

## **OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AND WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG MARRIED WOMEN POLICE**

**Dr. N. Shanmughavadivu\***

**Dr. A. Sethuramasubbiah\*\***

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### **Abstract**

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***Keywords:***

***Women, Police,  
Occupational Stress,  
Work life Balance***

Police work is normally considered to be a stressful occupation. In particular women police are perform challenging and extremely stressful jobs. High level of stress leads to imbalances in the family life and work life of women police. Therefore, the study attempted in identifying the Level of Occupational Stress and Work Life Balance among married women police personnel. The researcher adopted descriptive research design for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 226 respondents. The research was based on the structured survey through a questionnaire, with married women police who works in Coimbatore District. Data were subjected to descriptive statistics. The findings revealed that married women police have moderate level of occupational stress and work life balance. Women police do differ with regard to age, experience, income, working hours, number of children, receiving help from husband and (a) occupational stress and (b) work life balance. Correlation

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**\* Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore-641046, Tamilnadu, India**

**\*\* Former Professor & Head, Department of Social Work, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore- 641046, Tamilnadu, India**

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result shows that women police decrease in level of occupational stress there is increase in the level of work life balance. Age, income, number of children and total number of working hours per day are the strong predictors of work life balance among married women police.

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## **1. Introduction**

Policing is considered to be one of the most masculinized occupations of the world. It has been denoted as one of the most “gendered” professions (Butler, Winfree and Newbold, 2003), particularly agreeable to traditional male gender characteristics because the policing activities require physical powers. Fearlessness, aggressiveness and Physical strength are portrayed as the traits needed to carry out police work effectively. Besides, the gradual induction of women in all walks of life and professions can also be seen in the police force in India (Leger, 1997). Though, the increasing involvement of women in crime either as accused or victim, changes in social conditions, growing juvenile delinquency and domestic violence necessitated employment of women in greater numbers in the police. Women have become an integral part of the police forces all over the country. A good number of women have joined the central police organizations and the Indian police service. In Indian Police Service (IPS), Mrs.Kiran A. Bedi was appointed as a first woman in 1972. Since then many women have joined the IPS and their successful participation in a common training programme with their male counterpart in the National Police Academy. They are constituted a unique development in the history of police in India.

### **Women Police in India**

After independence in 1947, women were appointed in greater numbers as police officers for line duties. Delhi police force was first to recruit women police on a regular basis with effect from 1948. Section 51(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulated that whenever it is necessary to cause a female to be searched, the search shall be made by another woman with strict regard to decency. Women were assigned to the Prime Minister’s security force and to check “Purdah-

nasin” who was passing through India to Pakistan. From 1960 to 1970, there was a large enhance in the number of women detained, convicted and tried in India which led the government to recruit more women into law enforcement to deal with this new situation. The entry of women in to police force was considered a considerable strain on the public exchequer (Natarajan, 2008). Punjab Police Commission (1961) stated that women police were really an excessive, as they themselves had to be protected by the male police when they were employed to perform their duties. The commission acknowledged that there was considerable prejudice against the recruitment of women officers. As a result, many states began to employ women in their police forces in large numbers. There were 71,756 women police personnel as on January 1, 2011, showing an increase of 5,603 (8.47%) women police personnel over the strength of 66,153 as on 01.01.2010. (Data from Police Organization in India)

### **Women Police in Tamil Nadu**

Tamil Nadu Police force was established about 140 years ago and is the fifth largest state police force in India. In Tamil Nadu, women officers were first recruited in 1973. The first batch of women consisting of one SI, one HC, and Twenty PCs was recruited in 1973 in the state. At that time, as in the rest of India, they were hired to deal with women and children, but were slowly assimilated into more general police duties such as assisting senior officers with clerical duties, escorting women offenders to courts and prisons and traffic operations. They also began to be posted to divisions for detection/ investigation, community liaison, crime prevention, communications, administration, bandobust operations, and dowry cells and vice squads (Natarajan, 2008). In 1990, the strength of the women police had gone up to 857. This was less than 2% of the total police force. In 1990s, Tamil Nadu ranked fourth in the number of women police employed. At present 30% reservation in fresh recruitment has been in police force. The maximum 11,590 women police personnel were working in Tamil Nadu alone, as on January 1, 2011. (Data from Police Organization in India)

