CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

5.1: MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the present study are:

5.1.1 Sample Profile

1. Majority of the respondents (81) belongs to the age group of 31-40 years and were belonged to Hindu religion

2. Majority of the respondents (136) were married and only one respondent was divorced in the age group of 50+. Of the 146 samples 61 were graduates, 43 were post graduates and remaining 42 belonged to the other educational qualifications.

3. Majority of the respondents (96) belongs to rural areas and 57 respondents (57) stayed in quarters

4. Majority of the respondents (107) belongs to nuclear family

5. Majority of the spouses (92) of the respondents were unemployed

6. Majority of the respondents had more than two children and 97.6% of the respondents of the age of above 50 years had more than two children

7. Majority of the respondents (78.8%) shown that the communal harmony of their jurisdiction was normal

8. Majority of the respondents (56.2%) had no diseases as an outcome of stress.

5.1.2 Occupational stress

9. Majority of the station house officers had high levels of role overload responsibility for persons.

10. Majority of the station house officers had moderate levels of role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure,
under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability.

5.1.3 Coping

11. Majority of the station house officers adapted high levels of Healthy cognitive mechanisms, Social support coping, Physical activity related coping and Problem solving coping.

12. Majority of the station house officers adapted moderate levels of Spiritual religious coping and Unproductive coping mechanisms.

13. Majority of the station house officers adapted low levels of Unhealthy coping habits and High risk coping.

5.1.4 Stress and coping

14. Responsibility for persons and role conflict predicted more of Healthy cognitive mechanism,

15. Under participation, unprofitability, poor peer relations and low status best predicted Spiritual religious coping,

16. Powerlessness and intrinsic impoverishment best predicted Physical activity related coping,

17. Responsibility for persons, Un profitability, Role ambiguity, Strenuous working conditions predicted Problem solving coping

18. Poor peer relations, Low status, and Strenuous working conditions predicted Unhealthy coping habits,

19. Those with Under participation, Intrinsic impoverishment, Poor per relations, unreasonable group and political pressure used more of Unproductive coping mechanisms

5.1.5 Effect of demographic variables

21. The highest unhealthy coping habit was found in the age group of 50 years and above and the lowest unhealthy coping habit was found in the age group between 41-50 years.

22. Highest role conflict and unreasonable group and political Pressure found in other religions groups. But Highest under participation and stress was found with Christians and Physical activity related coping was found high in Hindus.

23. Respondents of 2 to 5 years experience had higher role over load scores, high levels of under participation, under strenuous working conditions and total occupational stress.

24. Respondents of more than 8 years of experience were shown high levels of spiritual religious coping and unhealthy habits to cope with stress.

25. Frequently disturbed communal harmony of the jurisdiction influenced role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group and political Pressure, Unproductive coping mechanisms, High risk coping and total stress.

26. Those with Irritable bowel syndrome found to have more powerlessness and those with Diabetes Mellitus had higher unprofitability.

5.2 Verification of the hypotheses

**H1: Station house officers experience significantly higher levels of stress**

H1 stated as ‘Station house officers experience significantly higher levels of stress’ is partially accepted. The test statistics clearly revealed that station house experienced high stress only in components of role overload and responsibility for persons. However, the selected sample had moderate levels of stress among components of Role ambiguity, Role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure, Under participation, Powerlessness, Poor peer relations, Intrinsic impoverishment, Low status, Strenuous working conditions, and Unprofitability.
None of the station house officers reported low stress in any of the 12 subscales of occupational stress index.

The station house officers found to be more stressed due to over load and responsibility is a clear cut indication of the present policing system and the workload. When the researcher had an interaction with the SHO’s and the senior officers who were served as SHO’s most of them were in an opinion that the present system of policing, especially the duties of SHO’ are shifted from basic policing and they are doing all sorts of works under the sun without sufficient strength, which the other departments have to be taken care. Entrustment of several duties at one time, additional duty as per government orders apart from the department is being entrusted only to SHOs’. No delegation of power for such duties. SHOs’ are compelled to give more emphasis on other duties other than basic police duties. But delay in police duties results in punishment. High demand of target wise performance, like Suo-Moto cases and petty cases than that of the crime cases and other low and order duties leads to high stress in their duties.

