

Mental Health Problems of Women Police hails from Rural Areas

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Abstract:

Globally, the profession of police personnel is many-sided. This is the most challenging profession subjugated by males, however more females are entering the police workforce. They juggle with personal and professional roles especially those who come from rural areas. In rural area the attitude of people towards working women is different. Most of the families thinks that a women should do all the house hold works perfectly and then she can go for her professional works. Moreover, at work place they have to enrich themselves in communicating in official language and update themselves along to the current requirement of the work place. Initially most of them are able to cope with, but as days goes on they are incompetent to bring a balance and develop mental health problems. The struggles they face in their day today life at home and work causes many work life balance problems. When those work life balance problems prolonged without any relevant measures which may turn as serious mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and stress. Mental health is nurtured by emotional, psychological, and social well-being. The reasons behind those mental health problems can be divide into personal and organizational factors. Personal factors includes fatigue, lack of understanding from family and friends about work, working alone at night, feeling like always on the job, over time demands, not enough time available to spend with friends and family, work related activities on off days, limitation to social life and shift in work. Organisational factors covers staff shortages, red tapism, internal investigations, perceived pressure to volunteer free time, unequal sharing of work responsibilities, dealing with the court system, dealing with supervisors, inconsistent leadership style, favourism, dealing with co-workers and the need to be accountable for doing the job. If the mental health needs of women police who hails from rural area, get facilitated they can be more productive and that will contribute to the economic development of the country also. This literature review and analysis paper will describe mental health problems faced by rural women police and discuss some conceivable solutions.

Keywords: Mental Health, Women Police from rural area, Work Life Balance

Introduction

Policing is an essential and challenging work. The role of women has been subjected to many changes over the past few decades. The impact of inequality is reflected in the status of women worldwide in general and in India in particular. Over a period of time, women engaged in

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various professions including police. The role of policing is essentially to maintain law and order in the society and it is a stressful work. The work place environment has a bearing on employee morale both positively and negatively. It influences their level of motivation and performance. Policing is a psychologically stressful work filled with responsibility to maintain law and order in addition to personal responsibilities towards their own families. This becomes all the more stressful to women police as women are traditionally considered as care takers of house hold activities. Nature of police work and a multiplicity of stressful situations impose a high degree of stress among police personnel which affects their physical health, mental health as well as interpersonal relationship.

Women police work environment and their family environment is entirely different from normal Indian women family environment. Work environment non-uniform service is normally 8 hours and 5 working days or 6 days in a week. Enjoying holiday for Saturday or Sunday or both in a week and also enjoying other festival holidays too. In rural area the attitude of people towards working women is different. Most of the families thinks that a women should do all the house hold works perfectly and then she can go for her professional works.

Women working in police work department, have no fixed timing for day to day duty. There nature of work is 24/7. They work in all the departments namely law and order, traffic, special branch, railways, women police stations etc. Their roles are to prevent, protect and maintain law and order at time of emergencies and at all needs. As an Indian traditional women, women police also to take all the responsibility like normal women viz., kitchen work, child care, husband care, father in law and mother in law care, brother in law and sister in law care, father and mother care, relations visit and hospitality, festival functions. So, women police face many problems in her day to day life and busted because of heavy work load especially in rural area. They may massively affect with distress. These stress responses may be an adaptive one because of the result of emergency reaction .While analyzing the fact, it is seen that maximum discomfort may be arising stress of women police through family environment. Many family environmental factors affected stress of women police which includes family support, not disclose feeling, fight a lot, not doing own think, feeling importance ,spending week end, planned activities, criticism, resolve problem, different ideas.

Work-life balance plays a great role in all types of employees, irrespective to which sector they belong to whether private or public. Work- life balance is also an element of employee welfare, since it distracts the employee physiological and psychological. Achieving work- life balance is a priority and desire of an individual employee. Work-life balance is a state of equilibrium in which the demand of both a person's job and personal life are equal. Work-Life Balance is the main motto in every organization and a license for the success of every organization. In modern life, employer understand that work- life imbalance mainly escalate stress, eventually causes poor performance, one role at the cost of another i.e. work on life or life on work. Management must try to nurture a work- life balance, promoting a culture that attracts and retain people, which help them in avoiding their employee resign their job.

The police profession has a challenging or even outright hostile work environment for women and men officers. Work-life balance is an essential problem in police personals. The job of a Police is one of the occupations that have been identified as the high level of stress. The

responsibilities of police personals are varied and differed from one another. Usual duties of police constables relate to keeping the law enforcement, peacekeeping, and people protection, protection of properties, and finally investigation and interrogation of crimes. They have to respond to unexpected situations that may arise when they are on duty. The boredom of monotonous responsibilities, exorbitant workload, exposure to adverse and extreme environmental conditions, lack of communications, lack of appreciation, unsatisfactory career prospects, poor pay and allowances, conflicts, working in night shift, unscheduled working time, complex role assigned to the law enforcers make the job and life of police officers extremely difficult to manage. Moreover, police personals have to maintain orders and consequent reporting to higher officials. The police officers also experience interpersonal relationship problems.

