

ROLE IDENTITY TRANSITION AMONG RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS IN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM DISTRICT

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Requirements for the Master of Social Work Degree Examination**

SUBMITTED BY

Name: NANDANA A R

Candidate code: LC24SW14

Subject code: SW 547



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
LOYOLA COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES (AUTONOMOUS)
SREEKARIYAM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled “**Role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district.**” is a record of genuine work done by Ms. Nandana A R, fourth semester Master of Social Work student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that it is hereby approved for submission.

Date: 10-07-2026

Thiruvananthapuram

Ms. Melbin Joseph

Dissertation Supervisor

Department of Social Work

Loyola College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Sreekariyam,

Thiruvananthapuram

Dr. Francina PX

Head, Department of Social Work

Loyola College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Sreekariyam,

Thiruvananthapuram

Dr. Prakash Pillai R

Principal

Loyola College of Social Sciences (Autonomous), Sreekariyam,

Thiruvananthapuram

DECLARATION

I, NANDANA A R, do hereby declare that the dissertation titled “**Role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district**” is the result of my original research conducted during the academic years 2024-2026. This work is submitted to the University of Kerala as part of the requirements for the **Master of Social Work** Degree Examination. I confirm that it has not been previously submitted for any other degree, diploma, fellowship, or similar academic recognition.

Candidate Name: Nandana A R

Place: Sreekariyam

Date: 10-7-2026

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CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL	i
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.5 CHAPTERISATION	7
1.6 CONCLUSION	9
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2 Literature Review	11
2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	25
THEORIES CONNECTED	26
2.8 RESEARCH GAP	27
2.9 CONCLUSION	27
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	30
3.1 INTRODUCTION	30
3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY	30
3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION	34
3.5 PILOT STUDY	34
3.6 RESEARCH APPROACH	34
3.7 RESEARCH DESIGN	35
3.8 SAMPLING	35
3.11 SAMPLING SIZE	36
3.12 SOURCES OF DATA	37
3.13 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION	37
3.14 DATA COLLECTION	37
3.15 DATA ANALYSIS	38
3.16 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	39
3.17 ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATION AND SCOPE	39
3.18 CONCLUSION	41
CHAPTER 4: DATA DESCRIPTION	43
4.1 Introduction	43
4.2 Demographic details	43

4.3 Case description	44
4.4 Conclusions.....	64
CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	66
5.1 Introduction.....	66
5.2 Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussions.....	67
4.4 CONCLUSION	84
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS	86
6.1 Introduction.....	86
6.2 Theoretical Framework for Interpreting the Findings.....	87
6.3 Findings.....	88
6.3.2 Theme 2: Power and Social Recognition - From Authority to Relational Respect.....	89
6.3.3 Theme 3: Domestic Transition - From Service Routine to Family-Centered Living.....	90
6.3.4 Theme 4: Emotional Health and Future Purpose - From Quiet Worries to Positive Wellbeing.....	91
6.3.5 Theme 5: Institutional and Family Support - From Administrative Exit to Holistic Preparedness.....	93
6.4 DISCUSSION	94
6.5 SUGGESTIONS	96
6.6 Conclusion	97
BIBLIOGRAPHY	99
ANNEXURES	102

LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 3.3 1: Conceptual and Operational Definition</i>	30
<i>Table 4.2 1: Demographic Details.....</i>	44

ABSTRACT

Retirement is a significant life transition that involves changes in identity, social roles, relationships, daily routines, and psychological wellbeing. For police officers, whose profession is closely associated with discipline, authority, responsibility, and public service, retirement often extends beyond leaving employment and becomes a process of role identity transition. The present study, titled “*Role Identity Transition among Retired Police Officers in Thiruvananthapuram District,*” was undertaken to understand the experiences of retired police officers during this important phase of life. The study adopted a **qualitative research approach** with a **phenomenological research design**. Fifteen retired police officers from Thiruvananthapuram district were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview guide and analysed through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that retirement is a gradual process of adaptation rather than simply the end of professional service. Five major themes emerged from the analysis: Identity Shift, Power and Social Recognition, Domestic Transition, Emotional Health and Future Purpose, and Institutional Feedback. The study found that while participants continued to retain values such as discipline, responsibility, and commitment, they gradually reconstructed their identities through family relationships, social participation, personal interests, and meaningful engagement. Although some participants initially experienced challenges related to changing authority, routines, and social recognition, many later viewed retirement as a period of emotional relief, stronger family relationships, and personal growth. Family support was identified as the most important factor facilitating positive adjustment, while institutional retirement preparation was found to focus mainly on financial and administrative aspects rather than psychosocial wellbeing.

The study concludes that role identity transition among retired police officers is a dynamic process of adjustment, identity reconstruction, and renewed purpose. It highlights the need for holistic retirement preparation programmes that address psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing alongside financial planning. The findings also emphasise the important role of social work interventions in promoting healthy retirement transition and improving the quality of life of retired police officers.

Keywords: *Role Identity Transition, Retirement, Retired Police Officers, Identity Reconstruction, Post-retirement Adjustment, Family Support, Phenomenology, Social Work.*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Retirement is a natural and important stage in every individual's life. It marks the end of a long professional journey and the beginning of a new phase that brings changes in daily routine, social roles, responsibilities, and personal identity. For many people, retirement is seen as a time for rest, family life, and personal freedom. However, for individuals who have spent many years in highly structured and disciplined professions, retirement can bring emotional, social, and psychological challenges. One such profession is police service, where identity is strongly connected with authority, uniform, discipline, and public recognition. When police officers retire, they move from a structured institutional environment to civilian life, which often requires significant adjustment in their role identity and social position (Biddle & Ashforth, 1986;2001)

Police service is widely recognized as one of the most demanding and stressful professions in society. Police officers work under strict discipline, follow a structured chain of command, and deal with law enforcement, crime prevention, and public safety on a daily basis. Their professional role requires authority, responsibility, decision-making power, and continuous interaction with the public. Over time, this structured environment becomes a part of their personality and identity. The uniform, rank, and institutional power provide them with social recognition and respect in society, which shapes how they see themselves and how others see them (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Bullock, Garland, & Coupar, 2019). As a result, the police profession becomes more than just a job; it becomes a way of life and an important part of their self-identity.

When police officers retire, they experience a sudden shift from authority to civilian life. The structured daily routine, institutional power, and public recognition gradually reduce, and they have to adjust to a new lifestyle where they are no longer in a position of authority. This transition can create feelings of identity loss, reduced social recognition, and emotional adjustment challenges. Many retired officers may feel that their social status has changed, and they may need time to rebuild their identity in family and community life. Research studies have shown that retirement among police officers often involves psychological and social adjustments, especially in terms of identity, social support, and emotional well-being (Bullock et al., 2019; Tufano, 2018).

Retirement transition is not always negative, and many retired police officers experience positive changes in their lives. After retirement, officers often get more time to spend with their families, engage in social activities, participate in community work, and focus on personal interests. Some officers take part in social service, religious activities, pensioners' associations, or new career opportunities such as legal practice or consultancy. These activities help them maintain a sense of purpose and social engagement. However, the process of adjusting to this new phase depends on several factors such as family support, financial stability, emotional preparedness, and institutional support. Without proper preparation and support, retirement may lead to stress, loneliness, or lack of social engagement (Schlossberg, 1981; Choksi & Agrawal, 2024).

In the Indian context, police officers face unique challenges due to the nature of their work and the social expectations placed upon them. Police service in India involves long working hours, frequent transfers, exposure to stress, and limited time for family life. Over many years of service, officers become deeply attached to their professional identity and institutional environment. When retirement occurs, they need to shift from a disciplined and authority-based role to a flexible civilian role, which requires emotional and social adjustment. Studies on Indian police officers have highlighted the importance of psychological well-being, financial planning, and social support in ensuring a smooth retirement transition (Choksi & Agrawal, 2024).

In Kerala, the police department plays an important role in maintaining law and order and ensuring public safety. Police officers in Kerala are known for their disciplined service and strong institutional structure. After retirement, most officers receive pension and financial benefits, which provide economic security. However, financial stability alone does not guarantee emotional and social well-being. Retired officers may still face challenges such as identity changes, reduced authority, adjustment to family life, and limited institutional support in preparing for retirement. Recent studies on police officials in Kerala have shown that stress and organizational factors significantly affect their well-being, which may continue even after retirement if proper support systems are not available (Mini et al., 2025).

Understanding the role identity transition among retired police officers is important from a social work perspective. Social workers play a key role in supporting individuals during

life transitions by providing counseling, support programs, and community-based interventions. Retirement is a major life transition that requires emotional support, social adjustment, and institutional awareness. By studying the lived experiences of retired police officers, social workers can better understand their challenges, needs, and coping strategies. This knowledge can help in developing retirement preparation programs, support groups, and welfare policies that improve the quality of life of retired police officers and ensure their social and emotional well-being.

The concept of role identity transition is supported by various sociological and psychological theories. Role Theory explains how individuals perform different social roles and how changes in roles affect their behavior and identity (Biddle, 1986). Social Identity Theory explains how individuals develop their identity based on their membership in social groups and professional roles (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Transition Theory explains how individuals adapt to major life changes and adjust to new roles and situations (Schlossberg, 1981). These theoretical perspectives help in understanding how retired police officers experience the shift from authority to civilian life and how they reconstruct their identity after retirement.

. Therefore, the study “*Role identity transition among retired police officers*” aims to explore the role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district and understand how they experience identity shift, social recognition changes, domestic transition, emotional health, and institutional support in their transition from authority to civilian life.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Police officers spend most of their professional life in a disciplined and structured work environment where authority, uniform, and public respect become an important part of their identity. Their daily routine, social relationships, and personal behavior are strongly shaped by their role in the police department. Over time, the professional role becomes closely connected to their self-identity, making the uniform and institutional authority central to their social position. According to **Bruce J. Biddle (1986)**, role theory explains that individuals develop their identity through the roles they perform in society, and long-term involvement in a professional role makes it a core part of their self-concept. Many retired police officers may experience identity confusion, emotional stress, and changes

in their social role after retirement. Some officers manage this transition positively through family support and social engagement, while others may find it difficult to adjust to civilian life. This shows that retirement is not only a professional change but also a social and psychological transition that affects the overall well-being of retired police officers.

Although many studies have focused on stress and working conditions of police officers during service, there is limited research on their life after retirement, especially in the Kerala context. Very few studies explore how retired police officers experience identity transition, emotional adjustment, and social changes in their daily life. In Thiruvananthapuram district, there is a lack of qualitative research that focuses on the lived experiences of retired police officers and their transition from authority to civilian life. This creates a gap in understanding their real-life experiences, challenges, and support needs.

There is limited qualitative research that explores how retired police officers experience identity transition and social adjustment in their daily lives. In Thiruvananthapuram district, very few studies have examined the lived experiences of retired police officers, particularly their identity shift, social recognition, domestic transition, emotional health, and institutional support after retirement. This lack of research creates a gap in understanding the real-life challenges and coping strategies of retired police officers in the local context.

Therefore, this study focuses on exploring the role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district. The study aims to understand their experiences of identity shift, changes in social recognition, domestic transition, emotional health, and institutional support after retirement. By examining their lived experiences, the research seeks to identify the challenges they face and the ways in which they adjust to civilian life after leaving police service.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Police service is one of the most disciplined and demanding professions in society, where officers play an important role in maintaining law and order and ensuring public safety. The nature of police work requires authority, responsibility, structured routines, and continuous interaction with the public. Over many years of service, police officers

develop a strong connection with their profession, and their identity becomes closely linked with the uniform, rank, and institutional structure. This professional role shapes their behavior, social relationships, and self-image, making the police profession a central part of their life and identity (Bruce J. Biddle, 1986). Because of this strong professional attachment, retirement becomes a significant turning point that requires adjustment in personal and social roles.

Retirement brings a shift from a structured institutional life to a more flexible civilian life. During service, police officers follow strict routines and hold authority and social recognition in society, but after retirement, this authority and structured lifestyle gradually reduce. This change can affect their sense of identity and social position, as they move from a position of power to a civilian role. Blake E. Ashforth (2001) explains that role transition often leads to identity changes because individuals need to redefine their roles and responsibilities in a new social environment. Studies have shown that retired police officers may experience feelings of identity loss, reduced social recognition, and the need to rebuild their role in family and community life (Bullock, Garland, & Coupar, 2019).

Although financial benefits such as pension provide economic security to retired police officers in Kerala, emotional and social adjustment remains an important concern. Many retired officers need support in adjusting to new roles, maintaining social recognition, and managing family and community responsibilities. However, there is limited research focusing on the lived experiences of retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district, especially from a qualitative perspective. Understanding their experiences is important to identify their challenges, coping strategies, and support needs. Therefore, this study focuses on exploring the role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district and understanding their adjustment to civilian life.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because it focuses on the experiences of retired police officers, a group that has contributed significantly to maintaining law and order in society but often receives less attention after retirement. Police officers spend many years in a disciplined and structured environment where authority, uniform, and public respect become a part of their identity. After retirement, they move into civilian life, which brings changes in their social role, routine, and identity. Understanding this transition helps to highlight the

emotional and social challenges faced by retired police officers and gives importance to their life after service.

The study is also significant because it helps in understanding how retired police officers adjust to family life, social relationships, and community roles after leaving their professional position. Many officers may find it difficult to adapt to a new lifestyle without the structured routine and authority they had during service. By studying their lived experiences, this research provides a deeper understanding of identity shift, emotional health, social recognition, and institutional support among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district. This knowledge can help social workers and policymakers understand their needs and develop better support systems.

Another importance of this study is it provides useful insights that can help in planning counselling services, support groups, and community-based interventions for retired police officers. It also adds to the existing literature by providing a qualitative understanding of role identity transition, which is still limited in the Kerala context, especially in studies related to police retirement and post-retirement life.

Finally, this study is significant because it can help government departments and police organizations develop better retirement preparation programs and welfare policies for retired police officers. Most research on police focuses on stress and working conditions during service, but very few studies explore their experiences after retirement. By understanding their identity transition and adjustment process, this research can help government departments and police organizations plan retirement preparation programs and welfare measures. The study also encourages future researchers to explore similar topics and improve support systems for retired police officers in different regions.

Many studies discuss about police stress and work pressure, but very few studies focus on the life of police officers after retirement. This research study on role identity transition among retired police officers is limited in the Kerala context where most existing studies focus on general retirement adjustment and do not specifically examine police officers' identity change after leaving service. Also, very few studies examine social recognition, emotional health, domestic adjustment and institutional support together. The studies related to retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district is very limited.

1.5 CHAPTERISATION

The present study is organized into six chapters, each dealing with specific aspects of the research in a systematic manner.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provide an overview of the study including the introduction of the research topic, statement of the problem, background of the study, the relevance and significance of the research.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature related to retirement, role identity transition, police profession, post-retirement adjustment, emotional wellbeing, social recognition, and institutional support. The review helps identify research gaps and provides a theoretical foundation for the present study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter explains the methodological framework adopted for conducting the study, including research design, study setting, sampling method, participant selection, tools for data collection, ethical considerations, and procedures used for analysing qualitative data.

Chapter 4: Data description

Details of data used in the study are recorded in this chapter in an elaborated manner for a better each case. Data of respondents are described through narrative and verbatim reporting

CHAPTER 5: Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the collected data and provides analysis and interpretation based on participants lived experiences. The findings are organised systematically to understand the experiences of retired police officers during their transition to post-retirement life.

Chapter 6: Findings suggestions and conclusion

This chapter presents the major findings developed through thematic analysis and discusses them in relation to the research objectives, research questions, and relevant literature to understand role identity transition among retired police officers. This chapter also summarises the overall findings of the study, presents the conclusion drawn from the

research, and provides recommendations to support healthier retirement transition and meaningful post-retirement experiences among retired police officers.

1.6 CONCLUSION

The introduction of this study sets the foundational framework for understanding the multifaceted experience of retirement among police officers in the Thiruvananthapuram district. By identifying the limitations of existing research, which has largely focused on financial or health-related aspects, this chapter establishes the necessity of exploring the sociological and psychological dimensions of role identity transition. It outlines the research objectives, the significance of the study in the context of professional identity, and the methodology employed to capture the nuanced experiences of retirees as they navigate the shift from institutional duty to civilian life. Ultimately, this introductory framework serves as a roadmap for the subsequent analysis of how former officers reconstruct their sense of self and social standing within their families and communities.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

A literature review presents an overview of existing studies related to research topic. It serves as a comprehensive survey of the current state of knowledge, identifying gaps, contradictions and trends in literature review helps researchers understand the context of their work and informs the formulation of hypotheses or research questions. Its importance lies in providing a foundation for research, ensuring that scholars build upon existing knowledge, avoid redundancy and contribute meaningfully to their field. By synthesizing and summarizing relevant literature, a literature review aids in establishing the theoretical framework, methodology and conceptual framework for a study, ultimately enhancing the validity for research findings.

Although retirement has been widely studied across different occupational groups, research specifically examining the lived experiences of retired police officers, particularly within the Indian and Kerala contexts, remains limited. Therefore, understanding these experiences through existing literature provides a meaningful foundation for the present study. The reviewed studies are synthesized under five major themes:

- Occupational Identity and Role Identity
- Retirement Transition and Psychological Adjustment
- Social Recognition, Authority and Identity Reconstruction
- Family, Social Support and Post-retirement Adaptation
- Institutional Support and Retirement Preparedness.

2.2 Literature Review

Occupational Identity and Role Identity

Occupational identity is a fundamental component of an individual's self-concept that develops through continuous engagement in a profession and the meanings attached to that role. It extends beyond the performance of occupational duties and gradually becomes integrated into personal identity, influencing values, behaviours, relationships, and perceptions of self. Among police officers, occupational identity is particularly strong because policing is characterised by discipline, authority, public responsibility, and a distinct organisational culture. Years of service within such an environment often result

in the internalisation of professional values, making the police role an inseparable part of an individual's identity. Consequently, retirement represents not only the end of employment but also a significant transition that requires individuals to redefine their identity and adapt to a new civilian role.

