CHAPTER III

METHOD

3.1 Purpose of the study

Experiencing acute stress is inherent in police work. Long working hour, irregular eating habits, poor living condition, disturbed personal life, ill treatment by seniors and the dwindling public confidence in the police force – the reason for policeman’s life are many. In fact, it is said that policing is one of the most stressful job among all government professions.

Incidentally, despite a lapse of about 67 years since independence not much has been done to recognize the police department or introduce in Criminal Justice Administration. As such police continues to be largely burdened with it pre-independence structure and systems. The role of the police has become too amorphous.

Station House Officers (SHO) are the cutting edge level of the police department. Since only one Station House Officer is there in every police station, they are compelled to work round the clock. Station House Officer may be the only person who prays for the entire public in their jurisdiction. A Station House Officer may pray for the public in such a manner that no accidents shall be occurred in that day, no one shall be inspired to commit rape or molestation, no occurrence of murder, hurt, theft, robbery etc. A Station House Officer is bounded to do all the work under the sun apart from dealing with the actual basic policing works like law and order, crime control and traffic regulation, investigation etc. This sort of situations has a number of unsavoury consequences. Police department has a terrible strain on manpower and other resources in correlation with the population and other duties vested upon them. Most of the duties are not part of regular police functioning and unpredictable, there is ill preparedness at time that brings the whole department into ridicule.

A Station House Officer is the actual representative of the entire police department. The public image of the police department depends upon the performance of SHOs’ in the state. SHO is the person who is directly in contact with the public in a
day today basis. SHO shall not only work in the field but also an administrator of the police station. He shall act as a mediator of public and the government, he has to take decisions quickly, he has to act speed and without delay, he shall not have any previous experiences in situations in which he has to act as each cases and law and order situation is not similar at all, he has to handle the public with different personality traits, he has to handle with the personal problems of the publics’ in his jurisdiction, he may have to settle the disputes by acting as a counsellor, he has to conduct legal awareness programs, he has to attend all possible important functions in his station limit, he has to be in good liaison with all the political parties, religious groups and NGO’ in his limit, he has to escort the VIP’s, He has to settle the petitions, he has to be there in front while dealing with the strike s and other sorts of agitations, he will be criticised by the media in all aspects, he will be personally hurt by the defence lawyers in the court for the cases investigated by him, he has to act in accordance with the policy changes by the newly elected government, he may be transferred without any reasons, he could not be take action against his subordinates due the external influences, he may be scolded or punished by the superior officers unreasonably, his performance is rated by the number of Suo-Moto cases, he will not be appreciated for any good works done, he do not have a family life like other equal status government employees, he may be trapped by the enemies whom he did not shown any favourism, he may be lacking knowledge updation, he may be lacking thorough legal knowledge, no accountability for the subordinate officers and so on. Unlike other professions and the officers of the same department, the life of SHO is always under severe stressful situations only may because of these reasons.

Kumar (1995) studied the stress among Station House officers (SHO) in Hyderabad and found the following factors influenced the causation of stress (Saxena A K, (2000):

- SHO’s working hours and conditions
- SHO’s had to keep everyone satisfied
- SHO’s were facing with accommodation problems
- SHO’s had to do several works in little time
- SHO’s had insufficient time to spent with their families
SHO’s had problems to cope with the superiors
SHO’s lack time in social activities, intellectual development and for recreational facilities
SHO’s had to keep everyone satisfied

The inability to cope effectively with stressful events can result in undesirable psychological and somatic outcomes leading to chronic stress, burn out and lacking efficiency basic policing like law and order duties and crime investigation works. The police department in Kerala is rarely provided with effective stress management strategies to help alleviate these problems. Surprisingly, however, understanding the coping process in police stress, especially the stress of Station House Officers and identifying effective coping strategies in response to stressful events has received only scant attention in research literature.

Based on these observations, the researcher about the stress and coping styles of Station House Officers of Kerala in this study.

3.2 Objectives

1. To identify the domains of stress in Station House Officers of Kerala state.
2. To assess the coping styles adopted by the Station House Officers of Kerala state.
3. To study the predictor variables for various coping strategies by different types of occupational stress.
4. To study the effect of demographic variables on occupational stress and coping strategies.

3.3 Hypotheses

Following hypotheses were formulated for the present study
1. Station house officers experience significantly higher levels of stress.
2. Station house officers adopt various types of coping strategies to manage their occupational stress.
3. Those who have different coping styles have definite predictive stressors.

A. Those who use healthy cognitive coping styles have definite predictive stressors.
B. Those who use social support coping have definite predictive stressors.
C. Those who use spiritual religious coping styles have definite predictive stressors.
D. Those who use physical activity related coping styles have definite predictive stressors.
E. Those who use problem solving coping styles have definite predictive stressors.
F. Those who use unhealthy coping styles have definite predictive stressors.
G. Those who use unproductive coping styles have definite predictive stressors.
H. Those who use high risk coping styles have definite predictive stressors.