Many studies were conducted to examine the influence of immune and nervous systems on the psychological consequence of stress in human beings. It was also pointed out that chronic stress may lead to aggravate moods disorder like depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, personality changes and problem behavior. Stress is something everyone experiences. Despite being unpleasant, stress in itself is not an illness. But there are connections between stress and mental health conditions including depression, anxiety, psychosis and post-traumatic stress disorder. Researchers are also investigating how these systems are involved in anxiety and depression, suggesting a biochemical link between stress and mental illness. Recent studies have shown that long-term stress can change the structure of the brain, especially in areas supporting learning and memory. It can affect both nerve cells (grey matter) and the connections between them (white matter). It is possible these changes, along with other factors, can increase the likelihood of developing mental illness.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The emergence of globalization and women liberalization, the women started to play a great role in all fields. But the prime difficulty is faced by women in balancing work and life. This would lead to a stressful life. Work-family conflict among women police posed to be a significant problem in the present scenario. Some individuals feel that their workplace creates too many pressures to maintain a work and family balance, and they may feel a reduction in their feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment of life. They are not getting time to spend with their family members. They are not able to concentrate on their duty because of frustration. Later on, this frustration will turn into depression and they will lose their interest in their job. Policing is considered as most stressful profession than other professions and they have the greater risk of stress. Especially female police personnel face more stress related problems than their male counterpart as they manage the family commitments and also work in law enforcement.

Rather than any working woman, woman in police force have to take more effort to balance their responsibility in work and home. Her contribution to the family income, increases the standard of living and additionally she has to do the household work and childcare also. After her full day work in job, she has to do a second shift at home. Balancing between the two faces of life is not easiest job it needs more effort. She has to perform well in her career. If children go astray, in case of the working mother is the first person to be blamed. If the guests were not treated properly and unattended, and if the house is unclean, then the woman is the person to

be accused first. In between this the working women doesn't have time to take care for her. The society glosses over the fact that the man does not combine roles-as father, husband and son in law perfectly either!! The general perception is that the role of women at home and in the department are two different things and one cannot be an excuse for the lapse in the performance of the other. This perception is irrational and illogical. The human body and mind have their own limitations. Excessive loading often leads to break down. At the same time, forcing a woman to make a choice between the two spheres is not the solution as a citizen, she has a right to be educated and employed. She cannot be expected to sacrifice her productive role, as a matter of right. Moreover, it is a criminal mistake to keep half the population at home, denying their participation in social production. Employment is not a privilege to male alone. And if a woman decides to work then she needs the support from the family, the community. And in working environment the employer is responsible for creating a conducive working climate. Her twofold responsibilities should not be considered a private concern.

SIGNIFICANCE

Women play active role in the economic development of the country. Earlier their role was only limited to house hold activities. But now, many women are opting jobs in order to build a good career and give financial support to their families. When compared to other occupation, police job is considered as highly stressful and stress is as an integral part of the life of a professional police officer. Police work involves protection of life, safeguarding property through vital patrol techniques, enforcement of laws in the place for which the police station is responsible. They are the first line of protection between the criminals and the society. Women in policing have had an important political, social, economic and psychological impact. Stress is considered as an integral part of modern life and it is the psychological or physiological reaction that occurs when an individual perceives an imbalance between the level of demand placed upon him and his capability for meeting the demand.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Anandhi (2020) conducted a study on Stress Management of Women Constables In Tamilnadu Police Force. This study revealed that among the age group ,stress affected other impact factors are tense circumstance, meditation, assignments are monotonous, insufficient no of employees, objectives of work role, officials do not interfere, group or political pressure , responsibilities of future.

Lavanya Sobana (2019) conducted a study on stress among women police personnel in Tamilnadu. In this study 12.5% employees mentioned that their family is the cause of stress, 9.1% of employees mentioned that their personal attitude is the cause of stress.59.2% of people mentioned that their job is their major stress contributing factor. 19.2% people agreed that their health is the major contributing factor. Very few people accepted that their personal attitude of cause of stress.

Jayasathya & K. Swathi (2019) conducted a study on problems and challenges faced by women police constables in Coimbatore. In this study noted challenges are suspicion by society and family members , family members disagree to work at night, inadequate time to look after

family affairs, lack of support of family members, no time for retirement, no time to participate in social and religious functions, no time for personal grooming, excessive tensions and challenges, health related problems, too much responsibility. This study recommends that effective training programs are imparted to every woman police constable in technology development and also in handling crowds and criminals. This helps the women police constables to overcome the stress.

