

Job Stress: to Improve the Occupational Well-being of Policewomen in Karnataka, India

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Abstract:

This article discusses the results of a study with an all-women police station and other police stations in Kalaburagi Karnataka, India, considering their occupational stress and hazards related to womanhood issues. In this descriptive study, a sample of 30 women police was selected by purposive sampling and analyses were performed using responses to a questionnaire method and individual/group meetings. Well-being as well as levels of satisfaction leading to the commitment of the policewomen to their organization has been identified.

A majority opined about experiencing occupational stress/hazards related to issues specific to womanhood. Ergonomic, on-the-job criteria, and appropriate design interventions, may address their stress and related concerns. Women's hygiene specific issues in the workplace were a major concern. A few remedial design attempts have been proposed and some such improvements have been implemented by authorities to upgrade the women's police station. In addition to the physical and mental well-being of existing policewomen enabling them to perform their duties effectively and efficiently, such sympathetic developments have created a positive niche to motivate more young women to enter the police force.

Keywords: Indian policewomen, occupational stress and discomfort, womanhood issues.

Introduction:

Today in India, many women are striving for equality with men outside of the home, including making contributions to the nation by entering into once male-dominated professions such as the police force. Considered as one of the more masculine occupations, the job of police personnel is indeed a challenging one, which encompasses uncertainty in many areas, including long hours of duty, sudden, unexpected deployments and exposure to unavoidable risky circumstances, to name a few. In the prevailing socio-cultural arrangement, policewomen are often overstrained and thus, find it difficult to maintain equilibrium between their job and homemaking responsibilities. This raises some situational concerns about the women in police service; including universal gender bias within the police force; the contexts or situations that police women are compelled to bear while satisfying their job responsibilities.

The empowerment of women requires a multidimensional approach. In India, sources of change are evident across many platforms including Women's Studies scholarship and activism, which has become a vital outlet to express directions for change. Similarly, the Government has promoted a sequence of pioneering tactics to ensure equal opportunities and empowerment of women in all respects. Within the police force, the Government of India has emphasized quotas for hiring women police up to 33% (the Parliament of India to the Ministry of Home Affairs or MHA, 2014-15). To achieve this goal necessitates augmented capacity building, and attitudinal and behavioral changes to empower women within the police force. Women Police are an integral part of police organizations globally; the improvement of specific aspects of the workplace environment in every police station has begun to accrue attention, including ergonomic design interventions of facilities and basic amenities.

The goal is to facilitate the interaction of human beings (policewomen) with their job responsibilities in their existing environments. Ergonomics and ergonomic design in general intend to enhance the human performance by providing them with lesser stress and better workspace, leading to better productivity and safety. In this context, our present research attempted to identify occupational stress factors and hazards experienced by women police officers in the workplace from the perspective of ergonomics and design intervention feasibilities, including assessment of the prerequisites for a stress-free workplace environment for policewomen.

Methodology:

The study is based on primary data and secondary data. Primary data were compiled from survey-based personal interviews and individual responses to a subjective assessment questionnaire. Secondary data were amassed from the office of the Commissioner of Police, journals, newspapers, articles and other published sources. The questionnaire was administered.

Table 1. Survey Results on exposure to Occupation Environment Stress and Perceived Well Being.

Sl No.	Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree
		B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1	Law enforcement is generally regarded as a masculine profession, therefore we felt that convenience is equally important for us	30	30							
2	Administrative over shifting is common	30	30							

3	Staff shortages cause stress	30	30						
4	Lack of resources cause stress	30			25			5	
5	In equal sharing of work responsibilities cause stress	30	30						
6	Shift work causes stress for special cases like pregnancy, expecting mother, lactating mother, menstruation period	20	20			6	6		4
7	Traumatic events affect psychophysical health	30	10		9		7		4
8	Social life outside the job is impacted by duty regimen	21	15	8	8				6
9	Occupation-related health issues in special cases like pregnancy, expecting mother, lactating mother, menstruation period			10	10			10	10
10	Not finding time to stay in good physical condition	20	20	10	10				
11	Feelings like you are always on the job and other responsibilities are compromised	30	30						
12	Working beyond working hours brings boredom	30	40						
13	Noisy work area	5	5	10	10	10	10	5	5
14	Frequent interruptions bring disturbance in the work place							30	30
15	Inadequate or poor quality equipment/maintenance			24	24			6	6
16	Unfair work environment in this job	30	3		6				17
17	Lack of a modern system/apparatus on duty	43	43						
18	Occupational health issues (e.g. back pain, neck pain, joint pain)	27	27	10	10			6	6
19	A good infrastructure brings satisfactions while doing work	30	10	20					
20	Lack of resources in professional/promotional	30	30						
21	Working alone at night is risky and I don't feel good	30	30						

