



A STUDY ON STRESS COPING AMONG WOMEN POLICE PERSONNEL AT SOUTH ZONE OF TAMIL NADU POLICE

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ABSTRACT

Job stress is a universal phenomenon which is part of mankind's work environment. It is widely viewed as a product of mismatch between the individual and his/her physical or social environment. When the level of stress exceeds the optimal level, it has the potential to be harmful and damaging to the individual. Police job stress has been shown to lead to premature death among police officers (Colbert, Johnson, & Slate, 2007). According to Finn and Tomz (1996), shift work, perceived favoritism by administrators, lack of input in departmental policy, lack of training, lack of career opportunities, police culture, and lack of recognition for good work are some of the stressors police officers/personnel experience. While a certain level of stress is present in any job, it is much more pronounced in the field of law enforcement – police departments. This is of course, pertinently the women police personnel are often exposed to danger or the threat of danger. The police bureaucracy itself can also enormous stress on the police personnel's family that can affect shift-work, constant fear of injury or death, low pay, and other factors often as much, if not more, than the police personnel. Police force occupations have traditionally been dominated by males. But at present gender unbiased environment there has been a vast increase in the number of women entering in this occupation throughout the world. The level of occupational stresses among women police personnel have also been increased at significant level. Tamil Nadu is getting second place in terms of suicide by the police personnel that is nearly 216 police personnel were lost their life through suicide during the period from 2006 to 2013. It is perceived that Constant and unmanaged stress not only reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of the personnel in the initial stage and also then it stressed police officers particularly women to pose a threat to themselves even suicidal, their colleagues, offenders and/or to public safety. In this view, this study titled "A study on Stress coping among women police personnel at south zone of Tamil Nadu Police" is pertinent and appropriate in the present day law enforcement field with the objective of various means of copying the work stress by the women police personnel in the study area. The study concludes as the contribution of the working environment, family environment is highly significant in the stress free life of any organization. In the case of defense filed, the police personal form an integral and dominant part to maintain law and order and thereby peaceful life for the public. With the increasing working environment pressure for women police personal, in the police department women police personal is facing stress in this industry.



KEYWORDS : Job stress , women police personal , small-scale industries.

INTRODUCTION

Job stress is a universal phenomenon which is part of mankind's work environment. It is widely viewed as a product of mismatch between the individual and his/her physical or social environment (Beehr & Newman, 1978). The phenomenon of stress has been examined in several disciplines, i.e. psychology,

physiology, anthropology, medicine and management. However, Selye was probably the first to use the term stress in Psycho-physiological context. Selye (1974) defined stress as a “non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it”. It was reported that for every activity (task), there is an optimal level of stress that is required to perform that activity; both before and beyond this point, the level of stress is either too little or too great. When the level of stress exceeds the optimal level, it has the potential to be harmful and damaging to the individual. Police job stress has been shown to lead to premature death among police officers (Colbert, Johnson, & Slate, 2007). According to Finn and Tomz (1996), shift work, perceived favoritism by administrators, lack of input in departmental policy, lack of training, lack of career opportunities, police culture, and lack of recognition for good work are some of the stressors police officers/personnel experience.

While a certain level of stress is present in any job, it is much more pronounced in the field of law enforcement - police departments. This is of course, pertinently the women police personnel are often exposed to danger or the threat of danger. And lengthy or rotating shifts schedules can, perhaps, prevent the women police personnel from spending time with family and friends. National Institute of Justice (2000) states that courts often drop charges or deliver lenient sentences to offenders who are the very ones that the police worked hard, and possibly risked their lives, to arrest and keep off the streets. The police bureaucracy itself can also enormous stress on the police personnel’s family that can affect shift-work, constant fear of injury or death, low pay, and other factors often as much, if not more, than the police personnel (Blau, 1994; Matteson & Ivancevich, 1987). It is needless to highlight the importance of a healthy outlet for dealing with these stress-related issues and copying the stress among the police personnel particularly women police. It is perceived that in the absence of proper copying of the stress among the women police, they may become cynical, impatient, violent towards others as well as herself, unhealthy and even suicidal.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Police force occupations have traditionally been dominated by males. But at present gender unbiased environment there has been a vast increase in the number of women entering in this occupation throughout the world. Particularly in India, there are three states viz. Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Union Territory of Chandigarh have more number 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. (Fatima Rizvi, 2015). Whereas on the other side of the coin, the level of occupational stresses among women police personnel have also been increased at significant level. Tamilnadu is getting second place in terms of suicide by the police personnel that is nearly 216 police personnel were lost their life through suicide during the period from 2006 to 2013 (Dinakaran dailies, 2015). Police job stress has been shown to lead to premature death among police officers (Colbert, Johnson, & Slate, 2007). Therefore, It is perceived that Constant and unmanaged stress not only reduces the effectiveness and efficiency of the personnel in the initial stage and also then it stressed police officers particularly women to pose a threat to themselves even suicidal, their colleagues, offenders and/or to public safety. In this view, this study titled “A Study on Stress Coping among Women Police Personnel at South Zone of Tamil Nadu Police” is pertinent and appropriate in the present day law enforcement field.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the various means of copying the work stress by the women police personnel in the study area
- To offer suitable suggestions based on findings of the study.