Vivek S, Rosin George Varghese (2018) A cross sectional study was conducted among 50 female police officers working in various police stations of Thiruvananthapuram city, selected by simple random sampling, during the period May 2018 to July 2018, using a pre tested semi structured questionnaire based on operational police stress questionnaire (PSQ-OP) and organizational police stress questionnaire (PSQ-ORG). The data was properly coded and entered in Microsoft excel and analyzed using SPSS version 16.0. Results: Mean age of the study population was 38.07 years (SD=5.714 years) and majority (64%) belonged to middle socioeconomic class. Perceived organizational and operational stress prevalence among the study population was as high as 80% (40 % experienced moderate stress and 40% experienced high stress) and 90% (high stress reported by 70 % and moderate stress by 20%) respectively. The most common stressor reported for organizational stress was staff shortage (74%) and that for operational stress was finding time to stay in good physical condition (76%).

Sundarameena (2017) prepared an empirical study on work life balance of women constables in police service. This study covers 17% women police hails from rural area of Chennai. This study noted that Women Police is expected to perform police services irrespective of their gender. They have to perform duties as compliance of the public and the government. Women Police Constables have to be working in a proactive, positive and powerful way as per the nature of the job. Women police constables feel they are facing more challenges which create more mental pressure and depression than non-working women or women working in other fields. The police must have an upgraded knowledge about technology and then they can accomplish their task, easily by reducing their working hours and concentrate their family and achieve work – life balance. It is found that the women police constables strongly agreed that insufficient staff, poor equipments and too many investigations create stress. They moderately agreed that criticism by superiors leads to stress. Women police constables moderately agreed to the opinion that various roles played on duty, leads to dispute and disagreement in the family and that irregular hour of duty or night shifts, create strain and stress to women constables. They also agreed to the fact that arrested criminals released due to lack of proper evidence generate more stress to respondents. The respondents disagreed that controlling public in political meeting create stress and also strongly disagreed to the opinion that women police constables encounter stressful situation in performing task beyond their limit.

Suganya (2017) steered a study on stress management among women police in Madurai city. In this study “Loss of hunger /Sleeplessness” get the maximum score followed by the statement “Absent mind / Mind upsetting”. The statements “Tend to feel worse in the morning”, “Difficulty in concentrating”, “Worrying a lot about health and job” occupy the third, fourth and fifth place respectively. Therefore “Loss of hunger /Sleeplessness” causes more stress compared with other factors on physical and psychological problems.

Maheshkumar Kuppusami (2016) conducted an assessment of psychological stress among female police personnel in Kerala. The perceived stress scale (PSS) was simultaneously administered to 75 available PW of both constable and officers, between 21-60 years of age from randomly selected police stations in the three district of Kerala. Result: In PW, those who are working for more than 12 hours in a day experienced significantly ($P < 0.05$) more stress (21.4 ± 3.40) than the 6 - 12 hours workers (17.98 ± 2.64). At the same time PW with gender inequality has significantly ($P < 0.05$) experienced high stress (27.82 ± 3.52) than the others without any gender issue (19.5 ± 4.38). Conclusion: This study provides an understanding on the perceived psychosocial stress level of female police personnel in Kerala, and Gender inequality present in their work, mainly due to their minority in the department.

G.Ragesh & Harish M (2016) studied on occupational stress among police personnel in India. The study found that both operational and organizational stress was significant among the police officers. Organizational stress was experienced in moderate level by 68% and in high level by 14%. Operational stress scores were in the moderate range in 67% and in high range in 16.5%. The younger age group (21-35 years) and lower level rank police personnel had higher stress. Stress was higher among female police personnel compared to males. While 23% of them had been diagnosed with physical illnesses, a significant four per cent of them with mental illness, and 29% of them reported substance abuse.

Kavya and Chandrashekar (2016) directed a sociological study on job satisfaction and adjustment problems among female police constables in Karnataka. This study finds that due to lack of time, lack of facilities, over time duty, high level job stress, inadequate salary, lack of holidays, delayed promotion, lack of recognition for good work majority of the respondents are dissatisfied with their job. The study also finds that majority of the respondents are facing both family and professional adjustment problems.

