Case Study

How Do Police Officers Perceive the Challenges Posed by Covid-19: A Qualitative Case Study from Jammu Region in India

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Abstract: Police is an agency characterized by multi-functionality, to handle civic problems and to fight crime like robbery, murder, etc. As they are among the first ones to respond to an emergency, they have been classified as public safety personnel (PSP) such as medical officials and firefighters. The police personnel struggle hard to handle issues related to law enforcement functions, which consumes the bulk of their time. This paper discusses the main challenges faced by J & K Police officials (In incharge Police posts, Station House Officers and newly recruited Sub-Inspectors) posted in the Jammu region, during COVID-19. Such a study was needed due to the unanticipated situation created by COVID-19 and the unprecedented scale to which it affected people in general and front-line workers in particular. A qualitative approach has been used to present findings. Results show that during COVID-19, J & K police personnel have pursued their day-to-day activities quite zealously. Even if they do not have a day off and cannot celebrate festivals like other people, they are contented with whatever they have been able to do for society at large. Their families are supportive and do understand the toughness of their job, though at times, their preoccupation with a 24 × 7 job puts their personal relations at stake. They have efficient coping strategies. Despite experiencing physical and mental fatigue, they consider serving the nation as their prime duty. Health issues are common, but ignored by them. However, handling the public and keeping them indoors has been the biggest challenge faced by them. Many of them have reported the arrogance of the public, including the educated people, when asked for maintaining social distance and the reasons for coming out. This experience, coupled with extra efforts to be made by them in a crisis situation disheartens them.

Keywords: police officials, breakless job, qualitative approach, COVID-19

JEL Codes: O15

1. Introduction

Police is a multifunctional service agency equipped to respond to civic problems and to fight crime (Adler et al., 1995) like robbery, murder (Arble et al., 2018). Since they are among the first ones to respond to an emergency, they have been classified as public safety personnel (PSP) such as medical officials and firemen (Oliphant, 2016). The police are usually assigned three main functions. These are service function (dealing with drug addicts, homeless, orphans, etc.), maintenance function (i.e. suppressing inter-personal conflicts through preventive patrolling) and law

enforcement function, which consumes the bulk of the time of these officials and is the most popular of all (Adler et al., 1995). The grueling tasks in which they are engrossed like handling terrorism, pandemics and natural disasters (Commission on Human Security, 2003) and their daily exposure to tragic incidents like accidents, deaths (Maia et al., 2007; Marmar et al., 2006; Violanti et al., 2017; Sherwood et al., 2019), fire and explosions (Komarovskaya et al., 2011; Oliphant, 2016) makes them hapless victims of different tragedies and exposes them to what is referred to as 'Potentially Psychologically Traumatic events' (PPTE). Apart from this, in many countries, most of their time is spent in ensuring smooth VIP movement and their security maintenance (Naz & Gavin, 2013). They feel socially isolated and psychologically burdened due to the pressure of work (Violanti et al., 2017) and due to their job being 24 × 7.

A quick glimpse of the existing police structure in India enables one to connect dots to develop an understanding of their work and work conditions. A study by the Indian Bureau of Police Research and Development concludes that the no. of normal duty hours for 90% of the staff was more than 8 hr a day; the no. of hours 68% of Station House Officers (SHOs) and around 76% of supervisory officers remained on duty daily was 11 or more; availing a leave even once in a month was unthinkable for more than 73.6% of the staff; 80% of the staff experienced uncertainty even during off time, as they reported having been called back on duty to deal with emergencies of law and order, VIP bandobasts (security arrangements) or other matters (Indian Bureau of Police Research and Development, 2015). According to the 'Status of Policing in India Report 2019', for Indian police personnel, the average length of a working day is 14 hr, while the percentage of those with working hours more than 16 hr and 12 hr was 24% and 44% respectively. As far as the people-policeman ratio is concerned, it is one policeman for 709 people in India, while that recommended by United Nations is 450. There is an acute shortage of staff in police, as the actual strength is 1.73 million against the sanctioned strength of 2.24 million.

Neeraj Kumar, former Delhi Police commissioner reveals the toughness of duties of police personnel by the following remarks: "Policing is becoming a thankless job and the police are increasingly finding it difficult to maintain a work-life balance. Over the years, it is becoming more and more difficult to be a law enforcer." (Kawoosa, 2020). Apart from general duties, during the Covid era, they have also handled situations for which they were neither prepared nor trained. "They are doing a range of jobs: enforcing the lockdown, contact tracing, manning check-points, providing security at high-risk zones like hospitals, quarantine centers and containment zones, and-importantly-calming people's fears about coronavirus. But they were never trained for this, says Vikram Singh, former police chief of India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh. "They were trained for maintaining law and order," he says, but never for managing a pandemic and understanding medical safety protocols." (Pandey, 2020).

