



ORGANISATIONAL STRESS - A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WOMEN CIVIL POLICE OFFICERS IN THRISSUR DISTRICT IN KERALA

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Abstract

Stress and anxiety has become pervading feature of people's life in modern world. Policing is considered as the one of the most stressful occupation. The workplace is a constant source of stress for them. The present study attempts to identify organisational factors which lead to job stress among women civil police officers in Thrissur district in the State of Kerala and its mental and physical consequences among them. The study reveals that the organisational factors such as work overload, dead line to complete the work, excessive responsibilities, frustrations, boredom and tiresome work, frequent transfers, unfair distribution of work, less promotion chances, gender discrimination and underestimation from the public are the factors which lead to organisational stress.

Keywords: Organizational Factors, Consequences, Women Civil Police Officers, Job Stress.

Introduction

Stress is a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances. Stress and anxiety has become pervading features of people's life in modern world. Factors causing stress can be internal and external. Internal stress emanates from within an individual and external stress from the environment in which they lives. External stressors may be group level, occupational and extra organisational. Organisational stressors are present at the organisational environment and create stress for a majority of the employees in the organisation.

Work of a police officer has been considered as a stressful occupation. There are lots of factors which creates stress among civil police officers. Stress in the workplace can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. The physical threats in police operational duties have been regarded as inherent causes of stress in police work, but organizational factors such as work overload, time pressure, inadequate resources, manpower shortage, lack of communication, managerial styles etc. emerge as more stressful to civil police officer. Generally police are trained for their operational duties and it is not sufficient to cope with their organizational stress.

The impact of organisational stress in police department is manifested in different ways, such as somatic and mental health problems, burnout, depression etc. The Present study is an attempt to identify the organisational factors which leads to stress among women civil police officers.

Statement of the Problem

Women are an important element of our Society. Women who were the most dormant segment of population have now become active participants in all walks of life. Women are becoming not only a significant unit of the society but also influencing the course of social change. Now their contribution for the development of the society is equal to their counterpart, men. The modern society has started recognizing the individual identity of women. They contribute for the development of the society in equally to their counterpart. Men generally concentrate in their occupation. Family affairs are handled by their spouse, but as far as women are concerned, both family and occupation are equally important for them and they are expected to perform in both. Balancing the work & family roles has become an important matter and family issue. There are many factors in working women's lives that leads to stresses. They deal with home and family issues as well as job stress on a daily basis.

The job of a women civil police officer is very stressful. They normally deal with the negative sides of the society. Along with that, they face disapproval from their male colleagues, family members and society. They always need to prove themselves efficient and capable of handling the pressures arisen from this job in front of



fellow officers and public. These all results in stress among women civil police officers. Stress will result in physical and mental problems. Along with that, job as a police officer's hinder them from non-police friendships, important social events and interferes in family schedule. In this situation, it is highly relevant to conduct a study to find out personal factors that affecting job stress and its consequences. The present paper is an attempt in this direction.

Significance of the Study

Stress is unavoidable part of modern life. It may lead to various problems like headache, high blood pressure, trouble sleeping, inefficiency, burnout, etc. Excessive stress could lead to psychological problems like depression and anxiety. Stress need to be controlled and it is only possible through identifying its sources. Thus it can be reduced through adopting various coping strategies. That will finally results in increasing the efficiency of police officers. Efficient police officers are a major factor required for the normal and peaceful life of the society, which is the ultimate aim of every government. It is expected that the outcome of the present study will be useful to minimise the organisational stress level of women civil officers in the State of Kerala.

Literature Review

The prominent studies conducted so far in relation to the present work are briefly reviewed below.

