

A STUDY ON WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG TRAFFIC POLICE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TIRUVANNAMALAI CITY, TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT:

Today's world in which life is fast and people following different profession are highly mechanical, stress has become a common phenomenon. It is so widespread that there is an imperative need to manage it more effectively. Stress is thus an inevitable part of modern life. It is the psychological reaction that occurs when an individual is subjected to an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon that individual and the capability of that individual for meeting that demand. Stress arises as a result of interaction between employees and employers, and is related to their jobs and working environments.

Keywords: Work Life Balance, Work Stress, Work Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, Work Environment, Traffic Police Personnel.

INTRODUCTION:

Stress is normally caused by factors such as deadlines for completing a job, quality of the work to be maintained, lack of rest hours, working atmosphere such as smoke, sound and weather conditions, health condition of the individual, personal commitment of the individual and so on. People employed in good working atmosphere are subjected to relatively less stress and strain as compared to individuals working in an oppressive atmosphere full of strain and tension. In cities like Tiruvannamalai, the stress experienced by the traffic police

personnel is of serious concern but it is not recognized as the major constraint of traffic enforcement and investigation professionals as yet. The media reports of police 20 brutality and indiscipline can be perceived as warning signs of job stress, emphatically pointing to the mismanagement of this crucial problem so far. Job stress is a phenomenon which is unmistakably part of human work environment. The traffic policeman's work environment also does not escape from this reality. Though work stress is not necessarily a negative phenomenon, if managed effectively, it can be instrumental to enhanced performance. Excessive stress can produce adverse effects and hence it needs to be prevented. In case the job stress with regard to vital social agency like the traffic police personnel is not managed properly, the negative implications could assume greater significance.

Society views the traffic police personnel not only as a law enforcing agency but also as an instrument of social service, an agent of social change and the protector of the rights and duties of the people. There are so many incidents of traffic police personnel brutality, highhandedness, excessive use of physical violence and verbal abuse. The negative image of the police of being discourteous, inhuman, sadistic and inefficient prompts a curious observer to look beyond the surface and discover the underlying strain that exists in them. The highly paradoxical nature of the

traffic police job makes it like tightrope walking and deserves a closer scrutiny than the attention given to them now both by the people and the government. It is felt that the stress experienced by the traffic police is the key factor influencing their behavior pattern. The negative aspects of the stress are normally exhibited by the traffic police through their behavior in dealing with the public and others who are in contact with them. Hence, stress of the traffic police deserves scientific analysis in order to find ways and means of managing their stress. It is also seen that no systematic study has been made in this aspect by any of the earlier researchers in order to give a scientific solution to solve the very important problem of stress that the traffic police is subjected to.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

If the traffic police personnel are not happy with their work environment, it can cause problems such as poor performance and undesirable interpersonal relationship affecting the physical wellbeing of the individual.

Finally, it leads to stress and affects the department operation and assignments. Therefore, the study needs to find out factors which influence the stress of their employees and take appropriate action to eradicate them. It also needs to improve the working conditions and fulfill the traffic police personnel fair needs which are required for better performance.

Keeping in mind the importance of stress of traffic police, it is proposed to carry out a systematic study to analyse the various parameters that are responsible for causing stress among the traffic police personnel of Tiruvannamalai City. It is believed that the study would yield scientific solutions that would reduce their stress by implementation. Such a concern has been brought out in the present study entitled "A study on work life balance among traffic police with special reference to Tiruvannamalai city"

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

It is very clear that traffic police personnel, working in the open atmosphere and regulating the traffic are subjected to work stress. There is an urgent need to make a systematic study of the problem and identify the pertinent factors influencing the work stress of traffic police with special reference to Tiruvannamalai city which is suffering from high traffic intensity. The effect of independent parameters such as personal, degree of work load, working environment, public support, level of communication and adequacy of physical resources on work stress are assessed accurately. It is felt that the study would yield an appropriate solution that would help to reduce the work stress of traffic police in Tiruvannamalai city, when implemented. This study would help to find out the kind of coping style that (positive and negative) is followed by traffic police when they are under stress. In view of all the above facts, the present study is important and the researcher feels that the validity and impact factors of the study are significant.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study was undertaken with the following objectives.

