

Police Officers' Experience of Facing Challenges in Combating Crime in Urban and Rural Areas: A Study on District Police Faridpur

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Abstract

Background: The purpose of the study is to find out the challenges police officers face while performing their duties and compare those experiences in different settings. **Methods:** This study follows the descriptive quantitative approach, where it uses a cross-sectional design. In this study, the data were collected from the police officer by cluster sampling method in District Police Faridpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh. With the help of statistical analysis, the study aims to investigate the nature of the challenges faced by police in combating crime in different settings. **Findings:** The study explores that getting accurate information about crime is the primary challenge. Along with this, officers face mostly environmental challenges (like cooperation and collaboration) and organizational challenges (lack of resources, workload, stress, hostile environment, and financial worries). In using technology, rural area police face more problems than in urban areas. Finally, it shows that implementing different types of policing strategies can improve the effectiveness of crime in both urban and rural settings. **Application/Improvements:** The interested executive bodies can use this information to find out more about the challenges faced by police officers in combating crime.

Keywords: Challenges, Urban, Rural, Technological Issues, Policing Strategy.

Introduction:

Police officers play a significant role in maintaining law enforcement and public order in society. They are responsible for protecting citizens, preventing crime, and ensuring that justice is served. One of the key challenges that police officers face is understanding crime patterns and responding to them effectively. After reviewing the literature, an idea is generated that life in a rural area (more specifically, rural areas) is easy and sound. But the real picture is different. The rural area exhibits higher crime rates than the urban area for specific crime types such as property crime or assault, and ethnic minorities have a higher rate of victimization. Again, in rural areas, police are facing challenges during policing because of the geographical remoteness of the area. (Ruddell, 2022). Though rural areas face a lot of challenges and can experience a higher degree of crime, research is less focused on the area or its consequences. Most national and international research publications on police agencies focus on urban policing crime patterns and challenges. (Wooley et al., 2022)

Sijuwade (2014), make a study to identify the relationship between urbanization and crime. Here in the article 'Urban crime, unrest, and social control' explores that the crime rate is much higher than that of the less urbanized areas.

According to Wells and Weisheit, it is defined that ecological and structural factors of demography can play a good influence in indicating urban patterns of crime. In their work, they used secondary sources of crime data for different urban and rural areas collected from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, economic research service data with an aim to identify crime patterns in urban and rural areas.

Adelman et al. (2017) made a study named 'Urban crime rates and the changing of immigration: Evidence across four decades.' which focuses on the identifying cause of relation between immigration and urban crime.

The criminal justice system also typically focuses on the study of policy formation in an urban area rather than in a rural area. (Weisner et al., 2020).

Apart from this, the police department of Bangladesh faces a lot of challenges in an investigation, such as resources, the training facility for forensic equipment, the remoteness of the area, and inadequate support or cooperation. (Kashem, 2017). Police are also facing different types of challenges in using technology. In recent days, police officers have experienced a large variety of technologies to combat the emerging patterns of crime and provide services effectively, such as CCTV, drones, GPS, etc. However, research shows that police departments face a wide variety of challenges in using technology, such as inadequate training, not adopting the new trend to make their job easy, workforce resistance budgets, and a lack of balance in the work. This study is done using a secondary method to identify the technology and its impact on police departments. (Rogers & Scally, 2018). Research in the UK shows that police departments use different strategies of surveillance. again because faced any technological imbalance in the education communication gap between humans and GPS, and forensic imaging faced data decode constraints. Lastly, biometric or DNA testing requires information or training to use technology properties. The study lacks training funding and resources in urban areas. (Nunn, 2001)

While practicing policing strategies and tactics, one may face a lot of problems, commonly or differently, in terms of facing challenges in two settings. However, existing literature cannot adequately address the problem faced by rural areas or draw a clear comparison. So, this part of the problem should be addressed. This study aims to locate and elaborate on this problem in a hypothetical way.

Research Methods:

Research methodology is a set of tactics or rules that specify how research should be carried out. (Sarantakos, 2013) Research methodology refers to the systematic and organized approach used to conduct research. The research is mainly grounded in a quantitative framework and mostly descriptive in nature. This study follows the deductive technique as well as a top-down approach to make generalizations about the hypothesis and is conducted by following a cross-sectional research design, but it aims to answer the objectives of this study. The data used in this research were sourced from primary sources, and the overall study was conducted with 99 respondents from Faridpur district police, both in urban and rural areas. The data is collected through a responsive questionnaire. A statistical descriptive analysis is applied to draw results from the data which make generalizations and could answer the objectives.

