

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BEHAVIOUR SERIES-2

Lecture-2

(Duration: 1 Hour)

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR: AN INSIGHT INTO POLICEMAN'S / OFFICER'S BEHAVIOUR

Why do police behave in a manner unacceptable to the dominant culture? They call indecent expressions on people and are not reluctant to use filthy language during interrogation of suspects, during the visit of a V.I. P. during patrolling and enquiring into petitions- This is what people speak of police behaviour. They keep people in a humiliating dress, parade them in public visibility in handcuffs, employ coercion, torture, third- degree methods- This is what the suspects in crimes say about police behaviour. They receive bribe and illegal gratification, concoct evidence in criminal cases and frame charges; harass people and this is what the courts, commissions, research studies and the press write about the police. Are these allegations true? If they are true, why do the police do so? An insight into the working of the police man's / officers psyche becomes necessary to understand this sort of behaviour by the police.

THE EGO OF THE POLICE MAN / OFFICER

Nobody is a born police man / officer. Everybody becomes so or is made to be so. When a person wears the police uniform and assumes the responsibilities of a policeman/ officer, it goes without saying that he should behave not in the manner in which he likes to behave, but in the way he is expected to behave. His role as a police officer/ man is specific as he is not supposed to take up a role which he is not expected to. But, it is often seen that he behaves in an unbecoming way. Why? In order to answer this question, one may look, into the working of the police officer's ego.

Just like any individual every police officer/ man has his own ideas, concepts and feelings about who he is. Such ideas, concepts and feeling are not developed one day, too soon. Even before a person joins the police department, he forms ideas and concepts about a policeman/ officer in his. For some, the role is glamorous, for others the uniform is attractive; yet for others the role, uniform, authority and power which the police enjoy may be enviable. All these may form the ego- concepts in an individual who joins the service.

EGO FORMATION AFTER JOINING THE POLICE SERVICE

After a person has joined the service as a police officer/ man, he starts thinking that-

" I am a police officers/ man holding the rank of and have a lot of power and authority. I can do this or that thing and there is nobody to question me"

"I am doing the executive functions of the government and my uniform gives a lot of pseudo authority as well. People are afraid of me as they think that I am a terror in the services".

These and similar feelings which one entertains to himself constitutes what is called the ego. in him. These feelings and ideas one may form about himself may be real or imaginary yet for everyone his ego is really important. It makes him to think, speak and act in a particular way. And his ways of thinking, speaking or acting may be acceptable or unacceptable to the dominant culture in society.

CASE EXAMPLES

1. A constable enters into a privately owned and operated transport bus. As a passenger, he is expected to purchase ticket. But he does not; rather he gets angry with the conductor when he is requested to purchase a ticket for the journey he performs. Here the constable thinks that people should allow him travel in bus as he is a policeman.

2. A Sub-Inspector gets into a movie theatre with his family members without purchasing tickets. He thinks that he can afford to do things in the way he likes in his jurisdiction, for according to him people should honour his authority and power as a police sub-Inspector by giving him and his family free access into theatres.

3. A Circle Inspector sends a constable to get a privately owned car from a person doing business in his jurisdiction. The car is intended for him to go to his wife's; house without paying the rent. The owner of the car refused to give the car and the Inspector openly says; "I will see you later" and instructs his sub- Inspector to harass the owner of the car.

4. A constable sees that a boy aged 9 is wandering in the city. He goes to the boy, calls him to his side, talks to him and collect details about his parents, native places etc., Afterwards, he sends information to the boy's parents and he

him many more things other than strict law enforcement in letters.

Police officers/ men behave in his way because they have developed an ego' which is bloated and unrealistic. People having such imaginary and inflated ego concepts assume pseudo- authority

and cause great havoc in this area of jurisdiction.

