

**A STUDY ON THE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG THE WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS
IN RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT**

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ABSTRACT

Stress has an ample impact on all the work place. Working with Police has got lot of stress and more number of police personnel is facing high level of stress due to their occupational background. Female police officers face more stress in different level. Police are the custodian of public to control crimes and create a smooth flow of societal culture. Occupational stress is considered as one of the most important health hazards of modern workplace, with policing (law enforcement) being no exception. We know pretty well that the women police officers are gradually mounting in numbers in our nation and having more experience and more stress than the male policemen. Therefore this study aims in approximating the prevalence of occupational stress among female police personnel in terms of operational and organizational stress the primary objective of this study is identify the reasons for the occupational stress among the women police officers in Ramanathapuram district and offer fitting strategies to diminish the stress intensity.

Keywords: Occupational stress, Female Police Officers, Organizational stress, Stress Symptoms, Coping Strategies, Enforcement

1. INTRODUCTION:

Stress is a mind boggling marvel. A person's understanding of pressure relies on various perspectives identified with identity, condition, socio - cultural circumstance, and a few relevant variables. Word related pressure involves worry in the present situation. Word related pressure results in disturbance of the mental just as physiological homeostasis of the individual, prompting degenerate working in the workplace. Every Individual in this society is experienced with some kind of stress in their life. Stress could be experienced when a person thinks that the demands exceed the personal and social resources. (Richards1984). Loss of hunger and inclination change which results in uninteresting in the work, getting furious on moment incitement and it makes issues in family just as in the general public. Women Police officers assume a vital job in controlling rush hour gridlock framework and are occupied with more responsibility. Police officers will have a high level of pressure and a variety of upsetting circumstances which can influence the physical, mental and relational connections of police personnel. The objective of the present study was to assess the level of stress among police personnel and to find the association of various factors with the level of stress among police personnel. Security of natives in the general public in an exceptionally dependable manner which bringing about expanding the people worry because of overwhelming outstanding task at hand as the inordinate increment of crimes and burglary mounting the stress in the normal life. Stress is a primary factor that frustrates the exercises of women police officers. Police staff assumes an urgent job in keeping up the disciplinary and authoritative homeostasis of the general public. Worry among police personnel is being recognized as a universal wonder of genuine concern. Worry among police staff, particularly female police officers, is currently being recognized as a global marvel of genuine concern. Diverse

examinations demonstrate that Police work is an upsetting occupation on the planet. Water and Ussery (2007) contended that perils related with the word related worry as hazardous. They ascribed worry to the idea of police job. Police officers are often obtainable to different horrendous circumstances going from dangers to themselves and their associates, to seeing uproars, wounds or demise of natives, besieging, shootings, criminal exercises and frequently deadly shootings of culprits. Distinctive investigations of research indicate cops in highly risk situations. Occupational stress with the women police officers are associated with a number of unpleasant organizational upshot which includes lower levels of obligation, gloominess, incapability to focus and rash behavior and an augmented likelihood of leave the work. Stress which is influencing the women police personnel is now being acknowledged as an worldwide trend of serious concern. Understanding the consequence, more work has gone into the countryside around the sphere but unluckily very less in our country. Well-functioning police machinery ensures peaceful life for the population. As per a World Health Organization archive, chip away at certain police exercises is connected to pressure initiating components, for example, tedious work requiring consistent, movements, detachment and steady danger of brutality. A similar archive confirms that there is likewise epidemiological proof regarding the matter: high danger of cardiovascular illnesses, especially coronary and hypertension for open security experts of both genders and in higher extents than in the overall public, which signifies, in substantial scale pressure impacts; the police are one of the portions most defenseless against mishaps. With respect to the stress among the women police officers, now an effort is made to evaluate the studies conducted on prevalence of stress among the women police officers.

2. DISTRICT LEVEL

The total strength women police is hardly eight percent on the national average, women in police constitute only 3.5 percent. The Ramanathapuram Police district was created on 11.03.1985 as per G.O.Ms.No.57. It has the jurisdiction of Ramanathapuram Revenue district. It has 6 police sub-divisions viz. Ramanathapuram, Paramakudi, Kamuthi, Rameswaram, Kilakarai and Thiruvadana. The district is under the charge of the Superintendent of Police assisted by Additional Superintendent of Police, Crime and Prohibition and Deputy Superintendents in charge of 6 sub-divisions and the special units District Crime branch, District Crime Records Bureau and Prohibition. The 6 sub-divisions have been divided into 12 circles which are under the charge of inspectors of Police, helped in some cases by Sub-Inspectors. Circles are sub-divided into Police stations under the charge of Sub-Inspectors who are assisted by an appropriate number of police officers in the rank of Head Constable, Grade I Police constable and Grade II Police constable. Station House officers are thus usually Sub-inspectors, but in important police stations especially in Urban areas are headed by an Inspector.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researcher has utilized a distinct research which is planned and dissected for the information quantitatively. For this study the researcher has conducted a study among the 50 female police officers engaged in police department at Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu State.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WOMEN POLICE

