



**Research Article**

**ATTITUDES OF POLICE OFFICERS TOWARDS JOB RELATED ISSUES**

**Somashekher C\***

Bangalore University, Bangalore – 560056

**ARTICLE INFO**

**Article History:**

Received 04<sup>th</sup> May, 2018  
Received in revised form 16<sup>th</sup>  
June, 2018 Accepted 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2018  
Published online 28<sup>th</sup> August, 2018

**Key words:**

Attitudes, Job, Police Officers, Profession,  
Work Environment

**ABSTRACT**

In India it can be said that until the early 20th century, the police as a subject was not academically pursued, discussed, debated and researched by the scholars of social science in general and sociologists in particular. The present study examines and analyzes the attitudes of police officers towards their profession, job related issues and the components that influence their surrounding work environment. As such, attitudes of police officers constitute an important dimension of the analysis of occupations and professions as these could be determining their approaches and perspectives towards their policing activities. This will enable us to understand the problems and prospects of police officers and also to come out with solutions and suggestions to improve their working conditions in terms of professional sophistication, discipline, commitment, competence and excellence. The empirical study was conducted on 143 police officers in Bangalore city, capital of Karnataka, India. Findings indicate that the police officers are aware of the dominant trend of politics, risky nature of job, lack of better training, declining standards of police personnel so on and so forth.

*Copyright©2018 Somashekher C. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The police profession has been one of the most essential and integral part of modern society. It forms the basis of law and order system of any administrative setup. Increasing cosmopolitan population and migration in search of employment has increased the problems of the city's manifold. Maintenance of law and order system in this situation makes the police community to put in more hard work. The policemen have a challenging task with the changing scenario of economic, political and social environment. In the wake of scientific developments and technological advancements in the global era, they need to perform with a high level of skills and efficiency. However, the efficiency, skills, commitment and performance can be attributed to the work culture of the police organization in general and the behavior and attitudes of the police personnel in particular. Thus the study intends to highlight on the behavioral attitudes of the police officers in the police profession. When people wish to describe how an individual sees a social situation and how he responds to a situation, they do it through the formation of attitudes. An attitude, can be defined as a way of seeing, acting and feeling of an individual toward an issue or object. Attitudes may be either negative or positive. Therefore, an individual could be favorably or unavoidably disposed towards a person or object (Coffey et al., 1975).

Cizancas and Hanna (1977) on the other hand, have stated that, an attitude is a predisposition or tendency towards a manner of action at the appropriate circumstances or opportunity. Attitudes can be both useful and detrimental. Thus, the police officers have attitudes that influence what they perceive and how they react.

The present study deals with attitudes of police officers towards their profession. Apart from these, their attitudes towards various components of the police environment are focused upon. To begin with, the police officer's attitudes towards the politicization of policing activities are focused with a view to know what they feel about the influence of politics and politicians on police. The police profession cannot be absolutely divorced from the politics of the day, nor can its problems be tackled in isolation from the interpretative version of political policy laid down by the executive and the legislature. The concept of police as limb of law, in a society, wedded to rule of law expects this executive arm of the government to be depoliticized. Basu (1978) in his study stated that the police organization should not be left on its own as policing needs political and discretionary considerations, wherein it leads to the overall control of the judiciary system.

**Review of Literature**

Overall, attitudes of police officer towards their profession are disheartening with the police reporting pessimistic perceptions of their role and often viewing police connected with politics. There has been an attempt by social scientists to understand the police personnel from various dimensions. An effort is put in here to make a review of such selected studies that would

\*Corresponding author: **Somashekher C**  
Bangalore University, Bangalore – 560056

throw light on the professional attitudes and behaviors of the police officers. Skolnick (1966) in his study has highlighted that the personality of the police personnel is based on loyalty to the officers and to the law. An empirical study conducted by Shernock (1992) addressed the differences in attitudes between degreed and non-degreed police, specifically examining whether a bachelor's degree had a positive influence in changing police officers' authoritarianism, cynicism, prejudice and intolerance. With reference to India it is found that, the first sociological study about Indian police was made by Baley in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In independent India after Baley's work on 'The Police and Political Development in India' (1969), Sharma (1975), Gupta (1974), have also studied the complexities of urban policing. However, in empirical context, Chaturvedi made studies of the police-people interface with rural and urban context in Metropolitan Police administration in India (1985) and Rural Policing in India (1987). In 'Community Policing- An Overview', Chaturvedi (1987) have very aptly felt that our police stations have a diary, frightening image and it is necessary to give each police station a sober and homely look. Few scholars have made a comparative study of the system of accountability and the style of functioning of police in India and in other countries like Britain, Canada, Japan and United States. They feel that for ensuring police accountability 'the people should be aware of their rights and should be willing to exercise the same in a responsible manner'.