Responsibility is vested only in the shoulders of SHOs, not in others. The other area in which the SHO’s are highly stressed was by responsibility of persons. For decades it was being discussed and suggested by experts and senior officers to fix the accountability among all the staff of the police station. Now a days the responsibility for the entire jurisdiction, cases under investigation, petition enquiries and any other instances occurred in the police station or in the limits of the police station, it is vested upon the SHO and departmental or judicial action may be initiated against the SHO for the action done by himself or by any of his staffs. Another important aspect in this regard is that for every cases investigated in the police station, the SHO should go and appear before the court of law, even if retired from the service. Because of these reasons the responsibility and workload as an SHO causes high levels of stress than that of any other subscales of the Occupational Stress Index.

Further it is found that no Station House officers are of with low stress and majority of them are facing moderate stress in their duty. For all other government servants and the employees of almost sectors have an idea regarding their next day duties or the next minute duties, but nit for SHOs’. The duties of an SHO could not be predicted in any means as they are the law enforcers.
Lacking proper accommodation and good infrastructure facilities also leads to stress. Alternative vehicles have to be arranged in emergency situations and that may lead to be corrupted in one or other way. SHOs’ are Compelled to report for duty at 8 AM even after performing overnight duties and others can avail night off except SHOs’. No overtime allowances are being paid to the SHOs’ for the over time duties. In some cases SHOs’ are under dilemma, whether to act as per the illegal pressure from politicians and superiors or to act as per law. Some politicians and superiors are compelling the SHOs’ to do the illegal activities under the shadow of transfer or departmental actions against them. Highly politicizes situation in the force make the job of SHOs’ shapeless and the official secrets of the police station reached to politicians and to vested interested personalities faster than sound. When disciplinary action is initiated to any of the wrong doers in the police station all other staffs join together against the SHO in the banner of association. SHOs’ are not permitted to avail leave even in emergency situations and even weekly off is denied for them. Investigation and law and order are separated only in paper, not in practice.

When assessing occupational stressors among police officers, researchers should consider measuring the impact of the job on the family (Alexander & Walker, 1996; McCreaery, Thompsen, & Pasto, 2003), as well as the impact of family life on an officer’s ability to do the job. In one study the researcher sought to address these limitations in the police stress literature during development of two reliable and valid measures of police stress. In study 1, the themes for these measures were developed using a focus methodology. The use of focus group during the initial stage of research is especially important because they provide essential insights into the depth and complexity of an area (Coyne & Raccioppo, 200, Lazarus, 2000), once the substantive themes and issues were identified, questionnaire items were created and quantitative psychometric analyses were then used with fresh samples of officers to determine the reliability, as well as the construct, discriminant, and concurrent validity, of the measures. Thus, the measures were developed utilizing relevant stressors obtained from focus groups of experienced police officers. The surveys were short to limit survey burden issues in future research. Finally, the development of items will take into consideration the permeability of work and family live (Xavier & Prabhakar, 2013).
H2: Station house officers adopt various types of coping strategies to manage their occupational stress.

H2 stated as ‘Station house officers adopt various types of coping strategies to manage their occupational stress’ is partially accepted. The test statistics clearly revealed that station house officers experienced high levels of healthy cognitive mechanisms, social support coping styles, physical activity related coping and problem solving coping. However, the selected sample had moderate levels of coping among components of spiritual religious coping and unproductive coping mechanisms and low levels of coping among components of unhealthy habits of coping and high risk coping.

Even if we had several studies related to the unhealthy habits among police officers in the past and the bad image of the police may have to be taken away at least in these present days. Because even if policing is considered as one of the most stressful job they are not selected any unhealthy habits to cope with stress. The experience in the past may made them to cope with the stress in a healthy cognitive manner, by social support, by finding out the root causes of stress and to solve it in a healthy manner and may be because of the reason that they are in the force they were coping through physical exercise.

Adaption of the healthy coping mechanisms is an indication that the police are more professionalized and by implementing new systems like community policing student policing etc. the police became more public friendly and it leads them to cope with the stress by the support of the members of the society. Since the SHO’s are dealing with different types of issues in their station limit they might have been experienced in solving the problems of others by different means. These experiences might have lead the SHO’s to cope with the stress by problem solving coping style highly.

H3: Those who use different coping styles have definite predictive stressors

H3: A: Those who use healthy cognitive coping styles have definite predictive stressors

H3: A stated as ‘Those who use healthy cognitive coping styles have definite predictive stressors’ is accepted. Test statistics clearly indicated stressors like
‘responsibility for persons’ and ‘role conflict’ best predicted adaptation of Healthy cognitive mechanisms.

