DHARANA

Impact of Excessive Workload on the Work-Life Balance of Police Personnel in Karnataka

M. R. Dhanush[1] and C. Shobha[2]

Abstract

Policing is a stressful job wherein, the workforce, performing duties in such stressful environments will be exposed to traumatic events and chronic stress in their line of duty. Irrespective of designations, policemen experience a lot of physical and mental health issues, addictions, extreme stress and pressure, excessive workload, and life-threatening situations. Several studies state that the work culture and constant stressful environment faced by the policemen make them victims to smoking and alcohol addictions. Despite the power and possession, policing is content of all such negative elements and yet there is still no permanent cure for the issues. Theories of Management suggest that there is always a solution for every problem in hand. The researchers, in this study emphasize on the inculcation of managerial aspects in the Police work culture. This study is focusing on the assessment of influence of excessive workload on the work-life balance practices of Karnataka State Police (KSP). The current study also emphasizes the positive outcomes of an effective managerial education in maintaining a healthy work-life balance among the Police Professionals. The researchers have attempted to enlighten the importance of efficient human resource management practices to safeguard the personal and professional aspects of Police personnel. The findings of the study showcase the numerous advantages of efficient managerial training and education in handling excessive workload and efficient balancing skills to enhance healthy work-life balance practices among the Police personnel in Karnataka.

Keywords: Karnataka Police, Police Personnel, Stress, Workload, Work Life Balance
JEL Classification Code: O15

1. Introduction

Karnataka was formerly called as the Mysore State until 1973, later the princely state was renamed to Karnataka state on 1st November, 1973 (Ghori, 2010). During the rule of Maharajas of Mysore, until 1965, policing did not exist in a hierarchal manner, instead policing was in existence with different names such as *Talwars, Thotis, Neeragantis, Kavalugararu, Amaragararu, Ankamaale, Patela, Shyanubhogas,* etc. Sri. L. Rickets has the fame of being appointed as the first Inspector General of Police in the history of Mysore state. Today, the State police has grown to be a big and complex organizational structure which is run on modern management principles. (Karnataka State Police, n.d.).

Initially, policing was just the job of protecting and safeguarding the law & order in the province but in modern days, policing is just not the protection but also prevention. Preventing crimes and unlawful activities before they happen is the prime responsibility of police personnel. Technology is a two-edged sword that when stuck, cuts from both sides. Over the last decade, the state has witnessed a drastic change in hotel-industry, IT sector, SSIs, construction and development agencies, human resources, innovation and technology-based start-ups and more. Optimistically, this is an appreciable economic progress in the province but pessimistically, the increase in economic activities has also increased the population in the state. Increase in population proportion is substantively related to the crime rates (Chamlin &

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Cochran, 2004). As per this study, it was proved that population proportion was positively related with the increase in the crime rates. Therefore, it can be noted that any increase in the population proportion in any given province, then the workload or duty responsibilities of police personnel shall be increased.

2. Review of Literature

Purba and Demou (2019) in their research paper, *"The relationship between organizational stressors and mental well-being within Police officers: A systematic review"* have brought forward the evidence to prove the association between organizational stressors and occupational stress, depression, psychological distress, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishments. The results reveal that the organizational stressors intimidate anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideas in the mind of an individual. The study has been concretely evidential in proving that the organizational stressors namely organizational culture, unfair workplace, dissatisfaction in the department, work role demands, mental expectations, work pressure, heavy workload, extended work hours, inadequate up, contempt, leadership, sexual and language harassment, bias, peer attitudes, poor decisions, a difference of social class, performance and reward imbalance and overcommitment were the significant contributors for the adverse mental well-being conditions.

Boyanagari *et al.* (2018) have analyzed the data related to Police officers in India, particularly in the state of Andhra Pradesh, to find out the essence of Police personnel as an important occupational group who constantly work under stressful situations. They have also investigated on data related to preventive programs in the government organizations and studies on occupational stress among these Police officers. Through their study, they have concluded that it is very essential to develop an adequate evaluation of occupational injury and illness among Police officers. The prevalence of a hazard surveillance system for tracking the same must be monitored. Additionally, the association between chronic diseases and mortality should be considered.