Identity Theory explains that individuals derive a sense of self from the social roles they perform repeatedly, while Role Identity Theory suggests that roles which become central to an individual's life continue to influence behaviour even after those roles formally end (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). Similarly, Kaplan and Garner's (2017) Dynamic Systems Model of Role Identity views identity as a dynamic process that evolves through changing life experiences rather than remaining fixed. These theoretical perspectives provide an important framework for understanding why retirement from policing often involves a gradual process of identity reconstruction rather than an immediate separation from one's professional identity.

Existing literature consistently demonstrates that police identity develops through years of organisational socialisation and becomes deeply embedded in officers' personal lives. Charman and Tyson (2022) found that policing extends beyond an occupation to become a defining element of personal identity. Former police officers described continuing to think and behave like police personnel even after leaving the organisation, suggesting that occupational identity persists despite retirement or resignation. Their study also highlighted that leaving policing often creates uncertainty and challenges individuals to reconstruct a sense of self outside the profession. Similarly, Tufano (2018) reported that police identity remains strongly internalised after retirement and significantly influences post-retirement adjustment. Officers who experienced involuntary retirement faced greater identity disruption than those who retired voluntarily, indicating that psychological preparedness plays an important role in facilitating identity transition. However, the study found that factors such as post-retirement employment and the duration of retirement did not significantly affect identity adjustment, reinforcing the view that occupational identity is shaped primarily by the individual's attachment to the policing role.

The process of identity transition has also been explored from broader retirement perspectives. Parnaby et al. (2018) observed that retirement from policing involves more than withdrawing from employment; it requires officers to disengage from an institutional

culture that has shaped their routines, relationships, authority, and self-perception for many years. While some participants experienced retirement as an opportunity for personal growth and family engagement, others struggled with feelings of emptiness, loss of purpose, and uncertainty about their place in society. The authors emphasised that successful retirement depends on the ability to reconstruct a meaningful identity beyond professional life rather than solely on financial preparedness.

Studies conducted among other occupational groups reinforce these findings. Flack and Kite (2021), in their research on military veterans, found that individuals who maintained a positive connection with their former occupational identity while simultaneously developing meaningful civilian roles demonstrated better psychological wellbeing and social adjustment. Similarly, Wasike (2023) reported that retirees who actively engaged in family life, community participation, and new social roles adapted more successfully to retirement than those who remained strongly attached to their previous occupational identities. These findings suggest that identity reconstruction is facilitated by developing alternative sources of meaning and belonging rather than abandoning one's professional identity altogether.

The broader retirement literature also supports the importance of occupational identity in shaping retirement experiences. Wang et al. (2011) argued that retirement is a multidimensional life transition influenced by psychological, social, financial, and occupational factors. Individuals whose identities are closely associated with their professions often experience greater adjustment difficulties because retirement disrupts established routines, social networks, and perceptions of self. Similarly, Bartol and Grah (2024), in a systematic scoping review, identified occupational identity as one of the most significant determinants of retirement adjustment across different professions. Their review highlighted that retirees possessing multiple social identities and meaningful post-retirement activities generally experience smoother transitions than those whose identity remains exclusively centred on their previous occupation.

Although these studies collectively acknowledge the importance of occupational identity in retirement adjustment, differences exist regarding the factors that facilitate successful identity transition. Tufano (2018) emphasised the significance of voluntary retirement and psychological preparedness, whereas Flack and Kite (2021) highlighted social connectedness and community engagement as essential resources for adaptation. Wasike

(2023) focused on the development of new social roles and meaningful activities, while Parnaby et al. (2018) stressed the importance of organisational support during retirement. These variations indicate that occupational identity transition is influenced by the interaction of personal, organisational, and social factors rather than by any single determinant.

Despite the growing body of international literature, research specifically examining occupational identity among retired police officers remains limited, particularly within the Indian context. Most studies have been conducted in Western countries using quantitative approaches that primarily assess retirement satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, or occupational stress. Comparatively fewer studies have explored the lived experiences of retired police officers and the ways in which they reconstruct their identities after retirement. Furthermore, the cultural, organisational, and social realities of police retirement in India differ considerably from those reported in Western settings. Consequently, there is limited understanding of how retired police officers in Kerala negotiate the transition from a profession associated with authority, discipline, and public service to civilian life.

In summary, the reviewed literature demonstrates that occupational identity plays a central role in shaping retirement experiences among police officers. Professional identity developed over years of service continues to influence self-perception, behaviour, and social relationships long after retirement. Successful transition therefore depends not only on leaving the organisation but also on reconstructing a meaningful identity through new roles, relationships, and life purposes. While previous studies have provided valuable insights into occupational identity and retirement adjustment, there remains a need for qualitative research that explores these experiences within the socio-cultural context of Kerala. The present study seeks to address this gap by examining how retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram District experience and negotiate role identity transition in their everyday lives.

Retirement Transition and Psychological Adjustment

Retirement is a major life transition that extends beyond the cessation of employment and involves significant psychological, emotional, and social adjustments. While retirement is often viewed as a period of freedom and relaxation, it also requires individuals to adapt to changes in daily routines, responsibilities, social relationships, and personal identity.

For retired police officers, this transition can be particularly challenging because policing is a highly demanding profession that structures an individual's lifestyle, decision-making, and sense of purpose. The shift from an active, disciplined, and authoritative role to civilian life often requires substantial psychological adaptation as individuals redefine their routines, relationships, and future aspirations.

Retirement adjustment has been widely discussed as a dynamic process influenced by individual, occupational, and environmental factors. Wang et al. (2011) describe retirement as a multidimensional transition shaped by health, financial security, family relationships, personality, and psychological preparedness. Rather than being a single event, retirement unfolds gradually as individuals adjust to new roles and responsibilities. Similarly, Atchley's (1989) Continuity Theory suggests that retirees who maintain continuity in their interests, relationships, and activities are more likely to experience positive psychological adjustment than those who perceive retirement as a complete break from their previous lives. These perspectives indicate that successful retirement depends not only on leaving employment but also on maintaining a sense of purpose and continuity throughout the transition.

Several studies have identified retirement as a period that may generate both positive and negative psychological experiences. Tufano (2018) found that retired police officers experienced different levels of adjustment depending on the circumstances surrounding their retirement. Officers who retired voluntarily generally reported greater emotional stability and acceptance of retirement, whereas those who retired because of organisational decisions or health-related issues experienced greater psychological distress and difficulty adjusting to civilian life. The study highlighted that psychological preparedness before retirement significantly influenced post-retirement wellbeing, suggesting that retirement planning should address emotional readiness alongside financial security.

Similarly, Parnaby et al. (2018) observed that retirement was experienced differently among former police officers depending on their personal circumstances and available support systems. While many participants appreciated the opportunity to spend more time with family, pursue personal interests, and enjoy greater independence, others described feelings of loneliness, uncertainty, and loss of direction during the initial stages of retirement. The absence of structured work routines and reduced interaction with

colleagues often contributed to feelings of isolation, particularly among officers whose social lives had been closely associated with their professional roles. These findings demonstrate that retirement adjustment is influenced not only by occupational factors but also by the availability of supportive social relationships and opportunities for meaningful engagement.

The broader retirement literature also emphasises the importance of psychological resilience in facilitating successful adjustment. Bartol and Grah (2024), through a systematic scoping review, found that retirees with strong coping abilities, positive self-perceptions, and active social participation adapted more successfully to retirement than those who experienced identity loss and reduced social engagement. The review further highlighted that retirement outcomes are shaped by a combination of psychological resources, health status, family support, and opportunities for continued participation in meaningful activities. These findings suggest that resilience plays a protective role during retirement by enabling individuals to adapt to changing life circumstances while maintaining emotional wellbeing.

Research conducted by Flack and Kite (2021) similarly demonstrated that psychological wellbeing among retirees is closely associated with social connectedness and the development of new life purposes. Their study revealed that individuals who remained socially active and established meaningful civilian identities reported higher levels of life satisfaction than those who struggled to disengage from their former occupational roles. Likewise, Wasike (2023) found that retirees who viewed retirement as an opportunity for personal growth and community involvement experienced greater emotional adjustment than those who perceived retirement as a period of loss. Participation in family activities, voluntary service, religious engagement, and recreational pursuits emerged as important coping mechanisms that promoted resilience and psychological wellbeing.

Mental health has also been recognised as a significant aspect of retirement adjustment. The World Health Organization (2022) emphasises that ageing and retirement can increase vulnerability to mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, loneliness, and reduced self-esteem, particularly when individuals experience social isolation or the loss of meaningful social roles. However, the organisation also notes that supportive family relationships, community participation, healthy lifestyles, and access to appropriate psychosocial services can significantly enhance emotional wellbeing among

older adults. These findings reinforce the importance of viewing retirement as a holistic transition requiring attention to both psychological and social dimensions.

Although the reviewed studies consistently acknowledge that retirement involves emotional adjustment, they differ in explaining the factors that promote successful adaptation. Tufano (2018) emphasises psychological preparedness before retirement, while Wang et al. (2011) highlight the combined influence of health, financial stability, and personal characteristics. Bartol and Grah (2024) identify resilience and social participation as important protective factors, whereas Flack and Kite (2021) stress the significance of developing new identities and maintaining social connectedness. These differences illustrate that retirement adjustment is a multidimensional process shaped by the interaction of individual, familial, occupational, and community factors.

Despite the growing body of retirement research, limited attention has been given to the psychological experiences of retired police officers within the Indian context. Most existing studies have been conducted in Western countries and primarily employ quantitative methods to measure retirement satisfaction or psychological wellbeing. Comparatively little research has explored how retired police officers themselves understand and negotiate the emotional challenges associated with retirement. Furthermore, few studies have examined these experiences within the socio-cultural environment of Kerala, where family structures, community relationships, and cultural expectations may influence retirement adjustment differently from Western settings.

Overall, the literature suggests that retirement transition is a complex psychological process influenced by occupational identity, personal resilience, family support, health, and social participation. While retirement may provide opportunities for personal freedom, it may also create emotional challenges associated with changes in routine, purpose, and social identity. Successful adjustment therefore depends on an individual's ability to adapt to new life circumstances while maintaining meaningful relationships and developing alternative sources of purpose. The present study builds upon this literature by exploring how retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram District experience the psychological dimensions of retirement and the strategies they adopt to adjust to life beyond policing.

Social Recognition, Authority and Identity Reconstruction

Police officers occupy a unique position in society as representatives of law, order, and public authority. Throughout their careers, they receive social recognition, institutional respect, and decision-making power that gradually become integral components of their professional identity. The authority associated with the police uniform often extends beyond the workplace, influencing how officers perceive themselves and how they are viewed by family, colleagues, and the wider community. Consequently, retirement not only signifies the end of an occupational role but also brings changes in social status, authority, and public recognition. Adapting to these changes requires retired police officers to reconstruct their identities within a new social environment where they are no longer identified by their official position.

Social Identity Theory explains that individuals derive a sense of identity and self-esteem through their membership in social groups and organisations (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). For police officers, the organisation provides a strong collective identity characterised by discipline, responsibility, and authority. As a result, retirement may weaken this group affiliation and create uncertainty regarding one's social position. Similarly, Goffman's (1959) concept of self-presentation suggests that professional roles influence how individuals present themselves and are recognised by others. The transition from being an active police officer to a retired civilian therefore requires significant psychological and social adjustment as individuals redefine how they interact with society and perceive their own value.

Several studies have highlighted the influence of social recognition on retirement experiences among police personnel. Tufano (2018) reported that many retired officers experienced a noticeable decline in public recognition and professional influence after retirement. Participants described missing the respect and authority associated with the police uniform, which had previously shaped their interactions with society. Although retirement provided freedom from occupational responsibilities, many officers found it difficult to adjust to a lifestyle where their opinions and decisions no longer carried the same institutional authority. These findings indicate that the loss of symbolic power may contribute to identity challenges during the retirement transition.

Similar findings were reported by Parnaby et al. (2018), who observed that retirement involved a significant shift in social relationships and public identity. While serving officers were often recognised through their professional roles, retired officers described

becoming ordinary members of society with reduced visibility and influence. Some participants welcomed this transition because it allowed them greater privacy and freedom from occupational pressures. Others, however, experienced feelings of reduced social significance, particularly when policing had been central to their self-concept for many years. The study emphasised that adapting to retirement requires individuals to redefine their sense of value beyond occupational status and public recognition.

The literature also suggests that identity reconstruction is influenced by the ability to establish new social roles after retirement. Charman and Tyson (2022) found that although many former police officers continued to identify with policing, those who successfully developed alternative identities through family life, community participation, or new employment experienced greater satisfaction during retirement. Rather than abandoning their police identity completely, participants integrated their professional experiences into new civilian roles, allowing them to maintain continuity while adapting to changing social expectations. This process of identity reconstruction helped retirees preserve self-esteem despite the loss of formal authority.

Research beyond policing supports these observations. Bartol and Grah (2024) concluded that retirement often involves a shift from externally recognised professional roles to identities based on personal relationships, community participation, and meaningful activities. Individuals who relied exclusively on occupational prestige were more likely to experience identity disruption, whereas those who possessed multiple social roles demonstrated greater adaptability and psychological wellbeing. Similarly, Wang et al. (2011) argued that successful retirement depends on an individual's capacity to redefine personal goals and establish alternative sources of recognition and purpose beyond employment.

Despite the consistency of these findings, studies differ in explaining how identity reconstruction occurs. Tufano (2018) primarily associates successful adjustment with retirement preparedness and voluntary retirement, whereas Charman and Tyson (2022) emphasise personal reflection and the gradual development of new identities. Parnaby et al. (2018) highlight the importance of organisational support during the transition process, while Bartol and Grah (2024) identify social participation and continued meaningful engagement as key factors promoting successful identity reconstruction. These perspectives collectively suggest that identity reconstruction is a multifaceted

process influenced by individual resilience, organisational experiences, family relationships, and opportunities for social participation.

Although international studies have provided valuable insights into the relationship between authority, social recognition, and retirement adjustment, research within the Indian policing context remains limited. Existing studies have predominantly examined occupational stress, job satisfaction, and retirement planning, while comparatively little attention has been given to understanding how retired police officers experience changes in authority and social identity after retirement. Furthermore, there is limited qualitative evidence exploring how these transitions are shaped by local cultural values, community relationships, and family expectations in Kerala.

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that retirement from policing involves a significant transformation in social recognition, authority, and personal identity. The loss of occupational status may initially create uncertainty and feelings of reduced significance; however, successful adjustment occurs when retired officers reconstruct their identities through meaningful relationships, community involvement, and new life roles. Understanding this process is particularly important in the present study, as it seeks to explore how retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram District negotiate the transition from positions of authority to civilian life while maintaining a positive sense of identity and purpose.

Family, Social Support and Post-retirement Adaptation

Retirement is not solely an individual transition but also a family and social experience that influences interpersonal relationships, daily routines, and patterns of social interaction. The shift from a structured professional life to increased time at home often requires retired individuals to renegotiate their roles within the family and adapt to new responsibilities. For retired police officers, this transition can be particularly significant because the demanding nature of police service often limits family involvement during active employment. Retirement therefore creates opportunities to strengthen family relationships while simultaneously requiring adjustments in domestic roles, social participation, and community engagement.

Family support has consistently been identified as one of the most important factors promoting successful retirement adjustment. Wang et al. (2011) emphasised that positive family relationships contribute significantly to retirees' psychological wellbeing by

providing emotional security, encouragement, and a sense of belonging during the transition. Similarly, Atchley's (1989) Continuity Theory suggests that maintaining stable family relationships and familiar social networks enables retirees to preserve continuity in their lives, thereby reducing the stress associated with retirement. These perspectives indicate that family plays a central role in helping retirees adapt to changing life circumstances and establish a renewed sense of purpose.

Several studies have demonstrated that supportive family environments facilitate smoother retirement transitions. Parnaby et al. (2018) found that many retired police officers valued retirement because it allowed them to spend more time with their spouses, children, and grandchildren, thereby strengthening relationships that had often been affected by the demanding nature of police work. Participants described retirement as an opportunity to reconnect with family life and participate more actively in household responsibilities. However, the study also noted that adapting to increased time at home required mutual adjustment, as both retirees and family members needed to negotiate new routines and expectations.

Wasike (2023) similarly reported that retirees who maintained strong family relationships and actively participated in community life experienced greater life satisfaction and emotional wellbeing. The study highlighted that emotional support from family members helped retirees cope with feelings of uncertainty and facilitated the development of new roles beyond employment. Engagement in religious activities, volunteer work, and social organisations further enhanced retirees' sense of purpose and reduced the risk of social isolation. These findings emphasise that retirement adjustment extends beyond the individual and is influenced by the quality of social relationships within both the family and the community.

The importance of social support is further reinforced by Flack and Kite (2021), who found that social connectedness significantly contributed to successful identity transition among retired military personnel. Individuals who maintained meaningful relationships with family, friends, and community members demonstrated higher levels of psychological wellbeing and resilience than those who experienced social isolation. Although conducted within a military context, the findings are highly relevant to policing because both professions involve strong occupational cultures and structured organisational environments. The study suggests that continued social engagement

enables retirees to develop new identities while maintaining positive aspects of their former professional selves.

The World Health Organization (2022) also recognises social participation and supportive relationships as key determinants of healthy ageing and mental wellbeing. According to the WHO, maintaining regular interaction with family members, friends, and community groups promotes emotional resilience, reduces loneliness, and enhances overall quality of life among older adults. Likewise, the United Nations (2020) emphasises that active ageing is strengthened through family support, community participation, and opportunities for continued social contribution, highlighting the importance of creating environments that encourage social inclusion after retirement.