Active and cognitive coping have been found to be positively associated with negative life events. Individuals who had more personal and environmental resources were more likely to rely on active coping and less likely to use avoidance coping (Hoahan & Moos, 1987), and also they pointed out that individual who are adapted to stress with little physical or psychological strain were less inclined to rely on avoidance coping then were people who showed psychological dysfunction under stress (Holahan & Moss, 1987) (Randhir Singh Ranta, 2009).

Since the station House officers are the most responsible person in a police station and he may have to act several roles at a time. Due to the high responsibility and conflicting roles usually the persons under stress may opt for the unhealthy coping strategies and it is a negative coping strategy. But in this study the Station House Officers are positively coping to the stress is good symptom of high levels of professionalism in policing.

**H3: B: Those who use social support coping have definite predictive stressors**

H3: B stated as ‘Those who use social support coping have definite predictive stressors’ is rejected completely as no subscales predicted adaptation on any coping styles.

In India, Mahajan’s (1982) study on women police in the state of Punjab revealed that women’ role in policing remains ambiguous and stressful. In another Indian state, Andhra Pradesh, the women police force acts as an instrument of social change to arise the status of women in society (Shamim, 1991). Shamim, 1991) urged that women police need to be given independent charge of cases to bring them at par with their male counterparts. On appositive note, Natarajan (1996) observed that in Tamil Nadu, India, the full integration of women into policing likely to occur soon. Pattanaik (1996) suggested that a majority of women police in Orissa have taken up their jobs with altruistic motive. Even so, they experienced role conflict, were looked down upon by the male police officers, and faced more work-related problems as compared to the male officers. Even so, they experienced role conflict, were looked down upon by the male police officers, and faced more work-related problems as
compared to the male officers (Jisu Ketan Pattanaik and Vidisha Barua Worley, 2011).

A police officer, especially a station house officer is working round the clock for protecting the life and property of the persons of their jurisdiction. In some instances the SHO may be in a position to attend his personal matters also. He is safeguarding every citizen of his jurisdiction and unfortunately the works of a station house officer is not well appreciated and instead of the appreciation they are always being criticized by the media and the public. The public and media treating men in khaki as aliens and they are being harassed in all possible time. Even if in Kerala there is a public friendly policing system, there lacks a police friendly public system. The public have to be more civilized and law abiding and cooperative with the policing system, then only the system will work out in an expected manner. Since the society is not trusted with the works of station house officers, they might be reluctant to opt the social support to ventilate their job pressure.

**H3: C: Those who use spiritual religious coping styles have definite predictive stressors**

H3: C stated as ‘Those who use spiritual religious coping styles have definite predictive stressors’ is accepted. Test statistics clearly indicated stressors like ‘under participation’, ‘unprofitability’, poor peer relations and low status best predicted adaptation of spiritual religious coping.

According to Piennar and Rothman (2003), the emergence of turning to religions a separate factor is of interest. This confirms the findings of Rothmann and Strijdom (2002) and Rothmann and Van Rensburg (2001) that turning to religious seems to be an important coping strategy in the South African Police (SAP). Since the SAP employ chaplains as part of their permanent members, it can be understood why this strategy was rated highest in a national sample, if the context that actively endorses religion as coping strategy is taken into account. The questions that should however be investigated goes to the functions and effectiveness of this strategy (J. Pienaar S. Rothmann, 2003).

As the studies revealed, the spiritual religious coping is the highest coping strategy adapted by the person under stress. Station house officers also regarded
spiritual religious coping strategy for four subscales, under participation, poor peer relations, low status and unprofitability.

**H3: D: Those who use physical activity related coping styles have definite predictive stressors**

H3: D stated as ‘Those who use physical activity related coping styles have definite predictive stressors’ is accepted. Test statistics clearly indicated stressors like ‘powerlessness’ and ‘intrinsic impoverishment’ best predicted adaptation of physical activity related coping styles.

Pestonjee (1992), pointed out that stress leads to psychosomatic disorders. Since emotional states are often expressed in terms of bodily reactions, one method of counteracting the harmful effects of stress is the effect of possibility of regular exercises. According to Bhole (1977), breathing practices are intended to develop certain type of awareness within oneself. According to Nagendra and Nagarathna (1988), Yoga holds the key to combat stress. Mathur (1999) concluded that physical exercise can play an important part both in reducing stress and coping behavior (Randhir Singh Ranta, 2009).

