

Analysis of Causes of Suicides Among Police Personnel of Haryana & Himachal Pradesh, India

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Abstract

There are several causes of stress among the police personnel which affects their daily life. Sometimes the quantum of stress is of such a high degree that it compels the personnel in the police force to commit suicide due to multiple reasons. Suicides were found committed by 20 police personnel during a time span of 2 years which were examined by Forensic experts to find out the causes and mode of death. The cases were analyzed based on the data available from the places of occurrence, the examination of the dead bodies, and information received from the police and the public. The data has been analyzed for an in-depth study and the findings have been presented in the light of the results obtained. Most of the suicides (70%) were committed by service weapons and 55% of the victims were alcoholics. For 30% of the victims, the cause of suicide was found to be extramarital relations.

Keywords: Police Personnel, Suicide, Forensic Expert, Alcoholics, Cause of Death, Extramarital Relations.

Introduction

A number of studies have been carried out in the past by various researchers on the serving police personnel for studying the causes of mental stress viz.[1]–[8] On the basis of these studies, we can list out some causes of mental stress to police and paramilitary forces due to the following main reasons-

- Personal health issues and arduous duty hours.[4]
- Unable to look after aged parents back home.
- Their children and family members are harassed sometimes when they are away from their families.[2]
- They are not given their due shares in their domestic properties.
- Interpersonal relations between officers and junior ranks are not good.[4]
- Shortage of staff in different ranks gives them higher workload without any compensation.[2]
- Long counterinsurgency duties- not fighting the enemy but their countrymen.
- High altitude duties and sense of isolation and less oxygen increases the stress.

- Promotions are not given on time.[4]
- Not adequate leave when required.[2]
- Difficult service conditions.[2]
- Domestic stress due to other multiple factors.[2]
- Intense stress and tension due to prolonged monotonous barrack life.[3]
- Verbal hurling of physical abuses by the seniors to the juniors.[3]

These causes of stress sometimes lead the police personnel to the habit of drinking, drug addiction, and extramarital relations and not only this the level of stress becomes so high that sometimes police personnel are left with no option but to commit suicide.[9] The women police personnel meet with cruelty at the hands of their in-laws and husbands sometimes which leads them again in committing suicides.

As per World Health Organization (WHO) figures, 0.8 million persons commit suicide per year, which means 2200 per day and 1 suicide every 40 seconds.[10] Over 940 police personnel committed suicide in 5 years till December 2018.[11] This includes personnel of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). As many as 54 daily police personnel ended their lives in the last 4 years. Between 2010-2014 166 policemen in Tamil Nadu and 161 in Maharashtra and 61 in Kerala committed suicide.[12] Police officers are almost under stress to meet the demands of the public and work under highly stressful conditions as they have to keep the crime rate under control. They have no breaks, no vacations, no weekends, and have to work in all weather conditions providing public with all comforts.[13] The Minister of State for Home Govt. of India stated in reply to a parliament in question that the state governments are being persuaded for the implementation of various police reforms for better service conditions of policemen.[14]

The present study has been carried out to find out the detailed causes and the circumstances under which the police personnel commit suicides.

Methodology

The material for the present study consisted of 20 suicide cases examined by the first author in the state of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. 15 cases pertained to the state of Himachal Pradesh and 5 cases were from Haryana. 5 cases out of 20 pertained to police gazetted officers and 15 cases to other ranks i.e., from Constable to Inspector. This data relates to 17 males and 3 females. Since the number of cases N=20 is a limited data for this preliminary study, hence could not be bifurcated separately for gazetted and other ranks and among males and females for a detailed separate investigation.

Observations from the Dead bodies and at the place of occurrence along with inquiries from the people present at the places of occurrence and police reports were consulted for getting detailed information's analyzed in the present paper.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed that suicide due to illness was 5%, failure in love 10%, extramarital relations 30%, not getting a promotion on time 20%, scolded by officers 10%, cruelty 15%, not getting leave in time 5%, property dispute at home 5% as depicted in Fig. 1. Out of the total 20 victims, 55% were Drinkers/Alcoholics and 45% were Non-drinkers/Non-Alcoholics as shown in Fig. 2. Thus, it is apparent that the 2 major causes responsible for suicides from this data among police personnel of Himachal Pradesh and Haryana were found to be alcoholism and extramarital relations. From the 3 cases of women police personnel who allegedly committed suicide due to cruelty committed upon them by the husbands and in-laws of the victims, it is indicative of the fact that women in police are even not spared from the evil of cruelty against them. Suicide due to Illness (5%), Not getting leave in time (5%) and property dispute at home (5%) indicated suicidal tendencies of less frequent occurrence. However, Failure in love (10%) and Scolded by officers (10%) were relatively of more frequent occurrence.

The frequency of the mode of committing suicide was found to be with service weapons (70%), Hanging (15%), Burning (10%), and Excessive alcohol consumption (5%) as depicted in Fig. 3.