As they work in precarious conditions, it results in adverse health outcomes. For example, morbidity and mortality rates are much higher than the general population. A survey of US police shows that the extent of cardiovascular diseases among police officials was 31.4%, as compared to 18.4% (Violanti et al., 2013) among the public. The severity of the problem increases with a shortage of staff. One Korean police officer was responsible for the safety of 444 persons (Korean National Police Statistical Yearbook, 2018), while in U.S. and France, the corresponding figures were 351 and 347 respectively (Lee et al., 2016). In April 2021, 42 police personnel died in the Madhya Pradesh state of India due to Covid. (The New Indian Express, 2021).

This paper throws light on the problems and challenges the J & K police officials (In incharge Police posts, Station House Officers and newly recruited Sub-Inspectors) posted in the Jammu region (during COVID-19) have come across, apart from their routine activities.

2. Review of literature

The previous studies on police officials have been conducted on different themes.

One of the predominant issues is stress among police officials. Stress is a self-perceived unpleasant or bad impact on an individual (Brown & Campbell, 1990) or a negative experience (Goodheart et al., 2001). Few scholars observe that it is there in every organization (Anderson, 2003; Dar et al., 2011), irrespective of its size or nature. Police is considered one of the most stressful occupations in public sector organizations (Bano, 2011; Hammad et al., 2012; Luo & Ruiz, 2012; Wang et al., 2014). Bulk of the extant literature on police officials deals with organizational or institutional (Collins & Gibbs, 2003; Acquadro Maran et al., 2015; Acquadro Maran et al., 2018; McCreary &

Thompson, 2006; Paoline & Terrill, 2013; Reuss-Ianni, 1983; Stuart, 2008; Ricciardelli, 2020; Shane, 2013; Sterud et al., 2008; Toch, 2002) stress. These studies highlight that organizational stressors can arise from work-related environments like avenues for promotion, relationships with other colleagues including seniors, the administrative machinery, job pressures, shift work, support by the department, lack of staff, inadequate resources. If the line officers' efforts get recognized by their immediate leaders in the organization (Paoline & Terrill, 2013; Reuss-Ianni, 1983) and if fairness is the norm (MacDonald, 2016; Nix & Wolfe, 2016), i.e. they win kudos for their sincere efforts, this can help them perform better (Donner et al., 2015; Holtz & Harold, 2013), maintain better relations with the public (Boateng, 2014; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Myhill & Bradford, 2013) and even neutralise the impact of a negative public mindset against them. Studies also put across that environment endogenous to the organization rules the roost, as far as shaping the behavior of officers is concerned (Eitle et al., 2014; Klinger, 2004; Shane, 2013; Wolfe & Piquero, 2011), while other factors are secondary. A good environment leads to a high social well-being (Diener et al., 1985), which becomes the basis for better performance and has implications for physical and mental health and community involvement (Diener & Scollon, 2004). In contrast, if the seniors use their authority to wield power against the juniors, there is a lack of salutary working conditions and the officers are not expeditious in decision making, quality of life decreases. Quality of life (Alexopoulos et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2006, Wu et al., 2011) has been widely discussed by researchers (e.g. Bardeen et al., 2013; Berking et al., 2010; WHO, 1994). Stress adversely affects job satisfaction (Allisey et al., 2014; Griffin et al., 2010), motivation and productivity (Leka, 2005).

Apart from the aforementioned issues, stress may also arise from outside the organization like facing flak from the public. It too has many repercussions for physical and mental health. Most of the scholars put it under the category of occupational stress (Neylan et al., 2002; Ramey et al., 2009; Tharkar et al., 2008; Tuckey et al., 2010). There are also operational stressors (Ryu et al., 2020), which the very nature of this job gives birth to, like efforts toward traffic control, crime prevention measures, patrolling activity, etc.

The rest of the studies reviewed shall be taken up in the relevant sections of the paper.