Although existing literature consistently acknowledges the significance of family and social support, researchers differ in their emphasis on the factors influencing successful adaptation. Wang et al. (2011) primarily focus on family relationships and personal resources, whereas Flack and Kite (2021) highlight broader social connectedness and community integration. Wasike (2023) emphasises meaningful engagement in family and community activities, while Parnaby et al. (2018) draw attention to the changing dynamics within the household following retirement. Collectively, these studies suggest that successful post-retirement adaptation depends on the combined influence of supportive family relationships, active social participation, and opportunities to establish meaningful civilian roles.

Despite these contributions, there remains limited research examining how retired police officers in India experience changes in family relationships and social roles after retirement. Most available studies focus on psychological adjustment or retirement planning, with comparatively little attention given to the everyday experiences of adapting to family life, rebuilding social networks, and negotiating new domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, few qualitative studies have explored how cultural values, family structures, and community expectations influence retirement experiences among retired police personnel in Kerala.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that family support and social connectedness play a crucial role in facilitating successful retirement adaptation. Positive relationships with family members, participation in community activities, and continued social engagement help retirees maintain emotional wellbeing, reconstruct meaningful identities, and adjust

to civilian life. At the same time, retirement requires individuals and their families to adapt to changing roles and responsibilities within the household. In the context of the present study, understanding these experiences is essential for exploring how retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram District negotiate family relationships, social participation, and post-retirement adaptation as part of their broader role identity transition.

Institutional Support and Retirement Preparedness

Retirement preparedness extends beyond financial planning and includes the psychological, social, and organisational support that enables employees to adjust successfully to life after retirement. For police officers, retirement often marks the end of a career characterised by discipline, authority, structured routines, and continuous public engagement. Therefore, effective retirement preparation should not only address financial security but also assist officers in coping with changes in identity, lifestyle, family relationships, and emotional wellbeing. Institutional support plays a vital role in facilitating this transition by helping retiring personnel prepare for the personal and social challenges that accompany retirement.

The literature consistently highlights the importance of organisational support in promoting positive retirement outcomes. Wang et al. (2011) argued that retirement adjustment is influenced not only by individual characteristics but also by the quality of preparation and support provided before retirement. Employees who receive guidance regarding retirement planning, emotional adjustment, health management, and future life planning generally experience smoother transitions than those who retire without adequate preparation. Similarly, Atchley (1989) emphasised that continuity between pre-retirement and post-retirement life can be strengthened through structured planning, allowing retirees to maintain stability while adapting to new roles and responsibilities.

Studies focusing on police retirement further reinforce the importance of institutional preparedness. Tufano (2018) found that officers who had sufficient time to prepare for retirement and who received support from their organisations demonstrated greater confidence and psychological readiness during the transition. In contrast, participants who experienced unexpected or involuntary retirement often reported feelings of uncertainty, identity loss, and emotional distress. The study emphasised that retirement

planning should extend beyond financial matters to include counselling, emotional preparation, and guidance on adapting to civilian life.

Similarly, Parnaby et al. (2018) observed that many retired police officers perceived retirement as a major life transition for which they felt inadequately prepared. Although most participants had considered financial planning, relatively few had received structured support regarding psychological adjustment, family role changes, or identity reconstruction. The researchers argued that police organisations should adopt a more holistic approach to retirement preparation by providing pre-retirement education, counselling services, and opportunities for officers to discuss their concerns before leaving the profession. Such interventions would enable retiring officers to approach retirement with greater confidence and realistic expectations.

The broader retirement literature also recognises the value of institutional and community-based support systems. Bartol and Grah (2024) concluded that successful retirement adjustment is enhanced when organisations provide comprehensive retirement programmes that address financial planning, health promotion, psychological wellbeing, and social engagement. The review further highlighted that retirees who received ongoing support after retirement demonstrated greater life satisfaction and experienced fewer adjustment difficulties than those who lacked institutional guidance. Similarly, Wasike (2023) emphasised that retirement preparation should encourage retirees to develop new interests, strengthen family relationships, and participate actively in community life, thereby reducing the risk of social isolation and identity loss.

International organisations have also stressed the importance of supportive policies for older adults. The World Health Organization (2022) advocates for healthy ageing through integrated approaches that promote mental health, social participation, and community support for older adults. Likewise, the United Nations (2020) encourages governments and institutions to develop policies that enhance the wellbeing, independence, and active participation of retired individuals. In India, the **National Policy for Senior Citizens** (Government of India, 2011) emphasises the need to ensure the dignity, security, healthcare, and social inclusion of older adults through coordinated support systems. Although these policies provide a broad framework for ageing populations, limited attention has been given to occupation-specific retirement needs, particularly those of retired police personnel.

Despite the growing recognition of retirement preparedness, the literature indicates that organisational support for retired police officers remains inadequate in many settings. Existing programmes largely focus on pension administration and financial benefits, while comparatively little emphasis is placed on psychological counselling, identity transition, family preparedness, or post-retirement engagement. Researchers consistently argue that retirement planning should adopt a holistic perspective that recognises retirement as a multidimensional transition affecting every aspect of an individual's life rather than merely an administrative process (Parnaby et al., 2018; Tufano, 2018; Wang et al., 2011).

Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that institutional support and retirement preparedness are essential components of successful retirement adjustment. Comprehensive retirement planning, counselling services, organisational guidance, and continued opportunities for social participation enable retirees to navigate changes in identity, family roles, and emotional wellbeing more effectively. However, existing research also reveals significant gaps in the provision of such support, particularly for retired police officers in the Indian context. There is limited qualitative evidence exploring how retired police personnel perceive institutional support or how retirement preparation influences their adjustment after leaving service. Addressing this gap is important for developing more responsive welfare programmes and retirement policies that support the long-term wellbeing of retired police officers.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- **SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY**

Social Identity Theory explains how individuals construct their identities through group membership and social roles. According to this theory, a person's self –concept is strongly influenced by the social groups to which they belong, such as profession, institution or community. Police officers develop a strong professional identity through authority, uniform, institutional power and social recognition, which becomes central to their self-definition. After retirement, the loss of group membership and institutional affiliation creates identity confusion, reduced social status and emotional distress, as the individual is no longer perceived as an authority figure in society. In the context of retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district, Social Identity Theory helps explains how officers experience a shift I self-identity and social recognition when transitioning from

an authoritative institutional role to civilian life. This theory is highly relevant for understanding identity loss, social belonging and the reconstruction of identity after retirement. (Tajfel and Turner (1979)

THEORIES CONNECTED

2.7.1 ROLE THEORY

Role Theory explains how individuals perform social roles based on societal expectations, norms and responsibilities associated with their position in society (Biddle, 1986). The theory suggests that every social position carries a set of expected behaviours and individuals internalize these expectations over time. Police officers hold a structured and authoritative role characterized by discipline, control, responsibility and public service, which becomes deeply embedded in their identity and daily functioning. Retirement leads to role exit, where individuals withdraw from their professional role and attempt to adapt to new civilian and family roles. This transition often creates role conflict, role loss and difficulty in adjusting to domestic and social environments. In this study, role theory helps explain how retired police officers struggle to shift from an authoritative professional role to ordinary civilian roles and how they renegotiate their position within family and society after retirement.

2.7.2 IDENTITY THEORY

Identity Theory, developed by Stryker (1980), explains how individuals maintain multiple identities based on social roles and interactions. The theory emphasizes that identity is formed through repeated social interaction and role performances, and individuals prioritize certain identities over others. For police officers, the professional identity becomes dominant due to years of service, authority and structured institutional life. After retirement, this dominant identity weakens and individuals must reconstruct their identity in new social and family roles. Identity theory helps in understanding how retired police officers recognize their self –concept and adapt to new roles in civilian life. In this study, it provides a framework to analyse how retired officers redefine themselves and maintain self-esteem and social relevance after leaving police service

2.7.3 DISCONTINUITY THEORY

Discontinuity Theory explains that retirement leads to a significant break in an individual's social role, identity and daily life resulting in psychological and social challenges (Atchley, 1989; Kim & Moen, 2002). Discontinuity theory emphasizes the

disruption and loss experienced during retirement particularly when individuals lose their professional identity, social status, and structured routine. This theory is highly relevant to the present study because retired police officers may experience a clear disconnection between their past authoritative identity and their current civilian identity. Discontinuity Theory helps explain the emotional struggles, identity crisis, and adjustment difficulties experienced by retired officers as they transition from structured institutional role to civilian life.

2.8 RESEARCH GAP

The existing literature has extensively examined retirement adjustment, occupational identity, psychological wellbeing, and retirement preparedness among various occupational groups, including police personnel. Studies have consistently highlighted that retirement is influenced by factors such as occupational identity, family support, social relationships, and institutional preparedness. However, most of these studies have been conducted in Western countries and have primarily employed quantitative approaches, focusing on retirement satisfaction, mental health, or financial preparedness. Consequently, there is limited understanding of the lived experiences of retired police officers and how they negotiate the transition from a position of authority to civilian life.

Furthermore, very few studies have explored **role identity transition** as a holistic phenomenon by integrating changes in occupational identity, social recognition, psychological adjustment, family adaptation, and institutional support within the Indian context, particularly in Kerala. Research focusing specifically on retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram District is virtually absent. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of retired police officers, providing context-specific insights that contribute to the fields of social work, retirement studies, occupational identity, and police welfare.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The literature reviewed in this chapter highlights that role identity transition following retirement is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by occupational identity, psychological adjustment, social recognition, family support, and institutional preparedness. The reviewed studies demonstrate that police service profoundly shapes an individual's identity, making retirement a significant life transition that requires

adaptation to changes in roles, relationships, authority, and daily routines. Although previous research has provided valuable insights into retirement experiences and identity reconstruction, there is limited qualitative evidence focusing specifically on the lived experiences of retired police officers, particularly within the Indian and Kerala contexts. Furthermore, existing studies have not comprehensively explored how retired police officers reconstruct their identities while negotiating changes in family life, emotional well-being, social recognition, and institutional support after retirement. These gaps underscore the need for the present phenomenological study, which seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram District. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in social work, retirement studies, occupational identity, and police welfare, while providing evidence to inform policies and interventions that promote healthy retirement adjustment and post-retirement well-being.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A research methodology is a specific technique for collecting and analysing data to uncover new information. Research methodology provides a strategy by which the researcher can plot out a systemic process to understand a phenomenon. When trying to understand a problem or phenomenon, different methods need to be used depending on the data available as well as how relevant available data may be. If there is limited data about a topic, a researcher may need to use different research methods to ensure the hardness.

This study aims to understand the role identity transition among retired police officers after retirement who are resided in Thiruvananthapuram district.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

“Role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvanthapuram district “

3.3 CONCEPTUALIZATION

The various concepts used in the study have evolved from the detailed literature review on the topic

TABLE 3.3 1: CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Concepts	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Role Identity	According to Stryker and Burke (2000) , role identity refers to the meanings and expectations that individuals associate with the social roles they occupy. These identities are developed through continuous social interaction and become an	In the present study, role identity refers to the participants' perception of themselves as police officers and the extent to which the values, responsibilities, discipline, authority, and professional characteristics developed during police service

	integral part of an individual's self-concept. As individuals experience changes in their social roles and positions, such as retirement, their role identities are reconstructed to accommodate new responsibilities and life circumstances.	continue to influence their self-concept, behavior, and everyday life after retirement.
Identity Shift	According to Helen Rose Fuchs Ebaugh (1988), identity shift occurs through the process of role exit , whereby individuals disengage from a central social role and gradually adjust to a new identity as they adapt to changing life circumstances.	In the present study, identity shift refers to the process through which retired police officers experience changes in their self-perception as they transition from an active policing role to civilian life. It includes changes in occupational identity, personal roles, social status, and the reconstruction of self-following retirement.
Power	According to Max Weber (1947), power is the ability to carry out one's will despite resistance within social relationship. Power refers to the ability of individuals to influence others within social relationships, while social	In the present study, power refers to the perceived authority, influence, decision-making capacity, and social respect that participants experienced during active police service and the changes they

	recognition refers to acknowledgement and value received from society.	perceived in these aspects after retirement..
Transition	According to Nancy K. Schlossberg (1981), transition is any event or non-event that results in changes in an individual's relationships, routines, assumptions, or roles, requiring the person to adapt to new life circumstances.	In the present study, transition refers to the process of adapting from an active police career to post-retirement civilian life. It encompasses changes in daily routines, occupational roles, personal identity, family responsibilities, social interactions, and overall lifestyle following retirement.
Adjustment	According to Robert C. Atchley (1976), adjustment refers to the process through which individuals adapt to changes in life circumstances by modifying their behaviors, attitudes, and roles in order to achieve a satisfactory level of functioning and well-being.	In the present study, adjustment refers to the process through which retired police officers adapt to the physical, psychological, emotional, social, and familial changes associated with retirement. It includes their coping strategies, acceptance of retirement, development of new routines, and adaptation to post-retirement life.

Family support	According to Sidney Cobb (1976), social support refers to the information and assistance an individual receives through social relationships that leads them to believe they are cared for, valued, loved, and part of a network of mutual obligations	In the present study, adjustment refers to the process through which retired police officers adapt to the physical, psychological, emotional, social, and familial changes associated with retirement. It includes their coping strategies, acceptance of retirement, development of new routines, and adaptation to post-retirement life.
Retirement	According to Robert C. Atchley (1976), retirement is the process of withdrawing from full-time employment and transitioning into a new stage of life characterized by changes in social roles, daily routines, and personal identity.	In the present study, retirement refers to the transition from active police service to civilian life following superannuation from the Kerala Police Department. It encompasses the participants' experiences of leaving their professional role and adjusting to changes in identity, social recognition, family life, emotional well-being, and everyday routines during the post-retirement period.

3.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

3.4.1 GENERAL QUESTION

- What are the experiences of role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram?

3.4.2 SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- How do retired police officers experience identity shift after retirement?
- How do changes in power and social recognition affect their self-perception?
- How do retired police officers adjust to the domestic life after retirement?
- What psychological adjustments do retired police officers experience?
- What role do institutional and family support systems play in retirement transition?

3.5 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted with two retired police officers who met the inclusion criteria of the study to assess the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the interview guide. The pilot study helped the researcher evaluate the sequence of questions, the duration of the interview, and the participants' understanding of the questions. Based on the responses obtained, it was found that the interview guide was clear, comprehensive, and capable of eliciting detailed information relevant to the research objectives. Therefore, no modifications were required in the interview guide, and the same interview schedule was used for the main study. As the pilot participants fulfilled the inclusion criteria and their responses were relevant to the objectives of the study, their data were incorporated into the final analysis.

3.6 RESEARCH APPROACH

Qualitative approach is adopted for the study and Phenomenological design was used to collect data for the purpose of the study. Qualitative research refers to research approach

that focuses on exploring ,understanding and interpreting phenomena through non-numerical data .it involves collecting and analysing rich, descriptive data such as interviews ,observation,documents,and artifices to gain in-depth insights into the underlying meanings ,perspectives and experiences of participants .

3.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study adopted a **phenomenological research design** to explore the lived experiences of retired police officers undergoing role identity transition after retirement. **Creswell and Poth (2018)** define phenomenology as a qualitative research approach that describes the common meaning of several individuals lived experiences of a particular phenomenon. This design enabled the researcher to understand how retired police officers perceived, interpreted, and made meaning of their transition from an active policing role to civilian life. Through in-depth interviews, participants were encouraged to narrate their personal experiences, emotions, challenges, and coping strategies associated with retirement. This approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the psychological, social, and occupational dimensions of role identity transition, allowing the researcher to capture the essence of participants lived experiences within their socio-cultural context. Therefore, the phenomenological design was considered most appropriate for addressing the research questions and achieving the objectives of the study.

3.8 SAMPLING

The present study adopted **purposive sampling**, a non-probability sampling technique widely used in qualitative research. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting participants who have direct experience and are knowledgeable about the phenomenon being studied. Rather than aiming for statistical representation, this sampling technique focuses on identifying information-rich participants who can provide detailed and meaningful insights relevant to the research objectives.

Purposive sampling was considered appropriate for the present study because it sought to explore the **lived experiences of role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram District**. Since the study required participants who had retired from police service and had personally experienced the transition from an

active policing role to civilian life, purposive sampling enabled the researcher to select individuals capable of providing rich and in-depth information. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of their experiences of identity transition, psychological adjustment, family adaptation, and post-retirement life, thereby helping to achieve the objectives of the study.

A total of **7 retired police officers from** Thiruvananthapuram were selected for the study. The sample size was considered adequate for phenomenological study as it enabled the collection of detailed narrative and facilitated an in-depth exploration of participants lived experiences.

3.9 INCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Retired police officers who had officially retired from the Kerala Police Department.
2. Retired police officers residing in Thiruvananthapuram District at the time of the study.
3. Retired police officers who had completed at least 5 years of retirement to ensure they had experienced post-retirement adjustment

3.10 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

1. Individuals who had served in other uniformed services but were not retired police officers of the Kerala Police Department.
2. Retired women police officers, as the study focused exclusively on the role identity transition of retired male police officers.
3. Police officers who had retired **less** than five years prior to the study, as they may not have experienced sufficient post-retirement adjustment.
4. Retired police officers residing outside Thiruvananthapuram District at the time of data collection.

3.11 SAMPLING SIZE

For the present study, a total sample of 7 retired police officers who are currently resided in Thiruvananthapuram district who satisfies the inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected.