4. Demographic variables (age, religion, educational status, years of experience communal harmony of the jurisdiction, disease condition and living with status) have significant effect over their occupational stress.

5. Demographic variables (age, religion, educational status, years of experience communal harmony of the jurisdiction, disease condition and living with status) have significant effect over their coping strategies.

3.4 Sample

A total of 146 Station House officers of Kerala Police across Kerala were selected using simple random sampling technique. The age of the participants of the study ranges between 30 and 54 and the length of their service ranges between 2-30
years. The researcher approached the then State Police Chief and got permission to collect data from the SHOs’ of Kerala state and followed by that the State Police Chief sent a wires less message to all the SHOs’ of Kerala state along with the questionnaire instructing them to fill it and send it to back to the researcher. But unfortunately the researcher got only four samples returned even if the State Police Chief made an instruction to do so. Because of the time constraints most of the SHOs’ could not fill the questionnaire and due this reason only 146 samples could be obtained.

3.5 Tools used

Following tools were used in the study

1. Demographic variables
2. Occupational Stress Index
3. Coping Check List

3.5.1 Demographic variables

The demographic variables such as age, religion, educational status, years of experience communal harmony of the jurisdiction, disease condition and living with status were incorporated for analyzing the effect of these variables over Occupational stress and coping strategies.

3.5.2 Occupational stress index

Occupational Stress Index (OSI) standardized by Srivastava and Singh (1984) was administered to assess the level of stress among the employees of MNC and call centre. This scale consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the five point rating scale, by indicating strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree. Out of 46 items, 28 items are true keyed and the rest 18 are false keyed. The items relate to almost all relevant components of the occupational life, which cause stress in some way or other. Such as Role Overload, Role ambiguity, Role Conflict, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure, Responsibility for persons, under-participation, powerfulness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability. The occupational stress index purports to
measure the extent of stress which employees perceive arising from various consistent and conditions of their job, it also measures the stress arising exclusively from job roles. The reliability index ascertained by split half (odd-even) method and Cronbach’s alpha co-efficient for the scale as whole were found to be 935 and 90 respectively. The reliability indices of the 12 subscales were also computed through split half method.

The following table records the obtained indices of reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Sub scales</th>
<th>Reliability Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Role overload</td>
<td>.684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Role ambiguity</td>
<td>.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Role conflict</td>
<td>.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Responsibility for persons</td>
<td>.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Under participation</td>
<td>.630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Powerlessness</td>
<td>.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Poor peer relations</td>
<td>.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Intrinsic impoverishment</td>
<td>.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Low status</td>
<td>.789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Strenuous</td>
<td>.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Un profitability</td>
<td>.767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The validity of the OSI was determined by computing co-efficient of correlation between the scores on OSI and various measures of job attitudes and job behaviour. The scores on the OSI is likely to positively correlate with the scores on the measures of job related attitudinal and motivational and personality variables which have proved lowering or moderating the level of occupational stress. The co-efficiencies of correlation between the scores on OSI and the measures of Job Involvement (Lodhal & Kejner, 1965), Work Motivation (Srivastava), Ego – strength (Hasan, 1970) and job satisfaction (Pestonjee, 1973) were found to be .56, .40, .51
respectively. The correlation between the scores on the OSI and the measures of job anxiety was found to be .59.

The employees scores on the OSI have been found to be positively correlated with their scores on the measures of mental ill. Health standardized by Dr. O.N. Srivastava (Prof. of Psychiatry). The flowing table presents the individual ill mental health of the high and low occupational stress groups of the employees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms of ill mental health</th>
<th>High occupational stress Grp. (N=103)</th>
<th>Low occupational stress Grp. (N=97)</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free floating Anxiety</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obsessive traits &amp; Symptoms</td>
<td>7.86</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>7.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phobic Anxiety</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>4.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatic commitment Anxiety</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neurotic suppression</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>3.330</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hysterical traits</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**P<.1; *P<.05

**Scoring**

Since the questionnaire consists of both true keyed and false keyed items two different patterns of scoring have to be adopted for two types of items. The following table provides guideline to score the responses given to two categories.
Norms

Norms have been prepared for the occupational stress index as a whole as well as its twelve subscales separately on a representative sample of 700 employees of different cadres operating in various production and non-production organizations. The distribution of scores on the OSI was found to be slightly skewed in negative direction.