3. Justification for the study

Though the studies reviewed above deal with many important issues, the current study expects to add to the existing stock of knowledge in the field, as every study is conducted with a unique state of affairs, that enables a clearer insight into the issues taken. A distinct feature of this study is that it was conducted when the whole world was grappling with the toughest circumstances ever and in which frontline workers had to adapt themselves to keep running and sustain their efforts and act tougher than they did in an already sticky (though) normal situation. The findings of the study thus throw light on some unseen aspects and unexplored issues the police officials confront.

4. Study area and demographic profile of respondents

The current study was conducted in the Jammu region of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Of the twenty-one respondents, five were more experienced i.e. serving in the department for at least 15 years; while others were freshers with a length of service ranging from 1 to 6 years. The freshers were unmarried, while others were married and had kids. Five of them were serving in rural police stations/Chaukis, while the rest of the personnel were posted in urban police stations at the time of conduct of this study. A broad map of the study area has been depicted below as Figure 1, while the demographic profile of the respondents has been presented in Table 1.

5. Objectives and methodology

The current study endeavors to understand the police officials' perception regarding the problems and challenges faced by them during COVID-19. To fulfill this objective, the following research questions have been taken up:
1. What are the main challenges faced by police officials?
2. How do police officials perceive a holiday or celebration of a festival?

3. How do they manage to give quality time to their families?

4. What are their experiences regarding the health implications of extra hours of work during the crisis?

5. How do they and their family members react to their breakless job?

As the study is based on the experiences of police officials, it is critical to obtain a deep insight into their, feelings, emotions, understanding (Creswell, 2013), and so on by letting them give vent to their views. It is significant to understand why they think or experience a particular thing as much as whether they experience it or not. Moreover, the interpretation of these experiences cannot be generalized. As these can be best dealt with by qualitative studies, a qualitative approach has been used.

One of the approaches to qualitative research is phenomenological. Phenomenology focuses on understanding how human beings experience their world. It gives researchers the opportunity to put themselves in another person's shoes and to understand the subjective experiences of participants (Smith, 1996; Smith et al., 1999) and interpret it (Larkin et al., 2006).

Further, the inductive approach has been used. In the case of the inductive approach (Lathlean, 2006), no predetermined structure or framework is imposed on the data. Rather the findings or results are made to emerge from the data. Though the identification of major highlights is time-consuming, it is the most suitable and most commonly used approach. Many scholars impute the bias in subjective studies to a predecided framework, within which the respondents are made to fit their responses.

Figure 1. Map of UT of Jammu & Kashmir, India
Source: www.mapsofworld.com

The data were collected from twenty-one J & K police officials posted as Station House Officers (SHOs/Incharge Police Station or Thana), Chauki officers (Incharge Police post/Chauki/sub-unit of a police station or Thana) and some freshly recruited Sub Inspectors, who had joined duty after completing their training. All of them were serving in the Jammu region of the Union Territory of J & K at the time of data collection. Semi-structured interview questionnaires were distributed through social media tools (What's app & e-mail) to these police officials by first obtaining their consent telephonically. Due to the Covid crisis, it was not possible to conduct a face-to-face interview. The officials were contacted and selected for the study through personal links. They were assured of confidentiality (Sanjari et al., 2014; Trafimow, 2014; Yin, 2013). The snowball technique was used to select the sample purposefully, as random sampling is inappropriate in the case of qualitative studies (Robinson, 2014; Yin, 2013). The sample size is treated differently in qualitative studies (Dworkin, 2012; Robinson, 2014), as compared to quantitative studies. Though there is no rule of thumb in this regard, it does depend on the (time, financial, etc.) constraints with which the researcher is conducting research as well as the stage of saturation. Moreover, the researcher should not try influencing the respondents (Sanjari et al., 2014), as it distorts the findings. All these prerequisites were considered. The written reply to the interview

questions was taken, primarily through e-mail. There was no need for transcribing the interview data (as suggested by Tessier, 2012), as the interviews were not recorded. As the answers were comprehensive, there was no need for a follow-up interview. The response rate was 100%.

