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Stress: An Empirical Study Among Women Police Constables.

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Abstract

Stress is a state of mind when external demand of the role exceeds from the internal capabilities of the person. Women working in law enforcement feel more stress as they face several hardships from both in job as well as with family life. This study examines the stress among women police constables working in Coimbatore district, Tamil nadu. In this descriptive study the sample of 240 was selected by adopting multi- stage sampling and responses were collected using questionnaire method. Results showed that 51.3 percent of respondents were in the age group of 18 – 26, nearly half 44.6 of them were graduates and 49.6 percent were not married. It was also found that education, marital status; experience has made significant variance in the stress among women constables.

Key words: women police, organisational stress, operational stress, Tamil Nadu police, constables.

Introduction

Women are playing dynamic roles from homemaker to Political leader (1–3). In the 21st century, women enter the criminal justice system as a response to social forces like societal violence, individual violent behavior, social problems, child abuse, crime against women and children, and for better protection of women and juveniles. Women in policing have had an important political, social, economic, and psychological impact (4). Stress is considered an integral part of modern life and it is the psychological or physiological reaction that occurs when an individual perceives an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon him and his capability for meeting that demand (5–9) When compared to the other occupations, police job is considered highly stressful and stress is an integral part of the life of a professional police officers (10–14). Police often encounter stressful situations in their daily work, and these stressors have cumulative effects (12,15). Gender plays major role in stress as female police personnel face more stress related problems than their male counterpart as they manage the family commitments and also working in law enforcement (16,17).

Review

Studies have found the factors for stress among police were round-clock duty, no time for family, inadequate salaries, negative interaction with other police staff, poor equipment, no recognition, too many cases, insufficient staff and harassment (18–20). Criticism by superiors, excess work, no rewards, inadequate value given to abilities and commitments and no satisfaction from work found the reasons for stress among police personnel (19,21).

Mathur has found inadequate equipment, fear of severe injury, working conditions, anti-terrorist operations, lack of recognition, being killed on duty, work overload shooting someone in the line of duty, tackle with the public, lack of job satisfaction and police hierarchy were acted as stressors stress among Indian police personnel (22). Political pressure, lack

of time for family, negative public image and low salary were the primary causes of stress among police personnel (23). Shift work closely associated with occupational stress (24).

Methodology

In this descriptive research, the following objectives were framed

1. To study the personal profile of women police constables.
2. To measure the level of stress among the women police constables.
3. To find influence of personal profile on stress of women police constables.

Sampling

In this descriptive study the researcher collected 240 samples by adopting multi – stage sampling. **Stage I** Women police constables working in Coimbatore was purposively selected. **Stage II** Using disproportionate stratified random sampling 120 respondents were selected from rural and urban police limits. **Stage III** In the last stage each 120 respondents were classified by their grade namely, head constables, grade I constables and grade II constables. Without considering the population size disproportionately 40 samples from each grade in both rural and city police were selected randomly to make up the 240 samples.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were framed. 1. There is no significant variance between age, education, marital status, experience, designation and stress of the respondents 2. There is no significant variance between place of work and stress of the respondents.

Instruments used

The researcher used questionnaires for data collection for this study. The questionnaire comprises of two parts. The first part deals with the personal profile namely age, education, religion, marital status, experience, designation and working place of the respondents and the second part of stress was measured by adopting police stress scale developed by Dr.Beulah Shekhar. The police stress scale measures the organizational and operational stress of police personnel.

Results

Personal profile of women police constables

Personal profile of women police constables shows that 51.3 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 18-26 and majority 44.6 percent of the respondents were under graduates. Regarding religion an overwhelming majority 80.4 percent of the respondents were Hindu and 41.3 percent of the respondents belong to backward class and 30.4 percent of them belonged to most backward class. Marital status shows 49.6 percent were not married. Majority 62.1 percent of the respondent were living in a nuclear family, 50.2 percent of the respondents were having two dependents and 47.9 percent of the respondents were experienced in the profession between 1-5 years. Among the respondents 34.6 percent of them have chosen policing as their career because it is a government job followed by 23.8 percent of them were motivated by the factor of to serve the society and 14.6 and 14.2 percent of the respondents were motivated by factors friends and peer groups and inspired by personalities in the profession.