Results:

The study is conducted with a total of 99 participants. Among them, 46.46.5% of the participants are aged between 21 to 30 years. The age range with the second highest number of participants is 31 to 40 years, with 28.3% of the total. The percentage of participants aged between 41 and to 50 years is 16.2%. The smallest proportion of participants belongs to the age range of 51 to 60 years, representing 9.1% of the total. Overall, the data suggests that the majority of participants are relatively young, with over 74% of them being under 40 years of age.

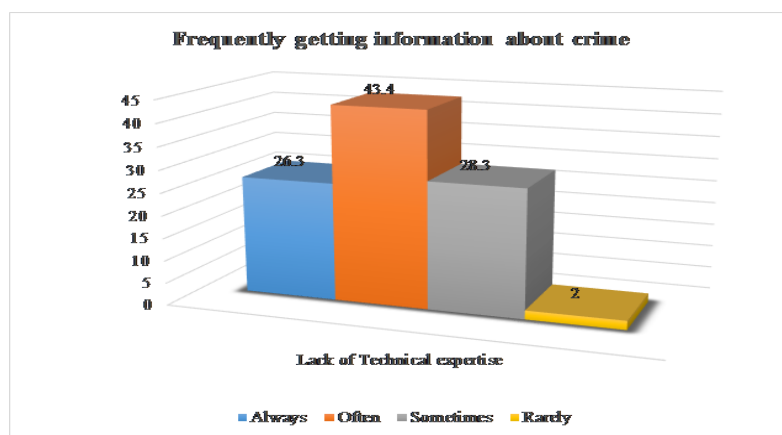


Figure: Frequency of Getting Information.

The bar chart data indicates that the majority of respondents, 47.5%, said "Sometimes," suggesting that the frequency of having information about crime occurrences is not regular but is still somewhat common. The next most common response was "often," with 33.3%, which means having information frequently. A smaller proportion of respondents, 15.2%, reported engaging in the behavior "always," suggesting that the

frequency of having information is regular. Only a small percentage of respondents, 4.0%, reported "rarely," suggesting that this behavior is not very common among the survey participants.

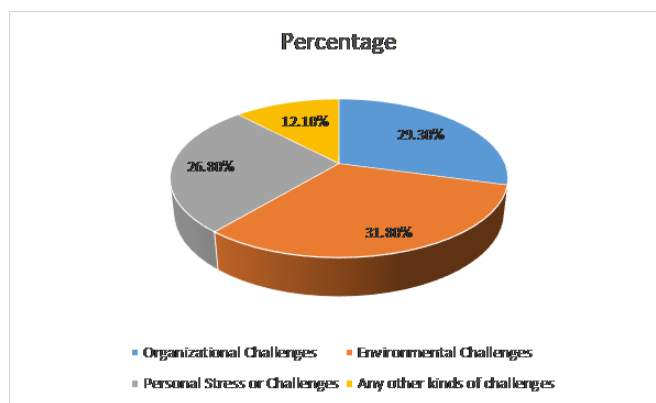


Figure: Types of Facing Challenges

The percentages provided in the pie chart show the types of challenges that individuals or organizations are currently facing. The data suggests that environmental challenges are a major issue, with 31.8% of respondents. The second highest category is organizational challenges, with 29.3% of respondents reporting this type of challenge. Personal stress or challenges are also prevalent, with 26.8% of respondents reporting this type of challenge. Finally, the category of "any other kinds of challenges" has a percentage of 12.1%, indicating that there may be other types of challenges not captured in the other categories that individuals or organizations are facing.

| Categories | Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| Lack of resources | 23.2 | 41.4 | 35.4 | 0 | 0 |
| Hostile environment | 20.2 | 36.4 | 27.3 | 15.2 | 1 |
| Workload and stress | 16.2 | 34.3 | 44.4 | 5.1 | 0 |
| Inter-agency collaboration issues | 8.1 | 12.1 | 63.6 | 11.1 | 5.1 |
| Health issues | 7.1 | 7.1 | 21.2 | 53.5 | 11.1 |
| Negative self-talk | 13.1 | 1 | 34.3 | 32.3 | 19.2 |
| Relationship problem | 6.1 | 7.1 | 34.3 | 39.4 | 13.1 |
| Financial worries | 20.2 | 25.3 | 24.2 | 16.2 | 14.1 |
| Lack of control | 7.1 | 6.1 | 16.2 | 44.4 | 26.3 |
| Physical threats | 9.1 | 7.1 | 47.5 | 31.3 | 5.1 |
| Verbal abuse | 12.1 | 23.2 | 33.3 | 23.2 | 8.1 |
| Intimidation | 2 | 1 | 20.2 | 27.3 | 49.5 |