To analyze the data, Thematic content analysis (Pope et al., 1999; Ritchie et al., 2004) has been used. In simple words, this means to identify the main themes that emerge from the data. Themes are recurrent unifying concepts or statements (Boyatzis, 1998) about inquiry. They are basic concepts (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) that make us understand the specific issues or problems of respondents from the general issues discussed in the data. It involves different steps like resorting to coding to understand the main ideas, putting together similar or closely related pieces of information in one category and moving on to higher-order coding whereby many categories can be put under one theme (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

S. No	Participant's ID	Experience in the job	Marital status
1	P1	More experienced	Married
2	P10	Fresher	Unmarried
3	P11	Fresher	Unmarried
4	P12	Fresher	Unmarried
5	P13	More experienced	Unmarried
6	P14	Fresher	Unmarried
7	P15	Fresher	Unmarried
8	P16	Fresher	Unmarried
9	P17	Fresher	Unmarried
10	P18	Fresher	Unmarried
11	P19	More experienced	Married
12	P2	Fresher	Unmarried
13	P20	Fresher	Married
14	P21	Fresher	Unmarried
15	P3	Fresher	Unmarried
16	P4	Fresher	Unmarried
17	P5	More experienced	Married
18	P6	More experienced	Married
19	P7	Fresher	Unmarried
20	P8	Fresher	Unmarried
21	P9	Fresher	Unmarried

Source: Compiled by the author

However, before starting with the process of (thematic) analysis, it is very important to understand the data as a whole. Scholars refer to it as 'getting immersed in the data' (Crabtree & Miller, 1999; Pope et al., 2000). Once we have understood it, we can start with the initial process of coding. For the sake of coding, one can take the whole paragraph or break the whole paragraph of reply by a respondent into small sentences and attach a tag or label to it (Miles & Huberman, 1994), as the researcher deems fit, based on the key concept or word indicated there, without distorting the

context. As the researcher moves forward with his/her analysis process, the coding structure becomes more refined. Scholars differ concerning whether coding should be done by one or multiple researchers. Those (Janesick, 2003; Morse, 1994; Morse & Richards, 2002) arguing for a single coder take up the cudgels on behalf of it on the grounds of maintenance of quality that can be ensured by only one person, as the researcher must get immersed in the data to feel the experiences of respondents. The deviation may occur from the desired approach in the case of more than one coder. Data collection and analysis are so intertwined that they should be integrated into with a single person who is the ''choreographer'' (Janesick, 2003) of his/her own ''dance''. Since the researcher has analyzed the data follow a particular approach personal to him and have a particular cultural background, he/she needs to incorporate transparency while discussing the findings, so that others are apprised of the biases, if any (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). Alternatively, some other scholars recommend a diverse group of coders (Denzin, 1978; Mays & Pope, 1995; Patton, 1999; Pope et al., 2000) to ensure better results. However, in the current study, the single coder approach was used. The next step is the finalization of codes, that is the extent to which we can keep on adding an increasing number of codes. Experts recommend doing this until no new concepts emerge from the data. In other words, as long as some new insight is being added, data collection continues. This process of data collection is referred to as the theoretical sampling and the stage when no new concepts or items are visible in the data is referred to as theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992; Patton, 2002; Regehr et al., 2003).

N Vivo software has been used to manage the data. As there were twenty-one respondents, manual handling of such a huge data and developing overarching themes looked problematic. Many researchers have suggested using software (e.g. McLafferty & Farley, 2006) for facilitating the researcher concerning the management of data. However, the researcher did go through each interview transcript many a time to get a feeling of emotions and experiences shared by the police officials. Before importing data into N Vivo, separate (Word) files (P1-P21) were created for each participant in accordance with the requirement of N Vivo (i.e., Heading style), so that initial or anchor codes could be created. The steps required (e.g., as suggested by Adu, 2016) here were strictly followed.

While analyzing the data, an attempt has been made to ensure validity and reliability. Results are said to be valid when a method used for analysis answers the research question posed by research (e.g. Schopper et al., 1993) and findings reported are a manifestation of reality (e.g. Goodwin et al., 1997). Reliability has been used to denote the consistency of the findings (Kvale, 1996). Credibility, the accuracy of the information collected and interpreted (Polit & Beck, 2012; Yin, 2013) by the researcher too has been taken care of.
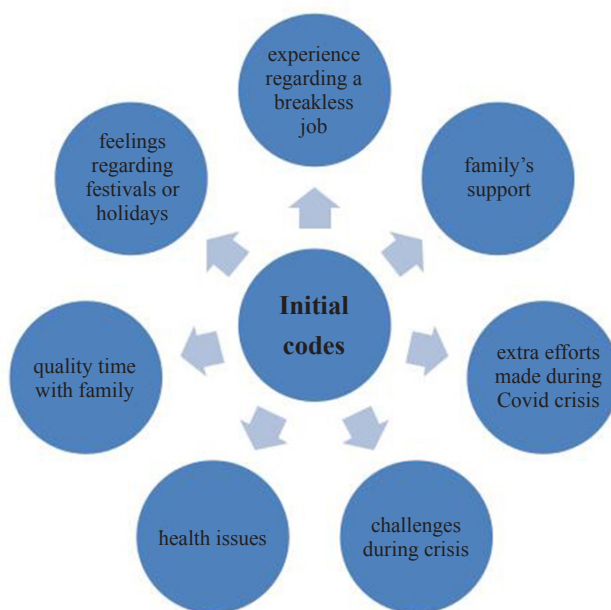

