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A STUDY STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG TRAFFIC CONSTABLES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MYSURU CITY

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ABSTRACT

Traffic constables play a significant role in ensuring smooth flow of traffic and pedestrians and work for the societal well being. They are doing their job round the clock without week end and occasional holidays which causes tremendous mental pressure and physical exertion. In recent years, Mysuru city is seeing an unprecedented increase in vehicular population. With the steady rise of human population and vehicular traffic in the city, constables manning the traffic are being exposed to various kinds of problems leading to stress. The present study aims at identifying the causes and effects of stress and suggests suitable measures to cope with the work place stress for better performance.

KEYWORDS

Mysuru, stress management, traffic police constables.

INTRODUCTION

Traffic constables play a significant role in maintaining the traffic. In fact, it is impossible to think of smooth and hassle free traffic movement without their efficient services. They have to supervise thousands of vehicles every day. The number may go up even more as the population of the Mysuru city is growing at a brisk pace. The physical and psychological well being of the constables is a crucial factor for enhancing their work efficiency. For proper management of traffic, there are many hindrances, which might come into the way of efficient service delivery. In recent years, the city is posing a challenge for those attempting to regulate traffic. The traffic population is growing at the rate of 8 to 9 percent in the city. But the number of traffic constables has not increased correspondingly leading to overtime work and stress. Therefore, a regular stress management is essential.

MYSURU CITY – A PROFILE

Mysuru is the second biggest city in Karnataka with a population of 8,87,446 as per 2011 census. The population has been increasing at a compound annual rate of 2.5 per cent in the last two decades due to the increase in heritage, culture and spiritual tourism. Today, Mysuru is being promoted as an alternative destination for the IT industry. The city has become a new heaven for IT and ITES industry with the establishment of software giants like Infosys, Wipro, SPI, etc., which has resulted in the increase in the number of vehicles. The number of vehicles registered in Mysuru up to 2010 was 4,95,513. Two wheelers constitute more than 75 per cent of total population. The vehicle growth in the city is about 8 to 9 per cent per annum. But the negative side of it is that there is no corresponding increase in the traffic constables in the city.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Traffic constables play a very significant role in ensuring smooth flow of traffic and pedestrians despite all shortcomings and limitations in the department especially with regard to infrastructure facilities, man power, lack of motivation and allowances. They are supposed to work round the clock to keep the public safe. They do not have week end and occasional holidays. In fact on the days VIP visits, rallies, Dasara and other festivals they have to work even harder in the name of security and law and order which causes tremendous mental pressure and physical exertion on them. Hence, there is a need for the study of stress management among traffic constables who work for the societal well being.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The increasing number of vehicles on the road is making the traffic management one of the most stressful jobs that a traffic constable undertakes on the mean streets of Mysuru city. Battling road rage, pollution, traffic rule violation, accidents and incessant honking can make constables a hard reed to tackle the situation which may often result in scuffles. All these causes occupational and behavioural stress among the traffic constables which affects their family and work life. There are instances of traffic constables suffering from cardiovascular and respiratory problems. Further, they suffer from heat stroke during summer due to long working hours without a break or leave.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Find the causes and effects of stress among traffic constables.
2. Suggest measures to reduce the stress.

HYPOTHESIS

H1-- Increase in manpower and adoption of technology leads to reduction in stress.

H2 – Educating public on the traffic rules reduces traffic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample size: A convenient random sample of 100 traffic police constables were taken from the city of Mysuru for the study irrespective of gender.

Source of data: the data was mainly collected from primary sources which included questionnaire and schedule. Secondary data was collected through news papers, journals, magazines and web sites.

Statistical tools: Chi-Square and ANOVA techniques are used to test the hypothesis.

CAUSES OF STRESS

Traffic police constables, owing to their long hours of work on the field, get stressed out on a regular basis. The causes of stress are:

1. Inadequate rest
2. No leave or occasional holiday
3. Excessive work pressure

4. Political pressure and interference
5. Abstaining from social occasions
6. Unable to give time to family during week end and festivals
7. Hot weather condition
8. Excessive number of vehicles on the road
9. Lack of public co-operation
10. Pressure from higher authority
11. Fear of punishment from superiors
12. Environmental pollution – Air and noise
13. Stereotype nature of work
14. Use of abusive language by the public when caught for violating traffic rules.

