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A sociological study on occupational stress and health problems among female police constables in Karnataka

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Abstract

Police work tends to impose a high degree and a multiplicity of stressful situations which can affect the physical, mental and interpersonal relationships of police personnel. This study was carried out with the sample of 25 police stations in Hassan District of Karnataka state. For this study, qualitative method was used. The analysis has been done on the basis of in-depth interviews with those who are female police constables in Hassan District. For this study, data was collected from 50 female police constables by using simple random sampling. The present paper aims to find out occupational stress and health problems of female police constables. This study finds that due to occupational stress majority of the respondents are facing health problems like high blood pressure, diabetic, heart problem, back pain, joint pain, body pain, heat etc.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Health Problems, Female Police Constables

1. Introduction

Occupational stress is experienced when the demands of the work environment exceed the employees' ability to cope with them. Stress is not a disease, but if it is intense and goes on for some time, it can lead to mental and physical ill health. Stress is a multi-causal, complex psychological phenomenon, often created by insidious, long range continuous pressures, threats and demands on individuals much beyond tolerance limits resulting in psychological, emotional and physical exhaustion.

Police occupational stress is a widespread problem because of its numerous negative effects on individuals and on police organizations. During their duty, unexpectedly they may encounter situations involving major crisis without any warning. There are several factors like 24 hours availability, administration problem were involved and make police as a most stressful job. The pressures of police job put officers at risk for high blood pressure, insomnia, increased level of destructive stress hormones, heart problems, post-traumatic stress disorder and suicide.

Working women have multiple roles to play. According to Ekelof (1991), "very often, women are stretched to the breaking point, pulled between the demands of working life and domestic commitments". Women working in police force feel more stress as they face several hardships from both in job as well as with family life. Policing is considered as most stressful profession than other professions and they have the greater risk of stress. Especially female personnel face more stress related problems than their male counterpart as they manage the family commitments and also working in police organization. The present study made an attempt to analyze female police constables and also this study may help to know about the occupational stress and health problems of female police constables working in Hassan District at a micro level.

2. Review of Literature

Occupational stress among police is often viewed as an unlucky, but expected part of police work. During their duty, unexpectedly they may encounter situations involving major crisis without any warning. Police work is considered to be one of stressful jobs. There are several factors like 24 hours availability, administration problem were involved and make police as most stressful job.

Various research studies were conducted on occupational stress among police.

Shanmuga Sundaram and Jeya Kumaran (2012) ^[11] conducted a Study on Frequency of Stress among Female Police Constables Reference to Tamilnadu Police Department, India. The study revealed that women police constables stressful jobs related events like stress due to insufficient personal time, seeing criminals going free, lack of recognition for good work, having to go to court, having to deal with the media, meeting deadlines, working overtime, dealing with crisis situations, lack of opportunity for advancement, competition for advancement of inadequate salary, delivering a death message or bad news to someone do vary with the demographic factors like age, gender, religion, service of the years, marital status, income and the place of residence. The study helps to identify the majority of female police constables are facing high amount of stress due to the stressful job related events.

Barve B N (2011) ^[2] conducted a Study on Job-Stress, Job-Involvement, Anxiety level and Mental Health among Maharashtra Police Constables. The study found that urban area police constables are suffering from high stress than rural area constables, due to unbalancing job demands and job-pressure on urban area. Mental health of female police constables is as well as good than male police constables. This study is helps to know the occupational stress, job involvement and mental health of police constables.

Suresh R S & Anantharaman R N (2013) ^[5] in their study Sources of Job Stress in Police Working in a Developing Country is an attempt was made to determine which job events are perceived as significant sources of stress in police work. Overall out of 80 sources of job stress perceived by police personnel 40 of them can be categorized as organizational or work place problems. They include round-clock duty, no time for family, inadequate salaries/facilities, negative interaction with other police staff, poor equipment staff and harassment. Through this study we can find that when stress is too much it may lead to burnout of the police staff. This is partly due to high stress environment, emotional involvement and outcomes that workers may be independent of the effort extorted by the working individual. The study is helps to know the majority of perceived sources of job stress are related to work place.

Srinivasan & Ilango (2013) ^[13] in their work Stress Problems faced by Police Constables in North Chennai focused on the stress factors that affect the wellbeing of policeman and family especially their work. Most of the police constables 52% expressed that this do not have enough time to spend with their families. About 58% police constables do not attend social functions and celebration due to their routine work. A high protection of 82% of the police constables visit doctors for medical assistance. A majority 68% of the police constables admit that they don't eat on time. Majority 82% of the police constables were that they had psychosomatic complaints. Sizeable number 36% of police constables accepted that they have suicidal thoughts. The study helps to know the occupational stress factors of the police constables.