Figure 2. Initial Codes
Source: drawn by the author, on the basis of initial codes extracted by N Vivo

6. Themes extracted

The initial codes (anchor codes) extracted through auto coding were: experience regarding a breakless job, family's support, feelings regarding festivals or holidays, quality time with family, health issues, challenges during a crisis, extra efforts made during Covid crisis, etc. Figure 2 shows these initial codes.

Later on, these initial codes (with similar issues) were integrated, child nodes were merged into parent nodes, few fresh nodes were created and the relevant text was shifted to the concerned nodes. So the nodes which finally emerged were not necessarily the answers just to original questions asked, but beyond that. This is because, in interview data, we can't confine the results to the interviewee's response to our questions. Many new insights are received, which need to be fitted into new themes. After refining the code structure, the final shape was given, when it was felt that there is no scope for further addition of fresh concepts due to saturation. As a result of it, the two main themes (with sub-themes) that emerged from the data (drawn as Figure 3) (along with the evidence from interview excerpts) are the following:
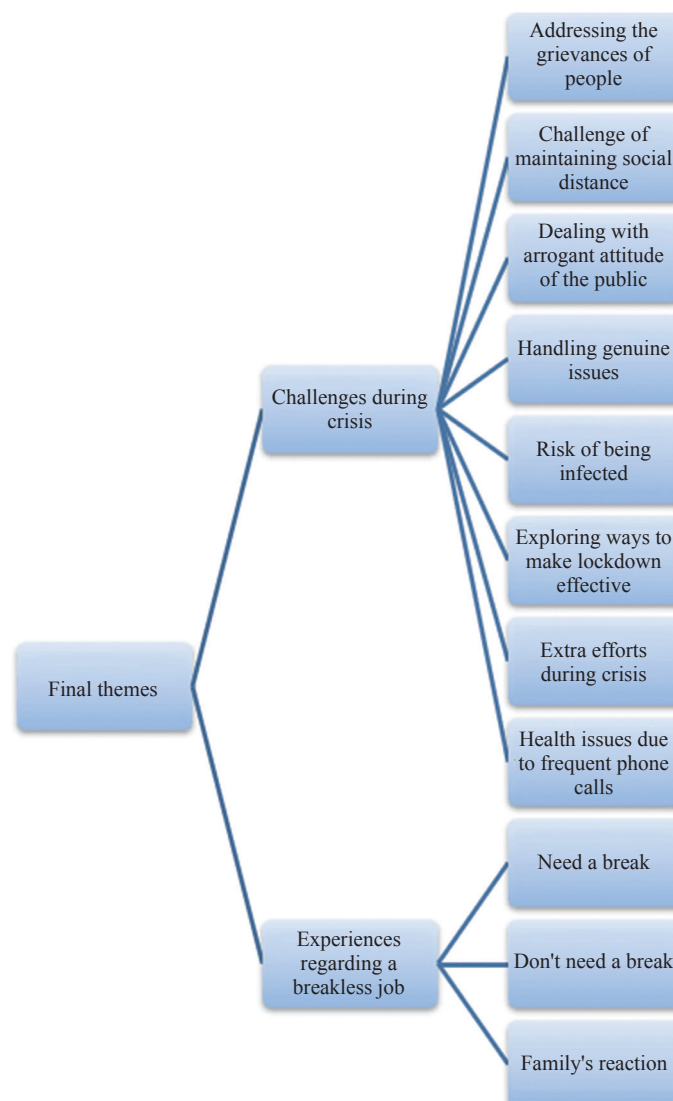

Figure 3. Flow chart of final themes
Source: Drawn by the author, on the basis of further analysis

7. Results

7.1 *Challenges during crisis*

Here the main themes have been discussed, along with few excerpts of the respondents.