Sampling

The multistage random sampling method is adopted for the present study taking Tamil Nadu state as the universe, the zone as the primary unit, the districts as the secondary unit and the women police personal as the ultimate unit.

For the better administration of Tamil Nadu police department, Tamilnadu divided into four zones namely North Zone headed by Coimbatore, south zone headed by Madurai, East zone headed by Chennai and Central Zone Tiruchirapalli. Among these four zones south zone is taken for the study randomly and this zone consists of nine districts namely, Dindigul, Theni, Madurai, Sivagangai, Ramnad, Virudunagar, Tirunelveli, Thuthuudi and Kanyakumari and all these districts have selected for the study. In these districts totally 2514 women police personal working during the study period and among them 485 respondents were selected based on the formula cited below with confidence interval of 4 and confidence level of 95%.

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{c^2}$$

Where:

Z = Z value

p = percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal (.5 used for sample size needed)

c = confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g., 04 = ±4)

The individual sample was chosen from the list of women police personal of district using Tippet random number table. The data were collected from all these persons through interview schedule.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In the modern and fastest world stress is unavoidable. Hence instead of getting afraid about stress, a person who is in stress should develop strategies to cope it. Generally coping style is classified into positive and negative coping style. In this section the researcher has attempted to know, at what level the women police personal coping the stress and how the personal profile factors is affecting their coping. Further in this chapter the researcher is also attempted to find out what kind of coping style generally the women police personals using such as positive and negative style. As per the review of literature problematize the coping style is called as positive coping style and affective coping styles is called negative coping style.

Table 1: Level of Coping

Stress Level	Sample (N)	Percent	Cumulative %
Low	70	14.5	14.5
Medium	346	71.3	85.6
High	69	14.2	100.0
Total	485	100.0	-

Source: Primary Data.

Table-1 reveals that 14.5% of respondents coping at lower level, 71.3% respondents coping at medium level and balance 14.2% of respondents are coping at high level. It is inferred that majority of respondents are coping the stress level at medium level. It clearly shows that this profession has more stress because majority of the respondents are not able to cope with work stress properly. It may be due to the low level of educational profile and work overload observed in the study. It can be reduced through providing shifts and job routines from division to division with a different nature of job. It demand the

workshop on coping the stress among women police personal in that way, department of police can sharpen their force and reduce the more absenteeism, and improve the productivity.

PERSONAL FACTORS AND COPING STYLE

In general, physical condition of individual plays significant role in coping with the work stress. Particularly in the police department, who physically unfit or poor fitness cannot perform well in a despotic physical environment. A person can maintain his physical fitness based on personal factors like age, working hours, working time, shift, salary, family condition and etc. Hence personal profile of the women police personal may significantly affect the stress coping style therefore in this section the researcher has attempted to test the relationship between the personal factors and copying level. For the purposes the personal factors called, age, marital status, working district, educational qualification, experience, working hours, salary, distance from residence to working place, family type and size, working shift and overtime conditions are taken .

Number of research stated that a person who has peaceful personal profile, working condition and optimistic mind thought will always have good coping level compared to others. The ANOVA test and t-test has applied in order to know the significant difference between the coping style and aforesaid personal factors of respondents. Table-2 explains relationship between coping style and personal factors, for the purposes the null hypothesis is assumed that there is no significant difference between the personal factors with respect of coping of stress among the women police personal.

Table 2: Personal Profile and Stress Coping Styles

Independent Factor	Classification	N	Mean	SD	F	p-value @5% Significance
Age	20-30	139	78.53	9.450	1.305	0.272
	31-40	97	80.30	9.609		
	41-50	172	79.89	10.014		
	Above 50	77	81.05	9.795		
Marital status	Married	248	80.04	9.614	1.375	0.254
	Unmarried	214	79.79	9.795		
	Divorced	23	76.52	10.600		
Education	SSLC	87	78.87	9.343	0.425	0.735
	HSC	115	79.50	8.079		
	UG	155	80.25	9.942		
	PG	128	80.02	11.121		
Service in years	Below 5	162	79.56	9.403	0.587	0.672
	5 to 10	141	79.50	9.489		
	11 to 15	75	80.11	10.475		
	16 to 20	72	81.08	9.011		
	Above 20	35	78.31	12.187		
Working hours	Below 8	75	79.80	10.257	0.274	0.844
	8 to 9	107	80.27	10.730		
	9 to 10	124	80.02	9.314		
	More than	179	79.27	9.260		
Salary per month (Rs. In '000)	10 to 20	23	79.17	9.994	0.219	0.954
	20 to 30	41	80.56	8.869		
	30 to 40	186	79.32	9.612		