EFFECTS OF STRESS

The stress affects the personal and career life of the traffic police constables. Some of the effects are:

1. Reduces the competence level of employees,
2. Causes severe health disorder like cardio-vascular disease, respiratory problems, lung infection, etc.,
3. Leads to psychological problems such as anxiety, suicidal tendency, alcoholism, etc., and
4. Affects the family life.

FINDINGS

1. 67 per cent of the respondents are in the age group of 30 to 40 years.
2. 80 per cent of the respondents expressed that they work over time.
3. 90 per cent of the respondents opine that stress is more during VIP visits, rallies, Dasara festivals etc.
4. 30 per cent of the respondents adopt safety measures such as wearing muffs, gloves, sunglasses, mask etc., at the work place.
5. One fourth of the respondents adopt healthy life style practices to de stress themselves.
6. 78 per cent of the respondents agreed that there is a moderate stress at the work place.
7. 58 per cent of the respondents expressed that they suffer from health disorder like respiratory problem, heat stroke, head ache and so on.
8. 100 per cent of the respondents said that there is no professional counselling for stress management.
9. 100 per cent of the respondents said that safety tools are not provided by the department. They should be purchased personally.
10. 65 per cent of the respondents agreed that they do not undergo frequent health check up.
11. 54 per cent of the respondents said that the stress has affected their personal life.
12. 62 per cent of the respondents opined that educating public leads to reduction in stress level.
13. 47 per cent of the respondents said that increase of man power and adoption of technology reduces stress.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

H1 47 per cent of the respondents said that the increase of man power in the department would lead to reduction in stress level as it eliminates the working of overtime without a leave or compulsory weekend holiday. The adoption of latest technology to trap the traffic rule offenders would also reduce the stress among the traffic police constables. (Chi Square value 0.050). The hypothesis is proved and accepted.

H2 62 per cent of the respondents opined that educating public and the introduction of traffic management as a part of the school curriculum would not only educate the people about the traffic rules but also reduces the stress. (Chi Square value 0.016). The hypothesis is proved and accepted.

SUGGESTIONS

Stress is inevitable in the traffic police department because of their job profile and nature of work. It is very difficult to make the department stress free, but few measures can be taken to reduce the stress among the traffic constables. Some of them are:

1. Stake holders i.e., the government and the public should play an important role in understanding the problems of traffic police constables.
2. Public should be educated about the traffic rules either through the media or by including in the school curriculum.
3. There shall be centres with facilities for stress management including yoga, meditation and professional counselling.
4. Government should not exercise unwarranted influence on the traffic police constables and should facilitate and support policing programmes.
5. The department should recruit more traffic police constables to reduce the work load.
6. Implementation of the safety measures like wearing muffs, gloves, mask and sun glasses at the work place must be made mandatory and should be provided by the department free of cost.
7. Long working hours without a break should be avoided as it affects their ability.
8. Entertainment allowance must be given to the traffic police constables as a measure to de stress themselves.
9. Frequent and regular health check up must be made mandatory.
10. Regular stress management workshops must be conducted.
11. Above all, the traffic police constables should personally make all their efforts to de stress themselves by adopting healthy practices like yoga, exercise, meditation etc. in their day to day life.

CONCLUSION

Stress is a fact of life, wherever you are and whatever you are doing. One cannot avoid stress in this busy world, but one can learn to manage it by applying the famous medical terminology i.e., "prevention is better than cure" so that stress doesn't manage us. The traffic police department is also not free from stress. The stress cannot be eliminated in Toto due to lack of man power in the department and the increase of human and vehicle population in Mysuru city. But certainly measures can be taken by the stake holders i.e., police department, government and the public to minimise the stress and the traffic police constables too should also adopt healthy life style practices to de stress themselves to improve their professional and personal life.

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