7.1.1 *Addressing the grievances of people*

We must ensure that every section of society is getting essential resources required at the time of lockdown. There is a huge population of daily wagers and street vendors, who are struggling to meet both ends meet. They must be provided with food. (Participant 3)

Many things remain unreported. However, there are so many instances where we find police officers risk their own lives to make others' lives better. So many stories of appreciation are being narrated by people, where police officers made cake available for others' kids, ensured the delivery of rations (food) to the needy and even catalyzed the timely hospitalization of pregnant women.

7.1.2 *Challenge of maintaining social distance*

When people come out in lockdown they make us unsafe, but we keep a necessary distance while interacting with them. More than 75% of people are following lockdown but some are taking it for granted. Those who defy lockdown need to be fined heavily or we should put them behind bars because they provide a serious threat to other people's life. (P17)

People by nature are disorganized. They come with different excuses to come out. It makes it difficult for us to identify who is in a real problem. I ensure that whosoever is out is maintaining social distancing. (P2)

People are not used to sitting at home. Initially (at the time of conduct of this study), they equalized staying at home with being imprisoned at home, as they had no prior experience of the crisis, nor did they learn anything from people's experience in the rest of the world. Wearing a mask was not considered important, nor was social distancing a norm. Under these circumstances, convincing people to stay indoors or follow social distance or follow other safety measures was a real challenge, as signalized by the respondents. People can't be helped against infection against their will. Not only this, such people become a source of infection for others, including the warriors.

7.1.3 *Dealing with the arrogant attitude of the public*

The public assault on police has been reported earlier also (e.g. MacDonald, 2016; Maguire et al., 2017). However, in recent months, the public has turned more hostile toward the police, when the latter tries to resort to coercive means to ensure lockdown. They are subject to a misapprehension on behalf of the public and are often at the receiving end of verbal abuse and physical assault from them. The recent instance in the Indian state of Punjab, where the hand of an ASI was chopped off substantiates this. So many other instances depict a picture of people ganging up against the police force. The unruly behavior of the public that gets depicted during a crisis (Bonkiewicz & Ruback, 2012) puts an additional burden on the police force apart from the crisis itself. Sometimes, people do not follow guidelines issued by the goverment and implemented by law enforcement agencies (Freeman et al., 2020; Imhoff et al., 2020), making the latter's job tougher. Scholars have also reported instances of intentional contamination, such as spitting attacks (Jennings & Perez, 2020).

When people come out without valid excuses and without taking safety measures, it creates a problem. At times, we need to be harsh to them to send them back. (P10)

They (people) give stupid reasons and when we do not allow them to cross the Naka they get angry and start talking rudely. We have many such confrontations during our duty on a given day. We suffer mental trauma because of this. We stand at Nakas for long hours. It is so tiring. So, there is both physical and mental pain. (P14)

Besides, some people also roam outside and behave in an atrocious manner. Dealing with such people and briefing them is tiresome. (P4)

7.1.4 *Handling genuine issues*

Human beings are perpetual planners. Before the Corona virus, we rushed to meet our daily deadlines. And then governments imposed lockdown across the globe and life, as we all know came to a halt. In some jobs, people can't take-offs e.g. take the case of a milkman. He must deliver milk to various families come what may. Likewise, there are some cases like older people getting heart attacks. So as an officer, I should see each case for its genuineness and then decide whether to allow the person or not. But many people do not understand social distancing. I am trying to help the government meet the objective by making people aware regarding of this. (P11)

7.1.5 *Risk of being infected*

We are dealing with the public all the time, this increases our risks of getting infected manifolds. (P14)
One of the challenges that worries me the most is that I might be the carrier of the virus to my family. It would be devastating for me for something to happen like this. (P21)

As mentioned earlier (and is evidenced by many earlier works (e.g. Bonkiewicz & Ruback, 2012; Adams & Stewart, 2015)), a crisis demands many unconventional work responsibilities from policemen, who then not only adapt their work profile in accordance with the situation, but also need to coordinate with other agencies to reduce the risk of infection (Flavin, 1998). However, at times, as remarked by the respondents, being in the front increases the risk of their own infection multiple times. COVID-19, being a highly contagious disease put their lives in danger. It has already been mentioned that so many front-line workers, including police officers lost their lives during Covid. It can't be denied that the direct or indirect involvement of police personnel in handling the pandemic situation (Brooks & Lopez, 2020; Jones et al., 2020; Stogner et al., 2020) escalates the risk of their infection (Bates, 2020). Enforcement of lockdown and the things associated with them (Laufs et al., 2020) demand their physical presence and more public contact. Since they (including other front line workers) are the first ones to get exposed to infected people, there is a real threat if they already have serious health issues (Chen et al., 2020; National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China, 2020). As per recent reports (Indian Police Foundation, 2020; Worldmeter, 2020a; Worldmeter, 2020b), as of August 2020, an Indian police personnel's likelihood of getting infected was 8.78 times, as compared to the general population. Hence, their health is at great risk (Drake & Altheimer, 2020; Jennings & Perez, 2020; Milliard & Papazoglou, 2020; Stogner et al., 2020) by virtue of work, as most of the time is spent in field.