- a. Bhagat (1983) in the study "Effects of stressful life events on individual performance effectiveness and work adjustment processes within organizational settings: A research model." has reported that work performance can be seriously impaired by external stressors. There are many aspects of organizational life that can become external stressors. These include issues of structure, monotony, a lack of opportunity for advancement, excessive responsibilities, ambiguous demands, value conflicts, and unrealistic workloads. A person's non-working life can also contain stressors that negatively impact job performance.
- b. Gokulan.M.S (2010) in his study "A study on job stress among traffic police professionals with a special reference to Kochi city" finds that traffic policemen regardless their job level is undergoing considerable level of job stress throughout their career. Since job role seems to be one of the major stressful elements in work, better understanding towards their roles may change the situation. Generally the police profession is considered as generating least promotions. Researchers went across with the experience that several policemen who completed more than 15 years of service still in the same post from where they had started with. Researchers feels that lack of promotion is the main reason why new generation is not attracted to the profession.
- c. BaumiOmalayo (2012) in his study "Effect of gender and status on job stress among police officers in Ekti state of Nigeria" points out that female police officers experience high significant stress level than the male police officers. The responsibilities of the female population as a result of cultural values and societal expectations have negative effect on their physical well-being and coping mechanisms on the job. They usually have very little time – their pent-up tension that they have been keeping or harboring from their workplace. Furthermore, the result of this study revealed that senior police officers do not experience more stress on the job than the junior police officers.
- d. Anbhule et al.,(2013) in the study "Study of job related stress and application of stress management strategies for traffic police in Pune city" found that maximum respondents are feeling stress on the job which is not a good sign for good job performance. So feeling stress on the job is the most important problem found during the study. One of the job requirement is to remember many things may be responsible for causing stress among traffic police. Due to feeling stress on the job some of respondents are having the addiction habit. It is clearly seen that they are having some physical symptoms like upset stomach, stomach ache, misbalancing heart beats, migraine, and trouble in sleeping at night.
- e. Jayanthi.P.Nair et al., (2013) in a study entitled "Correlates of job stress in policing: A comparative study of women and men police" found that 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. This points towards the fact that many of these sources of job stress can be dealt with by making appropriate policy decisions. It is high time that steps be initiated to better police-public relations in order to produce changes in the public's attitudes towards police and also to protect the police from victimization.

- f. Fatma Rizvi (2015) in her study "Challenges of women in Indian police system" points out that major obstacle for police women is society's traditional attitudes regarding women's role in society, an attitude which becomes more problematic as these women work in a male-dominated field. Being a women this job stress not only affects police women's life but also their families. The dual responsibility of work and family affect both men and women, but it is the women who are mainly responsible for the house chores. It affects women more since they do most of the work associated with the household activities, apart from taking care of children, older family members and other department. Mrs.Savitha.G⁵⁹ (2016) in her study "Stress management - A study among women police officials" suggested that majority of the respondents are not able to balance home and their career. They face problems like no time to spend with family members, not possible to attend functions and increased conflict with family members. Respondents also encounter problem like lack of opportunity to handle critical jobs while they work in police department.
- g. Mrs. Savitha. G(2016) in her study "Stress management - A study among women police officials" suggested that majority of the respondents are not able to balance home and their career. They face problems like no time to spend with family members, not possible to attend functions and increased conflict with family members. Respondents also encounter problem like lack of opportunity to handle critical jobs while they work in police department.

Objectives of the Paper

The main objectives of the present study are as follows.

1. To identify organisational factors which leads to job stress among women civil police officers.
2. To analyse the mental consequences of job stress and
3. To analyse the physical consequences of job stress.

Hypotheses

1. H_0 : Organisational factors do not create any stress among women police officers.
2. H_0 : Consequences of mental stress of Women Civil police Officers are not moderate.
3. H_0 : Consequences of physical stress of Women Civil police Officers are not moderate

Research Methodology and Data base

1.1. Sources of data

Both primary and secondary data are used for the purpose of the study. Primary data were collected by administrating a pretested structured schedule. Secondary data were collected from books, periodicals, project reports, research journals, articles, Kerala police department and various websites.

1.2. Sampling method

Simple random sampling method was adopted for selecting the Women civil police officers from the district of Thrissur. Number of police stations having women civil police officers under city is seventeen and it is twenty seven in rural section. Total strength of civil police officers in the district is 1399, among them 180 are WCPO. List of rural WCPO was available from collectorate, Thrissur. And the list of city WCPO was available from police academy, Ramavarmapuram, Thrissur. The sample size of the study is sixty, which is 33.3% of the total strength of WCPO. The respondents were selected from the list using lottery method.



1.3. Variables Used for the Analysis

The analysis is based on the following variables.