### ***Significance of the Study***

At present the position of police in urban centers, like Bangalore City, has become more complex. In order to get the best services from the police officers, one must pay attention to their job related attitudes which would help to focus on reforms in police organization. The matter pertaining to how police powers are exercised depends on the nature of police organizations. Thus, the professional nature of the job and the traumatic experiences the police officer has to pass through are the saga of an unsung soldier. Hence, the present study on police officers seeks to analyze their attitudes towards structural and professional traits of the police profession. The study of such job related attitudes of police officers would help to have an estimation of role performance of police personnel in India. Ideally, officers' perceptions of their job should shape how they assess situations while responding to the challenges. With police often being the first responders to the problems of citizens they are respected to seek a suitable resolution with their suitable behavioral pattern for each situation in which attitudes they hold play a significant role. This is a tremendous responsibility considering the great amounts of discretionary decision making accompanied with the job. However, many police officers have not been given the proper training and education to manage such a responsibility (Ruiz and Miller, 2004). It is appropriate to consider the results of empirical studies on the attitudes of police personnel, while forming policies for the welfare and development of police organizations in near future.

### ***Objectives***

#### ***The present study is aimed at the following objectives***

1. To understand the attitudes and behavioral patterns of the police personnel
2. To elucidate their perception about their roles and responsibilities

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted using an interview schedule for collecting data. The interviews gathered information on officers' demographic attributes, training and education, work experience, attitudes towards the police role and the functioning patterns of police department. Participation was voluntary and each respondent was promised confidentiality. The sample size of the present study is consisting of 143 police officers serving in different branches of Bangalore City. The police officers in the study are selected based on the stratified random sampling. The term police officers in this study, refers to a moderate ranks of a police inspector, sub-inspector and assistant sub-inspector, discharging their police duties assigned to them by the Bangalore Police Commissioner. The data have been analyzed by using appropriate statistical methods.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

Generally, one can assume that politicians do protect criminals. In this regard, an attempt is made, in the present study, to know what the police officers think of criminals being protected by the politicians. The responses of the police officers seem to indicate that an overwhelming majority (91.61 percent) of the respondents has looked down politicians for protecting criminals whereas, a very negligible proportion (8.39 percent) of them has given a clean chit to politicians for not protecting criminals. Politicians, apart from protecting criminals, are assumed to have influence in the transfers and posting of police personnel. As the transfers, postings and promotions are in the hands of the State Government, the idea of a direct link with the government is most welcome to some of the career-minded police officers who are quick to grab the opportunity to establish nexus with the politicians in power. In turn, the politicians started doling out favors like good postings carrying special pay and perks, quick promotions superseding others and protection against the displeasure and wrath of superior officers. As a result of this police officer found to be non-punctual and negligent corrupt. This tie-up soon percolated to police station levels and some of the officers-in-charge become so powerful that they did not hesitate to float the orders of the superiors (Atri, 1998).

In order to check this trend, an attempt is made to trace out of responses of police officers pertaining to the political implications for their transfer, postings and promotions. The data seem to reveal that an overwhelming majority (93 percent) of the respondents is of the opinion that politicians have a tendency to influence such issues as transfers, postings and promotions of police personnel. After emphasizing the dominant trend of politics, it is fascinating to know how powerful the police officers in their respective police stations are. The data seem to indicate that a majority (55.25 percent) of the police officers feels not so powerful, whereas a significant proportion (25.87 percent) of them are said to be somewhat powerful and a small proportion of them have declared themselves as quite powerful. The above trend could be remarked as a consequence of politicization in the process of policing. On the other hand, an attempt is made to analyze the attitudes of police officers towards their job related issues. Policemen presumably feel the risks to their lives while on the job. The data, with regard to the issue of risk to life, seem to indicate that more than three-fourths (72.92 percent) of the respondents are feeling risky in discharging their policing duties, whereas 23.08 percent of them disagree with the risk

factor. After considering the issue of taking to the police professional risk, one could be interesting to know, how are the sincere and honest policemen are rewarded? The answer to this question is sought by emphasizing the attitudes of police officers pertaining to the issue of rewarding pattern in the Indian Police system.