Bindu *et al.* (2016) have elucidated the training programs, methods and rewards. In their study, researchers have enlisted various training institutes in located Karnataka for the purpose of Police training. They have disclosed

the various infrastructure facilities available at training centers. Overall research shows that the training for the recruits included computer-based training, physical training in both indoor and outdoor activities, training in crime detection and prevention, map reading and plan drawing, First aid, intelligence and also induction training, refresher training and pre-promotion training for Police officers who are in service.

Yawalkar and Sonawane (2016) have determined their work in identifying the challenges involved and factors affecting the work-life balance of Police personnel in Jalgaon. Apparently, the data is collected from 30 sample respondents to assess the researcher's assumption and the obtained result demonstrated that general working hours of a Police personnel is not fixed to a certain limit thereby being the primary source of stress and dissatisfaction. The researcher, through a thorough analysis states that the Job profile of a Police personnel is the major challenge in rationing adequate time for family and personal care. In addition, the researcher suggests that the development and implementation of a proper policy with respect to the Police personnel will assist in maintain a healthy work-life balance among the Police Officers.

Kazmi and Singh (2015) have observed the enigmatic and strenuous work involved in the job profile of Police Officers. The researchers have scrutinized the existing theory of job satisfaction, occupational stress and work conflicts and attempted to analyze the impact of work-life balance, work stress on the job satisfaction also the researchers identify the enduring strategies and cognitive efforts to overcome the challenges involved in handling a proper work-life balance and job satisfaction. This theory is tested using 350 samples in the region of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh based on Non-probability Convenience sampling technique. However, the results disclosed that the independent variables – Work-life balance, Occupational stress and Coping strategies to be the significant predictors of Job satisfaction while, improper coping strategies revealed a destructive impact of stress on the work force.

Goswami and Burman (2015) have worked on a study focusing on the impact of work stress on job satisfaction and on psychological wellbeing among Police officers. They have also analysed the role of workplace support as a moderator, in the relationship of work stress with

job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. Through the study, they have concluded that when the working environment is favourable, the stress is faced by employees is lower and their job performance is significantly enhanced. Work related factors are the main cause of stress and is directly related to their psychological, emotional, and physiological well-being. They've analysed that stress has been discussed as the procedure of adjusting to or dealing with situation that interrupt, or intimidate to disrupt a person's physical or psychological functioning. To deal with such a scenario, workplace support from supervisor and co-workers acts as a moderator and does not lead to negative outcomes due to work stress, it rather creates a positive impact and leads to job satisfaction, thus acting as a moderator in the relationship of work stress with job satisfaction and psychological well-being

3. Research Design

3.1 Statement of the Problem

A healthy work-life balance is essential for every individual irrespective of the profession. Physical and mental health of an individual employee is dependent on the satisfaction level of that particular employee with respect to their work-life balance (Kauser, 2016). Policing is a stressful job as it is content of physical and mental stressors. Work environment is content of various factors that influence the work-life balance of police officers such as long working hours, excessive workload, peer pressure, superior pressure, multiple tasks, lack of public support and trust, workplace conflicts, family conflicts and much more. This study particularly studies the influence of workload on the work-life balance of KSP. The Official portal of the KSP disseminates the total number of cases registered every year throughout the state. The data disclosed showcases only the number of registered cases but the problem exists in solving those cases within the allotted time frame which might as well be subject to external or superior pressure.

3.2 Objective of the Study

This research attempts to study the influence of excessive workload on the work-life balance practices of Karnataka State Police (KSP).

3.3 Research Gap

Based on the literature review, it is evident that many studies have been conducted on the theme of work-life balance among police personnel based on primary information. All the studies are made based on primary information with respect to. All these studies have focused on demographic characteristics, organizational characteristics, and societal characteristics to study the work-life handling capabilities of the respondents. This leaves a potential gap to study the work-life balance hurdles caused solely on the grounds of workload. The police profession is well-known for its excessive workload with the minimum available time. Therefore, this study is an attempt to showcase the workload of policemen in Karnataka (as per the databases) and how they impact on their work-life balance.