Jayanthy P Nair and Joseph M.I (2013) ^[3] conducted a study on Correlates of Job Stress in Policing: A comparative study of women and men police. The study highlighted the prevalence of various job stresses in policing and their consequences in terms of job-related and affective strains. More than factors intrinsic to the job such as role conflict,

role ambiguity, overload, etc. the women police are more affected by psychosocial aspects of the job such as negative public attitude, victimization, schedules of working time, strenuous working conditions, home – work pressures, etc. in terms of their consequences.

Mohanraj and Natesan conducted a study on Stress: An Empirical study among Women Police Constables. The study found that women police working in city limits feel more stress than their counterparts working in rural. The study helps to know the level of stress among the women police constables.

3. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the demographic features of the female police constables.
2. To identify the most stressful job activities of female police constables.
3. To study the occupational health problems of female police constables.

4. Research Methodology

The present study is based on the primary data which is collected from the 25 police stations in Hassan District of Karnataka state. Through random sampling method 50 Female Police Constables were selected to generate primary data. Detailed information of the attitudes and opinions of the respondents were collected through pre-tested structured interview schedule which is comprised of pre-coded and open – ended questions regarding objectives of the research. The primary data was collected employing interview schedule directly from the respondents and the secondary data were collected from books, journals related to occupational stress of women police and Reports of police department and website. The data collections are processed in a systematic way. The data are edited for checking their completeness and accuracy. The data is tabulated and processed in the table by using computer.

5. Results and Discussion

The result pertaining to demographic profile of the female police constables are depicted in table 01. The data table 01 revealed that 28% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 20-29. Majority 56% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 30-39. 12% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 40-49, and only 04% of the respondents belonged to the age group of 50-59. The data indicated that 12% of the respondents are in the educational level of SSLC. 20% of the respondents are in the education level of PUC. Majority 52% of the respondents are having Under Graduation level and remaining 16% of the respondents are having Post Graduation level of education qualification. It was noticed that majority 86% of the respondents are following Hinduism as their religion, 08% of the respondents belonged to Islam religion and remaining 06% of the respondents belonged to Christianity. The data indicated that majority 40% of the respondents belonged to the Vokkaliga Caste. 20% are Lingaitha, 22% are SC, only 04% are ST and 14% belonged to other category. It is observed that majority 76% of the respondents are married women and only 14% of the respondents are single. In that 24% of respondents married the same profession. It was noticed that 72% of the respondents are from urban area and only 24% of the respondents are from rural area. The data revealed that 04% of the respondents are having less than 5

years of experience. 28% of the respondents are having 6-10 years of experience, majority 44% of the respondents are having 11-15 years of experience, 16% of the respondents are having 16-20 years of experience and only 8% of the respondents are having greater than 20 years of experience. It was noticed that majority 76% of the respondents are in the nuclear family and remaining 24% of the respondents belonged to the joint family. The data indicated that 20% of the respondents are having one-two dependents, majority 56% of the respondents are having three-four dependents, 16% of the respondents are having five-six dependents and only 08% of the respondents are having more than seven dependents in their family.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Female Police Constables

Sl. No.	Options	Frequency	Percent
01.	Age		
	20-29	14	28
	30-39	28	56
	40-49	06	12
	50-59	02	04
02.	Educational Qualification		
	SSLC	06	12
	PUC	10	20
	UG	26	52
03.	Religion		
	Hinduism	43	86
	Islam	04	08
04.	Caste		
	Vokkaliga	20	40
	Lingaitha	10	20
	SC	11	22
	ST	02	04
05.	Marital status		
	Married	38	76
	Single	12	24
06.	Place of the residence		
	Rural	14	28
	Urban	36	72
07.	Years of Service		
	Less than 5 years	02	04
	6-10 years	14	28
	11-15 years	22	44
	16-20 years	08	16
	Greater than 20 years	04	08
08.	Type of Family		
	Nuclear Family	38	76
	Joint Family	12	24
09.	Number of dependents		
	One – Two	10	20
	Three – Four	28	56
	Five – Six	08	16
	More than seven	04	08

Table 2: Occupational Stress of Female Police Constables (n=50)

Aspects	Frequency	Percent
Negative public image	28	56
Increased incidence of stressful events and daily hassles	40	80
Inadequate housing / security of the family	26	52
Irregular working hours	50	100
Inadequate provision for children’s education	32	64
Inconsistent policies regarding evaluation, accountability and transfer	32	64
Insufficient personal time (e.g., coffee breaks, lunch)	32	64
Lack of encouragement from higher male officer	26	52
Lack of recognition for good work	30	60
Lack of opportunity for advancement	26	52
Working overtime	38	76
Inadequate salary	36	72
Lack of Holidays	38	76
Delayed promotion	40	80