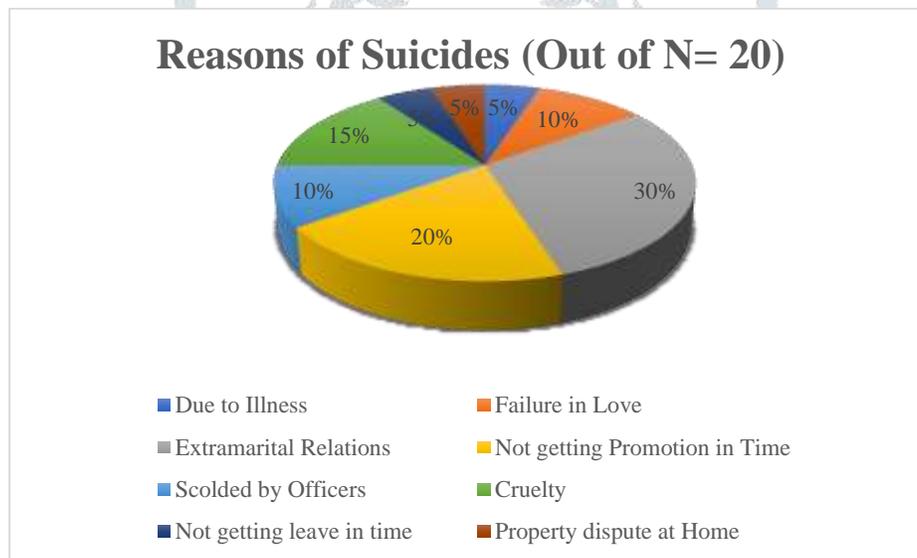


Fig. 1- Reasons of Suicides

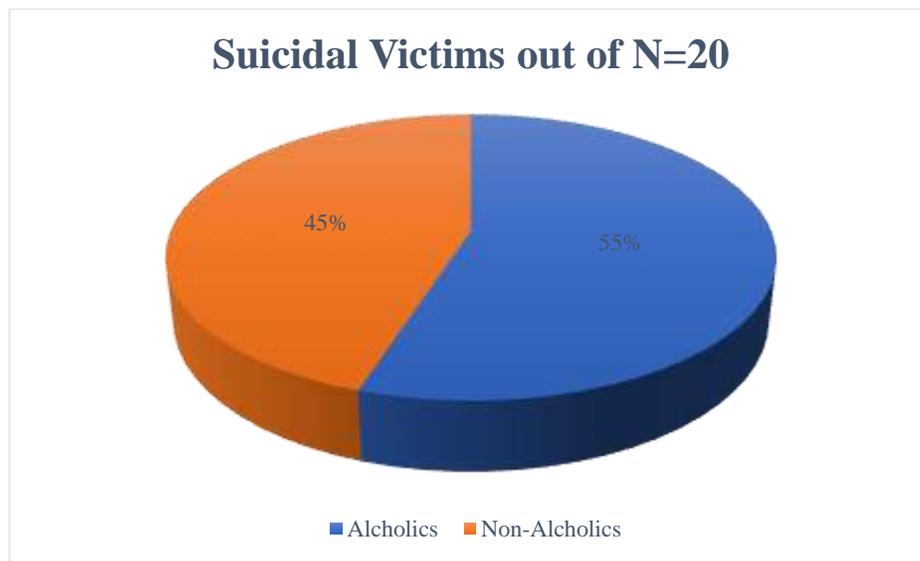


Fig. 2- Suicidal Victims

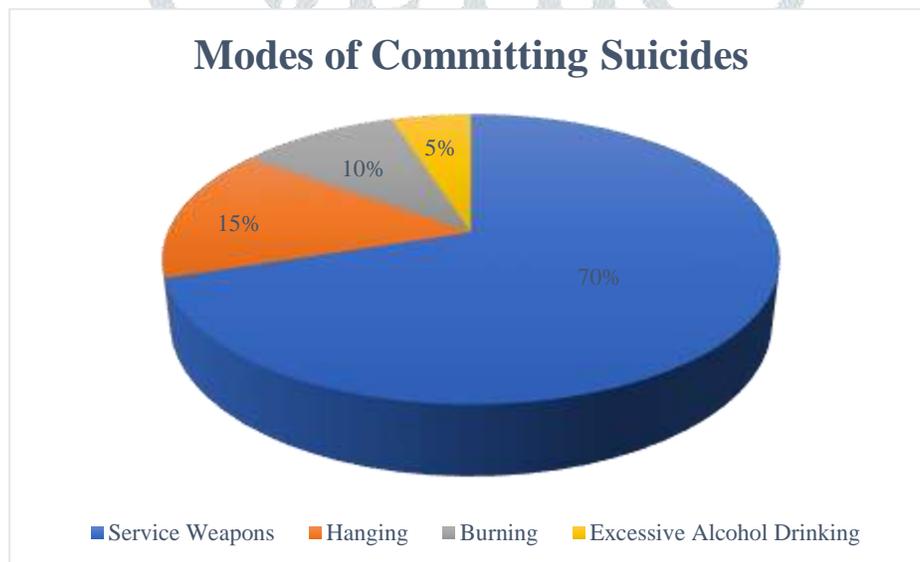


Fig. 3- Modes of Committing Suicides

Conclusion

The result of the present study revealed that a high degree of stress among police personnel coupled with the above stated reasons of stress and the circumstances like extramarital relations, not getting a promotion on time and the habit of drinking/alcohol consumption and the other reasons listed above can lead to suicidal tendencies. The most frequent mode of committing suicide by the police personnel was found to be with service weapons which are easily and frequently available with them. It is therefore suggested that better quality facilities such as clothing, food, married accommodation, recreation, and periodic welfare meetings can be quite helpful in ventilating out the stress from the minds of the police personnel.

Yoga, Meditation, and Psychological counseling can help further in maintaining a healthy mental makeup among the police personnel. Further research studies can also be carried out to identify and resolve the current issue of committing suicide by police personnel.

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