3.4 Research Methodology

The researchers have collected data from secondary sources such as statistical information available at the official portal of Government of Karnataka (GoK) and KSP. Data of the previous five years, i.e., from 2017-2021, has been collected through the official portal and the same has been further analyzed to interpret the results. The data available at the source discloses month-wise statistical reports which have been summarized and consolidated by the authors as per requirement.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Police are the first line responders for any uneventful incidents, criminal activities, public safety, VIP gatherings, law and order maintenance and so on. In their line of duty, they may encounter situations that are perilous, life threatening, mentally disturbing and also publicly disapproving. Being a police officer is not a straightforward one, as it involves problems in both workplace and personal space. The prime responsibility of any police personnel is to protect law and order in the society.

Currently, the Karnataka State Police is functioning on seven different ranges namely Belagavi (Northern), Mysuru (Southern), Mangaluru (Western), Davanagere (Eastern), Bengaluru (Central), Kalaburgi (North-Eastern), Ballari (Ballari) wherein, each range covers a minimum of three districts. KSP is also functioning under seven different

Table 1. Table showing the number of crimes in Karnataka

Sl.No.	Districts	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	BengaluruCity	53,705	3,049	2,789	2,582	2,829
2	MysuruCity	3,014	39,976	41,854	34,156	36,310
3	HubballiDharwadCity	2,270	6,136	6,008	5,409	5,916
4	MangaluruCity	3,789	5,929	5,346	5,589	6,065
5	BelagaviCity	2,475	4,341	5,068	5,292	6,115
6	BengaluruDistrict	6,249	4,096	3,789	3,544	3,582
7	K.G.F.	639	3,701	3,759	4,032	4,448
8	Kolar	2,220	2,718	4,699	3,287	4,013
9	Tumakuru	6,378	2,824	2,633	2,035	2,349
10	Chikkaballapura	2,852	3,013	3,272	3,395	3,633
11	Ramanagara	4,730	4,256	4,485	4,809	5,205
12	Chitradurga	4,589	2,265	2,039	1,829	2,009
13	Davanagere	4,314	4,275	3,937	3,462	4,007
14	Shimoga	6,975	1,333	1,286	1,364	1,719
15	Haveri	2,637	2,028	1,643	1,512	1,610
16	Chikkamagaluru	3,536	4,892	3,192	3,306	3,198
17	DakshinaKannada	2,476	5,968	5,323	5,641	6,464
18	Udupi	3,066	2,725	2,827	2,785	3,004
19	UttaraKannada	3,431	1,924	1,923	1,841	2,934
20	Bagalkot	3,001	760	837	739	851
21	BelagaviDistrict	6,591	1,880	1,867	1,686	1,683
22	Vijayapura	4,344	2,094	2,058	2,167	2,397
23	Dharwad	1,412	3,322	2,653	2,566	2,660
24	Gadag	2,059	6,248	5,900	5,930	6,072
25	Bidar	3,783	3,231	3,119	2,375	3,147
26	Kalaburgi	5,008	3,198	3,256	2,607	2,810
27	Yadgiri	1,932	4,758	4,657	5,077	5,595
28	Chamarajanagara	2,598	3,705	3,350	3,448	3,540
29	Hassan	5,821	1,344	1,863	756	920
30	Kodagu	2,031	4,084	4,147	4,631	4,185
31	Mandya	6,874	6,460	5,682	5,281	5,710
32	MysuruDistrict	5,622	6,153	6,143	6,013	6,722
33	Ballari	4,940	3,132	3,078	2,636	2,704
34	Koppal	2,802	3,343	3,306	2,910	3,126
35	Raichur	4,052	2,015	1,966	2,153	1,996
36	KarnatakaRailways	1,824	2,240	1,989	1,511	1,788
37	KalaburgiCity	NA	NA	1,948	1,724	2,381
STATE TOTAL		1,84,039	1,63,416	1,63,691	1,50,080	1,63,697