3.12 SOURCES OF DATA

- **PRIMARY DATA**

7 samples were taken and studied, which were collected from Thiruvananthapuram district. Data were collected through field visit and telephone interview. Primary method is crucial in research as it offers a direct and unfiltered source of information. By relying on personal experiences or direct evidences, primary data enables researchers to obtain firsthand insights into their research question. Interviews were conducted in Malayalam according to the participants' preference, and each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes

- **SECONDARY DATA**

Secondary data is information that has been previously collected and recorded by other researches for their specific purpose. This type of data is available in various forms, sourced from different outlets like government publications, journals, articles, research papers and more. In this study, secondary data were gathered from sources such as social media, online articles, journals, books and research papers.

3.13 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The present study used a structured interview as the primary tool for data collection. The interview guide was prepared by the researcher based on the objectives and research questions of the study. It consisted of open-ended questions that encouraged participants to freely share their experiences, opinions, emotions, and reflections related to retirement and life after police service. The tool included questions focusing on areas such as identity changes after retirement, changes in social recognition and authority, adjustment to domestic life, emotional wellbeing, future purpose, and the role of institutional and family support. The semi-structured format provided flexibility for participants to express their experiences in their own words while also allowing the researcher to explore emerging ideas and gain deeper understanding of their lived experiences.

3.14 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was carried out among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district after gaining permission and informed consent from the participants. The

researcher conducted individual interviews in a comfortable and convenient setting based on participants' availability. With permission, responses were recorded and detailed notes were maintained to ensure accuracy. The researcher-maintained confidentiality, respected participants privacy, and created a supportive environment that allowed participants to share their experiences freely. The collected data were later transcribed and organized systematically for thematic analysis.

3.15 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through in-depth interviews were analysed using **thematic analysis** as proposed by **Braun and Clarke (2006)**. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (p. 79). It is a flexible qualitative analytic method that enables researchers to organise and interpret rich textual data while capturing both explicit and underlying meanings. In the present study, thematic analysis facilitated the systematic examination of participants' narratives, allowing the researcher to identify recurring patterns and develop meaningful themes that reflected the lived experiences of role identity transition among retired police officers.

The analysis followed the **six-phase framework** proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which includes familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. This systematic process ensured a rigorous and comprehensive interpretation of the interview data while maintaining consistency with the objectives of the study.

THEMES

- Theme 1: Identity Shift
 - The Uniform Memory
 - The Internal police
 - The Mirror Test
- Theme 2: Power and Social Recognition
 - The Social Shift

- Decision –Making
- The Emotional Side
- Theme 3: The Domestic Transition
 - Routine Contrast
 - The Empty Hours
 - The Home Dynamic
- Theme 4: Emotional Health & Future purpose
 - The Quiet Worries
 - A New Pride
 - The Support Circle
- Theme 5: Institutional Feedback
 - The Mental Bag
 - Family Readiness

3.16 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Data collection was carried out among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district after obtaining necessary permission and informed consent from the participants. The researcher conducted individual interviews in a comfortable and convenient setting based on participants' availability. With permission, responses were recorded and detailed notes were maintained to ensure accuracy. The researcher-maintained confidentiality, respected participants' privacy, and created a supportive environment that allowed participants to share their experiences freely. The collected data were later transcribed and organized systematically for thematic analysis.

3.17 ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATION AND SCOPE

ASSUMPTIONS

The researcher assumed that retired police officers may experience challenges related to role identity transition after retirement due to changes in authority, daily routine and

professional identity. It was also assumed that retirement adjustment would be difficult for most participants.

LIMITATIONS

The study was limited to retired police officers from Thiruvananthapuram district and therefore may not represent the experience of retired police personnel from other regions. The study adopted a qualitative design with a limited number of participants, which focused on experience rather than generalisation.

SCOPE

The present study focuses on understanding the experiences of “role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district”. The study attempts to explore retirement as a broader life experience rather than viewing it only as the end of professional service. It examines how retired police officers experience changes in identity, authority, routine, social relationships, and personal adjustment after leaving active police service.

As the study follows a qualitative research approach, it provides an opportunity to understand participants lived experiences, personal reflections, emotions, and interpretations in greater depth. The study gives importance to participants’ voices and captures how retirement is experienced differently by individuals depending on their personal, family, social, and professional backgrounds. The findings of the study may contribute to the fields of social work, gerontology, retirement studies, and occupational wellbeing* by providing insights into the psychosocial experiences of retired police personnel. The study may also support the development of retirement preparedness programmes, institutional support mechanisms, family interventions, and policies that promote healthier adjustment and wellbeing among retired police officers.

Although the study is limited to retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district, the findings may provide a useful understanding of retirement transition and encourage further research in similar occupational groups and different geographical settings

3.18 CONCLUSION

The introduction of this study sets the foundational framework for understanding the multifaceted experience of retirement among police officers in the Thiruvananthapuram district. By identifying the limitations of existing research, which has largely focused on financial or health-related aspects, this chapter establishes the necessity of exploring the sociological and psychological dimensions of role identity transition. It outlines the research objectives, the significance of the study in the context of professional identity, and the methodology employed to capture the nuanced experiences of retirees as they navigate the shift from institutional duty to civilian life. Ultimately, this introductory framework serves as a roadmap for the subsequent analysis of how former officers reconstruct their sense of self and social standing within their families and communities.

CHAPTER 4

DATA DESCRIPTION

CHAPTER 4: DATA DESCRIPTION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher carried out thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district. The analysis is embedded within the research questions by integrating participants lived experiences with interpretation and discussion. The data presented descriptively in Chapter 4 is analysed to understand how retired police officers experience changes in identity, adapt to retirement, reconstruct social roles, and create meaning in life beyond professional service.

The themes include Identity Shift, Power and Social Recognition, Domestic Transition, Emotional Health and Future Purpose, and Institutional Feedback. The interpretation is carried out in relation to the research questions, with the aim of understanding how retired police officers experience retirement transition, negotiate changes in authority and social recognition, adjust to domestic life, and maintain emotional wellbeing after retirement. The themes are derived inductively from participants' narratives, and verbatim quotations are incorporated to retain the authenticity of their voices. The findings are interpreted in relation to the research questions and supported by relevant theoretical and empirical insights.

4.2 Demographic details

The participants' backgrounds are characterized by long-term commitment to the police service, with years of service ranging from 26 to 35 years. At the time of the study, the participants were aged between 58 and 62 years, and all were married, highlighting the importance of family as a primary social support system during their post-retirement transition. The group possessed diverse educational backgrounds, ranging from secondary education (SSLC) to professional degrees like LLB and M. Com, reflecting the varied paths through which these individuals entered and advanced within the police department. Upon their superannuation, the participants held ranks ranging from Assistant Sub Inspector to Circle Inspector, providing a range of perspectives on the influence of institutional hierarchy and authority on identity.

TABLE 4.2 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

Respo ndent	Age	Gender	Years of service	Marital Status	Educational qualification	Rank at retirement
P1	61	Male	34	Married	M.com	Sub Inspector
P2	62	Male	34	Married	SSLC	Sub inspector
P3	60	Male	31	Married	SSLC	Assistant sub inspector
P4	58	Male	32	Married	-	Sub inspector (GEL)
P5	61	Male	35	Married	Pre degree	Sub Inspector
P6	61	Male	31	Married	LLB	Circle Inspector
P7	61	Male	26	Married	-	Sub Inspect

4.3 Case description

4.3.1 Participant 1

The P1 explained that he did not initially have a strong interest in joining the police service. He said, *“Frankly speaking, I was interested in another job. After completing my M. Com, I was doing CA practice when I received the advice memo for police service.”* He discussed this with his teacher, who advised him to join government service, and he decided to stop CA practice and join the police. He added, *“I did not join the police with*

great satisfaction; I just got engaged in the job and continued.” During service, he was involved in sports like volleyball and managed his police life without major difficulties, though he faced challenges such as suspension, transfer, and public issues reported in newspapers.

The P1 described the emotional attachment to the police uniform and authority. He stated, *“When we wear the uniform, there is a feeling of position and power behind us, but after retirement that feeling changes.”* He explained that police officers work as a strong group and support each other, which creates a sense of unity and belonging. He also mentioned that officers who stay in quarters for many years lose connection with their native place, and after retirement they face difficulty adjusting to their home environment. He said, *“Those who lived in quarters for 20 or 30 years face real difficulty after retirement because they have less connection with their native place.”*

The P1 explained that social respect decreases after retirement. He stated, *“During service people respect us, but after retirement that respect and consideration will not be the same.”* However, he personally did not feel a major problem because he was socially engaged in sports, organizations, and community activities. He said, *“I enjoyed my service and even after retirement I am engaged in different activities, so I did not feel much loss.”*

He also highlighted the challenges faced by retired police officers, especially loneliness and lack of engagement. He explained, *“Some officers stay alone after retirement because their children are abroad and they have no social support, and some become depressed and even die early.”* He pointed out that financial problems, reduced income, and lack of social recognition are major reasons for post-retirement stress. He stated, *“Income reduces suddenly, social consideration reduces, and engagement becomes less, so depression may occur.”*

The P1 strongly supported pre-retirement awareness programs. He said, *“Providing awareness classes and support programs before retirement is good because many officers do not know how to manage life after retirement.”* He emphasized that financial planning, social engagement, and psychological preparation are important for a smooth transition to retirement life.

He also shared that staying socially active through groups, sports, trips, and community work gives happiness in retirement. He stated, *“Meeting old friends, participating in groups, and engaging in social activities gives happiness and reduces loneliness.”*

Researcher's Interpretation

P1's account illustrates the Power and Social Recognition theme, showing how the symbolic authority of the uniform recedes after retirement, while his observations about isolated peers speak to the Emotional Health and Future Purpose theme particularly the compounding risk of distress when financial and social losses converge. His advocacy for structured pre-retirement classes aligns directly with the Institutional Feedback theme and the study's objective of understanding how institutional support shapes the retirement transition

4.3.2 Participant 2

The P2 explained that he joined the police service in 1981 through the Public Service Commission (PSC) recruitment, which was the first PSC recruitment conducted for the Kerala Police. He stated, *“In 1981 I joined the service. At that time PSC recruitment had just started in Kerala Police, and after ranking, medical tests, sports tests, and other examinations, only then a person was selected for police.”* He mentioned that compared to other departments, police recruitment involved many strict physical and medical requirements such as fitness, no physical disability, and other conditions. He said, *“In other departments, if you pass the exam, you can join the job immediately, but in police department many tests and medical checks are required.”* He also shared that he joined the police at a young age without much understanding about the profession, saying, *“I was only 19 years old and I did not know anything about police or the nature of the job.”*

The P2 described the police training period as a completely different experience that changed his personality and outlook on life. He explained, *“When we entered the training camp, it was like entering a different world where we had to do everything on our own, and no one was there to help us.”* He said that the nine-month training included law classes, physical training, sports, and discipline, which helped them become responsible individuals. He added, *“After nine months of training, we become completely different people with commitment to society, family, and discipline in life.”*

He explained that police work is always stressful and requires continuous responsibility. He stated, *"Police job is a 24-hour duty, and even while sleeping we must be ready to attend duty anytime."* He also mentioned that police officers must handle sensitive situations such as dead bodies, crimes, and emergencies without fear. He said, *"A police officer should not be afraid because even a dead body becomes our responsibility."* According to him, the uniform creates a sense of authority and responsibility, and these qualities continue even after retirement.

The P2 explained that even after retirement, some police characteristics remain in behaviour. He stated, *"If we see any wrongdoing, we will react immediately because that habit remains."* He also shared that when he sees helpless people in need, he feels responsible to help them, saying, *"If someone is crying on the roadside or needs help to go to hospital, we feel it is our responsibility to help them."* This shows that the sense of duty and social responsibility continues even after retirement.

The P2 said that there is not much difference in family relationships before and after retirement because police officers are ordinary people once they remove the uniform. He explained, *"When we remove the uniform, we are just normal people, so family members treat us the same before and after retirement."* However, he pointed out that during service, there was very little time for family due to heavy duty schedules.

He described the daily routine during service and after retirement. During service, life was highly disciplined and structured, as he said, *"We had to wake up early, shave daily, reach the station on time, complete duty, and submit reports before going home."* After retirement, life became more relaxed and freer. He explained, *"Now there is no strict routine, and we feel free compared to the busy police life."*

The P2 also shared emotional experiences related to family life. He stated, *"Sometimes my children asked why they could not see their father because I was always busy with duty."* He explained that police duty prevented him from spending time with family, but after retirement, he was able to spend more time with them, which brought happiness.

He mentioned that during the first few months after retirement, old thoughts and routines continued to affect him. He said, *"For three to four months after retirement, the old thoughts and routine continued in my mind."* Gradually, he adjusted to the new life through social activities, family events, and community participation.

The P2 explained that he is now actively involved in social and community work. He stated, *“Now I am active in public activities, temple committee, SN association, and pensioners association.”* He described his daily routine as attending meetings, visiting people, participating in programs, and spending time with family and grandchildren. He added, *“Spending time with grandchildren and family gives more happiness after retirement.”*

He also highlighted the strong bond among police batchmates and explained that they meet every year for family gatherings and social activities. He stated, *“Police batchmates have strong emotional bonding and they meet every year with their families for gatherings and charity activities.”*

The P2 mentioned that the department provides awareness classes before retirement. He explained, *“Before retirement, awareness classes are conducted to prepare officers for retirement life and to encourage social service and charity work.”* He said these classes help officers avoid addiction, depression, and loneliness and encourage them to stay active in society.

Finally, he described retirement as a relief from stress using a simple example. He said, *“Police life is like wearing a tight shoe all the time, and retirement is like removing that shoe and feeling relief.”* This shows that retirement brings peace and freedom from stress while still maintaining a sense of responsibility and social commitment.

Researcher's Interpretation

P2's narrative strongly reflects the Domestic Transition theme, particularly the shift from a rigidly scheduled service routine to the comparatively unstructured hours of retired life, and his gradual re-engagement with family responsibilities. His description of persistent vigilance months into retirement supports the Identity Shift theme, indicating that professional identity does not dissolve immediately on leaving service. His confirmation of departmental awareness classes offers direct, if isolated, evidence relevant to the Institutional Feedback theme.

4.3.3 Participant 3

The P3 explained that there was not much difference in feelings between joining the police service and retiring from it. He stated that he felt happy both when he joined the job and when he retired. He shared that during the training period, the uniform was

different and simple, and later they were provided with proper facilities while going for duty. He mentioned, *"I was happy when I joined the job and I was also happy when I retired. There was no problem."* He added that retirement brought a different kind of life, but official life had its own tensions and responsibilities. According to him, *"Retirement was like a different life. Before that there were small tensions and official pressures in service life."*

The P3 described the stress and responsibility associated with police work and explained that official duties often prevented him from participating in family functions and personal events. He said that because of duty requirements, he had to travel to different places and sometimes missed important family occasions. He mentioned, *"Sometimes I could not take part in family matters because of duty. I had to go to many places for work and I missed family functions."* This shows the difficulty in balancing professional responsibilities and family life during service.

When asked about the behaviour of people before and after retirement, the respondent stated that he did not experience much difference in how people treated him. He explained that most of his duty was related to camp work and not local policing, so he did not create any problems for people in his locality. He said, *"I did not face any major problem. People still interact with me in a good way."* This indicates that his social relationships remained stable even after retirement.

The P3 also explained the difference between daily routine during service and after retirement. During service, he used to leave home early in the morning and follow the instructions of senior officers throughout the day. Sometimes he had to stay overnight for duty or travel long distances with accused persons. He mentioned that handling accused persons required careful attention to prevent escape or conflict. He stated, *"We had to travel with accused persons to distant places and we had to be very careful because they might escape."* This reflects the demanding and responsible nature of police work.

After retirement, the P3 described his life as more peaceful and active in a different way. He said that he is still engaged in many activities such as residence association work, reading room activities, tuition work, and farming. He also spends more time with family and goes for tours when he gets rest. He mentioned, *"Now I am engaged in many activities like residence work, reading room activities, tuition and farming, and I spend*

more time with my family.” This shows that retirement provided him with more freedom and personal time.

Regarding family life, the P3 stated that there was no major change or special reaction from family members after retirement. He felt that everything was going normally and peacefully. He explained, *“There were no special experiences from family members, so I feel everything is fine.”* This indicates a smooth transition into retirement life.

When asked about his feelings during the first months after retirement, the respondent said that he did not feel any major difference because he was actively involved in residence and social activities. He mentioned, *“I did not feel retirement strongly because I was actively involved in residence activities.”* This suggests that active engagement helped him adjust to retirement easily.

The P3 also shared that he finds happiness in travelling, visiting his family home, doing farming, and participating in different activities. He enjoys meeting old colleagues and attending police gatherings held once a year, where they sing songs and share memories. He said, *“We meet once a year in police gatherings and we sing songs and share old memories.”* This reflects the importance of social connections after retirement.

When asked about pre-retirement awareness or training programs, the respondent stated that he did not attend any such sessions. However, he strongly supported the idea of conducting awareness classes on financial management and post-retirement life. He said, *“It is a very good idea to give classes on how to use retirement money and how to handle retirement life.”* This shows the need for institutional support for retired police officers.

The P3 also mentioned that he was part of the police association and had participated in association activities and elections. Finally, he compared service life and retirement life and explained that both are completely different. He said that many people feel that society looks at them differently after retirement, but he personally did not feel such a difference. He stated, *“Service life and retirement life are two different lives, but I did not feel much difference in how people see me.”* This highlights his balanced and positive attitude toward retirement.

Researcher's Interpretation

P3's relatively smooth transition, anchored in immediate community involvement, illustrates a protective pathway within the Domestic Transition and Emotional Health

themes, in which sustained activity appears to buffer against the loss of occupational identity. His endorsement of financial-planning classes, despite never having attended one himself, reinforces the Institutional Feedback theme and points to a gap between officers' perceived needs and actual departmental provision.