1. Feel overloaded with work
2. Struggle to meet deadlines
3. Carry lot of responsibilities
4. Struggle to get along with superiors, subordinates and peers
5. Have to tolerate a lot of frustration
6. No control over work schedule
7. Work is boring and not interesting
8. Frequent transfer
9. Unfair distribution of work
10. Less chances of getting promotion
11. Need to prove efficiency in front of public and society
12. Under estimation faced from others on the basis of gender discrimination

1.4. Tools of Analysis

The analysis of the data has been done with the help of computer applying Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20). The data collected have been classified, tabulated, coded and edited. The statistical tools used for analyzing data include Z test, ANOVA, 2 test.

2. Analysis of Data

The results of the analysis based on primary data are discussed in the following pages.

2.1. Organizational Factors influencing Stress

Following Organizational factors which lead to job stress among women civil police officers are tested:

Table 1 Regression coefficient

Path	Estimate	CR	P	Variance explained
Feel overloaded with work Job Stress	0.937	26.369	<0.001	87.8
Struggle to meet deadlines Job Stress	0.415	6.799	<0.001	17.2
Carry lot of responsibilities Job Stress	0.540	9.301	<0.001	29.3
Struggle to get along with superiors, subordinates and peers Job Stress	0.313	4.986	<0.001	9.8
Have to tolerate a lot of frustration Job Stress	0.543	9.366	<0.001	29.5
No control over work schedule Job Stress	0.132	2.044	0.042	1.7
Work is boring and not interesting Job Stress	0.452	7.501	<0.001	20.4
Frequent transfer Job Stress	0.399	6.376	<0.001	15.4
Unfair distribution of work Job Stress	0.929	25.417	<0.001	86.3
Less chances of getting promotion Job Stress	0.524	8.957	<0.001	27.5
Need to prove efficiency in front of public and society Job Stress	0.467	7.793	<0.001	21.8
Under estimation faced from others on the basis of gender discrimination Job Stress	0.641	11.698	<0.001	41.1



Table 2: Model fit Indices for CFA organizational factors of stress

	χ^2	DF	P	Normed χ^2	GFI	AGFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	RMR	RMSEA
Organisational factors	60.723	28	.000	2.169	.960	.889	.951	.934	.972	.071	.070

All the attributes loaded significantly on the latent constructs. The value of the fit indices indicates a reasonable fit of the measurement model with data. In short the measurement model confirms to the factor structure of the constructs.

Table 3: Means, Standard deviation and z value for Organisational stress

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean % score	CV	z	p value
Organizational factors of stress	60	29.90	7.17	59.80	23.98	-8.21	<0.001

The mean percentage score of level of organizational stress of Women Civil police Officers is 59.80% which indicate that the level of organizational stress of the respondents with the present job conditions is Stressful. The CV indicates that this score is less stable as the value is more than 20%. To test whether the sample information that observed exists in the population or to verify that the organizational stress of Women Civil police Officers of the present job conditions is stressful or not, hypothesis is formulated.

H₀: The level of organizational stress of Women Civil police Officers is not stressful.

To test the above hypothesis one sample Z test is used and the result is exhibited in Table 3. From the table the calculated Z value is -8.21 which is less than the tabled value of -1.645 indicates that the test is significant. So it is concluded that the level of organizational stress of Women Civil police Officers is stressful and hence the hypothesis is rejected.

2.2. Analysis of The Consequences of Job Stress

Table 4: Mean, SD, Mean % Score and Z value Consequences of mental stress

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean % score	CV	Z	p value
Consequences of mental stress	60	24.25	7.42	48.50	30.59	-0.783	0.437

The mean percentage score of the Consequences of mental stress of Women Civil police Officers is 48.50% which indicate that the mental stress of Women Civil police Officers is moderate. The CV indicates that this score is not stable as the value is more than 20%. To test whether the sample information that is observed exists in the population or to verify that the mental stress Women Civil police Officers is of low or moderate, hypothesis is formulated.

Testing of Hypothesis

H₀: Consequences of mental stress of Women Civil police Officers are not moderate.