From the data presented in table 02, it is observed that majority 56% of female police constables are facing the stress of negative public image. Because police job is basically male dominance job people have not ready to accept females jobs in police department. Police is a most stressful job because it deals with the public and criminals. Majority 80% of the respondents are facing increased incidence of stressful events and daily hassles. 52% of respondents are facing the stress of inadequate housing/security of the family due to low wages. Police job is 24 hours work; it is not fixed working hours. Due to 24 hours availability 100% of respondents are facing irregular working hours. Due to lack of time and wages 64% of respondents are facing inadequate provision for children’s education. 64% of respondents are facing the problem of policies regarding evolution, accountability and transfer. 64% of female police constables are facing the stress of insufficient personal time for coffee break; lunch etc., due to their heavy works. 44% of female police constables are suffering from lack of encouragement from higher male officer because they are neglected by higher officer. 60% of female police constables are facing lack of recognition for good work due to non support from administration even their performance is very well. 48% of female police constables are facing lack of opportunity for advancement due to over competition with the male police constables. Majority 76% of female police constables are suffering from working over time because during their duty, unexpectedly they may encounter situations involving major crisis without any warning and 24 hours availability make them working overtime. Majority 72% of female police constables are suffering from inadequate salary while comparing their working hours and today’s high cost of life. 76% of female police constables are facing lack of holidays to spend with their families due to their involvement in untimely public protection which in turn leads to over duties. 60% of female police constables are facing delayed promotion due to delayed promotion structure in police department. Due to these all occupational stress female police constables facing several types of health problems.

Table 3: Occupational Health Problems of Female Police Constables (n=50)

Health Problems	Frequency	Percent
Blood Pressure	36	72
Diabetes	24	48
Heart Problems	26	52
Back pain	50	100
Joint pain	50	100
Headache	50	100
Body pain	42	84
Eye sight problem	23	46
Heat	50	100

Table 05 revealed that 72% of female police constables are suffering from blood pressure due to occupational stress. 48% of respondents are suffering from diabetes due to occupational stress. 52% of respondents are suffering from heart related problem due to dual role stress. 100% of respondents are suffering Back pain, joint pain and headache due to overtime work. 46% respondents are facing eye sight problem due to heavy work in front of computer. 100% of respondents are facing the heat problem due to wearing khaki uniform whole day.

6. Major Findings and Suggestions

It is evident that 56% of the respondents were in the age group of 30-39. Majority 52% of the respondents completed their under graduation level. Majority 86% of the respondents belonged to Hinduism. 40% of the respondents belonged to Vokkaliga caste. Majority 76% of the respondents were married. 24% of the respondents married the same profession. 72% of the respondents were from the urban area. Majority 44% of the respondents are having 11-15 years of experience. Majority 76% of the respondents are belonging to the nuclear family. Majority 56% of the respondents are having three-four dependents.

Majority of the respondents facing the occupational stress like Negative public image, Increased incidence of stressful events and daily hassles, Inadequate housing / security of the family, Irregular working hours, Inadequate provision for children's education, Inconsistent policies regarding evaluation, accountability and transfer, insufficient personal time (e.g., coffee breaks, lunch), Lack of encouragement from higher male officer, Lack of recognition for good work, Lack of opportunity for advancement, Working overtime, Inadequate salary, Lack of Holidays, Delayed promotion. This study noticed that due to occupational stress majority of the respondents suffering from various health problems like blood pressure, diabetes, heart problem, back pain, joint pain, headache, body pain, eye sight problem, heat. Through this study I prefer to suggest that perception about the work and practice must be changed by providing good work climate and developed departmental policy that will reduce the stress level and regularly organizing the training programmes, counseling and medical checkups for stress management of women police constables, regular stress relief camps, yoga sessions and other such programmes should be organized. And also I suggest that the promotional structure within the system should be radically revised to permit a smooth and quick promotional flow from the rank of constable. Decreasing working hours and flexi working time will lead to maintain female police constables personal time. Adequate salary and definite norms should be prescribed for deviations from police station duties.

7. Conclusion

The present study is focused on occupational stress and health problems among female police constables in Hassan district of Karnataka state. Through this study we can find out some occupational stress of female police constables likewise, Negative public image, Increased incidence of stressful events and daily hassles, Inadequate housing / security of the family, Irregular working hours, Inadequate provision for children's education, Inconsistent policies regarding evaluation, accountability and transfer, insufficient personal time (e.g. coffee breaks, lunch), Lack of encouragement from higher male officer, Lack of recognition for good work, Lack of opportunity for advancement, Working overtime, Inadequate salary, Lack of Holidays, Delayed promotion. Due to these all occupational stress female police constables suffering from various health problems like blood pressure, diabetes, heart problem, back pain, joint pain, headache, body pain, eye sight problem, heat. Regular stress relief camps, yoga sessions and other such programmes should be organized by police department. They need adequate salary, recognition for good work, quick promotions, decreasing working hours etc, so that female police constables reduce their occupational stress and health problems, then they play their roles efficiently and effectively.

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