4.3.4 Participant 4

The P4 stated that he had completed 32 years of service in the police department and retired on May 31, 2024, from the post of Sub Inspector (General Executive Local). When asked about his feelings during the time of joining the job and retirement, he explained that entering the police service through the competitive Public Service Commission examination was a challenging and disciplined process. He said that after completing studies and living a free life, entering the police force brought strict discipline and training, which naturally created stress. He mentioned, *“We entered the job through PSC examination and physical test, and during training there was strict discipline, so naturally there was stress.”* He explained that this stress was part of training, as people from different backgrounds were trained in the same way to become disciplined police officers.

The P4 further explained that after completing nine months of training, things became easier, but the stress of following the instructions of senior officers and managing family responsibilities continued throughout service. He said that official duties sometimes prevented him from attending family needs and important occasions, which increased emotional pressure. He mentioned, *“When we think about family and home, sometimes we cannot attend important family needs, and that creates more stress.”* He also described his service journey, stating that after training he worked in different departments such as Special Armed Police, City Armed Reserve, Traffic Police Station, Port Police Station, Vigilance, Museum Special Branch, and finally retired from Special Branch.

When asked whether police habits continued after retirement, the respondent explained that the mindset of a police officer does not change easily. He said that after many years of disciplined service, it becomes natural to respond to social problems and inform authorities when needed. He mentioned, *“Even after retirement we react to social problems and inform control rooms or officers if any law-and-order issue happens.”* He

explained that this behaviour comes from years of discipline and responsibility learned during training and service.

The P4 also spoke about discipline in daily life and explained that police officers are trained to follow strict routines such as waking up early, attending parade, and reporting to duty on time. He stated that even after retirement, he tries to maintain discipline in his routine because it has become part of his life. He said, *“Because we followed discipline for many years, after retirement also we try to maintain that discipline in our daily life.”* He explained that sometimes family and social issues may disturb routines, but discipline still remains as a personal habit.

When asked about the difference between his past identity as a police officer and his present identity, the respondent explained that there was no major change in his personality or lifestyle. He said that retirement only meant removing the uniform, but the values and discipline remained the same. He mentioned, *“Retirement only means removing the uniform; we cannot work in uniform anymore, and that creates a feeling.”* He also shared that on the day of retirement; there was emotional difficulty because the uniform had been part of his life for many years. He stated, *“When we receive the retirement certificate and leave the department, it creates a big emotional feeling because we cannot wear the uniform again.”* He explained that many officers feel this emotional attachment, even though they know retirement is a natural part of service life.

The P4 also shared that people’s approach towards him did not change after retirement. He explained that respect is based on how a person behaves with others, and respectful behaviour brings respect in return. He said, *“Respect is given and take; how we behave with people, we receive the same respect back.”* He described his experience in traffic duty, where he interacted with common people such as auto drivers, workers, taxi drivers, and shopkeepers. He explained that even when he had to act strictly during duty, people understood that it was part of his responsibility. He mentioned, *“People understand that strict behaviour is part of duty, not personal anger, so they show love and respect in return.”*

He also shared an example of standing in heavy rain during traffic duty, where local people brought an umbrella for him as a gesture of care. He said, *“While doing traffic duty in heavy rain, people arranged an umbrella and helped me, which showed their love*

and respect.” According to him, this kind of respect comes from genuine service and care for the public.

The P4 explained that after retirement, his family and society still treat him in the same way as before. He said that his wife and daughter interact with him normally, and people in society still call him with respect. He mentioned, *“People who called me ‘sir’ earlier still call me ‘sir’ now, and there is no major change.”* He emphasized that mutual respect and good behaviour help maintain positive relationships in both service and retirement life.

When asked about daily routine, the respondent explained that police service involves different types of duties such as traffic duty, station duty, camp duty, and special duties during events like strikes or festivals. He said that officers often have to report early, work long hours, and remain alert to prevent problems. He mentioned, *“Police duty means reaching early and taking precautions to avoid problems before they happen.”* He explained that after retirement, he is free from such pressure and has more time for family and social life.

The P4 described that after retirement he started engaging in social and educational activities. He explained that along with his old school friends, he started a tuition centre and became active in social, community, and organizational work. He mentioned, *“After retirement we started a tuition centre with school friends and I am engaged in social and organizational activities.”* He said that this helped him stay mentally active and use his time productively.

Regarding health and financial concerns, the respondent stated that he did not face major problems because he had planned his life and taken health insurance and pension benefits. He explained that diseases can happen to anyone, and one must take precautions and accept them calmly. He mentioned, *“Diseases can come to anyone, so we should take precautions and not worry too much.”* He added that pension and medical support reduced financial stress and helped him maintain a stable life.

The P4 also shared that his main source of happiness in retirement comes from friendships and social connections developed during his 32 years of service. He said that every year his training batch meets and spends time sharing memories and family updates. He mentioned, *“Every year we meet with our training batch, share old memories, eat together, and spend time happily.”* He explained that social media groups also help them

stay connected and attend important events such as weddings and funerals of colleagues and their families.

He further explained that he is actively involved in religious and community activities and regularly participates in mosque-related responsibilities and social service. He mentioned, *“I help in mosque activities and community programs and attend social events when invited.”* He also said that he is a member of Kerala Police Pensioners Association and Kerala Service Pensioners Union and regularly attends meetings and activities.

When asked about pre-retirement awareness programs, the respondent explained that although formal sessions were not provided by the department, retirement functions and speeches by senior officers gave guidance about retirement planning and financial management. He said, *“Senior officers give awareness about how to live after retirement and how to manage life and finances.”* He added that individuals who plan their savings and family life properly do not face major problems after retirement.

Finally, the respondent shared his opinion about post-retirement depression and awareness programs. He explained that police officers come from society and have different personal habits and personalities, and discipline during training can change their lifestyle if they are willing. He mentioned, *“If a person plans his life and savings properly, he can retire as a good officer and live peacefully.”* He also stated that most retired police officers do not frequently visit police stations because they understand the stress and workload of serving officers. He concluded, *“Most retired officers avoid going to police stations because they understand the stress of officers who are still in service.”*

Researcher's Interpretation

P4's experience closely reflects the Identity Shift theme: retirement is experienced less as a loss of self than as the removal of an external marker, while internal discipline and values persist unchanged. His account of continued public respect supports the Power and Social Recognition theme, suggesting that respect earned through conduct, unlike positional authority, survives the transition intact. His proactive engagement in a tuition center and associations reflects the self-directed pursuit of purpose central to the Emotional Health and Future Purpose theme.

4.3.5 Participant 5

The P5 shared his experience of joining the police service and retiring from it by reflecting on his long journey in the department. He stated that he joined the police service in 1988 at the age of 22 and remembered that the training period was very tough and physically demanding. He explained that the early days in service were full of challenges, discipline, and hard work, but at the same time, he had enthusiasm and energy because he was young and motivated to perform his duties well. He mentioned, *“I joined service in 1988, and the training was very tough and difficult. I got the job at the age of 22, and at that time I had the energy and interest to do police duty.”* He explained that as he grew older, he continued to perform all his duties responsibly, but the tension and pressure within the police department were always present. According to him, police work is naturally stressful because of responsibilities and unpredictable duties. He added, *“In police service there is always tension, but after retirement I am very free and living peacefully without tension.”*

The P5 also explained that even after retirement, some habits and attitudes developed during police service still remain in his life. He stated that while working in uniform, he always observed his surroundings carefully and paid attention to social situations, and this behaviour continues even after retirement. He explained that he always lived like a common man while in service and continues to live in the same way now. He mentioned, *“When I was in uniform, I lived like a common man, and even now I live like a normal person.”* He described himself as a people-friendly person who always maintained good relationships with the public and community.

When asked about changes in people’s approach after retirement, the respondent explained that there is a natural difference between being in service and being retired. He stated that while in service, people see him as a police officer, but after retirement, he is seen as an ordinary person. He mentioned, *“When we are in service it is different, but after pension we are seen as ordinary people.”* However, he did not express any dissatisfaction about this change and accepted it as part of life.

The P5 then described the difference between his daily routine during service and after retirement. He explained that during police service there was no fixed routine because duty timings were unpredictable and depended on emergencies. He said that sometimes he had to go for duty at night, early morning, or at any time depending on the situation.

He mentioned, *“Police duty does not have a fixed time; sometimes we have to go at 2 am or 3 am depending on duty.”* He explained that police work is always connected to emergencies and public needs, so officers cannot follow a regular schedule.

After retirement, his daily routine became more structured and peaceful. He explained that now he wakes up early in the morning around 4:30 or 5:00 am, eats food on time, and engages in farming and small business activities. He also mentioned that he keeps himself busy because sitting idle can lead to stress and health problems. He stated, *“Now I wake up at 5 am, do farming and small business activities, and I do not sit idle because sitting idle brings tension and illness.”* According to him, staying active helps maintain both physical and mental health.

When asked about family life, the respondent explained that he did not face any major complaints from his family during service or after retirement. He said that his wife was working, and the family managed their responsibilities together. He mentioned that his children were raised properly and settled in their lives, and there were no major issues at home. He stated, *“There were no complaints from family, and even after retirement everything is going normally.”* This shows that his family life remained stable throughout his service and retirement.

The P5 also shared his experience of the first few months after retirement. He explained that there was a small adjustment period because the uniform and regular work routine suddenly stopped. He mentioned that for a few days he felt a slight difficulty in adjusting to the new system of life. He said, *“After removing the uniform and changing the system, there was a small difficulty for two or three days, but later everything became normal.”* This shows that the transition period was short and manageable.

When asked about sources of happiness after retirement, the respondent explained that farming and spending time with family bring him the most satisfaction. He said that seeing his children and family members gives him happiness and peace of mind. He mentioned, *“Farming and seeing my children and family give me happiness.”* He also shared that earlier he used to meet colleagues and friends more often, but now such gatherings have reduced, and most interactions happen through phone calls or group communication. He stated, *“We have a group and we talk on the phone and meet sometimes, but it is less now.”*

Regarding departmental support and retirement preparation, the P5 clearly stated that he did not receive any special classes or sessions from the department to help adjust to retirement. He mentioned, *“There were no classes or sessions from the department for retirement adjustment.”* When asked about post-retirement depression and awareness programs, he explained that adjustment depends on the individual and that people should change their mindset after retirement. He stated that once a person removes the uniform, they should accept a normal life and live like an ordinary citizen without stress. He mentioned, *“We should change ourselves and live as normal people after removing the uniform; then there will be no tension.”*

Researcher's Interpretation

P5's rapid, self-driven adjustment, achieved largely through physical activity and a restructured routine, illustrates a proactive coping pathway within the Domestic Transition and Emotional Health themes. His observation that public perception shifts naturally once the uniform is removed adds nuance to the Power and Social Recognition theme, distinguishing status attached to the role from respect attached to the person. His explicit statement that no institutional support was offered underscores a recurring gap identified under the Institutional Feedback theme.

4.3.6 Participant 6

The P6 shared his experience of joining the police service and retiring from it with a strong sense of satisfaction and pride. He explained that when he first joined the police service, he felt extremely happy and motivated. According to him, wearing the uniform for the first time was a proud and joyful moment, and he was excited to serve the department and contribute to society. He mentioned that throughout his service he was able to complete many important projects and make meaningful contributions to the police department. He stated, *“When I first joined service and wore the uniform, I was very happy, and I completed many projects and did a lot for the police.”* He further explained that retirement did not reduce his happiness; instead, he felt even more satisfied because he had successfully completed many responsibilities and contributions during his service. He said, *“At the time of retirement I was even happier than when I joined.”*

The P6 also explained that even after retirement, the feeling of being a police officer still remains within him. He shared that whenever he goes outside, he still feels the presence of his former identity as a police officer and continues to observe things carefully. He

mentioned, *“Even now when I go outside, I feel like the old police officer is still inside me.”* He explained that this feeling comes from the meaningful work he did during his service, especially in places where he worked on major projects such as the development of facilities and infrastructure. He described one of his major achievements, stating that he was involved in developing a swimming pool project that still generates profit and benefits the department. He also spoke about a Miyawaki forest project that he successfully implemented, which later received recognition and was recommended to be implemented in other districts. He mentioned, *“I implemented a Miyawaki forest project and it was very successful, and the ADGP suggested that it should be implemented in all districts.”* This recognition from senior officers and colleagues gave him great satisfaction and happiness.

When asked whether he still observes social surroundings and public issues after retirement, the respondent explained that he continues to stay socially aware and engaged in developmental ideas. He said that he wishes to see the projects he started continue in different places and bring benefits to the police department and society. This shows his continued emotional attachment to the institution and his commitment to public service even after retirement.

The P6 also described the difference between police service life and post-retirement life. He clearly stated that there is a huge difference between official life and retirement life. He explained that while working as a police officer, he had many privileges, official support, and people to assist him in various responsibilities, but after retirement those privileges are no longer available. He mentioned, *“When we were in police service, we had many privileges and support, but in retirement life we do not have those privileges.”* He explained that in official life there were many people to help and support him, but in civilian life he mainly depends on family and close relatives. This change created a clear difference between official and personal life.

When asked about the reaction of colleagues and others at the time of his retirement, the respondent shared that many police officers expressed regret that he had to retire. According to him, many colleagues told him that if he had received one more year of service, he could have completed many more useful projects. He mentioned, *“Many police officers told me that if I had one more year of service, I could have done many*

more things, and that was my biggest happiness.” This appreciation from colleagues gave him emotional satisfaction and a sense of recognition.

Regarding people’s approach after retirement, the respondent explained that he did not experience any negative change in behaviour from others. He stated that he continues to behave with the same love and respect towards people, and they continue to show the same respect towards him. He mentioned, *“I behaved with love towards people during service, and even now I receive the same love and respect.”* This shows that positive relationships built during service continued even after retirement.

The P6 then explained the difference between his daily routine during service and after retirement. He said that during official life he did not get enough time for family and personal matters, but after retirement he was able to spend more time at home and focus on family responsibilities. He mentioned, *“After retirement I got more time to spend on my home and family, which I could not do during official life.”* This shift allowed him to maintain a better balance between personal and professional life.

He also shared that after retirement he started working as an advocate, which helped him stay active and maintain a sense of responsibility. He explained that although there was a reduction in income compared to his police salary, he remained happy and mentally stable because he believes in living a simple and balanced life. He mentioned, *“Earlier I received a good salary, now it is less, but I am happy and mentally stable.”* This shows his acceptance of financial changes and focus on mental peace.

When asked about financial or health concerns during the early months of retirement, the respondent stated that he did not face major problems because he had planned his life in advance. He explained that preparation and planning help in managing retirement life smoothly. He mentioned, *“We should prepare in advance so that financial and health problems can be managed.”* This highlights the importance of planning before retirement.

The P6 also spoke about social relationships and friendships after retirement. He explained that he still meets old friends, police colleagues, and school and college friends during gatherings and functions. He mentioned, *“I meet police officers and my school and college friends during gatherings and functions.”* This shows that social connections continue to play an important role in his retirement life.

When asked about hobbies and social activities, the respondent explained that he does not have any specific hobby but continues to stay engaged in small social interactions and personal responsibilities. He also emphasized the importance of spending time with family after retirement. He said, *“Spending time with family and children is a very good experience because we missed many moments during service.”* According to him, enjoying time with family after retirement is one of the most meaningful experiences in life.

Regarding departmental support and awareness programs, the respondent explained that he did not attend any special sessions or classes related to retirement adjustment or post-retirement depression. However, he believes that such programs would be useful for police officers. He mentioned, *“Giving classes before retirement is good because officers should know how to engage in life after retirement.”* He suggested that awareness programs should guide officers on how to plan their post-retirement life and stay mentally and socially active.

Researcher's Interpretation

P6 presents a notably positive case within the Identity Shift theme, in which professional accomplishment appears to convert directly into post-retirement satisfaction rather than loss. His continued attachment to institutional projects reflects the persistence of professional identity described elsewhere in the data, while his move into legal practice illustrates an active pursuit of purpose central to the Emotional Health and Future Purpose theme. His support for formal awareness classes, despite not having received any himself, again reinforces the Institutional Feedback theme.

4.3.7 Participant 7

The P7 shared that he had completed 34 years of service in the police department and retired as a Sub Inspector (SI). He explained that the police profession carries a strong sense of authority and discipline from the very beginning. He described the training period as highly structured and rule-based, where every activity was done according to strict orders. He said that *“police service is a field with authority, and from the beginning itself training is based on strict orders like waking up at 5 a.m., going to the ground at 6 a.m., and following discipline in everything.”* He explained that during training they were organized into sections, platoons, and companies, and after completing nine months of training they were posted to different guard duties and camps across districts. He

mentioned that *“after training we were posted to different guards and camps, and later we were moved to different places like AR camp, battalion, and local stations.”*

The P7 then described his service journey, explaining that he worked in different stations and departments such as traffic, crime branch, and local stations across different districts. He shared that *“I worked in different places like Vanchiyoore, Pettah, Kazhakootam, and later in Kollam rural areas, and I spent around 12 years in the crime branch.”* He explained that police service involves continuous transfers and exposure to different environments, which helped him gain experience and understanding of different people and situations.

The P7 also spoke about the nature of police officers and authority. He explained that different officers have different personalities and approaches to power and responsibility. He mentioned that *“in police service, different people have different characters; some use authority strictly, some are aggressive, and some behave calmly and respectfully.”* He emphasized that he personally did not misuse authority and always tried to behave in a normal and respectful manner. He said that *“I never tried to misuse authority, and I lived my service life in a simple and normal way.”* According to him, officers who misuse authority may feel difficulty after retirement, but those who work in a balanced manner can adjust easily to retirement life.

When asked about the feeling of being a police officer even after retirement, the respondent explained that he does not carry a strong sense of authority in his personal life. He shared that *“even when I was in service, I behaved politely in the police station and with the public, and I did not show unnecessary authority.”* He explained that a good Sub Inspector should treat both police staff and the public with respect and understanding. He said that *“if an SI behaves well with police staff and the public, the police station will function well and people will receive better service.”* He also added that stress or anger in the workplace can affect behaviour, so maintaining calmness is important.