	40 to 50	127	79.85	9.169		
	50 to 60	80	80.09	10.855		
	Above 60	28	80.71	11.479		
Distance in Kilometer	Up to 5	151	80.16	10.178	1.224	0.300
	5 to10	110	79.91	9.767		
	10 to 15	178	78.84	9.699		
	Above 15	46	81.70	8.249		
Family Size	2	51	79.84	8.531	3.305	0.011*
	3 to 4	172	81.22	9.101		
	5 to 6	157	77.65	10.906		
	7 to 8	77	81.12	8.389		
	Above 8	28	78.82	10.646		

Source: Primary Data.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 72.402., b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Table 2 reveals that the calculated ‘P’ value more than 0.05 except an personal factors called ‘district where they work’ and ‘family size’, at 5% level. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore it is evident that the selected personal variables such as age, marital status, educational qualification, experience, working hours, salary per month and distance between residence place and working place does not significantly differ with respect of coping of stress among the women police personal. Hence it is concluded that the respondents’ personal profile does not influence their coping level. In the case of variable called ‘district where they are working’ and ‘family size’ p value is 0.001 and 0.011 respectively, which is less than the critical value 0.05, it supporting to reject the hypothesis hence it conclude that the personal factors called ‘district where they are working’ and ‘family size’ is influencing the women police personal coping of stress. In order to find out whether the difference in the mean scores between the sample respondents who fall under different categories (type of family, shift working and overtime working) is significant, independent ‘t’ test has been applied and the results are presented in Table-3.

Table 3: Personal Variable and Stress Coping Styles

Personal Profile	Classification	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Df	p-value @5 % Significance
Family Type	Joint	40	79.96	9.496	0.142	483	0.417
	Nuclear	445	79,75	9.781			
Do work in Shift	No	70	79.17	8.761	0.550	483	0.582
	Yes	415	79.87	9.912			
Do overtime work	No	63	78.98	9.122	0.681	483	0.496
	Yes	422	79.88	9.844			

Source: Computed Data.

Table-3 shows that in all the cases p value are more than 0.05. Since p value is more than 0.05 the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 % level of significance. Hence it is concluded that there is no significant difference of mean value of coping of stress between the women police personal who have classified according to the type of family, do they work in shift and do they work in overtime. Comparing the mean value of coping stress score of the respondents and their demographic variable of the respondents is more or less equal to other category and there is no significant mean difference between them since p value is more than 0.05. Table-4 explains relationship between coping style and age group of respondents, for the purposes the null hypothesis is assumed that there is no significant difference between the age group with respect of coping style dimension of coping style among the women police personal.

Table 4: Age group and Coping Styles

Dimension	Mean value for Age group					F	p-value @5 % Significance
	20-30	31-40	41-50	Above 50			
Problem oriented coping style	39.37	40.59	40.22	40.67		1.681	0.170
Affective oriented coping style	39.16	39.71	39.67	40.38		0.847	0.469
Marital Status	Married	Unmarried	Divorced				
Problem oriented coping style	40.40 ^b	39.98 ^{ab}	38.34 ^a			1.936	0.145
Affective oriented coping style	39.64	39.81	38.17			0.950	0.388
Educational qualification	SSLC	HSC	UG	PG			
Problem oriented coping style	39.46	39.90	40.46	40.35		0.906	0.438
Affective oriented coping style	39.41	39.60	39.79	39.66		0.094	0.963
Year of experience	<5	5-10	11-15	16-20	>20		
Problem oriented coping style	39.95	39.97	40.47	40.89	39.17	0.909	0.458
Affective oriented coping style	39.61	39.53	39.64	40.19	39.14	0.275	0.894
Working hours	<8	8-9	9-10	>10			
Problem oriented coping style	40.59	40.53	40.15	39.57		0.970	0.407
Affective oriented coping style	39.21	39.74	39.87	39.61		0.242	0.867
Distance to working place	<5 KM	5-10 KM	10-15 KM	>15 KM			
Problem oriented coping style	40.28	40.30	39.70	40.76		0.768	0.512
Affective oriented coping style	39.87	39.61	39.14	40.93		1.478	0.220
Family size	2	3-4	5-6	6-7	>7	F stat	P value
Problem oriented coping	40.14 ^{ab}	40.95 ^b	38.97 ^a	40.61 ^{ab}	40.07 ^{ab}	3.501	0.008*

style							
Affective oriented coping style	39.71	40.27	38.68	40.51	38.57	2.544	0.039*

Source: Computed Data.

