

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

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A REVIEW ON THE OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG WOMEN WORKING IN POLICE DEPARTMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study based on review of literature. Stress plays a part in the lives of everyone. Some stress is not only inevitable, it can be good. For example, the physical stress of “working out” improves your cardiovascular system, and feeling pressure that causes you to study harder for an exam can improve your score. Police stress, however, refers to the negative pressures related to police work. Police officers are not super humans. Occupational stress among police is often viewed as an unlucky, but expected part of police work. Police are like a real heroes, but most of people are unaware the amount of stress that police face every day. Policing is a risky and stressful occupation (Anderson, Litzenberger, & Plecas, 2002; Berg, Hem, Lau, Håseth, & Ekeberg, 2005; Liberman et al., 2002). Acute stress is inherent in police work (Anshel, 2000). Experiences from police work can cause psychological strain and working as a police officer can increase the risk of experiencing psychological discomfort, such as symptoms of stress (Arrendondo et al., 2002). A female police officer may undergo even more scrutiny or stress than her male counterparts.

KEYWORDS: *Stress, Police, Occupational, Psychological Strain.*

INTRODUCTION:

Law enforcement occupations have traditionally been dominated by males. However, with more and more females entering the workforce and more emphasis being placed on equal opportunity hiring, there has been a vast increase in the number of women becoming police officers. Historically, women have played an important role in India. Women warriors have fought courageously for the honor of their motherland. More recently, Kiran Bedi, the first

woman to join the Indian Police Service in 1972, is continuing to make significant contributions toward the progress of Indian society even after her formal retirement from the Services. The induction of women in the Indian police system in comparison to other countries is of recent origin. The need for women police in British India was felt during the labor strike in Kanpur, India in 1938 when women workers had to be controlled, and so, women police were appointed in Kanpur in 1939 (Mahajan, 1982). According to Ghosh (1979), the idea of introducing women into the police force in independent India was first contemplated after the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 to deal with offenses that victimized women, as in kidnapping,



abduction, and rape cases, and in relief camps that housed unattached women and children.

Occupational stress among police is often viewed as an unlucky, but expected part of police work. Police are like a real heroes, but most of people are unaware the amount of stress that police face every day. Police work involves protection of life, safeguarding property through vital patrol techniques, enforcement of laws and ordinances in the place for which the Police station is responsible. Police who are out in the street, every day during their duty are struggle police. They are the first's line of protection between the criminals and the society. 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. Police occupational stress is a widespread problem because of its numerous negative effects on individuals and on police organizations. Officers who experience high levels of occupational stress report a high incidence of physical ailments and psychological problems that affect their work performance. Specifically, they commonly have poor health, are frequently absent from work, experience burnout, are dissatisfied with their jobs and because of weak organizational commitment, they may not fully invest themselves in their work or they may retire prematurely. When individuals are overwhelmed by occupational stress they suffer from increased chronic stress, depression, heart disease, stomach disorders, alcohol and drug use and abuse, divorce, and even suicide attempts. It is therefore critical to understand the sources of police occupational stress (i.e., the stressors) and to implement strategies for reducing stressors or, if they cannot be reduced, for assisting officers in coping effectively with them.

Police officers work stress reactions are always classified as physiological, emotional and behavioral reaction. Physiological reaction may be termed as having higher than normal probability of death from certain illnesses specifically heart attack and monad of health problems such as headaches, high blood pressure and stomach problems. On the hand, emotional reactions may include depression and extreme cases of suicide. Emotion reaction can also be so severe which may be termed as posttraumatic stress disorder. PTSD is always associated to severe and prolonged after one exposure to a series of traumatic events. This may lead to job dissatisfaction, apathy and cynicism. Whereas behavioral reaction may entail reduced level of job performance, errors of judgment, irresponsibility, low morale, absenteeism, tardiness, early retirement and quitting the police service altogether at the organizational level, however at the individual level they include aggression, violence, isolation, excessive drinking and smoking, alcoholism and drug abuse.

Work environment is one of the sources of women police stress it can be causes internally and externally. Internal work environment include factors that are related to organizational structure and climate can be even greater source of stress for the police officers, shift schedules that disrupt normal sleep patterns and social life, authoritarian, management styles, poor interpersonal relationships with supervisors, interdepartmental politics, lack of adequate planning and resources, lack of promotion and transfer opportunities, excessive paperwork, lack of autonomy in performing duties and lack of recognition for work accomplishment are among the organizational stressors faced by members of the police force.

