). [14]

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The concept of stress has been discussed comprehensively, highlighting the major definition, basic concepts, types, various impacts of stress – functional & dysfunctional, stress among police and its impact in general etc. An attempt has been made to provide conceptual clarity of stress by referring to various books, journals, magazine, research papers etc. Organizational Stress has also been discussed to know about the various types of organizational stress and its impact on organization as well as on individual. Towards the end of the chapter various symptoms of police stress have been discussed. This conceptual clarity will further help to discuss and identify its impact on police in general.

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