

UNDERSTANDING HUMAN BEHAVIOUR SERIES-3

Lecture-3

(Duration: 1 hour)

HUMAN BEHAVIOUR: WHY DO THE POLICE BEHAVE THE WAY THEY DO?

Why do the police behave the way they do? In a study conducted on police behaviour, it has been observed as under-

1. According to 82.96% the police behave courteously only 'at times'

2. 69.49% stated that sub-inspectors behaved discourteously, 94.40% reported that the constables too, behaved discourteously, 78.12% said that the assistant sub-inspectors misbehaved discourteously to the public.

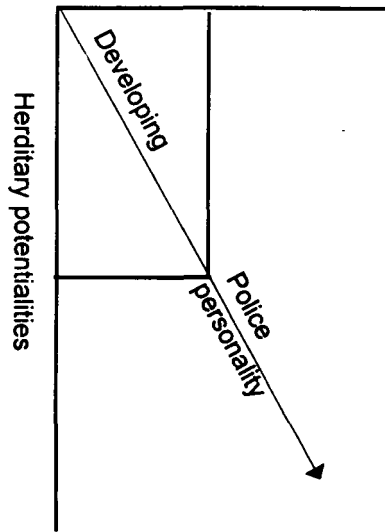
The reasons for the misbehaviour on the part of the police are found to be many and various and they are-

a. The police think that they can afford to behave in the way they do to the people. The police enjoy vast powers under the law. They have authority and strength so much so that the general public are not prepared to react against the police misbehaviour of discourteous behaviour.

b. The police have a uniform which they wear after undergoing sufficient physical training which gives to them some confidence that they can handle people who are not similarly trained. The training, the weapons, the lathies, which the policemen has with him give added courage to him. He has a feeling that he is a legion and behind him there is a force of man power coupled with the authority of law.

3. People approve of police misbehaviour towards criminals, hooligans, goondas, eve-teasers, rowdies etc. for, they think that such

Environment
(Police sub-culture and
the culture of the society)



people do not deserve a better treatment than what they receive now. The public visibility is taken for granted by the police as a licence to behave discourteously with all kinds of people in society.

There are instances in which the police behaviour rated to be enviable. For example:-

- I. During *bundh*, the police remove the road-blocks and make the roads usable for vehicular traffic. They carry sick people to hospitals and take up risks to face any law and order situations that may be created by the people who try to make *bandh* a success. In so doing, the policemen are attacked.
- II. During a natural calamity, the services rendered by the police receive wide public acceptance and recognition. The policemen involve in such social activities as a result of their conviction that they are primarily a service and not a force. The social commitment of the service is so much seen in police that they work for the welfare of the society even when people in other walks of life show indifference to such issues.

FORMATION OF POLICE PERSONALITY

A new entrant to the police department starts developing his self-concept as a police officer by associating himself with other police officers. A realistic self-concept that is congruent with the social aspirations and expectations can be given only if adequate opportunities are provided to him for the proper personality development with desirable personality traits. But, what is seen today is the lack of environments for the development of desirable personality traits. This can be graphically drawn. (Fig:1)

A new entrant to the police service has heredity potentialities to develop in a proper way. For this, he needs conducive environments

for the proper development of personality traits in a desirable fashion. The more is the conducive environment for the development, the better it is for the developing person of the police

CHARACTERISTIC OF POLICE SUB- CULTURE

As it is, there is an allegation that the police sub- culture is pregnant with -

1. informal arrest and illegal detentions;
2. torture coercion and use of third degree;
3. Corruption and susceptibility to influence;
4. political interference;
5. concoction of evidence and production of false witnesses;
6. harassing of public and causing troubles to them;
7. treat people with disrespect and in a degrading way.
8. use of vulgar language and epithets;
9. deal with people without consideration and sympathy ;
10. show partiality and unjust approaches.

The police sub-culture also consists of desirable personality characteristics and they are seen in many areas of police work, namely-

1. the doors of police stations are never closed. They work round the clock.
2. they risk their lives when they face violent agitation and aggressive tactics of an angry crowd.
3. they devote a lot of time in patrolling the jurisdiction and in preventing crimes. They work in adverse social milieu which does not offer security to their lives and property.

If this is true, then developing police personality will consist of all or many of such undesirable personality traits. In such a sub- culture, it may be difficult for the police to behave courteously to the

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public especially when the society's culture approves of the police sub-culture without questioning.

FORMATION OF DEFECTIVE SUPER- EGO

Super- ego consists of the totality of the do's and don't in police activities. The code of conduct for the police teaches the do's and don'ts in police functioning. The National Police commission and also the Ministry of Home Affairs have clearly put down the code of conducts for the police in India. A police sub- culture where the super-ego is not properly formed, it becomes difficult and sometimes impossible for the proper development of the right super-ego formation. The judgements from the courts of law amply prove to show that the police are not keen to observe the super-ego concepts in them. The observations of the courts sometimes show that the police are dirtying the law by their dirty methods and dirtier strategies of

action. The police sub- culture which is formed by defective super-ego concepts will make a service which does not feel guilty if at all the super- ego principles are violated.

HOW DOES THE DEFECTIVE SUPER- EGO IS FORMED IN POLICE SUB- CULTURE?

The defective super- ego concepts in police sub- culture are formed by accepting any or all of the under mentioned strategies adopted in police work. They are-

1. unacceptable traits are some times encouraged more than acceptable traits;
2. undesirable traits are sometimes tolerated even when desirable traits are warranted by the situation.
3. Abnormal traits are sometimes favoured more than normal traits in police sub-culture;
4. Negative traits are nurtured better than positive traits in police functioning;

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5. Inhuman traits are treated as human traits;
6. unethical traits are regarded as ethical traits in police work.

Of course, the socialisation and attitude formation of the new entrants to the police profession are decided by several factors like norms of the organisation, the values and attitudes of the senior police officers in the department, the general climate of the discipline prevailing in the department, inculcation of finer points in behaviour and human contacts etc. The desirable personality traits and behavioural patterns are effected in individual police officers through the process of learning, communication and observation of what is going on in the police sub- culture and therefore the atmosphere prevailing in police stations and the organisation should be such to develop further socialisation and correct attitude formation in police officers.

CLASS ROOM EXERCISES

1. Enumerate three more factors which may explain why police officers behave the way they do.
2. Note down the differences that you may notice in behaviour in police sub- culture and the same in other government departments.
3. Explain the reasons for the following behaviour in police sub- culture.
 - a) Misbehaviour to the poor and the needy.
 - b) Misbehaviour of harijans and girijans or people who are otherwise handicapped, especially the women.

c) Misbehaviour to witnesses, complainants, informers and suspects.

d) Misbehaviour with alcoholics, drug addicts, traffic- violators, juveniles and adult offenders.

Explain the reasons for the following behaviour in police sub-culture-

1. Extending help to the infirm and the disabled during a bandh day.

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2. Accommodating in unhealthy situations where violence is likely to erupt.

3. tolerating people who misbehave with police and who show disrespect to police uniform.

DISCUSSION

Notes

I. Alphonse L. Erayil and James Vadackumchery. Police and the society. Kairali, Tiruvanathapuram-1985

II. James Vadackumchery and Johny Kattakayam, Human behaviour and Law Enforcement. Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995.