The following table provides the norms for the raw scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub scales</th>
<th>Levels of occupational stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low (below -10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>6-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>5-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>3-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>3–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>4-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>3-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scales as a whole</td>
<td>46-122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.3 Coping Check List


Rao et al developed the coping checklist within the transactional perspective for use with an urban Indian population. The transactional model used referred to the individual’s ‘cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage the internal and external demands of the person – environment transaction that is appraised as taxing or exceeding the person’s resources’ (Folkman and Lazarus, 1986). Coping behaviours
selected for this tool were to serve one of the following three functions; to change stressful situations, to control the meaning of the situation and to control emotional distress in relation to stresses. Therefore, problem-focused, emotion-focussed and appraisal-focused coping behaviours were included in this instrument.

The CCL was comprised of 70 items and the responses were scored in a binary fashion – Yes/No indicative of the presence or absence of a particular coping behaviour. The total numbers of positively-responded to items were summed up to represent the size of the coping repertoire. This procedure assessed the individual’s coping patterns or resources in terms of the tendency for use in certain stressful situations (Rao, et al. 1986). The tool was kept open-ended, allowing the individual to report additional coping behaviours. The CCL was modified for use in the present study, as it had to suit a population comprised only of both urban and rural people. Items that were not relevant to this population were deleted from the original tool and three commonly rated responses to stress were included. The final version of the adapted tool consisted of 56 items.

**Scoring**

The response categories were modified to include the frequency of coping behaviours, rated on a five-point scale. The scale ranged from ‘never’ (1) to ‘always’ (5). The response categories were as follows:

1. Never – if this method of coping was never used at all.
2. Seldom – if the method was used 25 percent of the time.
3. Sometimes – if the method was used 50 percent of the time.
4. Often – if the method was used 75 percent of the time.
5. Always – if the method was used 100 percent of the time.

In order to facilitate easy comprehension and responding by the subjects, these categories were converted to currency values (paise) as suggested by Singh, Kaur and Kaur, (1984). The categories responded to, be summed to arrive at a total coping repertoire of the subject. The various dimensions are as follows:
1. Healthy Cognitive Mechanisms: The items here are 1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 24, 35, 36, 39 and 46.

2. Social support coping: The items here are 3, 7, 13, 22 and 40.

3. Spiritual religious coping: The items here are 9, 21, 23, 29, 33 and 49.

4. Physical activity related coping: The items here are 10, 19, 38, 4, 34 and 25.

5. Problem solving coping: The items here are 26, 43, 44, 45 and 50.

6. Unhealthy coping habits: The items here are 8, 15, 30 and 47.

7. Unproductive coping mechanisms: The items here are 20, 27, 28, 31, 32, 37, 41, 42, 48, 51, and 52.

8. High risk coping: The items here are 53, 54, 55 and 56.

### 3.6 Statistical methods applied

Following statistical methods were employed in the present study

1. Descriptive statistics

2. Analysis of variance (ANOVA).

3. ‘t’ test – independent samples

4. Regression analysis-stepwise multiple

#### 3.6.1 Descriptive statistics

To have a general idea of the nature of the distribution of the variables, the fundamental descriptive like arithmetic mean, median, mode, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness of the variables were calculated.

#### 3.6.2 Regression

Linear Regression estimates the coefficients of the linear equation, involving one or more independent variables that best predict the value of the dependent variable. For example, one can try to predict a salesperson's total yearly sales (the dependent variable) from independent variables such as age, education, and years of experience. In the present study step wise multiple regression was employed, coping
style scores for each coping strategy was considered as major dependent variable and 1 subscales of occupational stress were considered as independent variables to find out which of the subscales of occupational stress predict specific coping strategy.

3.6.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

To examine the significance of the difference amongst more than two sample means at the same time, ANOVA is used. The essence of ANOVA is that the total amount of variation in a set of data is broken down into two types, that amount which can be attributed to chance and that amount which can be attributed to specific causes. The basic principle of ANOVA is to test for differences among the means of the populations by examining the amount of variation in each of these samples, relative to the amount of variables between the samples.

In the present study one way ANOVA was employed to find out the effect of independent variables on selected dependent variables like stress and coping, when independent variables are varied more than 2 levels. (for example age groups varied at more than 2 levels).

3.6.4 ‘t’ test-independent samples

The Independent-Samples T Test procedure compares means for two groups of cases. Ideally, for this test, the subjects should be randomly assigned to two groups, so that any difference in response is due to the treatment (or lack of treatment) and not to other factors. This is not the case if you compare average income for males and females.

In the present study one way ANOVA was employed to find out the effect of independent variables on selected dependent variables like stress and coping, when independent variables are varied at levels. (for example, educational status varied at 2 levels).

3.7 Ethical issues

1. The nature of the study was explained to the subjects.
2. Confidentiality was assured and maintained.