- 1) To find out the work stress among the traffic police.
- 2) To identify the job-related factors influencing work stress.
- 3) To study the role of coping styles on work stress.
- 4) To offer suggestions based on findings of the study.

PROFILE OF THE STUDY- TIRUVANNAMALAI:

Tiruvannamalai is a city and a special grade municipality in the **Indian state of Tamil Nadu**. The city is also mentioned as Arunai, Tiruvarunai and Tondainattunallur in Tamil Tirumurai texts. The city is administered by a

special grade municipality that covers an area of 13.64 km² and a population of 145,278. It is the administrative headquarters of Tiruvannamalai District. Roadways are the major mode of transport in Tiruvannamalai, while the town also has rail connectivity. Chennai International Airport is the nearest domestic and international airport to the town. Tiruvannamalai is named after the central deity of the **Annamalaiyar Temple**, Annamalaiyar. The **Karthigai Deepam** festival is celebrated during the day of the full moon between November and December, and a huge beacon is lit atop the Annamalai hill. The event is witnessed by three million pilgrims. On the day preceding each full moon, pilgrims circumnavigate the temple base and the Annamalai hills in a worship called **Girivalam**, a practice carried out by one million pilgrims yearly.

Apart from other temples, there are 8 important shiva temples facing 8 important directions on the (side) path of Girivalam. All the Shivalings of these 8 temples are believed to have formed naturally.

Located on the foothills of Annamalai hills, Tiruvannamalai has been ruled by the Pallavas, the Medieval Cholas, the Later Cholas, Hoysalas, the Vijayanagar Empire, the Carnatic kingdom, Tipu Sultan, and the British. It served as the capital of the Hoysalas. The town is built around the Annamalaiyar Temple like other Nayak capitals. Tiruvannamalai is administered by a special-grade^a municipality constituted in 1886. Tiruvannamalai has an average elevation of 200 metres and experiences a hot and humid climate. Being a pilgrimage town, most of the people are employed in the tertiary sector. There are 25 elementary schools, nine high schools, 18 higher secondary schools, four arts & science colleges, one government medical college and four engineering colleges in the town.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Although precise figures are unavailable to substantiate a high incidence of alcoholism among police, department officials report that as many as 25 percent of the officers in their respective departments have serious alcohol abuse problems **Hurrell and Kores, (1975)¹**. It has proposed that alcoholism may result from the extraordinary stress of the job. The nature of police work and the environment in which it is performed provide the stress stimulus.

With the growing incidence of accidents, traffic violation, and widening role expectations, the mental and physical health of police personnel assumes greater significance than before. Stresses may be triggered from social change, economic conditions, police organization, the total criminal justice system, the demands made on policeman's time and of their families who are also experiencing stress, the job of policemen in general, and from the cumulative and interactive effects of these stressors **Grencik, (1975)²**

Stress is an integral part of any police job. Indeed **Somodevilla (1978)³** suggested that a police officer is under stress and pressure, unequalled in any other profession. In the recent years, there has been a spurt in research on occupational stress in police, particularly in the US and Britain. There is considerable evidence suggesting that more enforcement officers are killed by job related stress than they are by criminals. The destructive effect of stress on police personnel has been given due recognition in the western countries and steps have been taken there to combat the menace of police stress

In fact, concern over the high incidence of work stress in the police in USA has reached such a proportion that an International Law Enforcement Stress Association (ILESA) was formed in 1978 which published its own quarterly magazine entitled „Police stress“ highlighting the significance of the same. In the

first issue of this magazine **Hans Selye (1978)**⁴ suggested that police job is a uniquely high stress occupation. Those experiencing high job stress have been found to drink more than that experiencing low job stress.