It is fascinating to observe from the data that, by and large, the respondents are distributed equally in expressing their opinions pertaining to the issue of rewarding of sincere and honest policemen. As a significant proportion (39.16 percent) of the respondents is of the opinion that the sincere and honest police officers are rewarded rarely in the Indian Police system. Contrary to this, another significant proportion (29.37 percent) of the respondents feel that regards are always reserved for sincere and honest police officers and are rewarded quite regularly. Whereas, remaining 31.37 percent of the respondents opine that the highest qualities like, honesty and sincerity among police officers are rewarded neither quite regularly nor rarely but sometimes or once a while. Coming to the issue of reservation policy in promoting police personnel, the data reveal that nearly one-half (49.65 percent) of the respondents appears to be frustrated to a greater extent by the reservation policy in promotional aspects. A significant proportion (35.66 percent) of them are frustrated to some extent, whereas, a small proportion (14.69 percent) of the respondents are not at all frustrated with the existing reservation policy in the promotion of police personnel to higher ranks.

However, it is high time that one must reconsider the ideas on the reservation policy in promotional aspects, after collecting the opinions of police officers regarding this issue. Policeman's basic function is to interact effectively with the public at large. This also requires proper training which is lacking in Indian police structure. It could be viewed as another job related issues either. The data seem to indicate that more than three-fourths (72.22 percent) of the respondents opine that there is absolutely lacking of proper training among police personnel in interacting effectively with the public at large. Whereas, a small proportion (23.78 percent) of the respondents is not convinced by this that there is a lack of efficient training among police in dealing with law and order issue of the public at large. On the other hand, an attempt is made in the present study to observe the opinions of police officers pertaining to the maintenance of distance from the highest ranks of police. It could be observed from the data that a majority (68.53 percent) of the respondents is feeling a sense of distinction being maintained, quite regularly by their superior officers, whereas, a significant proportion (26.57 percent) of them have stated that the distance is maintained by their superiors sometimes, and a negligible proportion (4.90 percent) of the police officers maintain that of the police. When it comes to the measurement of the efficiency of superior police ranks, the data seem to indicate that a relatively greater proportion (42.66 percent) of the respondents has expressed negative attitude towards the efficient functioning of their superior officers, whereas, a significant proportion (29.37 percent) of them are on the positive side and the remaining 27.97 percent) of the respondents are neutral in ascertaining the efficiency among superior or top police ranks.

After emphasizing the views of police officers pertaining to the relationships and efficiency of their superiors, an attempt is made in this study to analyze the attitude of police officers

towards the competence of younger and older generations in general. The data suggest that, more than two-third (69.93 percent) of the police officers has expressed their unwillingness to accept that younger police officers are more disciplined and competent. In other words, it could be stated that the police officers of the older generation in police profession are more competent than the police officers of the younger generations. As such, it could be viewed that the seniority and length of police services of police officers seem to have greater implications for the assessment of professional competence in the police profession. However, more than two-thirds (62.82 percent) of the police officers expressed that the standards of police personnel are going down in recent years. It could be assumed that, the police officers studied do not appear to be so happy with the patterns of police training, discipline, skills, activities and performances. It might also lead them to feel that the police profession is constantly under threat.

However, they observed that this has been the trend world over and nearly one-half (48.96 percent) of them rate the level of professional competence and police excellence among Indian police officers appear to be sometimes better than that of the west. A significant proportion (30.77 percent) of the police officers considered police profession in India to be on par with that in the West. Only a few (20.27 percent) of them are of the opinion that, in terms of professional sophistication discipline, competence and excellence, the police officers in the west progress better compared to those in India. On analyzing the data collected, the results show that officers' perceptions of their supervisors' priorities for effective functioning affect the amount of time they spend in conducting these activities, although their own attitude towards their roles are unrelated to their behavior. We also find officers' attitudes and further that officers' perceptions of their supervisors' attitudes are often found to be inaccurate.

### **Findings**

- The majority of the respondents have looked down politicians for protecting criminals
- Most of them are of the opinion that politicians have a tendency to influence such issues as transfers, postings and promotions of police personnel
- Three-fourths of the respondents are feeling risky in discharging their policing duties and in spite of risking lives of themselves and their family members, respondents are of the opinion that the highest qualities like, honesty and sincerity among police officers are rewarded rarely in the current Police system.
- Three-fourths of the respondents opine that there is absolutely lack of proper training among police personnel in interacting effectively with the public at large
- One-half of the respondents expressed negative attitude towards the efficient functioning of their superior officers
- Two-thirds of the senior police officers have expressed their unwillingness to accept that younger police officers are more disciplined and competent.
- Seniority and length of police services of police officers seem to have greater implications for the assessment of professional competence in the police profession.
- Two-thirds of the sample expressed that the standards of police personnel are going down in recent years.