Police stress among women police constables

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of Police stress

Police stress	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Organizational stress	240	20	60	37.01	8.58
Operational stress	240	20	58	36.74	6.42
Overall stress	240	40	118	73.76	13.60

Table 1 show that organizational stress minimum score was 20 and maximum score was 60 with the mean of 37.01 and standard deviation of 8.58. Operational stress minimum score was 20 and the maximum score was 58 with the mean score of 36.74 and standard deviation of 6.42. The overall stress minimum score was 40 and maximum was 118 with the mean of 73.76 and standard deviation of 13.60.

Anova results

Table 2
Analysis of variance between selected personal variables and stress

Personal variables	Stress	Mean	Std deviation	F	P value	Result
Age	Organizational stress	36.02	8.58	1.151	0.329	NS
	Operational stress	36.75	6.42	1.983	0.117	NS
	Overall stress	73.76	13.61	0.648	0.585	NS
Education	Organizational stress	37.02	8.58	10.742	0.03	***
	Operational stress	36.75	6.42	4.274	0.016	***
	Overall stress	73.76	13.61	9.211	0.026	***
Marital status	Organizational stress	37.02	8.58	5.042	0.022	***
	Operational stress	36.75	6.42	7.06	0.01	***
	Overall stress	73.76	13.61	6.43	0.024	***
Experience	Organizational stress	37.02	8.58	4.875	0.045	***
	Operational stress	37.02	8.58	5.699	0.026	***
	Overall stress	75.01	14.76	4.647	0.036	***
Designation	Organizational stress	37.02	8.58	2.588	0.077	NS
	Operational stress	36.75	6.42	2.825	0.061	NS
	Overall stress	73.76	13.61	2.121	0.122	NS

*** = Significant at 0.05 % level

NS = No Significance

The table shows that age [$F(3,236) = .648, p = .585$] and designation [$F(2,237) = 2.121, p = .122$] of women police constables had no significant influence on stress. Hence the proposed hypothesis regarding age and designation was accepted. It was found that educational qualification [$F(3,236) = 9.211, p = .026$], marital status [$F(3,236) = 7.060, p = .010$] and experience [$F(3,236) = 4.647, p = .036$] significantly influenced the stress of women police constables. Hence the proposed hypothesis regarding education, marital status and experience was rejected.

t- test results

Table 3
t test between working place and stress

Stress	Place of work	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	p value	Result
Organizational stress	City Police	120	39.88	8.09	3.03	0.027	***
	Rural Police	120	37.16	9.08			
Operational stress	City Police	120	38.83	6.68	2.637	0.043	***
	Rural Police	120	35.66	6.19			
Overall stress of the respondent	City Police	120	78.71	13.37	1.634	0.036	***
	Rural Police	120	72.82	13.89			

*** = Significant at 0.05 % level

NS = No Significance

It was found that place of working has significantly influenced the organisational stress [t (238) = 3.030, p = 0.027], operational stress [t (238) = 2.637, p = 0.043] and overall stress of the women police constables. Hence the proposed hypothesis of there is no significant variance between working place and stress was rejected.

Conclusion

Policing is considered as most stressful profession than other professions and they have the greater risk of stress. Especially female police personnel face more stress related problems than their male counterpart as they manage the family commitments and also working in law enforcement. Studies have shown that working hours, education, age and relationship with co – worker and superior were the factors which led them to feel stressed. Hence the study was undertaken to find the stress among women police constables working in Coimbatore district. The results shows that women police working in city limits feel more stress than their counterparts working in rural. It was also found that age and designation of women police has not made any significant influence on stress. Stress among women constables was significantly varies in accordance with their educational qualification, marital status, years of experience. The study concludes with suggesting the department to regularly organise training programs and personal counselling for stress management of women police constables.

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