To test the above hypothesis one sample Z test and the result is exhibited in Table 4 are used. From the table the calculated value of Z is -0.783 which is higher than the tabled value of -1.645 indicates that the test is not significant. So it is concluded that Consequences of mental stress of Women Civil police Officers is moderate. Hence, the hypothesis that Consequences of mental stress of Women Civil police Officers is not moderate is rejected.



Table 5: Mean, SD, Mean % Score and Z value Consequences of physical stress

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean % score	CV	Z	p value
Consequences of physical stress	60	15.08	5.86	43.10	38.88	-3.19	<0.001

The mean percentage score of the Consequences of physical stress of Women Civil police Officers is 43.10% which indicate that the physical stress of Women Civil police Officers is moderate. The CV indicates that this score is not stable as the value is more than 20%. To test whether the sample information that we observe exists in the population or to verify that the physical stress Women Civil police Officers is of low or moderate, formulate the hypothesis:

H_0 : Consequences of physical stress of Women Civil police Officers are not moderate.

To test the above hypothesis one sample Z test and the result is exhibited in Table 5 are used. From the table the calculated value of Z is -3.19 which is less than the tabled value of -1.645, indicates that the test is significant. So it is concluded that there are physical consequences of stress among Women Civil police Officers. Hence, the hypothesis is that consequences of physical stress of Women Civil police Officers are not moderate is rejected.

3. Major Findings

1. The study reveals that work overload is an important factor that leads to stress.
2. Struggle faced by the women civil polices to meet deadlines is a factor which leads to stress.
3. Lot of responsibilities of WCPO leads to job stress.
4. Superiors, subordinates and peers relationship is cordial in police stations.
5. The WCPO tolerate a lot of frustration and stress in connection with their job.
6. Unscheduled work does not create any further stress among them because most of them are aware of with this issue and they are ready to serve the society at any time.
7. Boring work situation and not interesting environment leads to stress to WCPO.
8. Frequent transfer and subsequent problem of settlement is an important factor that leads to stress.
9. Unfair distribution of work creates stress among WCPO.
10. Comparatively less promotion opportunities is a factor that leads to stress.
11. The need to prove themselves as efficient in front of public and society creates stress among women police officers.
12. It is also found that underestimation faced from others on the basis of gender discrimination leads to stress.
13. As a whole, the organisational factors of women civil police officers are stressful.

Stress to a certain extent is inevitable in modern life and everyone is expected to cope with the normal stress. But consecutive high level of stress at work place or due to other factors will adversely affect the physical and mental health of the affected person. The analysis of the responses in this regard reveal that stress create negative mental and physical health of the WCPO.

Among the mental consequences of stress, anxiety and worrying a lot are the major problems faced by them. Getting easily frustrated, aggressive behaviour, want to be alone always and feels out of control are the other consequences.

When it comes to physical consequences, the major problem faced by WCPOs is headaches. Even though diseases like high BP, stiff & sore muscles, trouble sleeping, decreased immunity are faced by certain officers, but most of them are overcoming it.



Conclusion

Current study shows that among organisational factors work overload, dead line to complete the work, excessive responsibilities, frustration in the job, boredom and tiresome work, frequent transfers, unfair distribution of work, less promotion chances, gender discrimination and underestimation from the public are the major factors which leads to stress among Women Civil Police Officers. Superior subordinate relationship is well structured and strict in police department. But this structure is not a factor which leads to stress among WCPO. Even though there is no specific time schedule and expected to do their work at any time, WCPO are used with this nature of the job and it is not a stress factor among them.

Among the mental consequences of stress, anxiety and worrying a lot are the major consequences. These problems create negative impacts on the mental health and efficiency of WCPOs. Among the physical consequences, headache is a major consequence of stress. And most of the WCPOs are not facing much physical problems.

Suggestions

1. Lack of sufficient number of WCPO in stations is one of the major factor which leads to work overload and stress. There is a big gap between sanctioned strength and existing strength. Government should take necessary steps to fill the vacancies in police department in order to reduce the work load and subsequent stress among WCPO.
2. Even though counselling classes are organising by the department to reduce the frustration and stress, many respondents opine that it is insufficient while comparing the stress experienced by them. Department should arrange more counselling session, to cover all WCPO.

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