Along with the general responsibilities of safeguarding the society, Law and Order, the women police are entrusted to deal with the cases where the women crimes are involved. They are the guardians to protect the laws pertaining to the women society. Maintaining the self-respect of the individual society of India by executing the wide-ranging and extraordinary laws falls within the purview of the police. Women police officers have some special social responsibilities that they are expected to discharge, about which there is unspoken recognition but

no formal definition. Women police officers also support the society by safeguarding the women in many ways at various places. The position of the women police officers in this respect is quite unique. As it has noticed, the variety of police behavior is almost all encompassing; but unfortunately, the distrust that pervades even beyond that.

5. REASONS FOR OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Some of the major reasons contributing for the occupational stress among the women police officers are as follows:

- ✓ **NATURE OF JOB** – Apart from the nature of job, there are several other concern like continuous and unpredictable working hours, steady pressure to act upon their duty, accountability, work overload and other kind of job that are associated to their work.
- ✓ **POLITICAL INTERFERENCE** – This is also an important factor that gives an intensity of occupational stress to the women police officers. The women police officers are required to interact with the politicians for the protestations and other strike force.
- ✓ **PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT** – Since we all know very well that physical environment also gives them more stress because exposing to pollution, traffic and other jams.
- ✓ **ROLE CONFLICT** - Role conflict is a major issue which leads the women police officers for the distress. This is widely seen when some other personnel does the role of given personnel.
- ✓ **DUE TO INSUFFICIENT HYGIENIC CONDITIONS** - At certain work conditions particularly during the election, the women police officers are not given with proper food amenities which results in occupational stress to them.
- ✓ Apart from all of these above, age and family size supply to role conflict which infers the women police officer whose family size is huge faces much problem while balancing both the roles. Participation of women police personnel in household work absolutely contributes to role conflict.

6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rothman and Rensburg, (2002)¹ observed in their study that some psychological commotion linked with strict mental or physical health result and that direct to suicidal behavior. Suicidal behavior varies in harshly from ideation through objective and effort to actual completion. **Deschamps et al. (2003)**² in his study stated that number of working hours is significant associated with the occupational stress among the women police personnel. **He et al. (2005)**³ in his study observed that it is the work environment problems which cause more occupational stress than that of race and gender. **Sibnath, et al. (2008)**⁴ concluded that the women police officers are facing lot of occupational stress due to certain factors such as too much work load, working with computers in control room, poor coordination from their subordinates, less sleeping hours etc. **Agolla (2009)**⁵ exposed that some of the components that cause high stress are overload of work, conflicts between the personnel, awkward group and political demands and some of the slightest stress reason components are unprofitability and low status. **Nagar (2009)**⁶ observed through his study that most of the problems arise due to severe work load, pressure from politicians, lack of facilities and resources, improper leave allocation, conflicts with superiors are the major issue behind the occupational stress. **Sundaram, Kumaran (2012)**⁷ observed through their study that socio economic status plays an important role for the occupational stress among the women police personnel the sources of income and their salary are recorded which makes them more stress. **Hunnur, et. al. (2014)**⁸ highlighted in their study that high stress causing components were overload of role, conflicts among them, unreasonable group and political pressure and tiring working conditions.

7. OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND RISK FACTORS

The women police officers who face high amount of stress were primarily administrative matters and are having relationships with the non police. Some of the women officers who face more occupational stress were disposed to think more recurrently about the prospect of being offended. Work associated stress can be mostly categorized as organizational, environmental and individual stresses. Some of the women police officers were exposed to face huge problems like Irregular life-style which in turn have communicable diseases. The women police personnel having the occupational stress direct to antagonism and nervousness which may cause unhelpful physical and behavioral penalty. It has been seen that some of the occupational stress condition are up to highest condition which may result in death of the personnel by committing suicide. There are various factors which are liable for infuriating stress among the women police personnel. Certain demographic variables such as gender, age and year of experience says that it is truth. Thus, Stress affects all of us in dissimilar ways at dissimilar times and is frequently the result of a grouping of factors in our individual and operational lives.

8. SYMPTOMS OF STRESS AMONG WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS

- ✓ **FATIGUE** - Police officers need to be involved for long hours which cause tiredness but fatigue is a classic sign of stress among them. Overtime work will also result in fatigue and that causes adrenal exhaustion.
- ✓ **ISOMIA** - The prolong effects of stress on our body will ultimately change the sleeping patterns. As the body is in contact with stress conditions, the cortical cycle get disturbed and those results in low concentration and alertness.
- ✓ **RESTLESSNESS** - This is a common issue among the women police officer that affects the entire health. It leads to vicious cycle and if any individual doesn't get rest him mind gets affected and he may lose temper and they are unable to concentrate over their task.
- ✓ **SEX DRIVE MALFUNCTION** - A loss of libido and sexual longing is often be associated to phase of chronic stress. Uninterrupted revelation to stressful situations can direct to a long term lowering in sex hormone levels.
- ✓ **CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL** - The work load to the women police officers will result in consuming the alcohol. Since our traditions doesn't allow women police officers to consume alcohol and are not accepted by society. This also brings social chaos.