Women constitute only 5.33% of police forces in India:

According to home ministry statistics, out of 15,85,117 personnel working in state police forces, only 84,479 or just 5.33% are women.

Besides, there are just 499 all-women police stations in the country out of a total 15,000 stations.

The demand for more women in police forces has been growing since the gang rape of a 23-year-old girl in Delhi on December 16. There were also 2, 28, 650 incidents of crimes against women reported in 2011, of which 24,206 were of rape.

Uttar Pradesh has 2,586 women police personnel which is just 1.49% of the total 1, 73, 341 personnel while Andhra Pradesh has 2,031 policewomen, just 2.27% of its total 89,325 police personnel.

There are 1,485 policewomen (2.18%) in Bihar out of the total 67,964 police personnel. Madhya Pradesh, where the highest number of rapes took place in 2011, there are 3,010 policewomen (3.93%) out of the 76,506 personnel.

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Union Territory of Chandigarh have relatively better representation of

women in their police forces.

Out of the 1,34,696 police personnel in Maharashtra, 20,062 or 14.89% are women while in Tamil Nadu out of the 95,745 police personnel, 10,118 (10.57%) are women and in Chandigarh, 13.48% or 985 are policewomen out of the 7,308 police personnel.

There are 5,356 policewomen (7.13%) in Delhi out of 75,169 police personnel.

Meaning of stress:

Stress is a general term applied to various mental and physiological pressures experienced by people feel in their lives.

Definitions of stress:

Stress may be defined as "a state of psychological and / or physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual's ability and / or motivation to meet those demands."

Dr. Hans Selye, one of the leading authorities on the concept of stress, described stress as "the rate of all wear and tear caused by life."

Stress can be positive or negative. Stress can be positive when the situation offers an opportunity for a person to gain something. It acts as a motivator for peak performance. Stress can be negative when a person faces social, physical, organizational and emotional problems.

Meaning of occupation stress:

The Spielberger State-Trait (STP) model of occupational stress (Spielberger, Vagg, & Wasala, 2003) conceptualizes stress as a complex process that consists of three major components, namely sources of stress that are encountered in the work environment, the perception and appraisal of a particular stressor by an employee, and the emotional reactions that are evoked when a stressor is appraised as threatening.

Definition of occupational stress:

According to the current World Health Organization's (WHO) definition, occupational or work-related stress "is the response people may have when offered with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope.

Duties

There was a general consensus that women should not be used for guard duties and night beats. Even in Central Police Organizations, women personnel are not used for guard duties or armed duties.

Women Police constitute a sizeable portion of TSP and the district Armed Reserves, which are mainly intended for use in law and order situations and riot control. TSP and AR contingents are often posted in remote areas on picket duty for long periods. As it is difficult to provide suitable accommodation and toilet facilities for women, senior officers prefer men companies/platoons. In other situations where violence is anticipated, again women units are not preferred. In view of this, men in Armed Reserves complain that they are overburdened with work, while women contingents are kept on reserve or deployed on lighter duties. Most of the guard duties, escort of hardcore prisoners, pickets and law and order duties are done by the men. Personnel from a district AR which has strength of about 300, with one-third women, voiced the grievance that 200 men have to do the work of 300 personnel.

Men Police personnel seem to feel that women could be more usefully employed in administrative work and certain other specified functions.

A woman Sub Inspector has been appointed for each Police Station but many of them are idle because specific duties have not been earmarked for them.

A view widely expressed, including many women Police personnel, was that 30% reservation for women in TSP and AR is not necessary and that women are better suited for duties in Police Stations.

The Changing Roles of Women Police

Early descriptions of the experiences of women who were among the first to be employed in the police show that, despite the stultifying influence of the male dominated policing culture, they did perform a valuable, though segregated, function in assisting women victims and dealing with women offenders (Corbo, 2004; Darien, 2002; Gillen, 2003; Jackson, 2003; Schulz, 2004a, 2004b, and Wells, 2005). According to Alice Stebbins Wells (1913), apart from patrolling amusement places, women officers had “regular office hours and women come for help and advice which they would not go to the regular police department.” This created a marginal role for women in policing, but provided “a female gendered identity which had as a premise the idea that women were necessary and natural protectors of women and children...”

It is also apparent that women helped shape the direction of police reform in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century. For example, they actively searched their communities for the social conditions that supposedly hid or encouraged crime, such as dark streets, certain types of dance halls and “blind pigs” (places where people bought and/or drank liquor illegally), and thus helped create a safer environment for women and children.