DISCUSSION

Mental Health Problems Related Potential Challenges Faced By Women Police

From the review analysis it is understood that women police are facing challenges which may seriously affect mental health in future phase. Those challenges can be listed under five sorts. They are

1. Challenges within the Police Profession
2. Challenges posed by Women's Personality Traits
3. Challenges outside the work place
4. Problems faced at Work Environment
5. Problems faced at Home

Challenges within the police profession includes gender discrimination, sexual harassment and organizational in civility, prejudices and biases of male police personnel, role ambiguity and role conflicts, corruption, inadequate strength and problems of coordination. Challenges posed by women's personality traits covers difference in leadership style, low acceptance, poor

comfort level and lack of job satisfaction. Challenges outside the work place comprises balancing career and family life and technological advancement. Problems faced at work place consist of late working hours, inadequate income, excess work load, sexual harassment, long travel to work, boredom and monotony of work, insecure to work at night, increased gender bias, increase exploitation by higher authorities and health issues. Problems faced at home covers suspicion by society and family members, hamper the family relationship, family members disagree to work at night, odd hours work affect family members at home, hindrance to carry out the responsibility as a daughter /wife/mother, inadequate time to look after family affairs, lack of support of family members, no time for retirement, no time to participate in social and religious functions, no time for personal grooming, excessive tensions and challenges, health related problems and too much responsibility.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Women and men have certain differences, both biologically and in our societal structure, which cannot be neglected. Having a career poses challenges for women due to their family responsibilities. Working women are forced to leave their small children at home because of their work. The family support is the most important source of support for a working female it helps them to concentrate more in work. Lacks of proper support system, health issues are also bother the working women. In short, it is possible for a woman to be a good wife, mother, and an achiever with the help of family support. Many have done it with the help from society and family, and others have battled with endless odds to prove the same. In today's world, it is both desirable and incumbent upon mothers to be working, like their spouses. In the developing world, which still believes in the theory of culture and tradition of a male-oriented society, one should acknowledge that, contrary to traditional belief that a working mother is not a good mother or a good wife, a working mother can, in fact, be a better mother and a better wife. A working women police mother, especially the one who has a good family can balance her home and work and enjoy the stimulation that a job or career provides. To enable this, considerable adjustments are necessary with the help of family members, which help the working police mother to fulfill the dual responsibilities of career and motherhood. The working mother epitomizes modern womanhood. The modern work environment needs to consider the special needs of this working population, changing its orientation from male dominance to gender neutrality and parenting friendly behavior. The joint family and the nuclear family unit both need to adjust to the needs of the working mother so as to allow a healthier family to develop.

UPGRADATION

Women Police is expected to perform police services irrespective of their gender. They have to perform duties as compliance of the public and the government. Women Police Constables have to be working in a proactive, positive and powerful way as per the nature of the job. Women police constables feel they are facing more challenges which create more mental pressure and depression than non-working women or women working in other fields. The police must have an upgraded knowledge about technology and then they can accomplish their task, easily by reducing their working hours and concentrate their family and achieve work – life balance. Updating knowledge requires training. Good training session will enable the women police to learn the latest developments and also to solve the new types of crimes.

Separate training programs are to be organized for women constables to deal with the criminals, to meet the new challenges and also to meet the media persons. This would help them to have a better work-life balance.

Recommendations

- Flexible working hours and work load reduction will significantly improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism and help them to spare the time with family. Marital status of the women police constables is an important factor to be focused.
- Woman police constable once they get married counseling sessions has to be conducted for both women police constables and to their husbands.
- Long working hours disturb the family of women police constables. This could be avoided when they live joint family systems, as the other members in the family may carry out tasks even in the absence of women police constables.
- Women police have to share information about work load in job and job nature with their husbands, children and family members to provide and maintain a common understanding.
- Continuous Education is required as the nature of job is linked with information technology. Good knowledge and logical thinking is essential to solve problems.
- Job rotation will help the women police to have good work-life balance.
- Meditation and yoga sessions are to be arranged to reduce the stress of women police.
- Motivation speeches from the superior officers are required to have good work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

The work-life balance may vary at different stages in the life cycle of an individual's career life. Hence organizations are expected to have flexible and open-minded approach for ensuring the right balance. Today's workplaces are finally waking up to the importance of hiring women and offering special privilege packages to encourage them into the workforce. In a bid to provide a pro-diversity and equitable environment as well as enable female employees to meet the gender-specific challenges, organizations are proactively providing flexi-time options, pregnancy-friendly work conditions, maternity leave, child support, pick up/drop for women working in night shifts, protection against harassment and so on. Working women do need flexibility and support to be able to meet their varied commitments and the empowering concessions definitely help simplify the stress and imbalance. When those work life balance problems prolonged without any relevant measures which may turn as serious mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and stress. Mental health is nurtured by emotional, psychological, and social well-being. The reasons behind those mental health problems can be divide into personal and organizational factors. Personal factors includes fatigue, lack of understanding from family and friends about work, working alone at night, feeling like always on the job, over time demands, not enough time available to spend with friends and family,

work related activities on off days, limitation to social life and shift in work. Organisational factors covers staff shortages, red tapism, internal investigations, perceived pressure to volunteer free time, unequal sharing of work responsibilities, dealing with the court system, dealing with supervisors, inconsistent leadership style, favourism, dealing with co-workers and the need to be accountable for doing the job. If the mental health needs of women police who hails from rural area, get facilitated they can be more productive and that will contribute to the economic development of the country also.

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