

Occupational stress of men and women police

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ABSTRACT

A study on occupational stress of men and women police was carried out in the year 2014-15 in Dharwad taluk with the objectives to assess the occupational stress of men and women police and to know the relation between selected demographic variables with occupational stress of police. A total of 120 police belonging to 21-60 years age group were randomly selected from 22 police stations of Dharwad taluk. The occupational stress was assessed using occupational stress scale developed by Srivastav and Sing, 1984, socio-economic status was assessed using socio-economic status scale developed by Aggarwal *et al.* (2005) and self structured questionnaire were used to collect information. The data was collected through questionnaire method along with personal interview of the respondents. The results revealed that 58.33 per cent of police had moderate level of occupational stress followed by high and low level (35% and 6.67 %, respectively). Occupational stress had significant and positive relationship and duty period, distance travelled between residence and work place pointing out that higher the duty period and distance between residence and work place increases stress. There was significant and negative relationship between family size and occupational stress indicating that higher the family size decreases the stress. There was no significant relationship between age, education, marital status, work experience, work satisfaction, socio-economic status and occupational stress.

INTRODUCTION

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 the cardiovascular system. Police stress, however, refers to the negative pressures related to police work. Police are not super humans. According to Goolkasian *et al.* (1986) police were affected by their daily exposure to human indecency and pain; that dealing with a suspicious and sometimes hostile public takes its toll on them. The other causes of serious job stress included shift changes, the long periods of duty, and the ever-present danger in

policing. The stress of life describes the effect of long-term environmental threats calls “stressors”. An unrelieved effort to cope with stressors can lead to heart disease, high blood pressure, ulcers, digestive disorders, and headaches. Stressors in police work fall into four categories: Stresses inherent in police work, stresses arising internally from police department practices and policies, external stresses stemming from the criminal justice system and the society at large and internal stresses confronting individual officers (Sundaram and Kumaran, 2012).

Police stress arises from several features of police work. Alterations in body rhythms from monthly shift

rotation, for example, reduce productivity. The change from a day to a swing or graveyard, shift not only requires biological adjustment but also complicates officers' personal lives. Role conflicts between the job-serving the public, enforcing the law and upholding ethical standards and personal responsibilities as spouse, parent and friend act as stressors. Other stressors in police work include: Threats to officers' health and safety, boredom, alternating with the need for sudden alertness and mobilized energy, responsibility for protecting the lives of others, continual exposure to people in pain or distress, the need to control emotions even when provoked, the presence of a gun, even during off-duty hours and the fragmented nature of police work with only rare opportunities to follow cases to conclusion or even to obtain feedback or follow-up information. Hence the present study is an attempt to focus on "occupational stress of men and women police".

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Dharwad taluk of Karnataka state during the year 2014-15. The research design followed was correlation design and differential design with randomized technique. In Hubli-Dharwad there were about 22 police stations covering rural and urban areas of Dharwad taluk. There were 115-120 women police and 3000-3500 men police working in various police stations. Among total, 50 per cent of women police and 2-5 per cent of men police who were working at rural and urban police stations were considered for study. The study comprised of 120 police from 12 police stations, among which 60 were men and 60 were women police selected from rural and urban areas of Dharwad taluk. The structured questionnaire was used to collect the personal information like name, age, education, number of family members, years of experience, location of police station, distance between residence and work place, duty period and opinion about the work. The socio-economic status scale developed by Aggarwal *et al.* (2005) was used to know the SES. The socio-economic status has been classified as upper high, high, upper middle, lower middle, poor middle and very poor. Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastav and Sing (1984) was used to assess the occupational stress of women and men police. The scale consisted of 46 items with 12 components *viz.*, role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressures, responsibility of a person, under

participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability. Response to each statement was obtained using a 5 point likert type scale. Occupational stress was classified as low, moderate and high levels depending upon total scores.

OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS

The demographic characteristics of the men and women police included general characteristics and work related profile of men and women police is indicated in Table 1. The age range of the police was between 21 and 60 years. Majority of the police (45.8%) were in between 21 and 30 years followed by 31-40 years, 41-50 years and 51-60 years, respectively. Around 52.5 per cent of the police belonged to small sized family followed by medium and large sized families. Regarding educational level of the police, about half of the police (50.8%) had completed PUC followed by degree and above (43.3%) and SSLC (5.8%). Most of the police were married (68.3%) and 31.7 per cent were unmarried. In case of caste, 48.3 per cent of the police were from other backward caste followed by upper caste, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe. Socio-economic status (SES) of police indicated that about 64.2 per cent of the police were in upper middle SES followed by lower middle (31.7 %) and very few in high category of SES (4.2 %). The variation in the SES of police constables was observed because SES is measured as economic status from all the sources of income including their salary and contributions of family members these are in line with the study conducted by Sundaram and Kumaran (2012).

The work related profile of police (Table 2) revealed that, the work experience of police ranges between 2-30 years. Majority of the police personnel (62.5%) had 2-10 years of experience followed by more than 21 years of experience. With respect to duty period, about 43.3 per cent of the police indicated that they worked more than 17 hours per day followed by 29.2 per cent worked for 9-16 hours and 27.5 per cent worked for 8 hours per day. It is highlighted that 66.7 per cent of men work more number of hours when compared with women. As per the government rules it is compulsory to work for 8 hours per day, but in case of police it is observed that about 72.2 per cent of police worked more than 9 hours per day which is higher than minimum work hours per day. It was interesting to note that 55 per cent of women police

work only for 8 hours per day and all men police worked for more than 9 hours per day which might be one of the reasons for stress among men police. About 55.0 per cent of the police had to travel up to 5 km distance to reach work place from residence and remaining 45 per cent of the police had to travel more than 6 km of distance to reach the destination of work. Travelling from one place to another place might cause stress among police due to traffic, waste of time in journey, pollution, no facility to travel etc. With respect to work satisfaction, more than half of the police (52.5%) were satisfied with police work, 25.8 per cent were not satisfied with work and about 21.7 per cent of the police were in confusion state whether satisfied or not satisfied with police work. The police personnel who expressed work satisfaction opined that they have respect towards their job, respect in society,

helping people in difficult times or controlling anti social elements, patriotism, uniform, power and challenging nature of job. Those who have indicated as not satisfied with work were listed problems as, work load, problems with superiors, peers and juniors, inadequate resources and facilities, political pressure, allocation of leave, salary etc. Similar factors which deals with satisfaction of job has been observed in the study conducted by Nagar (2009).

The results of component wise percentage distribution of men and women police by level of occupational stress is presented in Table 3. In case of role overload, majority of police (80% men and 65% women) had high levels of role overload followed by moderate level and low) levels. It means that these police had high role overload, which makes the person frustrated

Table 1 : General characteristics of men and women police			(n=120)
Variables	Men (60)	Women (60)	Total police (120)
Age (years)			
21-30	33 (55.0)	22 (36.7)	55 (45.8)
31-40	14 (23.3)	16 (26.7)	30 (25.0)
41-50	07 (11.7)	16 (26.7)	23 (19.2)
51-60	06 (10.0)	06 (10.0)	12 (10.0)
Family size			
Small	30 (50.0)	33 (55.0)	63 (52.5)
Medium	27 (45.0)	24 (40.0)	51 (42.5)
Large	03 (5.0)	03 (5.0)	06 (5.0)
Educational level			
SSLC	03 (5.0)	04 (6.7)	07 (5.8)
PUC	28 (46.7)	33 (55.6)	61 (50.8)
Degree and above	29 (48.3)	23 (38.3)	52 (43.3)
Marital status			
Married	38 (63.3)	44 (73.3)	82 (68.3)
Unmarried	22 (36.7)	16 (26.7)	38 (31.7)
Caste			
Upper cast	19 (31.7)	26 (43.3)	45 (37.5)
OBC	33 (55.0)	25 (41.7)	58 (48.3)
Scheduled cast	07 (11.7)	07 (11.7)	14 (11.7)
Scheduled tribe	01 (1.7)	02 (3.3)	03 (2.5)
Socio-economic status			
Upper high	-	-	-
High	02 (6.7)	03 (5.0)	05 (4.2)
Upper middle	40 (66.7)	37 (61.7)	77 (64.2)
Lower middle	18 (30.0)	20 (33.3)	38 (31.7)
Poor middle	-	-	-
Very poor	-	-	-
Total	60(100)	60(100)	120(100)