Table: Facing different types of organizational challenges

The table shows the percentage of respondents who identified different factors that can affect their mental health in the law enforcement profession. Lack of resources was a concern for 23.2% of respondents, while 41.4% reported it as an often-occurring problem. A hostile environment was a significant problem for 20.2% of respondents, and this increased to 36.4% for often occurring. Workload and stress were identified as issues for 44.4% of respondents, while 16.2% of respondents reported financial worries as a significant problem. Inter-agency collaboration issues were identified as sometimes problematic for 63.6% of respondents, and negative self-talk was a concern for 34.3% of respondents. Physical threats were reported as always, a concern by 9.1% of respondents, with verbal abuse as a concern for 23.2%. Intimidation was a rare problem, with only 2% of respondents identifying it as always occurring and 49.5% of respondents saying it never occurs. The data suggest that factors that impact mental health vary in prevalence and that some problems, such as lack of resources and workload, are more common than others, such as intimidation.

| Frequency of Facing Challenges in Using Technology in Rural Area | Lack of Technical expertise | Unavailability of proper equipment | Lack of Familiarity | Lack of Proper Training | Adaptability to new trends |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Always | 26.3 | 31.3 | 20.2 | 25.3 | 9.1 |
| Often | 43.4 | 40.4 | 16.2 | 30.3 | 23.2 |
| Sometimes | 28.3 | 24.2 | 47.5 | 33.3 | 39.4 |
| Rarely | 2 | 3 | 14.1 | 8.1 | 24.2 |
| Never | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

| Frequency of Facing Challenges in Using Technology in Urban Area | Lack of Technical expertise | Unavailability of proper equipment | Lack of Familiarity | Lack of Proper Training | Adaptability to new trends |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Always | 11.1 | 19.2 | 12.1 | 10.1 | 4 |
| Often | 27.3 | 20.2 | 16.2 | 20.2 | 11.1 |
| Sometimes | 34.3 | 39.4 | 44.4 | 42.4 | 49.5 |
| Rarely | 27.3 | 19.2 | 24.2 | 26.3 | 28.3 |
| Never | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 7.1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table: Facing challenges in Using Technology in Urban and Rural area

Here, in the table, we clearly see that, in rural areas, police face more problems in using technology. The most frequently reported challenge was a lack of technical expertise, with 26.3% reporting always experiencing this challenge and 43.4% reporting often experiencing it. The second most frequently reported challenge was the unavailability of proper equipment, with 31.3% reporting always experiencing this challenge and 40.4% reporting often experiencing it. Lack of familiarity was reported as a challenge by 47.5% of respondents sometimes, while a lack of proper training was reported by 33.3% of respondents sometimes. The least frequently reported challenge was adaptability to new trends, with 9.1% reporting always experiencing this challenge and 23.2% reporting often experiencing it. According to Table table-6.2, the most prevalent factor affecting technical expertise is "unavailability of proper equipment," with 39.4% of individuals reporting that they experience this factor "sometimes.". This is followed by "lack of familiarity" and "lack of proper training," with 44.4% and 42.4% of individuals, respectively, reporting that they experience these factors "sometimes.". On the other hand, the least prevalent factor is "adaptability to new trends," with only 4.0% of individuals reporting that they experience this factor "always.". The data also shows that a majority of individuals reported experiencing these factors at least "sometimes.". Furthermore, the data indicate that the frequency of experiencing these factors varies across different categories. For instance, the category "often" reports a higher frequency of experiencing these factors compared to other categories. For instance, "lack of technical expertise" is reported to be experienced "often" by 27.3% of individuals, whereas it is reported to be experienced "always" by only 11.1% of individuals. Compared to the table for rural area, it is found that in urban areas, technical challenges are less frequent than in rural areas

| Categories | Increasing police presence and patrols | Community engagement and strategies | Effective use of technology | Professional development of officer | Partnership with other agencies | Tactical Police strategies (ILP, Hotspot policing) |
|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Strongly Agree | 72.7 | 51.5 | 53.5 | 40.4 | 33.3 | 53.5 |
| Agree | 22.2 | 35.4 | 36.4 | 43.4 | 36.4 | 38.4 |
| Neutral | 1 | 13.1 | 10.1 | 14.1 | 23.2 | 6.1 |
| Disagree | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7.1 | 2 |
| Strongly Disagree | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Table: Implementing Policing Strategy to combat Crime in Rural Area

