INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
SHORT ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Name of the Student : Dr. Shivali Kashyap

Roll Number : 146141023

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Thesis Title: A Risk and Protective Factors Framework for Indian Army Soldier's Subjective and Psychological Well-being

Name of Thesis Supervisor : Dr. Dilwar Hussain

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SHORT ABSTRACT

Army is a difficult profession which demands a great deal of physical, moral and mental strength of a person. They experience frequent and diverse occupational stressors such as separation from family members, adverse climatic conditions, isolation, unknown enemy in counter insurgency areas, uncertainty of life, difficult living conditions, fatigue, lack of control at work, role conflict and so on. Apart from these, stress can precipitate psychiatric illnesses like depression, anxiety, insanity, and alcohol and drug abuse. These stressors may adversely affect the well-being (both subjective and psychological well-being) of soldiers. However, a negligible amount of empirical research addressing occupational stress and well-being of Indian Army soldiers is available. Therefore, this thesis aimed to explore following objectives-

(1) To develop and validate a scale to measure occupational stress among soldiers of Indian Army.

(2) To identify and explore the role of significant risk and protective factors in the well-being of soldiers

(3) To understand the interaction effects of both risk and protective factors in influencing the well-being of soldiers

Risk factors included in the study are social isolation, occupational stress and death anxiety. Protective factors included are personality, resilience, leadership and group cohesion. Two studies were planned to address these objectives. Study 1 aimed at development and validation of occupational Stress Scale for soldiers (OSSS) to identify major occupational stressors experienced by soldiers. Study 2 aimed at understanding how risk and protective factors independently as well as interact to influence subjective and psychological well-being.

As an outcome of study 1, occupational Stress Scale for soldiers was developed with 37 items and four factors namely, job related stressors, individual/personal stressors, administrative

stressors and group/team stressors. The scale showed acceptable reliability and validity measures.

In the study 2, path analysis was conducted to explore the role of risk and protective factors on subjective and psychological well-being. Results revealed significant risk and protective factors of soldier's subjective and psychological well-being. Among the risk factors, death anxiety negatively predicted subjective well-being (SWB). However, death anxiety positively predicted overall psychological well-being (PWB). Among the occupational stress dimensions, only group stressors predicted significantly (negatively) both the subjective and psychological well-being dimensions. Job related and individual stressors significantly (negatively) predicted only psychological well-being. However, administrative stressors significantly (negatively) predicted only subjective well-being. Similarly, social isolation significantly (negatively) predicted both the subjective and psychological well-being dimensions. The analysis of the protective factors model showed that among the personality factors, only Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Openness to experience and Emotional stability significantly (positively) predicted PWB. However, Conscientiousness also significantly (positively) predicted SWB. The personality dimension of Extroversion negatively predicted SWB. In terms of Group cohesiveness, a group climate that is engaging has been found to be very highly significantly and positively predictive of both SWB and PWB. Avoidance of certain group members also significantly and a positively predicted SWB. A conflicting group climate on the other hand, very significantly (negatively) predicted PWB. Leadership (quality of leader-follower relationship) and resilience significantly predicted (positively) SWB. The analysis of the interaction or moderator factors model revealed the presence of four significant relationships which are: 1. Group engagement reduces the negative impact of social isolation on SWB. 2. Resilience reduces the negative impact of death anxiety on SWB. 3. Leadership helps to reduce the negative effect of death anxiety on SWB. 4. Engaging in a group reduces the negative impact of occupational stress on SWB.