Since compulsory yoga practice and physical exercises are implemented in Kerala police in a weekly twice basis the station house officers shown a trend to cope with the stress by using physical activity related coping styles. In all over the world yoga is considered to be one of the best coping strategy for stress and in almost all the private firms are now implementing yoga to their employees as a part of their stress ventilation. All the members of the Kerala police must attend the yoga practice in every Tuesday and Wednesday as a part of their duty. More such physical exercises or some relaxation techniques may help the police personnel to combat with stress rather than delivering lectures on the topic stress.

**H3: E: Those who use problem solving coping styles have definite predictive stressors**

H3: E stated as ‘Those who use problem solving coping styles have definite predictive stressors’ is accepted. Test statistics clearly indicated stressors like ‘responsibility for persons’ un profitability, role ambiguity and strenuous working conditions best predicted adaptation of problem solving coping styles.
The most familiar and widespread coping taxonomy is the one problem by Folkman and Lazarus (1980). These authors described coping as either problem-focused or emotion-focused. Parker and Endler (1992) demonstrated that these dimensions have been recovered in nine out of 13 studies. Problem-focused coping strategies aim at dealing with the distress that is evoked by the problem. Endler and Parke (1990) suggest that the third basic strategy that may be used in coping with stress avoidance. Avoidance can include either person-oriented or task oriented. Avoidance differs from problem- and emotion-focused coping in that avoiding a situation actually removes the person from the stressful situation, whereas problem- and emotion-focused coping might help the person manage the stressful situation while he or she remains in it (Kowalski & Crocker, 2001), (J. Pienaar S. Rothmann, 2003).

Evans et al. (1993) showed that police officers tend to use more problem-focused coping strategies (aimed at changing stressful occupational events), and less emotion-focused coping strategies (aimed at regulating their distress). Violanti (1992) found that the use of emotion-focused coping strategies result in higher levels of psychological distress, while the use of problem-focused coping strategies resulted in lower levels of psychological distress. Police officers probably compound stress by avoiding emotion-focused strategies, and when using such strategies, it only acts to exacerbate psychological stress, because the expression of emotion is not allowed in the policing environment (Kop&Meuema, 2001; Stephens & Long, 200), (J. Pienaar S. Rothmann, 2003).

Police officers, especially station house officers shall not be the problem creators, but they shall be the problem solvers. Whenever there are disturbances in their jurisdiction they have to solve it without affecting the harmony and peaceful environment of their jurisdiction. By going through different types problematic situations and by acting as mediator’s role in several issues the station house officers becomes an expert in solving the problems of the members of the society. As the saying ‘experience makes the man perfect’, the station house officers are adapting with stress by problem solving coping strategies than that of emotional coping styles.
**H3: F: Those who use unhealthy coping styles have definite predictive stressors**

H3: F stated as ‘Those who use unhealthy coping styles have definite predictive stressors’ is accepted. Test statistics clearly indicated stressors like ‘poor peer relations’, ‘low status’, and ‘strenuous working conditions’ best predicted adaptation of physical unhealthy coping styles.

Negative coping might adversely affect somatic health status by influencing the frequency, intensity, duration and patterning of neuro-chemical responses. It can also affect health negatively, when it involves excessive use of injurious substances such as alcohol, drugs or tobacco or when it involves the person in activities of high risk to life. Further, certain forms of coping (e.g., particularly denial-like process) an impair health illness – related behavior (Folkman & Lazarus, 1984). The implications of negative coping, as forced by the decorum of police personnel (Pate & Spielberger, 1979) is clearly evident in the earlier part of this research related to negative mood regulation and anger-in. it clearly highlights the need of such intervention which can enable the police personnel to come out of their superficial way of coping with emotional expressions to themselves in order to maintain sound health (Randhir Singh Ranta, 2009).

Studies on coping of police members have conceptualised and measured coping strategies in various ways, but several significant patterns have emerged (Patterson. 1999). Maladaptive behaviours such as excessive alcohol intake, drug use, smoking and overeating have been found to be ineffective and maladaptive as coping strategies among the police (Burke, 1993; Dietrich & Smith, 1984). It has also been sated that poor coping skills appear to be a significant factor in determining the intensity with which stress is experienced in police work leads to the experience of chronic, long-term stress (Hurrel, 1995; Nordlicht, 1979), and often results in job burnout and police members leaving the profession (Burke & Deszca, 1986; Malloy & Mays, 1984), (J. Pienaar S. Rothmann, 2003).