by challenge and may find it difficult to perform effectively in real situations. There was no significant association between men and women police. As per mean men had high role overload than women police these results are in line with the study conducted by Hunnur *et al.* (2014). Sibnath *et al.* (2008) revealed that stress was due to excessive workload, inadequate rest and time, leave and salary issue. With respect to role ambiguity, 53.3 per cent of men police and 50 per cent of women police were in moderate levels followed by 41.7 per cent of men and 45.0 per cent of women police were in low level and 5 per cent of both men and women police were in high levels. There no significant association between men and women. This means that both men and women police had similar levels of stress due to role ambiguity. This indicated that police require clear instructions from higher officials regarding in their role in different situations. With respect to role conflict, more than half of the police (56.7% men and 83.3% women) were belonged to moderate level followed by high (31.7% men and 13.3% women) and low (11.7% men and 3.3% women police) levels of role conflict. As many of the police indicated moderate level of role conflict, it may be because of limited resources, infrastructures and varied problems situated. The chi-square value (10.30) was significant and there was significant association between the gender and role conflict of police.

In case of unreasonable group and political pressure, about 50 per cent of men police and 41.7 per cent of women police had high levels of stress from group and political pressure followed by moderate and low levels of occupational stress. Which means political pressure within department or outside department causing stress among police personnel. There was no significant association between men and women police. These results are in line with the study conducted by Sibnath *et al.* (2008) revealed that stress was due the factors such as excessive workload, inadequate rest and time, political pressure, lack of co-ordination among colleague. Nagar (2009) concluded that higher percentage of stress in police work was due to work load, problems with superiors, peers and juniors, political pressure and salary. In case of responsibility of a person, majority of men and women police (66.7% and 55%, respectively) belonged to moderate level followed by low and high levels and none of the women found under high dimension of responsibility of a person. There was significant association between gender and responsibility of a person. It may be because men police has entered the police force much earlier than women police. Usually challenging responsibility will be handled by men police than women police. With respect to under participation, majority of police (40% men and 51.7% women) had high levels of under participation followed by moderate (28% men and 40% women) level

Table 2 : Work profile of men and women police				(n=120)
Variables	Men (60)	Women (60)	Total (120)	
Work experience (no of years)				
2-5	16 (26.7)	22 (36.7)	38 (31.7)	
6-10	19 (31.7)	18 (30.0)	37 (30.8)	
11-15	02 (3.3)	04 (6.7)	06 (5.0)	
16-20	13 (21.7)	05 (8.3)	18 (15.0)	
>21	10 (16.7)	11 (18.3)	21 (17.5)	
Duty period (hours per day)				
8	-	33 (55.0)	33 (27.5)	
9-16	20 (33.3)	15 (25.0)	35 (29.2)	
>17	40 (66.7)	12 (20.0)	52 (43.3)	
Distance between residence and work place (km)				
0-5	37 (61.7)	29 (48.3)	66 (55.0)	
6-10	14 (23.3)	13 (21.7)	27 (22.5)	
>11	09 (15.0)	18 (30.0)	27 (22.5)	
Work satisfaction				
Not satisfied	28 (46.7)	03 (5.0)	31 (25.8)	
Neither satisfied or not satisfied	15 (25.0)	11 (18.3)	26 (21.7)	
Satisfied	17 (28.3)	46 (76.7)	63 (52.5)	

and low (31.7% men and 8.3% women) levels. There was significant association between gender and under participation of police. It means that poor participation in the department work causing stress. It might be due to unequal distribution of work, role ambiguity and role conflict. To increase the participation in work the higher officials should give clear instructions to their sub ordinates without any partiality. There was significant difference between men and women police.