The „help or hinder syndrome“ tests an officer’s emotions daily. Added to this, the rigours of working for long hours without rest, meager remuneration and inadequate living conditions and rotating shifts make it clear why policing is a high stress occupation. The job makes great demand on the mental, emotional and physical capabilities of the officer; demands that are all too often so stressful that they begin to destroy the individual **Depue, (1979)**⁵

According to **White (1980)**⁶, first the police person should learn to become aware of the sources of stress in his own life and the methods by which they can be eliminated or controlled so that they do not impair his effectiveness on the job or the quality of his personal and home life. Secondly, he should learn to recognize and deal with the stress affecting his subordinates if he has to be a successful supervisor. Ability to recognize signs and symptoms of stress would enable one to know when to seek help and prevent disaster.

Law enforcement entails upon the traffic police to perform their job, to be on duty even in the scorching heat of summer, pouring rain and freezing winter. The functions of the traffic police encompass preservation of law and order, safeguard people from accident and reduce traffic congestion. He is a helper, savior, friend and referee. Then as a law enforcer he makes an arrest or uses force to enforce the rule of law. This roller-coaster ride is a process difficult to understand functionally and incomprehensible emotionally **Bratz (1986)**⁷

The unique patterns of job-related stress within a variety of occupations must be understood. **Marshall (1986)**⁸ examined the potential value of focusing on particular occupational groups separately to achieve

complete understanding of the environmental and personal pressures that contribute to the experience of stress. She concluded that the type of ecological awareness appropriate to stress will depend on the core definition of its role. With this perspective in view, a chapter on the structure and functions of traffic police in Chennai follows this one. The traffic police have been found extremely suitable for studying occupational stress because of high degree of stress and intense involvement in work. The special vulnerability of the traffic police as an occupational group to job stress and burnout deserves recognition and an effort to search for solutions to this problem need to be launched. If individuals and organizations are prepared to cope effectively with stressors, they may be able to reduce the negative consequences of the stress. Research can directly impact operational procedures and future training and illustrate the potential dangers of certain psychological responses which may be amenable to modification through training.

To preserve and protect lives on the one hand and to be prepared at a moment’s notice to lay down his own life in the service of the nation is a challenge this occupation expects its aspirants to handle. People involved in law enforcement are constantly exposed to other people’s problems as well as their own. The daily enigmas occurring in every person’s life become greatly intensified for a traffic police officer on duty. Law enforcement tends to impose a higher degree of stress and a multiplicity of stressful situations on the individual than do most other professions **Colwell (1988)**⁹.

Standing alone in the street, facing the reality of irrational violence, the policeman has to cope with his emotions, suppressing them and appearing in control as the society expects him to do. **Kunce and Anderson (1988)**¹⁰ have outlined five non-pathological attributes necessary for successful performance as a police

officer emotional restraint, emotional expressiveness, group cohesiveness, independent style and realistic orientation.

One reason that police may be slow to recognize the effects of stress on them is because it has been taken as "part of the job". There exists a gap in the research on traffic police stress and there is a need to identify the most stressed sub-group of traffic police hierarchy, most dominant job stressors and the various types of coping strategies adopted by traffic policemen to handle stress. An evaluation of various dimensions of the problem of stress in traffic police personnel is long overdue.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research methodology is a systematic process of identifying and formulating by setting objective and method of collecting, editing and tabulating to find solution. Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. In it we study the various steps that are generally adopted by the researcher in studying his research problem along with the logic behind them.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Research design is the aid framework which provides guidelines for the rest of the research process. It is a map or blueprint according to which the research is to be conducted. The research design specifies the method for data collecting and data analysis. The researcher specifically pinpoints that to carry out research properly how would the data be collected. Which instrument for data collection would be used? What sampling plan would be used? The researcher has to carefully decide and make a choice from the group of different alternatives available to him. In this proposed study we have used descriptive research design. Descriptive research design

concerns with focus of characteristics of group or individual or situation.

SAMPLING DESIGN:

Collection of data about each and every unit of the population is called census method. The approach where only a few units of population under study are considered for analysis is called sampling.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES:

Sampling techniques are classified into probability sampling and nonprobability sampling. In the study the researcher has used simple random sampling. Under simple random sampling each member of population has an equal chance of being selected.

SAMPLE SIZE:

60 respondents are selected as a sample size for this proposed study.

AREA OF THE STUDY

Tiruvannamalai is the study area for this proposed study.