22	Prolong standing affects physical health	30	30							
23	Lack of separate modular convenience/prompt service utilities in every police station	30								
24	Basic amenities like isolated/separate restrooms and child care units are still a major requirement for women police personnel	30								
25	Lack of residential accommodation which is seen as one of the major impediments faced by women in joining police force	30	30							
26	While I am involved in outdoor activities such as patrolling, security duty	24	30	6						
27	Crèches/day care centre in the police station for Working mother will help Them to take care of their children	20	30	10						

As stated above, the Ministry of Home Affairs has encouraged the induction and increase in the representation of women in the police force up to 33% while addressing the specific needs of women. Any percentage lower than 33% might represent a barrier to societal interaction, in order to maintain law and order; especially with respect to women specific issues of domestic violence, crimes involving women and injustice to the women. One of the major concerns expressed by the policewomen is the need to improve privacy. The survey also found that women police officers go for long spells with little or no water to avoid the lack of toilet facilities, while on job. Women police personnel, particularly in the constabulary, find it uncomfortable while travelling in heavy vehicles and trucks to report for work, particularly during periods of menstruation or pregnancy. Under the 'Swachh Bharat' mission' the Government recommended that sanitary pad dispensers be installed at all women's posts and portable toilets should be provided. In addition, the parliamentary report strongly endorsed the need for more day care centers or crèches, school pickup and drop of facilities for children, and clean living quarters and toilet facilities provided to create a comfortable and stress-free workplace. These additions are regarded as factors that will increase workplace performance.

Table 2. Survey Results for on-the-job Satisfaction

on-the-job Satisfaction		Yes		No	
		B	A	B	A
1	Public attitude towards women police is awkward			30	30
2	Lack of separate utility facilities in police stations.	30			30
3	Problems related to training.	30	30		
4	Govt. accommodation for women's hygiene and health issues			30	30
5	Difficulties faced in upbringing of children-day care centre is essential			30	30
6	Need to have a better working environment in terms of infrastructure	30			30
7	Provision of separate toilet facility at all offices/outposts	30			30
8	A modular mobile convenience facility while outdoor duty an immediate need	30			30

Job satisfaction is a pivotal component of an organization's effective and efficient productivity. Most women in the police force are not satisfied with their working conditions (Rizvi, 2015). In order to address these problems, the Government of India issued guidelines in February 2013, through the Modernization of State Police Force Scheme, asking the Government of India At large, extended to Government, to provide women officers with separate toilets, crèches, and restrooms (Rao, 2015). This is still in the implementation stage in Assam.

Table 3. On-the-job Burn-Out

		Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
1	My work is emotionally exhaustive	10	9	5	10	9	5	6	6		
2	I feel burnt out because of my work.	30	30								
3	My work frustrates me.							30	30		
4	I feel burn out at the end Of the working day.	30	30								
5	I feel exhausted in the morning only by the thought of another similar day at work.	30	30								

6	I feel quite energetic while passing time with family, friends and relations	30	30								
7	I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.	20	20	10	10						
8	My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.	30	30								
9	When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.	30	30								
10	The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.									30	30
11	Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job simple.					9	9	10	10	11	11
12	Those who do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.							25	5	25	5

Occupational stress unavoidably leads to the development of negative outcomes for Womenpolice personnel. Deprivation of general well-being, reduced levels of satisfaction and obligations to the organization have each been acknowledged as the sources of occupational stress experienced by employees. **The outcome of this stress is harmful to the entire society** in addition to the organization (Nikam, 2014). Additional features of workplace dissatisfaction include late night duties, lack of regular holidays and work schedules and gender discrimination from male officers. These communal needs should be addressed urgently; ergonomic design interventions can constitute an improved, amiable workplace, most importantly to enhance job satisfaction and improved workplace attitudes.

Conclusion:

The study examined the need to address the concerns of women police officers, contributing to occupational stress in karnataka. Ergonomic design interventions in basic areas such as implementation of a separate convenience facility would offer them. Agreed that the models would definitely help policewomen to cope with various kinds of on-the-job stresses; and they felt persuaded to implement the changes in the next few years. The limitation of a relatively small sample size in the present study was due to the fact that, the Karnataka police force works to build the numbers of women police officers, with the assistance of the Government the demands of women's workplace concerns will become

intensified. This research reflects the need-of-the-hour, representing a workforce in transition to meet the goals of gender equality and equal opportunity. The success of integrating women into male dominated professions depends on attention to the new needs introduced by women employees and the support of both the Government and the workplace in meeting them.

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