Regarding people's approach after retirement, the respondent explained that there was no major change in how people treated him. He shared that *“even now, if someone approaches me with a problem, I try to help them, and I still interact with people normally.”* He mentioned that he occasionally visits the police station and participates in social and political activities, and he continues to assist people in small matters whenever possible.

When asked about decision-making after retirement, the respondent explained that he does not take major decisions now and lives a simple daily life. He said that *“now I do not take big decisions; I live a simple life, eat, go out, and come back, and there is no pressure to earn money or achieve big things.”* He explained that he allows his children to make their own decisions regarding education and career, and he does not interfere much in their choices.

The P7 then explained the difference between service life and retirement life. He shared that during service he used to go to the station in the morning and return in the evening, especially during his crime branch period which followed regular office timing. He mentioned that *“during crime branch service, I used to go at 10 a.m. and return home by 5 p.m., like an office job.”* He explained that after retirement his daily routine became more relaxed, including small activities like attending party work, farming, and managing health issues. He said that *“now I spend time in small activities like farming, attending social work, and taking care of my health.”* He also mentioned health issues such as eye problems and a heart stent, but he continues his daily routine peacefully.

When asked about responsibility and stress after retirement, the respondent explained that stress reduced significantly after retirement. He shared that *“during service there was a lot of tension because we had to complete case files, produce accused in court on time, and manage responsibilities.”* He explained that police officers face stress due to case pressure, night duties, and emergency situations such as accidents or suicides, where they must reach the spot immediately and investigate. He said that *“during night duty, if someone dies or commits suicide, police must immediately go and investigate, which creates stress.”* He explained that after retirement this tension reduced, and life became more peaceful.

The P7 also explained that not everyone faces stress in the same way, as different people handle pressure differently. He gave an example, saying that *“some people prepare slowly and calmly and do not feel tension, while others feel tension if they are not prepared, and police service is also like that.”* According to him, those who manage responsibilities properly can avoid stress.

When asked about emotional difficulty in the early months of retirement, the respondent explained that he did not experience sadness because he never held strong authority or attachment to power. He said that *“I never held big authority, so I did not feel sadness*

after retirement.” He explained that in police service, officers are transferred frequently and work in different places, so they do not develop deep attachment to one place or position. He compared it with other government jobs and said that *“in other jobs people work in the same office for many years, but in police service we move to many places, so separation is easier.”*

The P7 also spoke about happiness after retirement. He explained that there is no extreme happiness or sadness, but life moves in a peaceful and balanced way. He said that *“there is no big happiness or sadness; life goes on in a normal and peaceful way.”* He also mentioned that he meets old colleagues during annual get-together programs. He shared that *“every year on February 7th we gather together, meet old friends, and share memories.”* He explained that such gatherings help maintain friendships and emotional connection.

Regarding family life, the respondent explained that he lives with a small family consisting of his wife, son, daughter, and grandchildren. He shared that *“we have a small and peaceful family, and there are no major conflicts or commitments.”* He explained that sometimes anger may arise due to age or daily stress, but it is normal and temporary. He said that *“sometimes anger comes naturally, but it does not affect family relationships.”*

When asked about departmental awareness programs before retirement, the respondent explained that there were no specific pre-retirement or mental health awareness programs. He mentioned that *“there were no special retirement awareness classes, only law-related classes like IPC and CrPC.”* He explained that these classes focused on legal procedures such as case registration, punishment sections, and investigation methods rather than mental health or retirement planning.

The P7 also spoke about stress in police service and explained that pressure comes mainly from case workload and higher officers. He said that *“SP and DYSP often pressure officers to reduce cases and complete work, and monthly crime review meetings increase stress.”* He explained that this pressure flows from higher officers to lower officers, creating tension in the system. He mentioned that *“crime review meetings and pressure from higher officers create stress among police staff.”*

The P7 further explained that police associations have helped officers by improving salary, allowances, and welfare benefits. He shared that *“police associations helped in*

getting allowances, gas supply, day-off allowance, and other benefits.” According to him, police officers receive additional allowances compared to other government employees, which improves their financial condition.

Finally, the P7 explained that authority and stress in police service vary from person to person. He shared that *“different people see authority and power in different ways, just like different people see the world differently.”* He explained that police work involves many responsibilities, confidential duties, and monitoring activities, which create pressure and tension, but proper understanding and balanced behavior help in managing these challenges.

Researcher's Interpretation

P7's account foregrounds the Power and Social Recognition theme through his reflection on the variable ways officers relate to authority; his own case suggests that lower personal identification with power correlates with an easier retirement transition. His description of reduced but persistent stress, tied to specific occupational demands such as night duty, contributes to the Emotional Health and Future Purpose theme, while his clear statement that no dedicated psychological-support programme was offered, only legal training, provides direct evidence for the Institutional Feedback theme and the study's objective concerning institutional support systems.

4.4 Conclusions

The seven profiles presented above indicate considerable variation in how retired police officers experience the transition out of active service, ranging from P6's account of accomplishment-driven satisfaction to P1's concern for isolated and unsupported peers. Nonetheless, several patterns recur across participants: the persistence of professional discipline and vigilance beyond retirement, the reciprocal nature of public respect, the reduction in occupational stress once case pressure and irregular duty hours end, and a consistent gap in formal institutional preparation for retirement, with most participants receiving little more than legal-procedure training during service. These patterns, drawn descriptively from the participant narratives in this chapter, are examined thematically and in direct relation to the study's objectives in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher carried out thematic analysis of the qualitative data collected from retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram district to understand their experiences of role identity transition after retirement. The data presented descriptively in Chapter 4 is analysed and interpreted by identifying common meanings, recurring experiences, and patterns emerging from the narratives of the participants. Verbatim expressions are incorporated within the analysis to preserve the originality and lived experiences of the respondents.

The analysis focuses on understanding retirement not merely as the completion of professional service but as a broader personal and social transition that influences identity, authority, relationships, emotional wellbeing, and adaptation to everyday life. The participants shared reflections about their journey from active police service into retirement and described how this transition affected different areas of their lives.

The thematic analysis is organised into five major themes derived from the narratives of the respondents: **Identity Shift, Power and Social Recognition, The Domestic Transition, Emotional Health and Future Purpose, and Institutional Feedback.** These themes represent different dimensions of retirement experiences and provide insight into how retired police officers understand themselves and adjust to life after leaving service.

The first theme, **Identity Shift**, explores how participants experience changes in self-identity after retirement and how professional values continue beyond active service. The second theme, **Power and Social Recognition**, examines changes in authority, decision-making, public respect, and emotional responses connected with retirement. The third theme, **The Domestic Transition**, focuses on changes in routine, adaptation to home life, and evolving family relationships. The fourth theme, **Emotional Health and Future Purpose**, examines psychological adjustment, concerns about the future, sources of meaning, and support systems. The final theme, explores participants' reflections on retirement preparation and the role of institutional and family support during the transition period.

The interpretation is carried out in relation to the research questions of the study with an attempt to understand how retired police officers experience identity transition after retirement, how changes in authority influence self-perception, how they adjust to domestic life, the psychological changes they experience, and the role of institutional and family support systems in shaping their retirement experiences.

Through this analysis, the chapter attempts to present a deeper understanding of retirement as a lived experience and to explore how retired police officers negotiate changes in identity, social position, emotional wellbeing, and everyday life while creating meaning and continuity beyond active service.

5.2 Data Analysis, Interpretation and Discussions

- **Theme 1: Identity Shift**

The theme of identity shift emerged as one of the most important dimensions in understanding the lived experiences of retired police officers after retirement. The narratives indicate that retirement is not experienced merely as the completion of service but as a gradual movement from a structured professional identity into a reconstructed personal and social identity. The experiences of participants reveal that years of police service become deeply connected to self-understanding and continue to influence behaviour, values, routines, and social interaction even after leaving active duty.

The major codes that contributed to this theme include uniform memory, internal police identity, continuity of discipline, emotional attachment to service, role carryover, civilian adjustment, self-recognition, social responsibility, and identity reconstruction.

From the narratives presented in Chapter 4, it becomes evident that participants did not experience retirement as a complete break from their identity as police officers. Rather, they described retirement as a process of change where official responsibilities ended but personal values and professional habits remained active. Participants repeatedly reflected that police service became part of who they were over time.

One of the strongest experiences emerging from the data was the emotional attachment participants held towards the uniform. Across interviews, the uniform was not described simply as clothing connected to employment but as a symbol of identity, responsibility, recognition, and years of lived experience.

One participant explained:

“Retirement only means removing the uniform; we cannot work in uniform anymore.”

The participant further reflected:

“When we receive the retirement certificate and leave the department, there is a big emotional feeling because we cannot wear the uniform again.”

These narratives indicate that retirement involves emotional separation from a role that had become meaningful over many years. The emotional response attached to retirement suggests that identity was strongly connected to visible symbols of service and institutional belonging.

This finding can be understood in relation to role identity perspectives discussed in the literature review, which explain that identities developed through long-term occupational engagement tend to remain influential even after individuals exit formal roles. According to the work of Sheldon Stryker and Peter J. Burke on identity theory, social roles become integrated into self-concept through repeated interaction and behavioural commitment. The present findings reflect this understanding, where participants continue to identify with values and meanings attached to police service even after retirement.

Another important pattern emerging from the narratives was the process through which participants developed attachment to police identity. Participants explained that professional identity was not always immediate but developed gradually through institutional experiences.

One participant reflected:

“Frankly speaking, I was interested in another job. I did not join the police with great satisfaction; I just got engaged in the job and continued.”

This response suggests that identity was formed through continuous involvement in professional life rather than personal interest alone. Over time, responsibilities, interactions, and routine transformed occupation into identity.

Training emerged as another significant experience contributing to identity formation. Participants repeatedly described training as an experience that transformed their outlook and behaviour.

One participant shared:

“When we entered the training camp, it was like entering another world where everything had to be done with discipline.”

The participant continued:

“After nine months of training, we become completely different people with commitment to society, family, and discipline in life.”

These narratives indicate that police identity was shaped through institutional socialisation. Participants associated training with personal growth, self-control, responsibility, and public commitment.

This finding reflects observations from earlier literature which explain that police culture influences not only occupational functioning but also personal identity and worldview. Studies on occupational socialisation among police personnel indicate that prolonged exposure to discipline and public responsibility often extends beyond the workplace and becomes part of personal life.

Another important experience emerging from the narratives was the continuation of what may be understood as the internal police identity after retirement. Participants repeatedly explained that retirement removed formal authority but did not remove professional habits and values.

One participant stated:

“If we see any wrongdoing, we react immediately because that habit remains.”

Similarly, another participant reflected:

“Even after retirement if there is any issue in society, we still feel responsible and inform the concerned people.”

These responses indicate that participants continued to experience responsibility towards society despite no longer holding official power. Their narratives suggest that the identity of being a police officer remained psychologically active and continued to influence everyday behaviour.

This finding aligns with earlier studies on retirement adjustment which suggest that individuals often maintain aspects of former occupational identity through attitudes,

habits, and social values. Retirement therefore becomes less of an identity loss and more of an identity transformation.

At the same time, participants recognised that retirement required adjustment and movement towards civilian life. Several respondents explained that retirement created opportunities to rediscover relationships, spend time with family, and engage in activities that had remained secondary during active service.

One participant explained:

“When we remove the uniform, we are normal people and family members treat us as ordinary people.”

This narrative reflects acceptance of changing social roles and indicates movement from public identity towards personal identity.

Participants also described that retirement gave them opportunities to spend more time at home, reconnect with family members, participate in social activities, and experience life outside institutional expectations. Rather than viewing retirement entirely as loss, many participants described it as adjustment and continuity.

The findings indicate that identity shift among retired police officers is not experienced as disappearance of identity but as reorganisation of identity. Professional values such as discipline, responsibility, public concern, and structured living continue after retirement while the context of expression changes.

Thus, identity shift emerges as a continuous and emotionally meaningful process through which retired police officers negotiate movement from institutional belonging towards civilian life while preserving the values and experiences developed through years of service.

- **Theme 2: Power and Social Recognition**

The theme of power and social recognition emerged as another important dimension in understanding the role identity transition among retired police officers. The narratives reveal that retirement involved not only a change in professional position but also a change in how participants experienced authority, recognition, social interactions, and their own self-perception. Participants described that police service had given them visibility, responsibility, decision-making authority, and public recognition, all of which

became part of their everyday experience during active service. Retirement therefore required adjustment to a social position that no longer carried formal institutional power.

The major codes that contributed to this theme include social shift, changing public recognition, authority withdrawal, decision-making transition, emotional response to retirement, continuing respect, personal dignity, social adjustment, and changing self-perception.

From the narratives presented in Chapter 4, it becomes evident that participants experienced a visible difference between being recognised as serving officers and being recognised as retired individuals. During active service, interactions with the public were often influenced by the position they held and the authority attached to the uniform. Participants reflected that retirement changed this social experience.

One participant explained:

“When we are in service it is different, but after pension we are seen as ordinary people.”

This narrative reflects the participant’s awareness that institutional identity shaped social interactions. The statement indicates recognition that retirement reduced official visibility and formal authority. However, participants did not always interpret this transition negatively. Instead, many accepted it as a natural movement into another phase of life.

Another participant expressed the symbolic importance of the professional role and stated:

“Retirement only means removing the uniform; we cannot work in uniform anymore and that creates a feeling.”

This response suggests that power and recognition were emotionally connected to the role itself. The uniform represented not only employment but also public presence and social acknowledgement developed over years of service.

The findings indicate that retirement affected participants’ self-perception because authority had been closely connected to identity. Participants described situations where they became aware that public responses changed once they no longer held official power. Nevertheless, they also reflected that respect after retirement depended less on institutional authority and more on personal relationships.

One participant explained:

“People who called me ‘sir’ earlier still call me ‘sir’ now and there is no major difference.”

Another participant reflected:

“Respect remains if we behave properly with people. Position alone does not create respect.”

These narratives indicate that participants differentiated between respect attached to authority and respect earned through personal conduct. Participants who maintained positive relationships during service reported continuity in social acceptance after retirement.

This finding can be understood in relation to earlier discussions in the literature regarding role exit and social identity. Studies discussing retirement transition explain that occupational positions often provide individuals with social recognition and self-worth, and retirement may create changes in perceived social value. However, individuals who develop identities beyond formal roles tend to adapt more positively to retirement experiences.

Another important pattern that emerged within this theme was the transition in decision-making experiences. Participants explained that active service demanded quick thinking, responsibility, and continuous decision-making under pressure. Retirement changed the context of decision-making but did not eliminate it.

One participant reflected on professional responsibilities and stated:

“Police duty means reaching early and taking precautions before problems happen.”

Another participant described the nature of service:

“Sometimes we had to travel with accused persons and had to stay careful because responsibility was ours.”

These narratives indicate that decision-making during service was closely connected with accountability and authority.

However, after retirement, participants explained that decision-making shifted towards personal and family life.

One participant stated:

“Now decisions are mainly related to family matters and how to spend time meaningfully.”

Another participant explained:

“After retirement there is more time to think and decide according to our own life.”

These responses suggest that retirement did not reduce participants' confidence or ability to lead; instead, authority shifted from institutional spaces into personal and social spaces.

The emotional side of losing authority also emerged clearly in the narratives. Participants described mixed emotional experiences associated with leaving service. For some participants, retirement created emotional discomfort because it represented closure of an important chapter of life. Others experienced relief from pressure and responsibility.

One participant reflected:

“When we receive retirement papers and leave the department, there is an emotional feeling because that chapter ends.”

Another participant expressed retirement differently and stated:

“Police life is like wearing a tight shoe all the time and retirement is like removing that shoe.”

These narratives indicate that retirement was emotionally complex. Some participants experienced attachment to authority and professional identity, while others experienced retirement as freedom from long-term responsibility.

This finding corresponds with earlier studies on retirement adjustment which explain that retirement can create both emotional loss and psychological relief depending on personal meaning attached to work roles. Individuals who perceive retirement as opportunity rather than separation generally experience smoother adjustment.

The findings of this theme suggest that changes in power and social recognition influenced self-perception among retired police officers but did not completely diminish their sense of self-worth. Participants gradually moved from authority-based identity towards relationship-based identity while preserving dignity, confidence, and social belonging.

Thus, power and social recognition emerged as a dynamic experience where participants negotiated the movement from institutional authority towards personal value, social respect, and emotional adaptation after retirement.

- **Theme 3: The Domestic Transition**

The theme of domestic transition emerged as an important dimension in understanding how retired police officers adjusted to everyday life after leaving active service. The narratives indicate that retirement brought significant changes in daily routine, family involvement, use of time, and personal responsibilities. For many participants, police service had shaped their lifestyle for several decades through structured schedules, emergency duties, long working hours, and limited family interaction. Retirement therefore introduced a new phase of life that required adjustment not only at an individual level but also within family and household relationships.

From the narratives presented in Chapter 4, it becomes evident that retirement created a visible contrast between professional routine and domestic life. Participants repeatedly described police service as unpredictable, disciplined, and highly demanding. Their daily activities during service were largely determined by departmental responsibilities rather than personal choice.

One participant explained:

“Police duty does not have a fixed time; sometimes we have to go at 2 am or 3 am depending on duty.”

Another participant reflected:

“We had to wake up early, get ready, reach the station on time, complete work, and sometimes return very late.”

These narratives indicate that participants lived under institutional schedules for a long period of time. Their routine was organised around responsibility, urgency, and availability rather than personal comfort or family life.

After retirement, participants experienced a major change in how time was organised. Many described the initial period after retirement as unusual because they were no longer required to follow strict schedules or remain constantly alert.

One participant shared:

“For three to four months after retirement, the old thoughts and routine continued in my mind.”

