

**EXPLORING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
PERSONNEL OF PUNJAB IN A POLITICALLY POLARIZED SOCIETY**



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03-171221-011

BAHRIA UNIVERSITY LAHORE CAMPUS

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PUNJAB IN A POLITICALLY POLARIZED SOCIETY



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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of
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Approval for Examination**Scholar's Name:** Zia Ul Mustafa Asad**Registration No:** 03-121221-011**Program of the study:** Bachelors of Science in Psychology**Thesis Title:**

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Dedication

I want to dedicate this to my beloved parents, supervisor and teachers whose constant support and trust in me made me achieve milestones in my life.

Special Thanks to My Father, Chairman Maqbool Ahmad and my Mother, whose affection and love kept me going even in worst situations. my friends and fellows who always supported me through thick and thin.

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I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Punjab Police Department and the individual police personnels who participated in this research. I am particularly grateful to the participants for their transparency and willingness to discuss sensitive operational challenges, including occupational stressors and political tensions. Their contributions provided the essential insights upon which this study is built.

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Zia Ul Mustafa Asad

Abstract

The Punjab Police is an institution of pillar and its staff is charged with the responsibility of keeping law and order however, the staff have often been faced with serious obstacles in the line of duty. Their work is very complex and challenging as they are expected to make serious decisions under great pressure. Starting with maintaining the safety of citizens to handling the complicated political and social duties, the officers of Punjab Police have to have to deal with many occupational stressors, which may have a detrimental effect on their mental health. It is a qualitative study of the mental health of such officers in the framework of the highly polarized politically charged society. Through the in-depth interviews with the staff of different ranks, this paper will investigate the impact of the interplay between the demands of the job and the political polarization on the mental health, the work performance and the overall life quality of the personnel.

The qualitative approach used in the methodology was based on the thematic analysis in order to reflect the lived experiences of the participants. The results showed the existence of two main Superordinate Themes, namely Job-related Stressors and Political Tensions. Concerning job-related stressors, the data identifies a systemic and deep-seated framework of an overwhelming workload, long-duty and tiredness in officers. Limited resources such as insufficient manpower and equipment are all these made worse by the fact that they cause officers to work under consistent pressure of being on the go. More importantly, the study reveals the culture of non-sharing as quite pervasive and the fear of

stigma as ingrained. Posts of the officers tend to bury their emotional conflict in order not to be viewed as weak or inefficient, which may hint at the organizational culture as the impediment to mental health care and early intervention as well.

The paper also reveals the extreme psychological toll of Political Tensions. Under the current conditions of a high degree of political polarization, the officers claim that their professional discretion is often undermined by direct political pressure and external interference. The information indicates that the officers are required to be on high alert at all times since each action, even routine arrests and investigations, comes under severe political analysis. This climate brings about a major ethical dilemma and officers find themselves in a moral dilemma where they have to strike a balance between the law and politics. Such a conflict causes severe moral and mental stress, since the key principle of the profession, non-partiality is always at risk, and it causes de-motivation and psychological distress.

To sum up, the study has shown that the psychological well-being of the Punjab Police employees is being compromised by both the combined stress of inefficient working conditions and the politicization of the judicial system. The results of the study indicate that although clinical intervention can help promote the well-being of the force, it should be supplemented by the fundamental policy changes. Among the suggestions, there are the ability to provide the police force with more autonomy in its operations to minimize ethical dilemmas and the establishment of support systems that are confidential and organization-level to eliminate the stigma of mental health. Through solving these multifaceted interconnections, policy makers could come up with policies that would not only improve

the mental health and the job performance of the officers, but to help them serve the people better and retain the trust of the people.

Keywords: Punjab Police, Mental Health, Political Polarization, Occupational Stress, Ethical conflict, Stigma, job performance, Qualitative research.

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