The Ego of a police officer has got a conscious part and an unconscious part. It is seen working in the conscious part of his ego that he has the feeling that he is a police officer/ man with a lot of authority vested in him and should be used only in the proper way. It is also seen that he entertains in the conscious part of his ego, the feeling that he should not misuse his authority for personal advantage or monetary benefits. Do there take place

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conflict

between these two diametrically opposed feelings in his ego?

How do these pervert ideas get into the ego of a police officer/ men? It is found that these prevent conceptions of ego is a learned response. He sees such misuse of authority being employed by his colleagues and he understands that the sub- culture existing in police approve of these practices. Though the dominant culture in the society frowns at these exercises of pseudo-authority, the police sub- culture does not take serious note of it. It ignores it so much so that the public criticise the police of their misbehaviour. Researches conducted in the area of pervert expressions of police officer/ man show that there are many such mal practices in the operative sphere of police functioning. Some such misbehaviours are-Obtaining petrol for police vehicles - for the police think that they can ask the people to do so and threaten them if they do not.

- I. using taxi- cars etc. without making any payment or sufficient payment- for, the police think that the taxi- drivers are helpless before the police authority as the police can harass them in several ways.
- II. Taking drinks from bars etc. without effecting payment for, the bar owners know the after effects if the police are not provided with liquor freely.
- III. Taking loans form businessmen in their jurisdiction without any intention to repay them-for they know that for the profitable conduct of their business even in an illegal illegitimate way, police need to be humoured.
- IV. The ego the police can also contain correct perceptions of human values. Examples are:

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- a) Duty first and then only relaxation for the police.
- b) Obey the superiors as a responsible member of the service.
- c) Uniform means justice. Nothing less than just and fair action in police work can do justice to the uniform one wears.

POLICISATION AND EGO FORMATION

Policisation is the process by which a person is made to become a professional policemen/ officer with desirable personality traits. During the induction training course, there is a likelihood of inadequate development of correct ego-concepts. The ego concepts formed in some trainees may be contaminated or destroyed during the post- induction injection by the operational staff in police department or by the people who centre around the police to get many things done through the police. About this change in the behavioural patterns, the National Police Commission observe:

1. At the Police Training College, the trainees are taught to register all crimes as soon as they are reported. In the districts, they were asked to make a preliminary enquiry first and then

record the FIR. after the preliminary enquiry which is entirely illegal.

2. They are told to forget scientific methods of investigation and resort to third degree though they were reportedly cautioned not to take it to a stage where there might be an adverse medical report if the person subjected to third degree was medically examined.
3. In the districts, they were told that bogus cases under section 190 Cr. P.C. were essential for a record for a good statistical record although they had been warned against this in the Police Training College. There goes the list of malpractices to which the new entrants are introduced.

Human Values and Police Behaviour

The police do all these things thinking rightly or wrongly that they can do it under the pretext of their authority or under the colour of their uniform. They do not seem to have developed any guilt feelings when they torture people or when they frame bogus cases against fellow citizens in the country.

CLASS ROOM EXERCISES

1. Write down any three of the negative personality traits that police officers/ men exhibit in their behavioural patterns.
2. Draw an Egogramme of a police officer with pervert and desirable ego concepts that he has developed.
3. Please 'agree', 'disagree' or say 'no opinion' to the following statements. The assessment should be made from what you have seen, heard or experienced in police sub- culture
 1. Police officers / men have only correct perception of their 'ego'. Their ego formation is rightly made.
 2. Police officers/men have wrong formation of their ego concepts. They assume pseudo- authority and imaginary powers.
 3. Many police officers have bloated inflated- imaginary ego concepts and they express it in their interaction with people. If it is not respected, they react against.
 4. Ego- formation, correct or pervert, is a learned response. Hence everyone in the hierarchy is responsible for the formation of ego concepts in new entrants to police service.
 5. Police sub- cultural should be changed if one desires to have correct ego- concepts formation in police officers/ men.

DISCUSSION

Notes:

1. Alphonse L. Earayil and James Vadackumchery, Police and the Society. Kairali Books International, Thiruvananthapuram, 1985.

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