Source: https://ksp.karnataka.gov.in/new-page/Crime%20in%20Karnataka/en
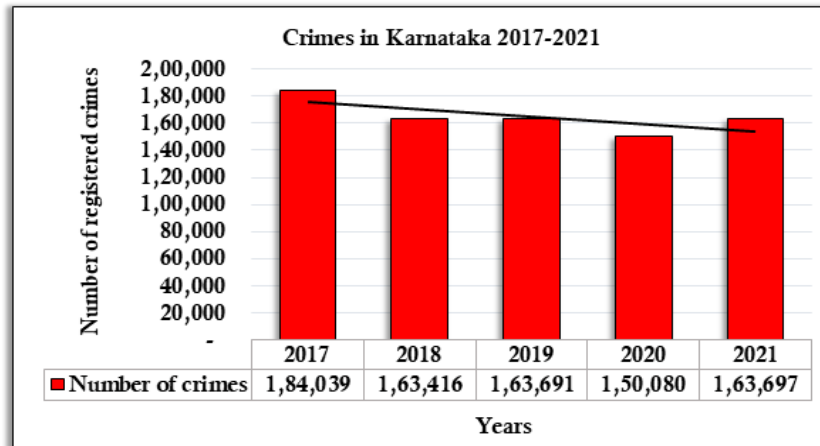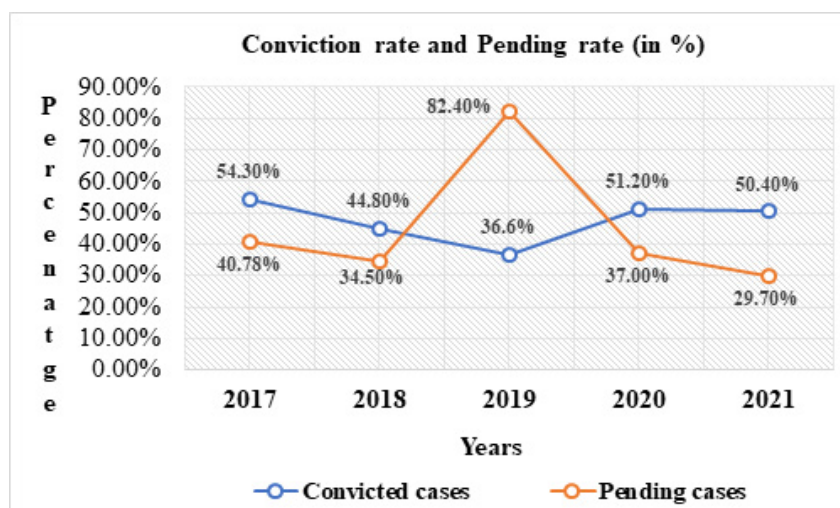
Source: Desk research

Figure 1.   Chart showing the graphical representation of crimes in Karnataka.

wings namely '*Law & order wing, Intelligence wing, Crime & Technical services wing, Police Computer wing, Criminal Investigation Department, Karnataka State Reserve Police, Communication, Logistic and Modernisation wing;* to safeguard the law enforcement within the province.

The above table discloses the number of registered cases in each district across Karnataka every year from 2017 till 2021. The number of cases enlisted in Table 1 is inclusive of the crimes of both Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Laws (SLL) categories. These crimes are inclusive of both cognizable and non-cognizable offences such as murder, robbery, burglary, abduction, narcotics,

cheating, forgery, assault, defamation, etc. Kalaburgi was not segregated as Kalaburgi city until 2019 and hence, in the Table 1, number of crimes in Kalaburgi city for the years 2017 and 2018 have been marked as NA.

Figure 1 depicts the graphical representation of the number of crimes registered in the Karnataka State during the years 2017-2021. Figure 1 indicates a downward trend in the registered crimes during these five years wherein, the number of total crimes registered in the year 2017 was 1,84,039 which saw a drop by - 11.205 % in the year 2018; thereafter the number of crimes raised by + 0.168 % during the year 2019 with a total number of 1,63,691

Source: Desk research

Figure 2.   Figure showing the percentage of convicted cases and pending cases.

cases; the total number of crimes in 2020 was 1,50,080 which again showcased decline in the number of crimes by - 8.315 % and the same saw a rise by + 9.073 % in the year 2021 summing up to a total of 1,63,697 cases.

In the Figure 1, the least number of cases registered was in the year 2020, which was due to the pandemic. An article suggests that on an average, the time taken to solve a case in India ranges 10-15 days depending upon the type of case. As a reason of thorough investigation and collecting substantial evidence, time period consumed in case of criminal cases for solving shall be up to 6 months (Tiwari). As per the secondary sources, there are up to 1,09,519 policemen working in the Karnataka Police Department (KSP, n.d.) wherein the population of the State, as per the Aadhar statistics during February 2019 sums up to 6.62 crores (indiagrowing.com, 2019).