Policewomen in plain clothes regularly patrolled certain public areas, such as theaters, amusement parks, and railway stations, with an eye towards detecting and interrupting illegal behavior for evidence of offenses against middle-class moral standards, such as the sale of allegedly obscene literature and erotic styles of dancing. In many respects they were public chaperones (Appier, 1992, p.13).

In the 1910s to 1930s, women officers in America were assimilated into the general crime prevention role of the police, even though the tasks they performed in this role were rather circumscribed (Appier, 1992). Later, when policing began to move to a crime control model, women officers increasingly found their work devalued and their functions increasingly segregated. This trend culminated in the establishment of women police bureau’s where women and children coming to police attention would be channeled for help in personal matters. These bureaus were subsequently abolished as a result of the broader social movement for equal status and employment for women.

One of the first empirical studies of women police was conducted by Martin (1989b). Her work explored the effect on recruitment of women officers of the 1972 Amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 eliminating discriminatory practices. Her data from 319 agencies show a marked upturn in recruitment, but data on retention and promotion show a mixed picture regarding the status of women in policing. Most had followed a career path somewhat different from men and while some reached the higher ranks, this was not in proportion to the numbers recruited. Martin (1990, p.xvii) comments: “Despite changes in equal opportunity policies many of the barriers women officers face are built into a formal organizational culture of policing, as well as culturally prescribed patterns of male/female interaction which remain strong.” Women were kept out of any upward mobility because of the often reported constraints such as male colleagues’ appraisals, chivalry attitudes by their supervisors and the perceived notion of lack of commitment to a police career.

In summary, women were first inducted into the police force to fill an auxiliary role, which helps explain the slow progress they have made. However, over the years, policies promoting equal opportunity and discouraging sex discrimination and sexual harassment have made some impact on the numbers of women recruited and on their deployment in a wider range of duties.

Symptoms of Stress:

These symptoms can be physical, psychosocial, and behavioural in nature, as illustrated in the following table (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2000):

Physical	Psychosocial	Behavioral
Headaches	Anxiety	Overeating or loss of appetite
Chest pain	Irritability	Impatience
Shortness of breath	Sadness	Quickness to argue
Thrashing heart	Defensiveness	Procrastination
High blood pressure	Anger	Increased use of alcohol / drugs
Muscle aches	Mood swings	Increased smoking
Heartburn	Hypersensitivity	Withdrawal or isolation from others
Constipation or diarrhea	Apathy	Neglect of responsibility
Increased wetness	Depression	Poor job performance
Fatigue	Slowed thinking or racing thoughts	Poor personal hygiene
Insomnia	Feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, or of being trapped	Change in religious practices
Frequent illness		Changes in close family relationships

Occupational Stress: A Conceptual Note:

Job stress is defined as the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), 1998). Wainwright & Calnan, (2002) suggest that occupational stress indicates the ‘natural’ limit of human endurance and resilience, a product of the unsustainable pressures and demands placed on the worker by late capitalism. Environmental factors that are involved in the stress process are called job stressors, and individual reactions to these stressors are referred to as stress reactions or strains (Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000). Determinants of strain can generally be grouped into three major categories: job specific sources, organizational sources and individual sources (Cooper et al., 2001).

Under the rubric of “environmental” sources of strain, Cartwright & Cooper (1997) have further differentiated six primary work-related stressors:

- Factors intrinsic to the job itself (i.e. long hours, work overload, time pressure)
- Roles in the organization
- Relationships at work, such as those with supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates
- Career development issues
- Organizational factors, including the structure and climate of the organization as well as its culture and political environment
- The home-work interface

Some other stressors:

- Lack of superior interest
- Sexual harassment
- Temptation of taking bribes
- Use force when job demands
- Un fair treatment by superiors
- Irregular work hours
- Problem at home
- Negative public image of police
- Work overload
- Inadequate resources
- Unpleasant duties
- Competition with co-workers
- Dealing with suicide scenes
- Dealing with fatal accidents
- Low salary
- Boring routine tasks

- Makefast decisions
- Contact with criminals
- Uncertainty about promotion
- Injured while on duty

CONCLUSION:

The study explained 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 Inadequate salary, Delivering a death message or bad news are the primary causes of stress among police constables. Further, it empirically investigated that age, gender, religion, service of the years, marital status, income and the place of residence in the same field has significant association with stress level among police constables. The study suggests to regularly organizing the training programs, counseling and medical checkups for stress management of women police constables.

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