Another participant explained:

“After removing the uniform and changing the system, there was some difficulty for a few days but later everything became normal.”

These narratives suggest that adjustment to retirement did not happen immediately. Participants carried service habits into retired life and gradually learned to develop new patterns of living.

An important experience that emerged strongly within this theme was the presence of what participants described as “empty time.” During service, most participants had little time for rest or personal interests because of demanding work schedules. Retirement suddenly created long periods without structured activity.

One participant reflected:

“During service there was no time to sit at home. After retirement suddenly there was more time.”

Another participant stated:

“Initially there was a feeling that something was missing because we were used to a busy life.”

These narratives indicate that free time initially created discomfort for some participants because activity and routine had become central parts of their identity.

However, over time many participants gradually adapted and began to use their time differently. Participants spoke about developing new routines and engaging in activities that gave structure to their daily lives.

One participant explained:

“Now I wake up early, do farming work and spend time in useful activities.”

Another participant stated:

“Now there is time to meet people and do things that we could not do before.”

These responses suggest that retirement created opportunities for self-directed living and greater personal control over daily activities.

Family relationships also emerged as an important dimension within domestic transition. Participants repeatedly explained that police service often limited family interaction because of long working hours and irregular schedules. Retirement created opportunities to reconnect with family members and become more involved in household life.

One participant shared:

“Sometimes my children used to ask why they could not see their father because I was always busy with duty.”

Another participant reflected:

“After retirement, spending time with family and grandchildren gives more happiness.”

These narratives suggest that retirement became a period of rebuilding emotional closeness and strengthening family relationships.

Participants also described changes in their position within the household. During service, work responsibilities often remained central, while retirement increased involvement in family discussions, household decisions, and caregiving roles.

One participant explained:

“Now I spend more time at home and participate in family matters.”

Another participant stated:

“Retirement gave me a chance to know more about what happens at home.”

These narratives indicate that retirement allowed participants to move into more active domestic roles.

The findings also reveal that domestic transition was not experienced as loss alone. Although participants initially described challenges in adjusting to a slower pace of life, many gradually developed satisfactions through family engagement and personal activities.

This finding can be understood in relation to adjustment perspectives discussed in the literature review, which suggest that retirement requires individuals to reconstruct daily

routines and create meaning outside professional roles. Studies on retirement transition explain that successful adjustment often depends on developing new routines, maintaining social connection, and finding purpose within family and community life.

The present findings support this understanding and show that retired police officers gradually reconstructed their everyday lives by shifting from institution-centred routines to family-centred and self-directed living.

Thus, domestic transition emerged as a process of adaptation through which retired police officers negotiated changes in routine, managed periods of emptiness, strengthened family relationships, and developed new ways of experiencing everyday life after retirement.

- **Theme 4: Emotional Health and Future Purpose**

The theme of emotional health and future purpose emerged as an important dimension in understanding the psychological experiences of retired police officers after retirement. The narratives indicate that retirement created emotional changes that extended beyond leaving employment and included adjustment to ageing, changing responsibilities, thoughts about the future, emotional acceptance, and the search for meaning in everyday life. Participants described retirement as a period that required emotional adaptation while also creating opportunities to redefine priorities and discover new forms of satisfaction.

The major codes that contributed to this theme include **quiet worries, emotional adjustment, acceptance of ageing, future orientation, finding new meaning, personal satisfaction, support circle, social engagement, emotional stability, and renewed purpose.**

From the narratives presented in Chapter 4, it becomes evident that emotional experiences after retirement were not uniform across participants. While some participants described retirement as a period of relief and freedom, others experienced uncertainty and periods of emotional adjustment. Participants reflected that moving away from structured work created time for self-reflection and greater awareness of personal and family life.

One participant explained:

“After retirement there are thoughts about health, family, and how life should continue.”

Another participant reflected:

“Initially there was some emptiness because we were used to working continuously.”

These narratives suggest that retirement created emotional changes because participants moved from a highly active and demanding environment into a slower and more reflective stage of life.

One of the important experiences emerging within this theme was what may be understood as quiet worries. Participants did not always describe strong emotional distress directly; rather, they spoke about concerns in a calm and practical manner. Their concerns often centred around health, ageing, physical limitations, and maintaining independence.

One participant stated:

“Diseases can come to anyone, so we should take precautions and not worry too much.”

Another participant explained:

“At this age, we cannot expect life to remain exactly the same.”

These narratives indicate emotional acceptance rather than emotional helplessness. Participants appeared to acknowledge ageing and uncertainty while attempting to maintain emotional balance.

This finding can be understood in relation to literature on retirement adjustment, which explains that emotional wellbeing in retirement is influenced not only by health status but also by an individual’s ability to adapt expectations and maintain a sense of purpose.

At the same time, participants did not describe retirement only in terms of concern and adjustment. Another strong pattern emerging from the narratives was the development of a new sense of pride and purpose after retirement.

Many participants explained that retirement allowed them to engage in activities that created satisfaction beyond professional achievement.

One participant shared:

“Now I am active in public activities, temple committee, association work, and social activities.”

Another participant stated:

“After retirement we started a tuition centre and now I feel happy being involved in it.”

These narratives indicate that retirement created opportunities for participants to redirect their energy into meaningful engagement. Purpose was no longer measured through official responsibility but through contribution to family, society, and personal interests.

Participants also described happiness in becoming more available to family members and spending time with children and grandchildren.

One participant reflected:

“Spending time with family and grandchildren gives more happiness now.”

Another participant shared:

“Earlier there was no time for these things because duty came first.”

These responses suggest that emotional fulfilment after retirement was often connected to relationships rather than professional achievement.

Another important aspect emerging from this theme was the role of support circles in maintaining emotional wellbeing. Participants repeatedly described the value of friendships, former colleagues, social groups, and regular interaction.

One participant explained:

“Every year we meet with our training batch, talk about old memories, and spend time together.”

Another participant stated:

“Meeting old colleagues gives happiness because they understand our experiences.”

These narratives indicate that social connection continued to remain important after retirement. Shared experiences and long-standing relationships created emotional continuity during transition.

This finding supports earlier discussions in the literature review which explain that emotional wellbeing during retirement is strengthened through social participation, meaningful relationships, and opportunities for continued engagement. Studies on

successful ageing also suggest that emotional adjustment improves when individuals remain connected to supportive networks and maintain purposeful activities.

Interestingly, participants did not define future purpose in terms of major achievements or new careers. Instead, purpose was often expressed through maintaining health, supporting family, participating in social life, and enjoying every day experiences.

One participant reflected:

“At this stage of life, happiness itself is enough.”

Another participant explained:

“Now the focus is on living peacefully and staying useful.”

These narratives suggest a shift in life priorities after retirement. Rather than pursuing professional goals, participants focused on emotional stability, meaningful relationships, and balanced living.

The findings indicate that emotional health after retirement is not a fixed condition but an ongoing process of adjustment, reflection, and meaning-making. Participants negotiated emotional concerns while creating new forms of satisfaction and purpose.

Thus, emotional health and future purpose emerged as a dynamic process through which retired police officers adapted to ageing, managed emotional transitions, built supportive relationships, and reconstructed meaning beyond professional life after retirement.

- **Theme 5: Institutional Feedback**

The theme of institutional feedback emerged as the final dimension in understanding the experiences of role identity transition among retired police officers. The narratives indicate that retirement adjustment was influenced not only by personal experiences but also by the preparation, support, and guidance available before and after retirement. Participants reflected on the role of the department, retirement preparedness, emotional readiness, and family support in shaping their transition into post-retirement life. The experiences suggest that retirement was easier when participants had opportunities to prepare emotionally and practically for life after service.

The major codes that contributed to this theme include **retirement preparedness, institutional support, emotional readiness, family readiness, coping preparation,**

departmental guidance, adjustment support, continuity of relationships, and transition experience.

From the narratives presented in Chapter 4, it becomes evident that participants had different experiences regarding preparation for retirement. Some participants explained that they had little formal preparation from the department regarding emotional adjustment and lifestyle changes after retirement, while others recalled receiving guidance sessions before retirement.

One participant explained:

“There were no classes or sessions from the department for retirement adjustment.”

Another participant reflected:

“Before retirement, awareness classes are conducted to prepare officers for retirement life.”

These responses suggest that retirement preparation was not experienced equally across participants. While some respondents received opportunities to think about retirement in advance, others entered retirement relying mainly on personal understanding and life experience.

The findings indicate that retirement preparation extends beyond financial planning and includes emotional readiness, adjustment to routine changes, and preparation for new social roles. Participants repeatedly suggested that retirement becomes easier when individuals begin to think about life beyond service before their actual retirement.

One participant shared:

“If people prepare mentally before retirement, adjustment becomes easier.”

Another participant stated:

“Retirement should not come as a surprise because one day everyone has to leave service.”

These narratives indicate that participants viewed retirement as a natural life stage that required acceptance and planning.

This finding reflects earlier discussions in the literature review which suggest that retirement adjustment is more successful when individuals prepare psychologically and

socially in addition to economic preparation. Studies on retirement transition explain that awareness, planning, and emotional readiness help reduce uncertainty and support identity reconstruction.

Another important aspect emerging from this theme was what participants described through experiences connected to carrying the “mental bag” from service into retirement. Participants explained that many habits developed through years of police work continued after retirement and sometimes influenced adjustment.

One participant reflected:

“Initially the thoughts from service remained with me even after retirement.”

Another participant explained:

“We cannot suddenly stop thinking the way we used to during service.”

These narratives indicate that retirement adjustment involved emotional and behavioural continuity. Participants carried discipline, responsibility, and professional habits into post-retirement life and gradually adapted these experiences into new routines.

The findings suggest that institutional preparation could support this transition by helping individuals understand that adjustment takes time and that identity change is a gradual process.

Family readiness emerged as another important dimension within this theme. Participants repeatedly described family as the strongest support system during retirement transition. Since police work often involved irregular schedules and limited family interaction, retirement created opportunities for families to adjust together.

One participant stated:

“There were no complaints from family, and even after retirement everything is going normally.”

Another participant shared:

“Family gives happiness and support after retirement.”

These narratives suggest that emotional security and acceptance within the family played an important role in helping participants adapt to their new stage of life.

Participants also described that retirement allowed family members to become more involved in their daily lives. Many respondents explained that spending time with children, grandchildren, and spouses created emotional comfort and reduced feelings of emptiness.

One participant reflected:

“Now there is time to be with family and enjoy things that were not possible earlier.”

Another participant explained:

“Family helped me adjust because they understood my situation.”

These responses indicate that retirement transition was not an individual experience alone but a shared family process.

This finding corresponds with literature that highlights the importance of family systems during retirement adjustment. Previous studies indicate that emotional support, communication, and family involvement strengthen wellbeing and reduce feelings of isolation after retirement.

At the same time, participants also recognised the importance of maintaining connection with former colleagues and social groups. Participants who remained socially active appeared to adjust more positively and reported greater satisfaction with retired life.

One participant stated:

“Meeting old colleagues and staying active gives happiness.”

These narratives suggest that retirement adjustment becomes smoother when individuals continue meaningful social engagement while also building stronger family relationships.

The findings indicate that institutional and family support systems together influence how retired police officers experience retirement transition. While institutional guidance helps individuals prepare emotionally and practically, family support provides continuity, belonging, and emotional security during adjustment.

Thus, institutional feedback emerged as an important component of role identity transition, showing that retirement adaptation is strengthened through preparation, emotional readiness, family support, and continued social connection beyond professional service.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The fifth chapter delves into the core thematic findings regarding the process of identity reconstruction and the shifting social roles of retired police officers. It explores the profound transition from the structured, high-authority environment of police service to the more ambiguous domain of post-retirement civilian life, highlighting how participants navigate the loss of institutional status while simultaneously redefining their self-worth through family and community engagements. By analyzing the tensions between past professional identities and present realities, the chapter illustrates that retirement is not merely an endpoint but a transformative journey of psychological adaptation. Consequently, this chapter provides a critical understanding of how former officers internalize their career legacies to establish a new sense of purpose, laying the groundwork for the broader social and psychological conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS, AND DISCUSSIONS

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the major findings, discussion, and suggestions of the study titled “Role Identity Transition among Retired Police Officers in Thiruvananthapuram District.” The chapter is developed from the thematic analysis of qualitative data collected from retired police officers and is organized around the research questions of the study. Rather than presenting participant responses as isolated statements, the chapter interprets the meanings emerging from their narratives and connects those meanings with the theoretical framework and relevant literature on role identity, retirement adjustment, continuity, emotional wellbeing, and family support.

Retirement from police service is not merely an administrative exit from employment. For many officers, the police role becomes closely connected with self-definition, daily discipline, public recognition, authority, responsibility, and social value. Role Identity Theory helps explain this process because it views identity as being shaped by the meanings attached to the social roles people occupy and perform (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Burke & Stets, 2009). In the present study, the police role was not only an occupational position but also a powerful identity through which participants understood themselves and their place in society.

The findings also show that retirement did not produce a single uniform experience. The initial assumption of the study was that retirement would create a highly negative drawback for retired police officers because of the loss of uniform, authority, routine, and institutional belonging. However, the findings challenge this assumption. Although participants experienced adjustment concerns, many also described retirement as a stage of relief, emotional calmness, family closeness, personal freedom, and renewed wellbeing. This positive change is a central conclusion of the chapter and is discussed critically throughout the findings.

The chapter is organized into five major themes: Identity Shift, Power and Social Recognition, Domestic Transition, Emotional Health and Future Purpose, and Institutional and Family Support. Each theme is interpreted in relation to the corresponding research question. A separate consolidated discussion is also included to

demonstrate clearly how the findings answer all research questions. The chapter concludes by presenting suggestions for strengthening retirement preparedness, psychosocial support, family readiness, and meaningful post-retirement engagement among police personnel.

6.2 Theoretical Framework for Interpreting the Findings

The findings of this study are primarily interpreted through Role Identity Theory. According to this perspective, individuals develop meanings about themselves through the roles they occupy, and these role-based meanings guide behavior, relationships, and self-perception. When a role is central and repeatedly performed over a long period, it becomes highly salient in the person's identity hierarchy. Police service, because of its discipline, authority, public visibility, and moral responsibility, can therefore become a dominant role identity rather than a simple job.

This theoretical lens is useful for understanding why retirement affected participants at multiple levels. The end of service changed not only their work routine but also the way they experienced recognition, authority, family life, emotional balance, and future purpose. At the same time, the findings show that role identity was not completely lost after retirement. Instead, participants carried certain values of police life, such as discipline, alertness, responsibility, punctuality, and public concern, into their retired lives. This supports the idea that identities are reconstructed through both continuity and change.

Continuity Theory also supports the interpretation of these findings. Atchley (1989) argues that older adults often adjust to later life by maintaining internal continuity, such as values and personality patterns, and external continuity, such as relationships, routines, and familiar social roles. In this study, participants maintained internal continuity through discipline and service values, while external continuity was developed through family engagement, retired officers' networks, social participation, religious involvement, and meaningful daily routines.

The theoretical discussion therefore shows that retirement among police officers should not be read only as role loss. It is better understood as role transition, where the formal institutional role ends but selected elements of the professional self are retained, revised, and expressed through new personal, family, and community roles. This interpretation

allows the study to move beyond description and critically explain why many participants reported positive wellbeing despite the loss of official authority.

6.3 Findings

The findings are presented theme by theme. Each theme begins with the research question it addresses, followed by interpretation, literature connection, and critical discussion. The emphasis is placed on meaning-making rather than on listing direct participant quotations.

6.3.1 Theme 1: Identity Shift - From Institutional Role to Reconstructed Self

Research Question 1: How do retired police officers experience identity shift after retirement?

Identity shift emerged as the most central finding of the study. Participants did not experience retirement simply as the end of service; they experienced it as a gradual movement from an institutional identity to a more personal and relational identity. Police service had shaped their habits, language, discipline, emotional responses, social status, and sense of usefulness. Therefore, retirement required them to reconsider who they were outside the formal structure of the department.

The uniform appeared as a strong symbolic marker in the narratives. It represented authority, duty, sacrifice, public recognition, and personal achievement. Its absence after retirement created a visible break from institutional identity. However, this break did not necessarily create identity collapse. The findings suggest that the uniform remained psychologically meaningful as a source of pride and memory. Participants continued to value their service history and used it as a foundation for self-respect even after official duties had ended.

A second aspect of identity shift was the persistence of what may be called the “internal police.” Participants continued to follow disciplined routines, punctuality, alertness, responsibility, emotional control, and structured decision-making. These qualities were no longer enforced by the institution, but they remained internalized as part of the self. This supports Role Identity Theory, which explains that repeated role performance can become part of self-definition (Stryker & Burke, 2000). It also reflects continuity in ageing, where earlier life patterns continue to guide later-life adaptation (Atchley, 1989).

The critical interpretation is that retirement produced both detachment and continuity. The formal role ended, but the values developed through the role continued. This finding challenges the assumption that retirement from a strong institutional profession necessarily results in identity crisis. For many participants, retirement created space for reflection and self-reconstruction. They began identifying themselves not only as former police officers but also as family members, elders, community participants, spiritual persons, and individuals with personal interests and wellbeing needs.

At the same time, the transition was not fully problem-free. Participants who had strongly depended on official status and work identity appeared to require more time to adjust. This indicates that the more central a role is to self-worth, the more emotionally demanding the transition can become. Therefore, the finding must be understood as a negotiated process: retirement weakened the public expression of police identity but strengthened opportunities for personal identity reconstruction.

6.3.2 Theme 2: Power and Social Recognition - From Authority to Relational Respect

Research Question 2: How do changes in power and social recognition affect their self-perception?

The second major finding concerns the change in power, authority, and public recognition after retirement. During service, participants occupied a role that carried institutional authority and public visibility. Their social interactions were often shaped by their designation, uniform, decision-making power, and responsibility for maintaining order. Retirement changed this social position and placed participants in a more ordinary civilian space.