It is a good indiaktion that the unhealthy coping habits are been very less comparing to other types of coping mechanisms. Usually there is a saying that the police personnel have all sorts of unhealthy habits compared with other professionals in the sector. Due to frequent training and circulars and government orders the
unhealthy habits of the police personnel are somehow reduced to certain extend. The image in the public and family may be a reason for this less unhealthy habits in coping with the stress. By implementing practical stress management techniques and by ensuring the peer relation better the unhealthy habits of coping with the stress can be reduced. The department and government have to provide unconditional support while the station house officers are discharging their official duties.

**H3: G: Those who use unproductive coping styles have definite predictive stressors**

H3: G stated as ‘Those who use unproductive coping styles have definite predictive stressors’ is accepted. Test statistics clearly indicated stressors like ‘under participation’, ‘intrinsic impoverishment’ and poor peer relations best predicted adaptation of unproductive coping styles.

Police officers operating under severe and chronic stress may well be at greater risk of error and over-reaction that can compromise their performance and public safety. The unrealistic expectations imposed by professional police culture discourages officers from admitting the feeling of stress and form openly expressing negative emotions. Thus, while police personnel receive ample training in the theoretical knowledge and technical skills required to perform their jobs and take effective action in an emergency situation, most often them receive little if any training in self-management skills to help them quickly regain psychological and physiological equilibrium after the intense challenges of their work. This is the positive aspect of mental health, which is entirely neglected in this profession. The unusually stringent demands for self-control, compounded by the availability of effective strategies for inner self-management becomes an added stressor in its own right for police (Abernathy, 1995; Ganster, Pagon & Duffy, 1996). It is clear that practical stress management techniques are needed not only to help police personnel to remain more balanced during and after during and after the acute stresses of their jobs, but also to take action to better manage and seek real solutions to the chronic stress related to organizational and family issues (Randhir Singh Ranta, 2009).
**H3: Those who use high risk coping styles have definite predictive stressors**

H3: H stated as ‘Those who use high risk coping styles have definite predictive stressors’ is accepted. Test statistics clearly indicated only stressors like ‘under participation’, best predicted adaptation of high risk coping styles.

Gershon et al (2002) found that the most important risk factors associated with perceived work stress among police officers in the US aged above 50 years were maladaptive coping behaviours (e.g., excessive drinking or problem gambling) and exposure to critical incidents (e.g., shootings). Also, perceived work stress was significantly associated with anxiety, depression, somatisation, posttraumatic symptoms of stress and/or burnout, chronic back pain, alcohol abuse, and inappropriately aggressive behavior.

In earlier days police were the suppressive force of government to implement all the legal and illegal policies of the government. During that period any act done by the police were unquestionable and even if anyone questions them, they use to suppress public by using their force. But in the present scenario police is the protector and savior of the society and only minimum amount force is being used to enforce the law. Apart from that the influence information and communication technology is an important factor in the functioning of any government system. Any activities done by the police is a keen interested topic for the media nowadays. Because the negative news related to the police department have high news value and because of that reason the media is keenly interested to project the mistakes of the police department rather than the good works done. So in this information and communication technology era police personnel are reluctant to adapt with high risk coping styles. The previous experiences might have proven that if they are opting high risk coping strategies to combat with stress, they may have to pay for that.

**H4: Demographic variables (age, religion, educational status, years of experience communal harmony of the jurisdiction, disease condition and living with) have significant influence over their occupational stress**

H4 stated as ‘Demographic variables (age, religion, educational status, and years of experience communal harmony of the jurisdiction, disease condition and living with) have significant influence over their occupational stress’ is partially accepted.
Significant differences between respondents belonging to different age groups were found for 3 subscales- Under participation, Poor peer relations and intrinsic impoverishment. We find that as the age increased, stress scores in these subscales of under participation and poor peer relations were decreased linearly and significantly. But in the case of intrinsic impoverishment, we find that as the age increased, stress score were increased linearly and significantly.

