

“Occupational Stress Among Male And Female Police of ficers Engaged in Traffic Duty”

VS Kochukrishna Kurup¹, Shani Lasar², Nisanth M³

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri Campus, India

²Social Work Trainee, Amritapuri Campus, India

³Faculty Department of Social Work, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Amritapuri Campus, India

ABSTRACT: Stress has a wide impact on all professional settings. Policing is a more stressful job and majority of the police officers face high level of stress because of their occupational background. Traffic police officers, both male and female face stress in different level. Traffic police are the guardians of public to control the flow of vehicles and create a good environment to people.

The main objective of this study is to understand the level of stress among male and female traffic police officers and find the causes of stress and provide appropriate strategies to reduce the stress level. The ‘purposive sampling method’ is used to collect the data and the researcher prepared a self-made questionnaire consisting of 45 questions and collected data from 60 respondents (30 male and 30 female). Target group of the study was male and female police officers engaged in traffic duty in Trivandrum district of Kerala State. The findings show that, the female police officers face high level of stress than male officers and they are mostly facing physical, occupational, psychological and cognitive stress. In the case of male police officers they face moderate level of stress, but in the case of occupational stress both male and female officers face same range of stress. Researcher also advised coping strategies for those respondents like proper diet and sleep, making the duty time more happy through funny talk and the provide appropriate counselling session for them and their family to cope up with stressful situation

Keywords: Stress, Occupational stress, psychological and cognitive stress, Female traffic police

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I. Introduction

Every persons in the society is affected by one or another kind of stress in their life. Stress is a feeling experienced when a person thinks that the demands exceed the personal and social resources, the individual able to mobilize (Richards1984). Stress leads to several problems like, lowering of self-esteem, inability in doing better work, loss of appetite and mood change which results in uninterest in the work, getting angry on minute provocation and it creates problems in family as well as in the society. Police officers play a very important role in Controlling traffic system and are engaged in security of citizens in the society in a highly responsible way which resulting in increasing the individuals stress due to heavy workload as the excessive increase of vehicles and air pollution. Traffic duty is a strcesful job that physically as well as mentally challenging one.

Stress is a main factor that hinder the activities of traffic polices officers especially women officers, because of the continuous hours of working in the summer and in the rainy season, they are struggling to manage their work-life. Health status also negatively affected. Traffic duty is a very risky job that induces stress because of long duty hours, irregular eating habits, irritability, negative attitude from public and senior officers ,sleeplessness, gender discrimination etc.

1.1 International level

Stress is a big issues in every work sector and every employee faces stress due to their work load. Different studies show that policing work is a stressful occupation in the world. Water and Ussery (2007) argued that hazards associated with the occupational stress as dangerous. They attributed stress to the nature of policing. Police officers are frequently exposed to various traumatic situations ranging from threats to themselves and their colleagues, to witnessing riots, injuries or death of citizens, bombing, shootings, criminal activities and often fatal shootings of perpetrators (McCafferty, godofredo, Domingo &McCafferty, 1990).

Different studies of research shows police officers in every country worldwide faces different problems especially psychological and physical problems. Police officers are also becomes victims in various highly risk situations. They are the people who considered by the society to deal with all kind of risky situations to protect the public from any harm without considering their own life. Most of them are engage with stress inducing

environment and they are mostly under continuous stress. To control traffic and dealing with the traffic problems will create negative attitude among police officers as they are mostly face stress related to occupational, family, physical and cognitive domain.

1.2 National level

The total strength women police is hardly eight percent on the national average, women in police constitute only 3.5 percent. Kerala stands third with about 3000 women police personnels that includes 7 IPS officers, 4 circle inspectors, 12 sub-inspectors and the remaining in the constabulary. Women police officers generally face stress more than men police officers. Kavitha (2012) in her research point out that stress among women employees in the IT sector face more occupational stress than men and it also negatively affect their family life. Married women face more stress than unmarried women. Satija S and Khan W.(2013) disclosed that emotional experience is a leading cause for occupational stress. Occupational stress is more related to working condition of the job, it also negatively affect their behaviour and attitude. The emotional intelligence is playing a leading risk factor of stress . Police officers stress in Botswana, is largely due to job related issues such as over time extra duty and injuries from antisocials who come across during the duty hours, negative working environment, lack of relaxation.(JE Agola-2009) The police occupational stress is closely related to the mechanism of each organisation adopted for reducing stress among the force (Hurrelljr.,josephj.(1995)

