

ABSTRACT

The rate of suicides in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is more than the national rate of suicides in general population. This is a matter of grave concern to the CRPF and immense trauma to the families of the suicide victims. On an average the Force is losing 34 trained and disciplined men every year. Nothing can be more sacrosanct than the life of a human being and hence the issue of suicides becomes a worthy subject of research. The rationale or justification of this study is inherent in the increasing acceptance of the concept of recognition of dignity and sanctity of the welfare and life of a jawan and his family. The foot soldier or the jawan is the bulwark of any army or CAPF like CRPF. Valuing his life is vital for the health of CRPF and maintaining high motivational levels amongst its personnel.

The study attempts to examine: What are the trends and challenges of suicides in CRPF? What are the causes that have led CRPF personnel to commit suicide? What steps can be taken to reduce suicides in CRPF?

Survey research techniques were adopted as the methodology for the study. Using SPSS to analyze primary data from questionnaires administered to gauge CRPF personnel's perception about causes of suicide in CRPF; content analysis of inquiry reports, interactions with family members and discussions with CRPF officers were also employed for drawing inferences in the study.

The study finds that no single cause by itself can explain the reasons for suicide in CRPF. However it can be said that the major causes of suicide by CRPF personnel are 'reasons affecting personal life', 'working environment reasons' and 'medico-psychological reasons'.

Multi-pronged strategies need to be adopted to reduce and prevent suicides in CRPF. These include designing such transfer, personnel, housing and welfare policies which can reduce the toxicity in the system. Psychometric tests during recruitment should be introduced so that mentally and emotionally tough candidates are inducted in CRPF. Posting of counselors in every battalion can go a long way in providing succour to men under stress. Structural changes in the CRPF organisation and enhancing image of CRPF to instil pride in the service are some of the recommendations made in the study. The *esprit de corps* and *camaraderie* in any Force fosters a positive and stress free environment in an uniformed and disciplined organization. This is a very well accepted and recognized factor in maintaining emotional and psychological health of any armed force. The CRPF also needs to develop this *esprit de corps* and *camaraderie* to prevent and reduce the incidence of suicides.