SOURCE OF DATA COLLECTION:

Both primary and secondary data are used for collecting information.

Primary data Primary data is data which is collected directly from the respondents. Survey method is adopted to collect the primary data and questionnaire is an instrument used to collect the primary data.

Secondary data Secondary data is the data which is collected from previously published sources. It is known as secondary data for this study. The researcher has collected the secondary data through books and internet.

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED FOR THIS STUDY:

In this study we used the two following statistical tools, namely percentage analysis and weighted average method.

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS:

Percentage analysis is use to find percentage value for this entirely different question used for all. The question used in making comparison between two or more series of data.

$$\% \text{ of Respondents} = \frac{\text{No. of respondent}}{\text{Total no. of respondents}}$$

DATA ANALYSIS:

	Factors	Particular	No. of Respondents	% of the Respondents
1	Gender of Respondents	male	55	92%
		female	5	08%
2	Age Group of The Respondent	Below-40	30	50%
		40-50	15	25%
		Above -50	15	25%
3	Marital Status of The Respondents	Married	50	83%
		Unmarried	10	17%
4	Academic Qualification of The Respondents	PG	15	25%
		UG	20	33%
		HSE	25	42%
		DIPLOMA	0	100%
5	Present Designation	RI	10	17%
		RSI	25	42%
		HC	10	17%
		Grade-I PC	5	8%
		THG	10	17%
6	Year of Services	Below 5	20	33%
		5-10	15	25%
		Above 10	25	42%
7	Daily Working Hours	8-9 hrs.	30	50%
		9-10 hrs.	5	8%
		More than 10 hrs.	25	42%
8	Salary Per Month	Below 10,000	5	8%
		10,000-15,000	20	33%
		Above 15,000	35	58%
9	Size of The Family	Up to 3	5	8%
		4-5	50	84%
		Above 5	5	8%

FINDINGS:

- 92% of the Respondents are Male.
- 50% of the Respondents age group is Below 40.
- 83% of the Respondents are married.
- 42% of the Respondents qualification was HSE.

- 42% of the Respondents present designation is RSI.
- 42% of the Respondents years of services are Above 10.
- 50% of the Respondents daily working hours are 8-9 hours.
- 58% of the Respondents salary was above 15,000.
- 84% of the Respondents family size is 4-5 members.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The traffic police department should give opportunity to improve educational qualification of traffic police. It improves knowledge and theoretical skills of the employees.
- The daily work hours should be 8 hours as per government norms and regulations.
- The monthly income must be revised time to time based on the cost of living
- Employees should give equal importance for work and family responsibilities to avoid work family conflict.
- The work overload can be avoided though streamlining the HR department and proper man power planning from time to time.
- Any government can have success only by getting good support from public. It is true of traffic department too. Ruthlessness and rudeness are counterproductive. So, traffic organization should take necessary steps to make the public understand traffic rules and regulations by awareness programmes in schools, colleges and public meetings.
- Traffic police officers have to appreciate and give certificate, reward, and award to their subordinates who have done good work. It gives satisfaction of the employees and reduces occupational stress which is caused by employees" grievance, lack of motivation and support.

CONCLUSION

Work stress is a subject matter of every organization and nature of job. It is to be kept under minimum level. Organizations conduct a lot of training programmes to improve coping styles and to create awareness among the traffic police on health and good habits and precautionary measures of somatic symptoms. One should understand the job needs from time to time and improve himself in terms of health, coping styles and potential to work and succeed. In the process of training and developing an employee, there is need to participate and support the team so that traffic police grows along with the organization. Organization can play a keen role in planning and developing the individuals for future needs.

It is also true that training and development can help in reducing work stress and improve employee potential. Physical and technological changes on the basis of current needs can help the traffic police in conducting their duties efficiently. Both external and internal factors need to be maintained from time to time. These measures can help in developing the organizational climate and individual employee's morale to a greater extent. This can help in keeping the minimum level of stress and bringing out the optimum level of employee potential for the betterment of services of traffic in particular and the lives of traffic police at large. We hope and pray for such environment bestowing the benefits to the traffic police in particular and to the society at large.

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