II. Methodology

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive research design and analysed the data quantitatively. The sample size was collected from 30 male and 30 female traffic police officers engaged in traffic duty in Trivandrum district of Kerala State. Purposive sampling method was used for collecting the data for the study . Self-made stress questionnaire is used after validating its reliability to know about stress level among male and female traffic police officers. Respondents selected are from the age group between 20 and 50 is included and the data is collected from their job sites.

III. Major Findings And Discussion

The study had conducted to check the stress among male and female traffic police officers engaged in traffic duty in Trivandrum district. Various studies discussed the stress among police officers and find the various reasons. Researcher identified that both male and female police officers are facing high and moderate level of stress. In the case of female officers they are the victim of high level of stress. Women can't control their emotion compared to man, that they become vulnerable to stress and strain during the work and also at home. From this, researcher find out that female officers face high physical, psychological, occupational and cognitive level of stress than male officers. This is because of the type of job character, which means that traffic control is the tedious job requires continuous alertness which increases the stress. Majority of both male and female police officers are not like to work in traffic which create a negative attitude among them. Some of them are get this because as a part of punishment. So they are already set a limit to their work. Sometimes the duty shift will negatively affect their physical and psychological function, especially night duty at station in lieu of traffic duty becomes a stress creator for them.

In the day time, the increasing number of vehicles will disturb them a lot, especially in the busy traffic junction where traffic jam occurs due to violations of traffic rules. So the traffic duty is directly affect the health and wellbeing of the officers by missing of their timely diet and relaxation. The study disclose that the women officers are facing high level of physical stress and which shows that respondents in the age group of 40-50 have high stress than others and it increases as the increase of age. The married respondents also face high level of stress than others. Their family life also affected by the untimed stressful duty in the traffic. Night duties and other punishment duty allocation increases their physical stress and psychological stress. They are not capable to adjust with the emotional experiences, the increasing flow of vehicles, negative attitude from public and family relationship and time shifts also affect their mental health.

But in the case of male officers they face moderate level of stress because their capacity to adjust with the situation is higher than female officers.. But there both categories of respondent have experiencing psychological either moderate or higher level. In the case of occupational stress both male and female face moderate level of occupational stress.. They face more stress related to their working pattern. In the case of low qualified officers, they face high level of stress because of the low level of self esteem related to job position.. In the case of female officers, they experience high level of cognitive stress than male officers. Because they are always more conscious about the chances of accident during the duty at traffic control. They fear about the miss happening and its drastic after effect in their own and their family life.

IV. Suggestions

This study focused on the job induced stress among male and female traffic police officers in general and particularly on different aspects of stress. Generally female police officers face more stress than male officers. But in the case of occupational stress both of them are faced moderate level of stress. So from the understanding the causes and situations of problem, the researcher put forward the suggestions to increase the coping capacity to adjust with stress.; They are emotionally more stressful so if they practice to exert commitment in their work it will minimise the level of day by day stress. Then to recognise the stress related to their environment, it is the best way to prevent the signs and symptoms of stress. The long hours of work and time shifting is also affect their health pattern so to practice regular exercise and good diet pattern and appropriate sleep will help them to prevent the symptoms of stress. Provide periodical psychological counselling for all officers to manage the stressful situation and provide family counselling will help them to minimize family related problems. Apart from that provide support mechanism for these officers from office circle will help them to make their day more beautiful

V. Conclusion

Stress among police officers is a wide spread problem worldwide. This study is to compare the stress among male and female traffic police officers in Trivandrum district of Kerala. From this researcher identified that female face high stress than male officers and the stress level is increased according to the increase in the on the basis of age and qualification. The vulnerable condition of the women are the major reason for the increase in stress among female police officers. The discretion power to allocate duty to female officers is sometimes misused by the higher officers that leads to increase the stress among female officers. The physical vulnerabilities, emotional attachment to family are also the reason for the stress among female officers than in male officers.

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