Age: Table-4 reveals that there is no significant different between age groups with respect to coping style since P-value is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Based on the mean value, it is observed that the coping style are high among the women police personal who belong to the above 50 years of age group and low level of coping style are observed among the police who belong to 20-30 years of age group. It may be because the work pressure and responsibilities of lower level women police personal are high compared to the remaining groups. In addition to above 50 year age group the period when majority of the biological changes take place. Because of these reasons coping style may be high. It can be avoided through proper diet and exercise on a regular basis. In addition avoiding junk foods can help in keeping good health.

Marital Status: It can reveals that there is no significant different between marital status of respondents with respect to coping style since P-value is greater than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Based on the mean value, it is observed that the coping style are high among the women police personal who married group and low level of coping style are observed among the police who divorced group. It may be because the family commitment and responsibilities of lower level women police personal are lower compared to the remaining groups. In addition to above women police who has married have family commitment. Because of these reasons coping style may be high.

Education: Since P value is more than 0.01, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance with regard to coping style. Hence there is no significant difference between educational qualification with respect to coping style and overall coping styles. Based on Duncan multiple range tests, the UG, PG, HSC and up to SSLC is not significant with respect to coping style at 5% level. It is observed from the mean values that the problem oriented coping styles are high with the score of 39.97% among the employees having under graduate degree and the low level of problem oriented coping styles is observed with the scoring of 39.41% who are having SSLC education. It may be due to higher education that gives a lot of exposure to the individual to understand the environment and to cope with the atmosphere. In this way educated men have higher problem oriented coping styles.

Experience: Since P value is more than 0.01, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance with regard to coping style. Hence there is no significant difference between experiences of respondents with respect to coping style. It is observed from the mean values that the problem oriented coping styles are high with the score of 40.89 among the employees having under experience 16-20 years and the low level of coping styles is observed with the scoring of 39.14 who are having experience more than 20 years. It may be due to rich experience that gives a lot of work pressure to the individual. **Working Hours:** Since P-value is more than 0.01, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance with regard to coping style. Hence there is no significant difference between working hours of respondents with respect to coping style. It is observed from the mean values that the problem oriented coping styles are high with the score of 40.59 among the employees having working hours under eight hours and the low level of coping styles is observed with the scoring of 39.57 who are having working hours more than 10 hours. It may be due to high working hour that gives a lot of work pressure to the individual.

Distance to working place: Since P-value is more than 0.01, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance with regard to coping style. Hence there is no significant difference between distance between residence to working place with respect to coping style and overall coping styles. It is observed from the mean values that the problem oriented coping styles are high with the score of 40.93% among the employees having distance more than 15 kilometer and the low level of problem oriented coping styles is observed with the scoring of 39.14% who are having distance at 10-15 kilometer distance.

Family Size: Since P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance with regard to coping style. Hence there is a significant difference between family size of the respondents with respect to coping style. Based on Duncan multiple range tests, the family size upto 2, 3-4, 5-6, 6-7 and more than 7 is not significant with respect to coping style at 5% level. It is observed from the mean values that the problem oriented coping styles are high with the score of 40.95 among the employees having family member 3-4 and the low level of problem oriented coping styles is observed with the scoring of 38.97% who are having family member 5-6.

SUGGESTIONS

- The coping styles can be improved through assigning the duties on a rotation basis and allocating independent assignments can help the women police to know their potential and to start learning from the experience. It can be trailed and tested for the benefit of women police and whole department.
- By practicing like yoga, meditation and other techniques the women police can improve the coping styles. Further the police department also should conduct development programme for the purposes like, soft skill development, personality development and so on help them to improve the coping style.
- Stress is an interrelated process of human mind and body. So reducing stress with the help of coping styles can avoid somatic symptoms and other kind of personal and work issues.
- The work stress can be reduced through self-discipline, effective time management and proper planning for both personal and departmental commitments. This can be achieved through regular practice and follow up of the daily schedule. One can achieve the minimum level of stress through his personal planning and coping attitude of the problems and the environment. Individual attitude and commitment towards work can influence the stress levels among the women police.

CONCLUSION

The present study carried out by the researcher has been a rewarding experience in the sense that it has assessed the stress level among the women police personal of the southern zone of Tamil Nadu police department. The contribution of the working environment, family environment is highly significant in the stress free life of any organization. In the case of defense filed, the police personal form an integral and dominant part to maintain law and order and thereby peaceful life for the public. With the increasing working environment pressure for women police personal, in the police department women police personal is facing stress in this industry.

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