TABLE 1
STRESS LEVEL OF WOMEN POLICE OFFICERS

Level of Stress	Police (N= 50)	
Low	10	20%
Moderate	10	20%
High	09	18%
Very High	21	42%

Interpretation: From the above table 1 we may infer that, from the total sample of 50 women police personnel, 10 were having low levels of stress whereas 21 exhibited very high stress level. Therefore the educational intervention programme meant for stress reduction was offered for police personnel who had very high level of stress (N =21).

TABLE 2
SLEEPING TIME

SLEEP PATERN	WOMEN POLICE OFFICER (50)	
	N	%

Sleep Hours		
4 - 6 hours	35	70%
7 - 8 hours	15	30%

Interpretation: From the above table we may infer about the sleeping hours of women police officer. The normal sleeping hour's human is 8 hours which is must to lead a hygienic life but among the selected police women officers 70 % of female police officers slept only for 5 hours in night. This data reveals the amount of lack of sleep by police personnel. From this we may say that the shift disorder is the practice where the women police officers lose the entire sleep.

9. STRESS MANAGEMENT EXERCISES:

One of the major problems for women police officers is that stress can go unrecognized and unacknowledged. Officers are in constant stress and they don't find much time for taking treatments. Many times they contradict the stress they are experiencing for fear of being viewed as weak or not being able to handle their job. Stress management techniques can be practiced for the better relief from the stress for the women police officers. The district police headquarters provide the proper training to their women police officers to overcome the issues oriented with stress. Some of the stress management practices are as follows:-

- ✓ **SUPERVISOR TRAINING** - Providing the supervisor training to the women police officers will really help out to come up with some better ideas in prevention of stress.
- ✓ **CONDUCTING ORIENTATION PROGRAMMES** - The district police office shall conduct the necessary orientation programmes for the avoidance of stress among them. The orientation programme shall help them to overcome the challenges that they face every day.
- ✓ **YOGA SESSIONS** - Women Police officers should have the yoga and meditation sessions to improve the mental health and to keep away the stress and through this they may keep away the stress and improve the sleeping conditions.
- ✓ **RESILENCE STRESS** - **In order to** reduces the force of occupational stress in women police officers on health and behavioral outcomes they are given with resilience training.
- ✓ **SELF REGULATION SKILLS** - Self-regulation skills training needs to be given to the women police officers to reduce negative emotions, improve sleep, and increase the use of effective coping strategies.

10. SUGGESTIONS

It has been seen through this paper that Long working hours among the women police officers were certainly create the role conflict among them which prove most of the time they spend away from their family, more work - which result in family disagreement. Some of the suggestions are as follows:-

- ✓ It will be thankful to the policy makers to recognize the Police occupation as job which is stress prone and there shall be the stress management training once in 3 months which will help the women police officers to manage all the activities.
- ✓ The Government of Tamil Nadu shall execute effective exercises on stress management free of cost to the police personnel.
- ✓ Police departments in Government of Tamil Nadu should ask the police officers for indulge in training activities and can arrange cultural meets which will really understand the functioning of police in constructive way.
- ✓ Government should also give paid leave so that they will spend time with their family.

- ✓ Police personnel particularly women should get in touch with counselors and shall attend counseling sessions for stress management and this will help them to make right decisions in everyday situations and to reduce the effects of physical illness.

11. CONCLUSION

In the legal enforcement the stress could not be measured and it cannot be ascribed to only one factor. In essence, Police stress consisting of so many complexities and that has many diverse contributing factors. Most of the women police officers who are having the stress are categorized into intra-personal, inter personal, work-related, family and if stress is neglected it effects on their mental and physical health and their family relations also adversely affected. Stress among the police officers could be easily managed by so many ways like going to parks for relaxation, gyms for body exercise and building, going to temples for relaxation and soul worthy, house hold chores, etc. Through this study researcher identified some of the problems that are creating the intensity of occupational stress among the women police officers and that are, physical vulnerabilities, and pitiful attachment to relatives are also the cause for the stress among female officers. Playing the dual role also constitute the stress among the women police officers when their subordinates are absent or they are away. The prudence power to distribute duty to female police officers is from time to time distorted by the higher officials that go ahead to increase the stress among female police officers. This identify for instant notice from the higher officials as occupational stress can have an tremendously unenthusiastic impact on the physical, mental and social health as well as qualified life of the women police officers.

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