Figure 2 reveals the rate of pending cases and convicted cases during the years 2017 to 2021. In the year 2017, there were a total of 1,84,039 cases registered and the corresponding conviction rate and pendency rate were 54.3 % and 40.78 % respectively; in the year 2018, total number of registered cases were 1,63,416 and the corresponding conviction rate and pendency rate were 44.8 % and 34.5 % respectively; in 2019 there were 1,63,691 cases with a conviction rate of 36.6 % and a pendency rate of massive 82.4 %; in the year 2020, 1,50,080 cases had a conviction rate of 51.2 % and a pendency rate of 37 %; similarly the year 2021 had 1,63,697 cases with 50.4 % conviction rate and 29.7 % pendency rate (State Crime Records Bureau, n.d.). Pending cases of each year disclosed in Figure 2 indicates the percentage of pending cases of that respective year and pending cases of the previous year shall be carried forwarded to the current year, which is not included in the present year's data.

Amongst the registered crimes, up to 40 % of the crimes are comprised of violent crimes, property crimes and economic crimes while the remaining 60 % of the crimes are comprised of other IPC and SLL crimes. This concludes that police personnel have to work cautiously while investigating and collecting evidence of criminal cases, which will consume more time. All these cases must be completed within the shorter time frame with other tasks in hand every day. With the above data, it is evident that the workload is constantly rebuilding throughout the year and policemen are running short of time in handling the burden. When there is excess of work and less time to complete them, such situations tend to burnout (Queiros *et al.*, 2020).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Mr. Raghavendra Auradkar, Additional Director-General of Police (Recruitment), had submitted a proposal to implement the eight-hour shifts instead of current shifts. The proposal had mentioned about the benefits of eight-hour shifts which could directly improve the work efficiency of around 1.08 lakh policemen and substantially reduce their fatigue and work pressure. The proposal also tagged the unfair difference between the sanctioned strength and existing strength. As per the proposal, three-shifts strategy would separate the staff between crime and law and order branches and provide a fixed time of duty to all the policemen who were working for a minimum of 12 hours per day without any time limits. It would also distribute manpower to the jurisdictions where the actual requirement is high and reduce the excess manpower where the requirement is less. Despite the efforts, the State Government is yet to fill 23,000 vacancies. Officials within the department believe that the three-shifts strategy can only be implemented by restructuring the organization and which is why the government has held the approval of the same till date (Police News Plus, 2019).

All the data showcased in Table 1, Figure 1 and Figure 2 reveals the workload that is present on the records. Policemen are handling far more workload off the records, and they experience the pressure and burden of overtime and excessive workload. Even today policemen are working for a minimum of 12 hours in a day and they hardly get their week-offs. Their duty and functions have no limits and moreover they do not have a fixed time duration of work, which is even more stressful. Work-life balance is said to be intact only when a person can make the right decisions in both workplace and personal life. Right decisions always come from a sound mind and straight thinking which is possible only when the mind is provided with proper care and rest. Adequate personal time and work-life balance is the need of the hour for policemen in Karnataka. Hence, work-life balance is the

key to enhance the efficiency and personal growth of policemen.

Work-life balance is all about proportioning the available time between work and personal space. Human resources are an important part of any organization. In the work environment as dynamic and challenging as Police department, where manpower is the ultimate source of reliability and progress, it is very necessary to protect the health and mind of the personnel. Policing involves a tremendous workload where multi-tasking is a routine challenge and apportioning time for personal care and family care becomes a harder task. A healthy work-life balance is the result of positively handling stress and hardships at both workplace and personal space. In this study, the researchers have identified the extensive workload borne by the Karnataka Police which creates a hurdle in maintaining a work-life balance.

Policemen are neither rewarded nor recognized for their honest efforts towards social cause. Instead, they are criticized for their harsh actions and judged for their behavior. Public have failed to understand the motive behind their actions and have failed to empathize their stance which is why policemen possess poor public image. Absenteeism, alcohol and smoking addictions, procrastination, health risks and inefficiency in work handling are the common results of improper balance of work and life. Psychology experts suggest that the best cure for stressors is communication. Proper communication at the time of need and to the people of need, reduces the stress burden which also eventually motivates people to accomplish their tasks successfully.

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