- The respondents do not appear to be so happy with the patterns of police training, discipline, skills, activities and performances. It might also lead them to feel that the police profession is constantly under threat.
- Three-fourths (74.83 percent) of the respondents are found to exhibit low level of job satisfaction. The police officers with high level of professional ethics derive higher level of satisfaction.
- Two-thirds of them exhibit a high level of commitment towards their roles and responsibilities. Further, professional commitment, competence and ethics are found to be higher among the younger generation officers than in the senior aged officers.

These findings suggest that policing is considered more of an occupation than a profession. If this is true, an exclusive, integrated apprenticeship training module to improve the skills and performance of the police officers could become a better model for developing honest and sincere, competent and committed police officers. These results raise important questions for future research. As transformational leaders, senior officers are expected to communicate their priorities with less reliance on their formal authority.

## **CONCLUSION**

Attitudes and orientations of the police officers toward various components of their police environment constitute an important thrust of the present study. Further, an attempt is made in the study to ascertain the extent of the politicization of police role activities. Now-a-days it is said to be believed that the politicians, in general, do interfere in the role activities of the police personnel and the criminals. The responses of police officers have looked down politicians for protecting criminals as well as influencing the transfers, postings and promotions of police personnel. In consonance with the dominant trend of politics an attempt is also made to the authority pattern of police officers in their respective police stations. It is observed from the data that a majority of them feel not so powerful in discharging their duties in their respective jurisdictions. Hence, it is advisable to state that politics should be kept at bay in the matters of police recruitment, transfers and promotions in order to provide better professional police services to the society. When it comes to the matter of attitudes of police officers towards their job related issues a majority of them opine that policing is a risky job on which they can also receive some threats and sometimes lose their life. After emphasizing the risky nature of police job one can think about the rewards to be provided to the genuine and deserved police officers. With regard to this issue a significant proportion of the police officers are of the opinion that the sincere and honest police officers, in the Indian police set-up, are rewarded very rarely.

Further an attempt is made to collect the opinion of police officers with regard to their superior counterparts. With regard to the competence of younger and older generations in police profession are found to be more, could be stated that the seniority and lengthy policing experiences of the assessment of professional competence in the police profession. But, when it comes to the standards of police personnel, most of the police officers appear to be very much disappointed and worried about the declining standards. However, they are very confident of their professional and police excellence and they rated their excellence far better than that of in the West. In spite of some limitations inherent in the system of police, the police officers by and large, stick to their role patterns quite favorably.

## **References**

1. Atri, Parvesh. K. 1998. *Sociology of Crime and Criminology*. Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Basu, P.K. 1978. "Use of discretion in Police". In *Police at the Cross Roads*, (mimeo) Hyderabad. S.V.P. Police Academy.
3. Bayley, D.H. 1969. *The Police and Political Development in India*. Manchester. Princeton University Press.
4. Chaturvedi, S. K. 1985. *Metropolitan Police Administration in India*. New Delhi
5. Chaturvedi, S. K. 1987. *Rural Policing in India*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi.
6. Cizanckas, V.I. and D.G. Hanna. 1978. *Modern Police Management and Organization*. New Jersey. Prentice-Hall. Inc.
7. Coffey, et al. 1975. *Police Community Relations*. Englewood Cliff. N.J. Prentice-Hall. Inc.
8. Goldstein, Herman. 1990. *Problem-Oriented Policing*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
9. Gupta, A. S. 1974. *Crime and Police in India*, Sahitya Bhavan, Agra.
10. Prottas, Jeffrey M. 1978. The power of the street-level bureaucrat in public service bureaucracies. *Urban Affairs Quarterly*. 13: 285-312.
11. Ruiz J., Miller C. 2004. An exploratory study of Pennsylvania police officers, perceptions of dangerousness and their ability to manage persons with mental illness. *Police Q.* 7:359-371
12. Sharma, P. D. 1977. *Indian Police in a Development Approach*. Research Publications, New Delhi.
13. Shernock, S. K. 1992. Effects of college education on professional attitudes among police. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*. 3: 71-92.
14. Skolnick, Jerome H. 1966. *Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society*. New York: Wiley.
15. Whitaker, Gordon P. 1979. Managing discretion: A central dilemma of police administration. *Public Administration Review*. 39:190-192.

### **How to cite this article:**

Somashekher C (2018) 'Attitudes of Police Officers Towards Job Related Issues', *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, 07(8), pp. 14595-14598. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijcar.2018.14598.2652>

\*\*\*\*\*