### **Duties and Responsibilities of Women Police**

Women police have been found useful and acceptable to the people to discharge these jobs like, escorting of female prisoners to hospital, court and prison, guarding over woman prisoners in police lockups, arrest of female suspects and searching of woman prisoners, safeguard of

neglected and unwanted children and victims, recovery of missing women and juveniles, etc. Investigation of certain crimes committed by women like, infanticide, immoral trafficking of women and girls, theft by domestic servants, kidnapping, dowry deaths when mothers-in-law and sister-in-law are often involved along with husbands. Women police are responsible towards crime against women specifically, rape, molestation, cruelty on women and girls etc. Inquiry of complaints which involves execution of warrants and service of summons for females, surveillance of women criminals and juveniles, control of labour and political demonstrations by women, tracing of runaway female, inspection and watching over brothels. Women police control the traffic in important roads. Women police also acts as a liaison workers with social women welfare organizations and counseling in domestic/disputed discords.

### **Major Problems Faced by Women police**

There are innumerable challenges and problems faced by women police both at home and work place. The problems of women police at work place are multiple and differ from woman to woman according to the nature of the work and position. Some of the problems experienced by any women police in day to day life are includes Gender Discrimination, Prejudices of Male Police Personnel, Corruption, Working Condition, Inadequate Strength, Occupational Stress and Work-Life Balance.

### **Occupational Stress and Work Life Balance among women**

Policing is considered one of the major stressed occupations because of the hierarchic pressure, irregular working hours, lack of holidays and deal with anti-social element. Police are the first's line of protection between the criminals and the general public. Throughout their duty, unpredictably they may encounter situations involving major crisis without any notice. For police officers, there is evidence that workplace problems have considerable influence on stress. Wexler & Logan (1983) found in their qualitative research that when women police identified occupational stressors, they highlighted problems with interactions with coworkers. Officers who experience high levels of occupational stress report a high incidence of physical ailments and psychological problems that affect their work performance. Being a woman this job stress not only affects women police's life but also their families (Fatima Rizvi, 2015). The cost of stress for employees are mainly psychological and physical illnesses, including depression and job

dissatisfaction; while the costs for employers are mainly absenteeism, job attrition and deterioration in productivity (Gohlipour et al., 2011).

Work-life balance is a broad concept, defined in different ways by different researchers using diverse dimensions. The origins of research on work-life balance can be essentially traced back to studies on women having multiple roles. Work-life balance was initially termed as 'work family conflict'. Frone (2003) defined 'work-family balance is a condition; where there is least conflict and substantial facilitation between work and family spheres'. Work life and personal life are the two sides of a coin. These two are often interrelated. Balancing these aspects is always a challenging game, especially for women. Work-life balance refers to have the 'right' combination of participation in paid work and other aspects of their lives. This combination may not be the same in all occasions, may change over a time period. Women with the changing economic, political and social changes are joining into the workforce for various reasons. The present educational and infrastructural facilities have encouraged women to occupy prominent positions in the corporate world. Many women are opting jobs in order to build a good career and give financial support to their families. To lead a comfortable living and self satisfaction, women are working hard to get a balance between their personal and work-life. However balancing work and household responsibilities is a skillful exercise that women perform every day.

### **Literature Review**

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. Job stress is the crucial problem confronting police officers. (Selye, 1978; Fell et.al., 1980; Kroes, et.al, 1974; Stratton, 1978, Silbert, 1982). Burke (1993) who said that, when compared to other occupations, police job is considered highly stressful. He N et al., (2002) & Poteyeva M et al., (2009) says 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. Bunmi Omolayo (2012) found that female police officers experience significant high level of stress than their male counterparts. Mayes (1996) found that age moderated the relationship among various stressors and physiological symptoms as well as psychological depression and life satisfaction.