Significant differences between respondents belonging to different religious groups were found for 3 subscales- Role conflict, Unreasonable grp.pol pressure and Under participation. Stress scores in this subscale indicates a highest role conflict for other religions and lowest role conflict for Hindu religion. Respondents belongs to other religion were under highest unreasonable group and political pressure and the respondents of Hindu religion scored the lowest. The highest under participation was found with Christians and the lowest with others. The total stress score indicates that the Christians were under more stress comparing to the other religions and Hindus were at the lowest stress level.

Educational status of the respondents had significant influence over 2 subscales of the OSI- Responsibility for persons and Powerlessness.

Significant differences between respondents belonging to different years experience groups were found for 3 subscales- Role overload, under participation and strenuous working conditions.

Significant differences between respondents belonging to different communal harmony of the jurisdiction were found for 3 subscales- Role ambiguity, role conflict and unreasonable group and political pressure.

Significant differences between respondents belonging to different diseases groups were found for 2 subscales- Powerlessness and Un profitability.

Living with status of the respondents had significant influence over 4 subscales of the OSI- Role ambiguity, under participation, Powerlessness and Strenuous working conditions.
Much of the existing police stress research is overly focused on the job itself and does not recognize that work-family boundaries are permeable. Researchers have argued that occupational stress is not only a function of the stressors found in the immediate work environment but also those from the individual’s family life (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). More specifically, Greenhaus & Parasuraman (1986) emphasized that work and family boundaries overlap and that family concerns also have a negative impact on both occupational stress and organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction (Xavier & Prabhakar, 2013).

It is seen that in Indian police force, police men in higher ranks have increased workload and areas of jurisdiction. Further, there are conflicting job demands, responsibilities of subordinates, time pressure and deadlines, physical strain of work environment, long hours and having to cope with changes at work and expenses (monetary and career) of making mistakes. It is seen that since subordinates are incapable of performing their tasks properly, the senior officers tend to take on their responsibilities also. Increased accountability of any act within their area of jurisdiction, political interference, fear of explanation of any indiscipline or irresponsibility on the part of subordinates, fear of unknown, lack of communication and cooperation from other departments result in unresolved frustrations and personal conflicts which further lead to stress and anxiety among officers at higher levels. Studies suggest that stress course and its dimensions will be significantly different among levels and departments of police personnel (Xavier & Prabhakar, 2013).

**H5: Demographic variables (age, religion, educational status, years of experience communal harmony of the jurisdiction, disease condition and living with) have significant influence over their coping strategies**

H5 stated as ‘Demographic variables (age, religion, educational status, years of experience communal harmony of the jurisdiction, disease condition and living with) have significant influence over their coping strategies’ is partially accepted.

Significant differences between respondents belonging to different age groups were found for 4 subscales- Spiritual religious coping, Physical activity related coping, Unhealthy coping habits and Unproductive coping mechanisms.
Significant differences between respondents belonging to different religious groups found only for one subscale - Physical activity related coping.

Educational status of the respondents had no significant influence over the subscales of the Coping Check List.

Significant differences between respondents belonging to different years experience groups were found only for 2 subscales - spiritual religious coping and unhealthy coping conditions.

Significant differences between respondents belonging to different community groups were found only for 2 subscales - Unproductive coping mechanisms and high risk coping.

Significant differences between respondents belonging to different diseases groups were found only for one subscale - spiritual religious coping.

Living with status of the respondents had significant influence over only one subscale of the Coping Check List - Spiritual religious coping.

Most policemen are emotionally starved and starved of finer things of life. Their normal physiological and psychological and needs are not fulfilled and that too right from 19-20 years till the retirement day. There are several limitations to the existing police stress research literature, however, much of the extant research has been qualitative in nature, using focus groups and one-on-one interviews with officers to identify the stressors and the impact it has on them (Kores et al., 1974a, b; Toch, 2002). Although a qualitative approach gives researchers an excellent snapshot into the lives of police officers, it cannot be used to quantify how much stress officers are under or the degree to which those stressors are associated with outcome variables such as job satisfaction (Xavier & Prabhakar, 2013).

**5.3: General discussion on stress among police and coping**

Police work tends to impose a high degree of stress and a multiplicity of stressful situations which can affect the physical, mental and interpersonal relationships of police personnel. Occupational stress among police personnel can reduce productivity, encourage absenteeism, lower morale, increase conflict with others, cause physical and emotional problems and poor satisfaction with life.
Stress is an important factor influencing individual efficacy and satisfaction in modern day occupational settings. This study investigates the level of stress among station officers and coping strategies and different factors associated with stress levels among station house officers in the state of Kerala.