7.1.6 *Exploring ways to make lockdown effective*

The administration should reduce the period which people are using to buy essential goods and services. (P17)
I suggest adopting measures related to red zone areas, where no in or out movement is allowed. That seems more effective. (P2)

7.1.7 *Extra efforts during a crisis*

I have assisted many stranded locals and migrants, distributed food and essentials and guided many. (P1)
Making others aware of the crisis and how to ensure safety is my prime concern. (P11)
In this situation, awareness is the key. I am making people aware of this pandemic, requesting them to cover their face while coming out if necessary, washing their hands, etc. I distributed soaps and masks among them. (P17)
Well, apart from my regular duty, I have some groups of friends, along with them we raised some funds and the same is used to give some relief to the weaker sections of society by providing them with the essential commodities of the daily use, especially the ration and other food items. We also had a campaign in the nearby slum areas of our places to get the people aware about this pandemic, about the social distancing, about covering of their faces with masks, about consuming hot water as much as they can take and moreover Do's and Don'ts regarding this (covid). (P18)

The above excerpts further highlight that these duties were not a part of their job profile. The prevailing situation readied them for putting in extra efforts. As reported in Telangana State police reference Handbook (2020) and Kerala

Police SOPs (2020), at the time of training, they are taught at the most how to handle natural disasters. This was an emergency of an unexpected kind and extent.

7.1.8 *Health issues due to frequent phone calls*

I pick up the calls from my department as well as the distress call received for help, during this time of crisis and most of the time, I ignore personal calls on duty. (P11)

The number of calls surely has increased from a few to 30 to 40 calls a day. Headache has become an everyday thing now. (P14)

Yes, of course, as in society some people are aware of the digital India campaign and so most of the people place their complaints on phone media, as they are not allowed to move out of their houses. So, I can say it has increased. Yes, I can say some health issues occur due to an overload of work. (P20)

Yes, the frequency of phone calls has increased during this time. I am in a job with maximum public interaction. Whenever I receive calls for help and related issues, being a responsible police officer, I am ready to help. No headache experienced so far. There is a lack of sleep sometimes. However, our presence in the field is the need of the hour right now. (P3)

On average, I receive approximately 110 calls per day. Yes, more than double calls are being received during this crisis. (P5)

However, I do not experience any health issues, as I am working for a noble cause that keeps me motivated. (P7)

Health issues such as headaches and lack of sleep are common. (P8)

Headache has become an everyday thing now. (P9)

Concerning physical fatigue experienced by them (sub-theme 8), most of them agree that they get over-exhausted due to long working hours. This is consistent with previous studies (Barnett & Brennan, 1995; Perrewe & Ganster, 1989; Russell et al., 2009), which throw light on long working hours and the unflexible nature of the job, that overtax them.

7.2 *Experiences regarding a breakless job*

When these police officials were asked whether they feel bad for working day and night, without break, their response was:

7.2.1 *Do not need a break*

It hurt but this hurting didn't matter so much because I am not alone there. Moreover, appreciation by our seniors boosts our morale and gives us energy and power to work in such conditions. (P16)

However, I know my work and duty are more valuable than my holiday or a festival celebration. Also, I will persuade my family that the duty of a policeman is above all. (P18)

Sometimes it feels proud that I/We are doing a tremendous job for the public and nation as well. (P19)

However, not all the time do I feel sad or unfortunate as it's part of my job. Sometimes, it's even good in other ways like a few days back when Prime Minister Modi requested people to ring bells or clap outside one's balconies and so on, for thanking the frontline COVID-19 warriors. At that time, I felt proud and satisfied. (P21)

7.2.2 *Need a break*

On the contrary, few others felt that it did put them in a distressing situation:

I feel excited about my work, but I also miss my family and the fact of not being able to celebrate with them saddens me at times. (P14)

Most of the time, it happens I do not remember when it's Sunday. At festivals, I do not feel good for not being there with my family. (P4)

Some earlier studies corroborate such a situation (limited family time and hence social isolation) confronted by these officials (e.g. McCreary & Thompson, 2006; Ricciardelli, 2018; Ricciardelli et al., 2020). This has been experienced more by married officials (Singer & Burns, 1984).