Ma CC et al. (2014) stated that shift work was closely associated with occupational stress. Political pressure, lack of time for family, negative public image and low salary were the primary causes of stress among police personnel. Patterson (2012) said that due to rotating shifts of work of police officers unable to spend enough time with their families are major sources of stressors and also highlighted few more stress causing incidence like high levels of violent offense, greater public scrutiny, unfavorable publicity, and changes in law enforcement such as the advent of community policing. Suresh R S et al., (2013) found that never off duty or round the clock duty, lack of time to spend with family, political pressure, inadequate salary, facilities, providing security to VIPs and public meetings, public criticism are the major sources of stress. The Indian Police Journal, (2004) reveals that according to the National Police Suicide Foundation, every 22 hours, a police officer in America takes his or her own life. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that police officers are not able to cope adequately with job-related stress. Work stress may be transmitted to family members, and this may particularly be a problem in high stress occupations such as policing (Thompson, Kirk-Brown and Brown, 1999). Karunanidhi S & Chitra (2013) found that selected psychosocial variables such as occupational stress, personal life interference with work, work/personal life enhancement significantly accounted for 45 percent of variance in the psychological well being of policewomen.

Vijayalakshmi (2012) found that most of the women police personnel were dissatisfied with work-life balance and also long hours in field duty leads work-life imbalance and also found that middle cadre women police suffered from inadequate and lack of support from their family members. Subha et al., (2014) established that there is a significant association between work-life balance and age, marital status of the women police. Padma & Sudhir Reddy (2013) found that support from family members will play a significant role in balancing personal and professional lives. They also found that women police who have adult children can easily balance than women with younger age kids. Vimala & Muthulakshmi (2012) established that family support is negatively correlated with family interference with work among women police and also family related sources of time based conflict are experienced more by married women police than by unmarried. Sergeant Corey Haines (2003) noted that police officers were stressed by numerous other factors such as low pay, irregular sleep schedules, and conflict with family and friends. Banerjee (2010) highlighted various problems of women police personnel like

separate toilet, rough language of their male bosses, lack of female instructors at training programs, uniform at pre-natal and post natal periods and family issues. Matsch et al., (2009) said that Military Law Enforcement Agents and their spouses perceived greater support for work-life balance from immediate supervisors than from the organization as a whole. Tremblay, Genin & Loreto (2011) found that the importance for organizations to offer formal and informal support to employees in the work environment to balance their work and family aspects. Higgins & Duxbury (2005) in their survey of 4,500 police officers from 25 police forces in Canada found that police officers throughout their career requires a lot of support within the service, and certainly a lot of support with family and friends and so forth.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To Study the personal profile of the married women police.
- To find out the level of occupational stress and work life balance among married women police.
- To measure the difference between the means of the groups of selected personal variables and key variables such as occupational stress and work life balance among married women police.
- To find out the relationship between occupational stress and work life balance among married police women.
- To examine the influence of personal variables on occupational stress and work life balance among married women police.

### **Hypotheses**

- There is significant difference between the variables such as age, experiences, income, number of children, working hours, receiving help from husband and overall occupational stress and work life balance of the married women police.
- There is a significant relationship between occupational stress and work life balance of the married women police.
- Age (b) income (c) number of children and (d) total number of working hours per day strongly predict the occupational stress of married women police.

- Age (b) income (c) number of children and (d) total number of working hours per day strongly predict the work life balance of married women police.

### **Research Methodology**

According to nominal roll 651 married women police were working in various police units such as Tamilnadu Special Police (Battalions), Armed Reserve, All women police stations, Local police stations in Coimbatore district and Coimbatore City, various special units. The researcher employed simple random sampling for the study. The participants were randomly selected from the list by using the Tippets table. The researcher used Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determined the sample size. The survey was conducted among 242 married women police in Coimbatore district. However, only 226 surveys were found usable for analysis due to incomplete information.

### **Tools Used**

The researcher used a structured close ended questionnaire method for data collection. The questionnaire consists of Personal profile, The Occupational Stress Index developed by A.K. Srivastav & A.P. Singh (1984) which consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the five-point scale. Out of 46 items 28 are 'true-keyed' and rest 18 are 'false-keyed'. The items relate to almost all relevant components of the job life which causes stress in some way or the other, such as, role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group & political pressures, responsibility for persons, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions, unprofitability with reliability is 0.96. The reliability was tested for the current study.