Regarding powerlessness, about 51.7 per cent, 38.3 per cent and 10.0 per cent of the men police belonged to low, moderate and high dimension, respectively. 41.7 per cent, 45.0 per cent and 13.3 per cent of the women police belonged to low, moderate and high dimension of powerlessness, respectively. Which indicated that not having power to do the things / work causes stress or waiting for the order of higher authority even in critical situation causing stress. There was no significant association gender and powerlessness. As per mean women was suffering more from powerlessness than men police. This may be due to male dominant structure of our society. In case of poor peer relations, more than half of the police (76.7% men and 55% women) were belonged to moderate level followed by high and low levels of poor peer relations. This indicated that peer support helps an individual to come out from stress and strenuous situations. The chi-square value (6.51) was significant at the 0.05 level of significance. It revealed that there was significant association between the gender and poor peer

relations of police. This indicated that lack of communication, limited peer support, less interaction between colleagues may cause stress.

With respect to intrinsic impoverishment, 61.7 per cent, 21.7 per cent and 16.7 per cent of the men police belonged to low, moderate and high dimension of intrinsic impoverishment; 45.0 per cent of the women police belonged to low as well as moderate dimension, respectively and only 10.0 per cent of the women police belonged to high dimension of intrinsic impoverishment. The chi-square value (7.46) was significant at 0.05 level of significance. Regarding low status dimension of occupational stress, about 60.0 per cent of men and 55 per cent of women, 35.0 per cent men and 40 per cent women, 5.0 per cent of both men and women police were in low, moderate and high dimension of low status, respectively. This may be due to efficient higher officials and providing only initial information regarding any problems. Usually higher officials are involved in in-depth investigations and taking decisions regarding complicated problems. Police work under them as sub ordinates and information facilitators. It was also noted that low status was causing less stress when compared with other components of occupational stress. There was no significant association between men and women police.

With respect to strenuous working conditions, 46.7 per cent of men police had high level of strenuous working conditions followed by 43.3 per cent moderate and 10 per cent of men police had low dimension. 58.3 per cent

Sr. No.	OS components	Men (60)			Women (60)			X ²	Men	Women	t-value
		Low	Moderate	High	Low	Moderate	High		Mean ± SD	Mean ±SD	
1.	Role overload	03(5.0)	09(15.0)	48(80.0)	07(11.7)	14(23.3)	39(65.0)	3.16	24.92 ± 3.28	23.27 ± 3.79	2.55*
2.	Role ambiguity	25(41.7)	32(53.3)	03(5.0)	27(45.0)	30(50.0)	03(5.0)	0.14	10.98 ± 2.56	11.02 ± 1.71	0.084
3.	Role conflict	07(11.7)	34(56.7)	19(31.7)	02(3.3)	50(83.3)	08(13.3)	10.30**	16.27 ± 2.39	15.47 ± 1.84	2.05*
4.	Group and political pressure	09(15.0)	21(35.0)	30(50.0)	16(26.7)	19(31.7)	25(41.7)	2.51	14.27 ± 3.44	13.30 ± 3.17	1.60
5.	Responsibility of a person	11(18.3)	40(66.7)	09(15.0)	27(45.0)	33(55.0)	-	16.40**	10.17 ± 2.04	8.58 ± 1.78	4.54**
6.	Under participation	19(31.7)	17(28.3)	24(40.0)	05(8.3)	24(40.0)	31(51.7)	10.25**	12.28 ± 3.33	13.73 ± 2.46	2.71*
7.	Powerlessness	31(51.7)	23(38.3)	06(10.0)	25(41.7)	27(45.0)	08(13.3)	1.24	8.48 ± 2.32	9.28 ± 2.04	2.06*
8.	Poor peer relations	03(5.0)	46(76.7)	11(18.3)	04(6.7)	33(55.0)	23(38.3)	6.51*	12.10 ± 1.63	12.58 ± 2.12	1.40
9.	Intrinsic impoverishment	37(61.7)	13(21.7)	10(16.7)	27(45.0)	27(45.0)	06(10.0)	7.46*	10.13 ± 2.89	10.93 ± 2.15	1.72
10.	Low status	36(60.0)	21(35.0)	03(5.0)	33(55.0)	24(40.0)	03(5.0)	0.33	7.40 ± 2.11	7.38 ± 1.95	0.04
11.	Strenuous working conditions	06(10.0)	26(43.3)	28(46.7)	13(21.7)	35(58.3)	12(20.0)	10.30**	14.00 ± 3.32	12.65 ± 2.12	2.65*
12.	Unprofitability	10(16.7)	30(50.0)	20(33.3)	10(16.7)	33 (55.0)	17 (28.3)	0.38	7.38 ± 1.74	7.03 ± 1.69	1.20
13.	Occupational stress	06(10.0)	34(56.67)	20(33.3)	02(3.33)	36 (60.0)	22(36.67)	2.15	148.20±17.80	145.23±9.60	1.14