The working conditions of the policemen are lagging behind in many aspects – social as well as human, his training deficient in equipping him to meet the task pressures, public condemnation bad enough to add to his frustration and overall work environment which is dehumanizing and de-intellectualizing. A policeman, on an average has far too many frustrations most of which remain unresolved. He passes through incessant mental conflicts and inner turmoil’s. The unresolved frustrations and personal conflicts result in stress and anxiety and the process goes on. Everybody employs self-protective maneuvers without awareness (sometimes with awareness) to prevent anxiety and stress by disguising or screening the sources of frustration or adjusting one’s responses to them. Such redirection of responses and manipulation of sources of frustration are called defense mechanisms. It is evident that the common adjustment reactions of the policemen to their work environment may not be particularly healthy. Poor adjustments are a function of both the individuals and the situations. Stress and related health and personal problems should be the concern of every administrator not only because of the humanitarian aspects but also because a failure to deal with them can have a profoundly negative effect upon the total operation of the police organization (Xavier & Prabhakar, 2013).

The majority of police personnel studied reported stress at the workplace. A significant association of stress level among police personnel was found between age group, marital status, and education. Hence there is a need for resources to be directed towards exploring effective ways of modifying the organization of workload and improving the management environment. Also introduction of periodical health examination may be required to detect any morbidity developing or existing among the police personnel.

Results from various studies indicate that most of the subjects tested, strongly or moderately agree that the following factors would reduce occupation stress experienced by police officers, (Xavier & Prabhakar, 2013):

1. A behavioral profile of each policeman. (Davis, 1982; Black, 1982)
2. A programme from training supervisors to train needs, recognize problems and initiate remedial actions. (Teten and Minderman, 1977; Daviss, 1982)

3. Counseling programmes for groups as well as for families and individuals (Carson, 1982; Yeblonsky, 1979)

4. Self-monitoring of reactions to stressful situations, muscular relaxation and development of adaptive self statements (Fennell, 1979; Gudjonsson and Adlam, 1982).

5. Training in biofeedback, progressive relaxation, T group or sensitivity sessions,


7. Recognize the value of the job and set goals so that there is something to work toward, to accomplish (Black, 1982)

8. Efforts by police organization to cut back on department caused stress (Daviss, 1982)

9. Increase fitness through physical exercise, nutritional habits and psychological well being (Prentice and Servatius, 1982)


11. Personal participation in problem identification, problem solving, performance evaluation and decision making so that likelihood of job satisfaction increases and there is reduction of some of the organizational stresses otherwise active (Schilling, 1980).

Stress is the demands made on an organism or a person, which the person is unable to cope with. A policeman, on an average, has far too many frustrations most of which remain unresolved. He passes through incessant mental conflicts and internal turmoils. The unresolved frustrations and personal conflicts result in stress and the process goes on. One might abstain from, control or redirect one’s reaction in such situations, depending on one’s ability to modify one’s conduct. Everybody employs self-protective maneuvers without awareness (sometimes one may be aware also) to prevent stress by disguising or screening the sources of frustration or by adjusting
one’s responses to them. The adjustment reactions and behavioral outcomes of the policemen in response to stress are not particularly healthy. Poor adjustments are a function of both the individual and the situation. In the case of the police, action is called for on both fronts (Xavier & Prabhakar, 2013).

The stress management programmes have been implemented successfully by police organizations in the west (Axelberd & Velle, 1978; Swanson & Territo, 1983; Wagner, 1981). In India Pandya (1982) has been conducting workshops for the special branch of the Mumbai police for the last eight years (Hindustan Times, 26 November 1996). But these singular efforts need to be replicated all over India. The findings of the present study is an encouraging indication to pursue this line of research. Keeping in view the Indian ethos, the psychologist need to explore the scope of indigenous techniques to (a) alleviate the wear and tear of body and mind, (b) enhance the well-being of person. Both these aspects are important, whether we take management view, or the remedial measures (Randhir Singh Ranta, 2009).

5.4: Implications

1. The unproductive coping mechanisms can be converted into healthy cognitive mechanisms.

2. The role overload / workload of SHO’s can be reduced for effective functioning at bio-psycho-social levels.

3. The responsibility / accountability can be distributed among other staff of the police station.

4. Police work is a stressful occupation with frequent exposure to traumatic events and psychological strain from work might increase the risk of burnout.