Work Life Balance Scale was developed by V. M. Rincy & N. Panchanatham (2010). The Work Life Balance Scale consists of 42 items, each to be rated on the seven-point scale. The Work Life Balance Scale consists of 42 items, each to be rated on the seven-point scale. Out of 42 statements 28 are 'false-keyed' and rest 14 are 'true-keyed'. The scale has four dimensions namely Intrusion of personal life into work (IPWL), Intrusion of Work into Personal Life (IWPL), Work Enhancement by Personal Life (WEPL), Personal Life by Work Enhancement (PLEW). The reliability was tested for the current study.

## Results and Discussions

The results of the study reveal that nearly half of the respondents (47.8%) were in 21-30 years of age. One third of the respondents (39.8%) had 1-5 years of work experience. More than one third of the respondents (35%) earn ₹10,001 – 15000 per month. More than one third of the women police (36.3%) had two children and merely 1.8 percent of the women police had three children. More than half of the women police (65.9%) said that they work 8-11 hrs daily. More than half of the women police (54%) did not get support from husband to do their household work and rest of the women police got some support from their husband.

### Findings related to Occupational Stress

The finding on the occupational stress dimensions depicts that majority of the respondents (84.5%) have low level of role overload. More than half of the women police (58%) have moderate level of role ambiguity and more than half of the respondents (53.1%) have low level of role conflict. Nearly half of the women police (49.6%) have low level of unreasonable group and political pressure. Almost half of the respondents (49.1%) have low level of responsibility for persons. Less than half of the women police (42.5%) have moderate level of under participation. More than two third of the women police (41.6%) have low level of powerlessness. Half of the respondents (50.4%) have moderate level of poor peer relation. Nearly half of the women police (42.9%) have high level of intrinsic impoverishment. More than half of the respondents (56.6%) have moderate level of low status. Almost half of the respondents (48.2%) have moderate level of strenuous working condition and exactly half of the women police (50%) have high level of unprofitability. On the whole the occupational stress finding reveal that 44.2% of the women police have moderate level of occupational stress, 39.4 percent of the women police have low level of occupational stress and remaining 16.4 percent of the respondents have high level of occupational stress.

### Findings related to Work-Life Balance

The result on the work life balance shows that two third of the respondents (66.8%) have moderate level of intrusion of personal life into work. Nearly two third of the women police (62.8%) have moderate level of intrusion of work into personal life. More than half of the respondents (64.6%) have moderate level of work enhancement by personal life. More than half

of the women police (56.2%) have moderate level of personal life enhancement by work. The finding of the overall level of work life balance reveals that nearly two third of the respondents (63.3%) have moderate level of work life balance, 20.4 percent of the respondents have low level of work life balance and remaining 16.4 percent of the respondents have high level of work life balance.

### **Results related to Hypotheses**

ANOVA was used to test the hypothesis. The result shows that

Women police do differ with regard to age and (a) occupational stress (b) work life balance of the married women police. Respondents who belong to 21-30 years age group experience high occupational stress when compared to respondents of other age group and respondents who belong to 51 years and above age group experience high work life balance.

Women police do differ with regard to work experience and (a) occupational stress (b) overall work life balance of the married women police and respondents with 1-5 years of work experience had experienced high occupational stress. Respondents with 16 years and above work experience had high work life balance.

Women police do differ with regard to income and (a) occupational stress (b) overall work life balance of the married women police. Respondents who earn ₹ 5000-10,000 experienced high occupational stress and respondents who earn ₹ 20,001 and above experienced high work life balance.

Married women police do differ with regard to number of children and (a) occupational stress (b) overall work life balance of the married women police. Respondents who had three children experienced high occupational stress and respondents who had one child experienced high work life balance.

Women police do differ with regard to working hours per day and (a) occupational stress (b) overall work life balance of the married women police. Respondents who work 20 hours and above per day experienced high occupational stress and respondents who work 8-11 hours per day experienced high work life balance.

To test the hypothesis Z test was used and the result shows that women police do differ with regard to receiving help from husband and occupational stress and work life balance of the married women police. Respondents who did not receive help from husband experienced high occupational stress and respondents who receive help from husband experienced more work life balance.