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages * and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

of men police had moderate level of strenuous working conditions followed by 21.7 per cent low and 20 per cent of men police had high dimension. The chi-square value (10.30) was significant. It revealed that there was significant association between gender and strenuous working condition of police. The reason may be tense circumstances in their work, it might be because of long working hours, work overload, or any communal conflicts in sensitive areas. In order to prevention as well as detection, crime police stations should be separated from law and order police stations. These results are in line with the study conducted by Hunnur *et al.* (2014) revealed that high stress causing components were role overload, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure and strenuous working conditions. In case of unprofitability, more than half of the police (50% men and 55% women) were belonged to moderate level followed by high and low levels of poor peer relations. Though the police work is challenging and daring, the returns and appreciation they receive after completion of work found not high as in the other government department. This kind of unprofitability and lack of appreciation regarding their work causes stress among police personnel. There was not significant association as well as not significant difference between the gender and unprofitability of police.

In case of overall occupational stress, majority (56.67% and 60%) of men and of women police had moderate levels (33.3% men and 36.67% women) of stress followed by high and low levels (10% men and 3.33% women) of stress. However there was no significant association between men and women police. Indicating that irrespective of gender, policing causes occupational stress. These results are in lined with the study conducted by Nagar (2009) pointed out that majority of the police

had moderate stress followed by high and low stress level. As per mean men had high stress than women police. The reasons could be having to work for more than 17 hours per day, distant travelling from residence to work place, lack of facilities in the department, dealing with criminals, more work load, alertness during duty hours. These results are supported by the study conducted by Hunnar *et al.* (2014) and Agolla (2009) revealed that high stress causing components were role overload, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure and least stress causing components were unprofitability and low status. Nagar (2009) concluded that higher percentage of stress in police work was due to work load, problems with superiors, peers and juniors, political pressure and salary. Oweke *et al.* (2014) were reported that working environment, work load and work schedule were causes of stress.

The results (Table 4) revealed that there was significant and positive relation between duty period, distance between residence and workplace and occupational stress which indicated that higher the duty period increases the occupational stress of police. It might be due to long hours of duty, no rest and no time for family. It also indicated that distance between residence and work place increases occupational stress of police which might be due to the pollution, transport problem and long hours of journey. There was significant and negative relationship between family size, work satisfaction and occupational stress which indicated that higher the family size increases stress among police and those who were not satisfied with job were more having higher occupational stress than other. These results are supported by the study conducted by Solekar *et al.* (2011) and Deschamps *et al.* (2003) revealed that number of working hours has significant association with stress

Sr. No.	Demographic variables	Occupational stress (r)
1.	Age	-0.11
2.	Education	-0.04
3.	Marital status	0.01
4.	Family size	-0.18*
5.	Work experience	-0.12
6.	Duty period	0.18*
7.	Work satisfaction	-0.33**
8.	Distance from residence to work place	0.18*
9.	Socio-economic status	0.05

* and ** indicates significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

among police personnel. He *et al.* (2005) revealed that work environment problems explained more stress when compared with gender and race. Sibnath *et al.* (2008); Haines (2003); Mustafa *et al.* (2013) and Deb *et al.* (2008), expressed that stress was due to long duty hours, political pressure, excessive work load, lack of coordination among colleagues. Sekar *et al.* (2013) pointed out that there was no association between gender, years of service and income with occupational stress.

The study concluded that 58.33 per cent of police had moderate level of occupational stress followed by high and low level. Out of 12 dimensions, the high stress causing components in police department were role overload, role conflict, under participation, strenuous working conditions and poor peer relation. Least stress causing components were unprofitability, low status, powerlessness and responsibility of a person. In case of overall occupational stress men had higher mean score than women police indicating men had high occupational stress than women police. There was no significant difference between men and women police in any of the components as well as in overall occupational stress.

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