The findings indicate that this change affected self-perception in different ways. Some participants initially felt a reduction in social visibility and influence. The shift from being approached as an officer to being seen as an ordinary retired person required emotional adjustment. This is important because police identity is closely associated with authority and public recognition. Literature on police culture explains that policing creates a distinctive occupational culture shaped by authority, discipline, solidarity, discretion, and public responsibility (Skolnick, 1966; Reiner, 2010; Loftus, 2010). When that authority is removed, the individual has to renegotiate self-worth outside official power.

However, participants did not interpret the loss of authority only as a negative experience. Several narratives reflected relief from pressure, reduced tension, and freedom from the constant expectations of service. This is a significant critical finding. The end of institutional power did not simply reduce self-worth; it also reduced occupational burden. Participants began to experience respect through family relationships, community presence, age, service memory, and personal character rather than through official designation.

Decision-making also changed after retirement. In service, decisions were often urgent, hierarchical, and responsibility-driven. After retirement, decision-making became more collaborative and family-oriented. This change required adjustment because authority was no longer exercised through rank or command. Yet, over time, many participants viewed this shift positively because it allowed greater patience, emotional participation, and shared responsibility within the household.

The critical discussion here is that power after retirement was transformed rather than simply lost. Institutional authority decreased, but relational influence increased. Participants moved from formal power to interpersonal respect. This finding answers the second research question by showing that changes in social recognition affected self-perception initially, but positive adjustment occurred when participants developed alternative sources of value through family, community, service memory, and internal satisfaction.

6.3.3 Theme 3: Domestic Transition - From Service Routine to Family-Centered Living

Research Question 3: How do retired police officers adjust to domestic life after retirement?

Domestic transition emerged as a visible and transformative part of retirement adjustment. Police service had created a structured, time-bound, and responsibility-heavy routine. Retirement disrupted this structure and brought participants into a more flexible domestic environment. This transition was not only about spending more time at home; it involved emotional readjustment, renegotiation of family roles, and learning to participate in everyday household life in new ways.

Participants experienced a clear contrast between the disciplined rhythm of service and the open rhythm of retired life. In the initial stage, free time sometimes produced boredom, restlessness, or uncertainty because productivity had previously been connected with official responsibilities. Retirement required participants to create new daily structures through walking, health management, religious practices, household participation, social interaction, leisure, and family time. This supports retirement adjustment literature which shows that successful retirement depends not only on financial security but also on meaningful routine, role replacement, social resources, and psychological preparedness (Wang, Henkens, & van Solinge, 2011; van Solinge & Henkens, 2008).

A major positive finding is that increased presence at home improved family closeness for many participants. They became more involved in family discussions, caregiving, household responsibilities, and relationships with spouses, children, and grandchildren. Family became a space for belonging and emotional renewal. This finding is important because it directly challenges the initial assumption that retirement would produce mainly negative consequences. Instead, for several participants, retirement corrected an earlier imbalance created by demanding service schedules.

The critical point is that domestic adjustment required mutual adaptation. The retired officer had to adjust to the family's existing rhythm, and the family also had to adjust to the officer's increased presence at home. In some cases, long-standing police habits such as control, strictness, and command-oriented behaviour needed to become more flexible. Therefore, domestic transition should not be romanticised as automatically positive. Its success depended on communication, emotional support, willingness to share roles, and the ability to move from institutional discipline to family sensitivity.

This theme answers the third research question by showing that adjustment to domestic life occurred through the development of new routines, increased emotional availability, shared decision-making, and stronger family participation. Domestic life became an important site where participants reconstructed identity beyond the uniform.

6.3.4 Theme 4: Emotional Health and Future Purpose - From Quiet Worries to Positive Wellbeing

Research Question 4: What psychological adjustments do retired police officers experience?

The fourth theme reveals that retirement involved psychological adjustment across identity, routine, ageing, health, social participation, and future meaning. Participants experienced quiet worries about reduced public engagement, ageing, health, independence, and the absence of institutional responsibility. These concerns were not always openly expressed, but they appeared in the way participants reflected on changing time, reduced urgency, and the need to remain useful.

At the same time, emotional health did not decline uniformly. A strong finding of the study is that many participants experienced positive wellbeing after retirement. They described emotional relief, reduced occupational pressure, better work-life balance, stronger family connection, personal freedom, and time for health and spiritual life. This finding is theoretically important because it shows that role exit can create both vulnerability and growth. Retirement adjustment is therefore not a single event but an evolving process of interpretation, acceptance, and reconstruction.

Literature on retirement supports this interpretation. Retirement can either improve or reduce wellbeing depending on health, financial security, social support, voluntary or involuntary exit, role attachment, and meaningful engagement (Kim & Moen, 2002; Wang et al., 2011). Activity-oriented perspectives also suggest that social participation and meaningful activity contribute to life satisfaction in later life (Havighurst, 1961). In the present study, participants who remained engaged with family, peers, religious activities, community relationships, or personal routines appeared to experience stronger emotional stability.

The finding of “new pride” is especially important. Participants did not only look back at service with nostalgia; they also developed satisfaction in having completed a difficult public role. Their understanding of success shifted from official achievement to emotional peace, family connection, dignity, and personal fulfilment. This indicates a movement from externally measured accomplishment to internally experienced wellbeing.

The critical discussion is that psychological adjustment after retirement must be understood beyond the language of loss. The absence of work can create emptiness when identity is narrowly tied to occupation. However, when participants were able to create meaning through relationships, service memory, spirituality, health, and social participation, retirement became a positive life stage. This directly addresses the study’s

assumption and shows that retired police officers may experience not only adjustment difficulties but also emotional growth and positive change.

6.3.5 Theme 5: Institutional and Family Support - From Administrative Exit to Holistic Preparedness

Research Question 5: What role do institutional and family support systems play in retirement transition?

The fifth theme shows that support systems strongly shaped the quality of retirement transition. Participants identified family, spouses, children, grandchildren, former colleagues, retired officers' networks, community relationships, and religious engagement as important sources of emotional support and continuity. Family support was especially significant because it gave participants belonging, reassurance, companionship, and opportunities for meaningful participation.

The findings indicate that institutional support was present mainly through financial and administrative mechanisms such as pension procedures and formal retirement processes. These were important, but they did not fully address the emotional and identity-related dimensions of retirement. Participants' experiences suggest that retirement preparation within police institutions needs to move beyond paperwork and financial settlement. It should also include psychosocial readiness, identity transition, family preparation, health awareness, emotional coping, and post-retirement engagement planning.

The "mental bag" carried by participants is a useful interpretative idea. Years of police service exposed officers to discipline, public pressure, responsibility, conflict, risk, and emotionally demanding situations. Retirement did not immediately remove these experiences. Some aspects became strengths, such as resilience and responsibility, while other aspects required adjustment, especially in domestic and emotional life. This supports transition literature, which emphasizes that adaptation depends on the interaction between the situation, the individual, available support, and coping strategies (Schlossberg, 1981).

Family readiness emerged as equally important. Retirement changes not only the retired person but also the household. Families that accepted the participant's changing role and involved them meaningfully helped create smoother adjustment. Supportive families reduced emotional uncertainty and strengthened life satisfaction. However, where family expectations were unclear or where the participant found it difficult to shift from

command-based behaviour to shared domestic roles, adjustment could become more challenging.

The critical discussion is that retirement adjustment should not be treated as an individual responsibility alone. It is shaped by institutional preparedness, family communication, social networks, health systems, and opportunities for continued contribution. This theme answers the fifth research question by showing that support systems operate as protective factors that transform retirement from a possible identity rupture into a more manageable and meaningful transition.

6.4 DISCUSSION

The discussion section brings together the findings from all five themes and demonstrates how the research questions are answered. The central argument is that role identity transition among retired police officers is neither purely negative nor purely smooth. It is a layered process involving loss of formal role, continuity of internalized police values, reconstruction of domestic and social roles, and the discovery of new forms of wellbeing.

Research Question 1: How do retired police officers experience identity shift after retirement?

The findings show that retired police officers experience identity shift as a movement from institutional identity to personal and relational identity. The uniform, designation, authority, and official responsibilities lose formal relevance, but service pride, discipline, responsibility, alertness, and commitment remain part of the self. The interpretative meaning is that retirement is not identity loss but identity reconstruction. This finding aligns with Role Identity Theory and Continuity Theory because participants retained selected elements of their earlier role while reorganising the self around family, personal wellbeing, spirituality, and social participation.

Research Question 2: How do changes in power and social recognition affect their self-perception?

The findings indicate that reduced authority and public visibility initially affected self-perception for some participants. However, many gradually developed self-worth through family respect, community relationships, age-based dignity, service memory, and personal values. The interpretative meaning is that power shifted from institutional

authority to relational respect. The loss of rank also created emotional relief because participants were freed from continuous pressure and public responsibility.

Research Question 3: How do retired police officers adjust to domestic life after retirement?

The findings show that participants adjusted to domestic life by creating new routines, spending more time with family, participating in household responsibilities, and renegotiating relationships at home. Domestic life became a major site of identity reconstruction. Adjustment was smoother when participants became flexible and when family members accepted their changing presence, emotional needs, and role expectations.

Research Question 4: What psychological adjustments do retired police officers experience?

The findings reveal that participants experienced quiet worries about ageing, purpose, health, independence, and usefulness. At the same time, many also experienced emotional calmness, pride, reduced stress, positive wellbeing, and renewed self-understanding. This directly challenges the assumption that retirement would be mostly negative. Retirement can create personal growth when meaning, support, health awareness, family connection, and social engagement are present.

Research Question 5: What role do institutional and family support systems play in retirement transition?

The findings show that family support, peer contact, religious engagement, retired officers' networks, and institutional continuity helped participants adjust to retirement. However, institutional preparation was found to be stronger in administrative and financial areas than in psychosocial areas. The interpretative meaning is that retirement preparedness should become holistic, including emotional readiness, identity transition, counselling, family involvement, and meaningful post-retirement engagement.

Overall, the findings show that retirement among police officers cannot be interpreted only through decline, loss, or withdrawal. While there are real adjustment concerns, the dominant pattern in the study is one of negotiated transition. Participants carried forward

positive aspects of police identity, reduced the pressure associated with institutional responsibility, strengthened family relationships, and developed new meanings around wellbeing and purpose.

The most important conclusion is that the study's initial assumption requires revision. Retirement did create identity and routine-related challenges, but it also created positive transformation. Participants experienced wellbeing through relief from occupational stress, improved emotional balance, greater family involvement, spiritual engagement, and renewed self-understanding. Thus, retirement should be treated as a psychosocial transition requiring support, rather than as a negative endpoint.

6.5 SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion, the following suggestions are proposed to support healthier retirement transition among police personnel and to strengthen institutional, family, and community-based support mechanisms.

- Retirement preparation programmes within the police department should move beyond pension procedures and financial formalities. They should include sessions on role identity transition, emotional readiness, family adjustment, healthy ageing, stress management, and post-retirement purpose.
- Pre-retirement counselling and guidance units may be introduced for officers approaching retirement. Social workers, counsellors, and mental health professionals can help officers prepare for emotional change, loss of formal authority, routine adjustment, and identity reconstruction.
- Family-inclusive retirement preparation should be encouraged. Spouses and close family members may be included in awareness sessions so that they understand the emotional needs, behavioral changes, and domestic adjustments associated with retirement.
- Retired police officers' networks should be strengthened through periodic gatherings, peer-support groups, mentoring platforms, and retired officers' associations. Such networks can preserve belongingness and reduce feelings of disconnection from professional life.

- Opportunities for meaningful post-retirement engagement should be created. Retired police officers can contribute to community policing awareness, youth mentoring, road safety education, school programmes, public legal awareness, disaster response training, and social welfare activities.
- Wellness programmes should be designed for retired police personnel, focusing on physical health, emotional wellbeing, recreation, active ageing, social participation, and spiritual or reflective practices according to individual preference.
- Institutional policies on retirement should adopt a holistic approach that recognizes identity, emotional wellbeing, social participation, and family relationships in addition to financial security.
- From a social work perspective, community-based support services may be developed for retired police officers. These services can include counselling, support groups, family interventions, advocacy, resource linkage, and active ageing initiatives.
- Further research may examine retirement transition among police personnel across different ranks, gender groups, service backgrounds, and districts. Longitudinal research would be useful to understand how identity transition changes across the early, middle, and later stages of retirement.

6.6 Conclusion

The present study explored role identity transition among retired police officers in Thiruvananthapuram District. The findings show that retirement is not merely the completion of professional service. It is a multidimensional transition involving identity, authority, family life, emotional wellbeing, routine, social recognition, and future purpose.

The chapter demonstrates that police identity continues to influence retired life even after formal service ends. Participants carried forward discipline, responsibility, alertness, service pride, and public concern as internalized aspects of the self. At the same time, they gradually reconstructed identity through family relationships, personal interests, spiritual practices, social participation, and meaningful daily routines. This supports the theoretical understanding that role identity is not simply removed when a role ends; rather, it is renegotiated and expressed through new contexts.

The study also finds that changes in authority and recognition affect self-perception, but not always negatively. While some participants initially experienced uncertainty due to reduced visibility and power, many later experienced reliefs from occupational pressure and developed self-worth through relational respect, family belonging, and internal satisfaction. The transition from official authority to personal dignity is one of the important interpretative findings of this chapter.

Domestic life emerged as a major space of adjustment and positive change. Retirement allowed participants to become more emotionally available within the family and to participate in relationships and responsibilities that were previously limited by service demands. However, this adjustment required flexibility from both participants and family members. The findings therefore show that family readiness is central to successful retirement transition.

A major conclusion of the study is that the initial assumption of a highly negative post-retirement drawback is not fully supported. Retirement did bring challenges related to identity, routine, ageing, and changed social recognition. However, participants also reported positive wellbeing, emotional calmness, freedom from stress, stronger family relationships, spiritual engagement, and renewed purpose. Therefore, retirement among police officers should be understood as a process of adaptation and positive transformation, not only as loss.

The study further highlights the need for institutional support that addresses psychosocial realities. Existing retirement processes should be strengthened with counselling, family preparation, peer-support networks, wellness programmes, and meaningful engagement opportunities. From a social work perspective, such interventions can promote dignity, belonging, emotional wellbeing, and active ageing among retired police personnel.

In conclusion, role identity transition among retired police officers is a continuing journey of adjustment, reflection, and reconstruction. Although retirement marks the end of formal institutional service, it also creates possibilities for renewed wellbeing, stronger relationships, personal growth, and meaningful life beyond the uniform

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ANNEXURES

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Part 1: Participants' profile

- Age
- Gender
- Educational qualification
- Rank at Retirement
- Total years of service
- Years since retirement

Part 2:

Theme 1: Identity Transition

- Attachment to uniform and Authority
 1. Can you describe what being a police officer meant to you personally?
 - Emotions associate with wearing the uniform.
 - Did the profession shape your personality or lifestyle?
 - Did you have attachment towards your uniform and your position?
 2. In what ways do you see yourself differently now compared to when you were in service?
 - What aspects of police identity still following
 - Do you feel a shift in your identity after retirement
 - Do you miss command and leadership roles?
- **Loss of public recognition and power**
 1. How has the way people treat or respect you changed after retirement?
Can you share any experience?
 - Have you noticed any changes after the retirement
 - How do people address or approach you now
 - Does this difference affect you emotionally?
 2. In what ways, if any, have you experienced changes in influence or authority after retirement?

- How has your involvement in decision making processes changed after retirement?
- Did the change from job impact your social-interactions?
- **Adjusting to family centred life**
 1. Can you describe how your daily routine changed after retirement?
 - What was your structured routine during service?
 - How do you spend your time now?
 - Was it difficult to manage unstructured time?
 2. What was your experience adjusting from a structured professional life to home centred life?
 - Did you feel boredom or restlessness initially?
 - How long did it take to feel comfortable in this new phase?

Theme 2: Emotional and Psychological Adjustment

Here I would like to understand your emotional journey after retirement

- **Anxiety about the future**
 1. How did you feel about your future when you retired?
 - Were you concerned about financial stability?
 - Did health related concerns increase?
 2. What were your main concerns or thoughts during the early period of retirement?
 - Family responsibilities, children's education, ageing, economic security
- **Self-esteem changes**
 1. In what ways has retirement influenced how you feel about yourself?
 - Did retirement affect your confidence
 - How do you define yourself now?

2. What currently gives you a sense of pride, purpose or self-worth?

- Like family achievements, social contributions, community involvement, mentoring junior officers

- **Personal Hobbies /peer networks**

1. Can you describe the activities or hobbies that bring you satisfaction now

- New hobbies after retirement
- Religious or community involvement
- Physical activities

2. How have hobbies, friendships or social groups helped you in adjusting to retirement?

- Do you meet former colleagues regularly
- Are peer discussions helpful
- Has social engagements reduced feeling of isolation

Theme 3: Retirement Preparations

- **Emotional preparations**

Now reflect on how prepared you were for retirement and the support systems available.

1. How prepared did you feel emotionally before retirement? can you please describe your thought at that time.

- Did you think about life after service?
- Did you have future plans

2 What kinds of support or preparation did the department provide and how did it impact you?

- Were there any pre-retirement sessions?

- Did they address psychological adjustment?
- What support would have been helpful?

- **Family Readiness for Retirement**

1. How did retirement affect your family relationships and dynamics?

- Increased time in home (is it positive or challenging)
- Did you have any role conflicts?
- Did any change occur in decision-making patterns?

2. In what ways has family support influenced your adjustment to retirement?

- Did family help in adjustment
- How does spousal support influence wellbeing?

- **Role retires police association**

1. Can you share your experience with any retired police association you are part of?
2. What changes or improvements would you suggest to make retired police associations more supportive?