**Table No. 1**  
**Correlation between Occupational Stress and Work Life Balance**

| Variables           | Occupational stress | Work life Balance |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Occupational stress | 1                   |                   |
| Work life Balance   | -.587**             | 1                 |

To test the hypothesis Correlation was applied the result shows that women police decrease in level of occupational stress there is increase in the level of work life balance.

**Table No. 2**  
**Regression Analysis for Independent Variables and Occupational Stress**

| Variables                       | B       | Std. Error | Beta  | T value | Sig  |
|---------------------------------|---------|------------|-------|---------|------|
| Constant                        | 138.382 | 4.211      |       | 32.859  | .000 |
| Age                             | -5.076  | 1.568      | -.227 | -3.237  | .001 |
| Income                          | -2.512  | 1.482      | -.119 | -1.696  | .091 |
| Number of children              | 1.720   | 1.544      | .071  | 1.114   | .266 |
| Number of working Hours per day | 3.768   | 1.342      | .180  | 2.808   | .005 |

| <b>R</b> | <b>R Square</b> | <b>F value</b> | <b>Sig</b> |
|----------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| .360     | .129            | 8.203          | .000       |

Regression result shows that age and total number of working hours per day are the strong predictors of occupational stress expect income and number of children among married police women.

**Table No. 3**

**Regression Analysis for Independent Variables and Work Life Balance**

| <b>Variables</b>                | <b>B</b> | <b>Std. Error</b> | <b>Beta</b> | <b>T value</b> | <b>Sig</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Constant                        | 134.393  | 9.686             |             | 13.875         | .000       |
| Age                             | 12.904   | 3.607             | .244        | 3.578          | .000       |
| Income                          | 8.673    | 3.408             | .174        | 2.545          | .012       |
| Number of children              | -8.638   | 3.552             | -.152       | -2.432         | .016       |
| Number of working Hours per day | -7.353   | 3.086             | -.149       | -2.383         | .018       |

| <b>R</b> | <b>R Square</b> | <b>F value</b> | <b>Sig</b> |
|----------|-----------------|----------------|------------|
| .419     | .176            | 11.767         | .000       |

Regression result shows that age, income, number of children and total number of working hours per day is the strong predictors of work life balance among married police women.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the study show that younger married women police were experiencing high level of occupational stress than their elder counterparts. The younger married women police also perceive lower level of work life balance. The nature of problems differs from individual to individual along with their own set of constraints but some general recommendations can be framed to facilitate women in balancing their work as well as their family. The subsequent

recommendations may assist the women police to reduce the level occupational stress and improve the level of work life balance among women police.

Women police should build a bond among family members. They should explain their difficulties to their husbands and other family members and share the troubles of household responsibilities carefully. Women police should spend time with family members, husband especially children.

Physical fitness is an important for police profession especially women police. Hence women police should concentrate on their physical fitness. Regular food habits and keeping a normal sleeping schedule and regular exercise are important factors which may reduces occupational stress and increase work life balance among women police.

The women police could involve in some recreational activities such as listening music, organizing tours with family members, chatting with friends other than police profession etc. For good time management is to do the right thing, in the right way, at the right time and for the right length of time.

To reduce the occupational stress the husband should understand the problems of women police in organization as well as home and provide necessary support.

In every all women police stations a counseling centre has to be established by the government and qualified and trained professional social workers should be appointed as a full time service provider.

## **Conclusion**

Policing is considered as most stressful profession than other professions and they have the greater risk of stress. The findings of the study revealed that the married women police were having Moderate level of occupational stress and work life balance. ANOVA result shows that there is a significant difference found between the personal variables such as age, experience, income, number of children working hours, help from husband and occupational stress and Work life balance. Social work intervention can be suggested to the married women police by using the

methods of social work such as social case work, social group work, and other techniques such as counseling, therapies, psycho education and coping methods to improve the work life balance among married women police. This study is constructive to the police department in planning various work life balance practices and create harmonious work environment to enable women police personnel reduce stress and rightly balance their work and personal life that improve their performance levels.

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