5. Intervention is necessary to help officers deal with their difficult and stressful occupation. Police officers need to learn how to relax, how to think differently about things they experience as a cop. There is such a thing as post-traumatic growth. People can grow in a positive way and be better cops and persons after they survive the trauma of police work.

6. It is believed that the novel findings will assist in the development of practical interventions enhancing a better training and performing, healthier police force and impact the safeguard of the station house officers in Kerala.
5.5: Limitations of the study

1. The study was done only in 146 samples from Kerala. Higher sample size would yield better results.

2. The main limitation of the present study was the self reporting by the respondents through questionnaire method. Self reporting may either under estimation or over estimation.

3. Only stress and coping strategies of the station house have been studied. No effort has been made to study their quality of life, subjective and psychological wellbeing.

4. Intervention programmes for the station house officers have not conducted.

5.6: Suggestions for Govt. of Kerala to decrease stress among police and increase their quality of life

1. The workload of the SHO’s should be reduced by implementing policies and strategies.

2. Practically separate law and order and crimes at the police station level.

3. Fix accountability for all the members of force and define their duties by revising the age old Police Standing Orders.

4. Implement practical stress management programs at the Police station level regularly.

5. Conduct more in-service training programs on stress management.

6. Incorporate practical stress management techniques in the basic training itself by revising the recruit syllabus of Police constables and Sub Inspectors.

7. Performance appraisal of SHOs’ should not be merely on the basis of the number of suo-moto cases and petty cases. Issue government orders in this regard to the District Police chiefs to stop unnecessary harassments in the name of suo-moto cases and petty cases in a daily basis.

8. Ensure the minimum tenure of two years in a jurisdiction as in Kerala Police Act. Avoid unnecessary and illegal interference in any means under the shade of transfer.
9. Legal advisors / legal cells may start functioning at district level in district police head quarters to render legal aids to the SHOs’ in crime cases and to tackle with the unwanted private cases against SHOs’ while discharging his duties. Government may issue orders in this regard and may take initiation to the police department professionally competent.

10. Make sure that the SHOs’ are provided with leaves compulsorily in emergency situations. Issue specific government orders in this regard mentioning in which are all the emergency situations when the SHOs’ are to be given leaves compulsory.

11. Ensure that the all SHOs’ of the states are undergone a minimum of at least one in-service course in year for the knowledge updation in newly enacted laws, technologies and to understand the new patterns and trends in crime.

12. The police are civilized and professionalized through immense training programs to such an extent, but not the public. We have a public friendly police system, not a police friendly public system. Government may take necessary steps to make the public to friendly with the criminal justice system.

5.7: Suggestions for future research

1. Further research should be focused in other ranks of officers and men of the police department.

2. Further research should be conducted in different states of India and in other countries.

3. Research should be further extended to the relation between basic training and stress among the officers.

4. Effectiveness of stress management programmes can be focus area for future researchers.

5. Further research should be taken over in trainees at the time of their training also.
5.8: Conclusion

The station house officers found to be more stressed due to over load and responsibility is a clear cut indication of the present policing system and the work load. Duties other than the basic duties, poor peer relations, lacking the support from the public, criticisms by the media, unnecessary political involvement in the day to day functioning of the police station, illegal compulsion by the superior officers to do favourisms to their well wishers, uncertainty in the next day work, high responsibility, lack of accountability for other staffs, and so on in the occurrence of stress, reasons are not very less. Entrustment of several duties at one time, additional duty as per government orders apart from the department is being entrusted only to SHOs’. No delegation of power for such duties. SHOs’ are compelled to give more emphasis on other duties other than basic police duties. But delay in police duties results in punishment. High demand of target wise performance, like Suo-Moto cases and petty cases than that of the crime cases and other low and order duties leads to high stress in their duties.

Even if policing is considered as one of the most stressful job they were not adapted with any unhealthy habits to cope with stress. The experience in the past may made them to cope with the stress in a healthy cognitive manner, and may be because of the reason that they are in the force they were coping through physical exercise. Adaption of the healthy coping mechanisms is an indication that the police are more professionalized and by implementing new systems like community policing student policing etc. the police became more public friendly and it leads them to cope with the stress by the support of the members of the society. Since the SHO’s are dealing with different types of issues in their station limit they might have been experienced in solving the problems of others by different means. These experiences might have lead the SHO’s to cope with the stress by problem solving coping style highly.