ABSTRACT

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. In the present study an attempt is made to assess the stress levels among station house officers and coping strategies adapted by them to manage the stress. 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. It was hypothesized that Station house officers experience significantly higher levels of stress, Station house officers adopt various types of coping strategies to manage their occupational stress, those who use various coping styles have definite predictive stressors, and demographic variables have significant influence over stress and coping strategies. The selected sample was administered Occupational Stress Index (OSI) standardized by Srivastava and Singh (1984) and Coping Checklist (CCL) developed by Rao, et al (1990). Occupational stress of station house officers was measured in following subscales-Role Overload, Role ambiguity, Role Conflict, Unreasonable Group and Political Pressure, Responsibility for persons, under-participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability and total occupational stress. Coping strategies were measured in 8 areas- Healthy Cognitive Mechanisms, Social support coping, Spiritual religious coping, Physical activity related coping, Problem solving coping, Unhealthy coping habits, Unproductive coping mechanisms and High risk coping. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed in the present study for data analysis. Analysis of variance (ANOVA), ‘t’ test – independent samples, Regression analysis-stepwise multiple were employed for data analysis. Results revealed that majority of the station house officers had high levels of role overload responsibility for persons. 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. Majority of the station house officers adapted high levels of Healthy cognitive mechanisms, Social support coping, Physical activity
related coping and Problem solving coping. Majority of the station house officers adapted moderate levels of Spiritual religious coping and Unproductive coping mechanisms. Majority of the station house officers adapted low levels of Unhealthy coping habits and High risk coping.

Further analysis revealed that responsibility for persons and role conflict predicted more of Healthy cognitive mechanism, under participation, unprofitability, poor peer relations and low status best predicted Spiritual religious coping, powerlessness and intrinsic impoverishment best predicted Physical activity related coping, Responsibility for persons, Un profitability, Role ambiguity, Strenuous working conditions predicted Problem solving coping, Poor peer relations, Low status, and Strenuous working conditions predicted Unhealthy coping habits, those with Under participation, Intrinsic impoverishment, Poor peer relations, unreasonable group and political pressure used more of Unproductive coping mechanisms and lastly Under participation of officers best predicted high risk coping. Various ways to reduce stress and managing stress have been delineated.