The results of this table indicate that increasing police presence and patrols and community engagement are the most popular strategies, with 72.7% and 51.5% of respondents strongly agreeing, respectively. Effective

use of technology and professional development of officers received slightly lower levels of agreement, with 53.5% and 40.4% of respondents strongly agreeing, respectively. Partnership with other agencies and tactical police strategies received the lowest levels of agreement, with only 33.3% and 53.5% of respondents strongly agreeing, respectively. A significant proportion of respondents selected the "Neutral" response option for each strategy category, ranging from 1.0% to 23.2%, suggesting that many people may not have a strong opinion or may not have enough information to form a strong opinion on these strategies. The "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree" response options were rarely selected, indicating that these strategies are generally viewed positively by the survey participants.

| Categories | Increasing police presence and patrols | Community engagement and strategies | Effective use of technology | Professional development of officer | Partnership with other agencies | Tactical Police strategies (ILP, Hotspot policing) |
|-------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Strongly Agree | 60.6 | 42.4 | 52.5 | 34.3 | 28.3 | 53.5 |
| Agree | 29.3 | 47.5 | 35.4 | 46.5 | 44.4 | 38.4 |
| Neutral | 8.1 | 9.1 | 10.1 | 14.1 | 24.2 | 6.1 |
| Disagree | 1 | 1 | 2 | 5.1 | 3 | 2 |
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Compared to the previous table, there is a decrease in the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with most of the strategy categories. The strategy category with the highest level of strong agreement is still tactical police strategies (ILP, Hotspot policing) with 53.5%, followed by effective use of technology with 52.5%. However, the percentage of respondents who strongly agree with increasing police presence and patrols has decreased to 60.6%, and community engagement and strategies have decreased to 42.4%.

The strategy category with the highest level of agreement (combining both "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses) in a partnership with other agencies, with 44.4% of respondents indicating agreement. The professional development of the officer's strategy category also received relatively high levels of agreement, with 46.5% of respondents indicating agreement.

Discussion:

By collecting data from 99 respondents both from urban and rural areas, it shows a clear picture of what type of challenges are faced by police in combating crime, it is found that they face the most problems in getting information about crime occurrences. Only 26% of cases they always get accurate information. They face mostly organizational challenges and environmental challenges. At the organizational level, they face workload and stress, hostile environment, financial worries, and lack of resources. Along with this, they face many other problems too.

Less use of technology in rural areas caused for facing more challenges compared to urban areas rural area police frequently face challenges like lack of technical expertise (43.4%), unavailability of proper equipment (31.3%), and lack of proper training (30.3%) whereas urban area police face these challenges rarely or sometimes.

Along with this, police personnel mostly seek support from family and friends to maintain a healthy work-life balance and deal with stressful situations despite facing challenges. Again, this study gives insights into the recommendations that should be fulfilled to have proper service delivery from the police and it is found that the police department needs to enhance the technological training (43.4%) facility for combatting challenges effectively.

Again, it is found that, when different types of new policing strategies and techniques are implemented both in rural areas and urban areas, they agree that it reduces the chances of facing challenges.

Conclusion:

This research is conducted with the aim of identifying and exploring the experiences of police officers in addressing and dealing with crime patterns and the challenges they face in urban and rural areas. The study followed a deductive approach to test the hypothesis that is assumed, and data was collected through a survey questionnaire to find out a generalization about the idea. Basically, this study is conducted to find out the experiences and differences based on the experiences they gathered after completing the data collection. The data were analyzed statistically through SPSS, and the findings suggest that police in urban and rural areas faced both similar and unique challenges. It is found from the study that rural area police face more challenges than urban area police in terms of collaboration and cooperation, as also in having resources. Both are facing a significant level of criminal occurrence, but the nature of crime is different.

However, this study highlights the need for policymakers and police agencies to identify some useful solutions immediately to recognize the challenges and combat them. It is suggested by the study findings that the police department needs to take proactive measures to combat challenges. Along with this, the study recommends some other measures that will be a concern to policymakers and thinkers.

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