7.2.3 *Family's reaction to it*

The snippet of information provided below by the police officials in response to how their families react to their breakless working hours shows that while few families can come to grips with the situation, a couple of them fail to cope with it:

My family members have expressed their discontent sometimes, however they do extend due support considering my job. (P1)

Sometimes my family members, (especially my mother) feel that I have opted for a wrong career. (P3)

They understand that service to the nation should be unconditional and hence they do not feel negative about my long and break-less working hours. Their blessings are always bestowed upon me to guide me to the path of righteousness and selfless service. If anything, they take pride in me and my chosen career. (P11)

However, still my parents are worried and my mother cries when on phone. It is difficult for me to persuade them (P14)

Father is also in police service and mother expresses herself by complaining about our absence. (P15)

I am not married but my mother and my father ask me many a time to make any excuse to my senior officer to get a holiday for some days, when I didn't come home for a long time. (P16)

My family members know that I am serving the motherland and they are proud of it. (P18)

In reality, my wife and daughter too told me that I loved my duty more than them. (P19)

I will nurture the kids in a way that they will understand the toughness this job requires. (P2)

My family. mainly my kids remain stressed as does their mom regarding whether I had enough sleep, had dinner, etc. (P20)

Few of them have a shift system, with late-night duties, that has a bearing on the family life. Shift work (Kroes & Hurrell, 1975; Scrivner & Reese, 1994) has been discussed earlier with repercussions for near and dear ones. The toughness of the job and their preoccupation with it does make them overlook certain things imperative for smooth running of relations. Many of these couples end up getting the short end of the stick (Hageman, 1977). Scholars also discourse on a new dimension i.e. re-socialization, that occurs when a person joins the police force and that grants a unique identity to him (Niederhoffer & Niederhoffer, 1978). Sometimes, the family members, especially the spouse get so much discontented with this career that their marital relations follow a U shape (Kirschman, 1997), which means they get better only after few years, when presumably they get accustomed to it.

8. Conclusion

On the basis of the above recounting of tales by the police officials of J & K Police, it can be concluded that they are pursuing their day-to-day activities quite zealously. A thematic analysis shows that many small yet significant pieces of text coalesced into a major theme i.e. challenges faced by the respondents during a crisis. Most of these are associated with their arduous journey undertaken during the outbreak of coronavirus. Nowhere in the text, there is mention of their routine law and order maintenance activities, as they presumably took a backseat during a crisis. The challenges ranged from managing to address the grievances of the public; differentiating between requests of the people to go out based on genuineness; handling the chaotic situation arising because of a disruptive attitude of the irresponsible public, by resorting to coercive measures; making social distancing mandatory among terribly messy situations; setting remarkable feat of making necessities available to the needy; carrying the risk of being infected and the health issues arising out of nonstop (distress) calls. The second major theme reveals that even if they do not have a day off and can't celebrate festivals like other people, they are contented with whatever they have been able to do for society at large. Their families are supportive and do understand the toughness of their job, though at times, their preoccupation with a 24 × 7 job puts their personal relations at stake. Those in favor of a break let out their desire to be with the family on special occasions. They were cognizant of their families' (usually mothers', wives' and kids') complaints regarding their being away from the family when they were required the most. However, they have, nevertheless, efficient coping strategies, that help them manage the breakless job with fortitude. Despite experiencing physical and mental fatigue, they consider serving the nation as their prime duty. Though the identities of respondents were hidden, in no part of the extract, they were found complaining of their work. It thus becomes evident that they are endowed with good coping strategies.

There was no dissimilarity between the respondents' responses concerning their demographic profile. Even the more experienced officers did not depict their fatigue or burnout, though all of them acknowledged it as one of the most stressful occupations. An effective coping strategy enables resilience (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). Throughout the interview excerpts, the respondents have reflected positivity among adverse circumstances. Many scholars including (Goerling, 2012) have discussed how wellness can be promoted by staying positive. Few earlier studies (e.g. Arnetz et al., 2009) have also focused on their constant exposure to life-threatening situations being responsible for their resilient behavior during crises. This gets manifested in the responses of police personnel of J & K. Future studies can be undertaken on officers of the rank DSP and above. Also, a gender-wise comparison can be done, to yield better results.

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