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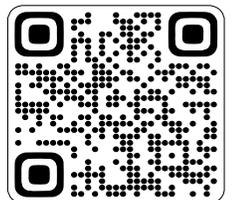


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PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING OF WOMAN POLICE AND ITS ASSOCIATED FACTORS IN MADURAI DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU

C.Kanmani¹, V. Sethuramalingam², D. Nirmala³

¹Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University,
Tiruchirappalli-620 024, Tamil Nadu, India.

²Professor (Rtd) and Former Head, Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University,
Tiruchirappalli-620 024, Tamil Nadu, India.

³Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli-
620 024, Tamil Nadu, India.

ABSTRACT

Generally, psychological well-being (PW) of police in general and police women in particular, is largely affected by work-related factors, besides their personal characteristics. In fact, a fewer researches have been made on this topic in the Indian context. Keeping this in mind, here, the researchers took an effort to measure the PW and its associated factors of 278 individual police women (who were selected based on stratified proportionate and simple random sampling methods) working in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu. The PW was measured based on the sub-scale (14 items) of the Mental Health Inventory – 38. Data were collected through structured-questionnaire and analysed into frequency tables, cross-tabulations (means, standard deviations, and One-way ANOVA / t-test), and step-wise regression analysis.

The results revealed that, overall, the mean PW score of sample woman police was noted as 41.33 ± 10.50 (Range: 17–69). Results of step-wise regression analysis

highlighted that six variables/factors collectively had explained about 21.6% variation in PW. The likelihood of PW of police women was positively associated with their years of schooling ($p<0.01$), monthly family income ($p<0.001$), and also of those who were living in a joint family environment ($p<0.01$). Conversely, such probability of PW appeared to be lessening among those who were reported as facing more problems while working at outside police stations ($p<0.001$) and working for more number of hours/day ($p<0.01$); whereas, such well-being was observed as much lower among those who were working in 'general' police stations as against All Women Stations ($p<0.001$). Police women's monthly income, current department (or wing) in which working, the average number of days/month on night duty, number of transfers had by request, and the number of police wellbeing programmes attended were also found to be associated with their PW. Suitable suggestions were put forwarded for enhancing psychological wellbeing among women police.

Keywords: Psychological Wellbeing, Step-Wise Regression Analysis, Woman Police

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1. Introduction

Throughout the world, policing is considered as a profession meant exclusively for men. Practically, it still remains a male dominated profession in the world. It is a demanding job, which demands long and unpredictable hours of duty. In course of socio-cultural development, women also started taking up police profession. Initially, when the flood gate for appointing women in police department, they preferred becoming high-level police officers. Later, they started occupying low-grade positions in police department. Hence, women, who were considered as the soft gender, weaker sex and constantly in need of care and protection from men, started providing protection to the society by keeping law and order. It was believed that the physical characteristics of women were not suitable to the requirements of police profession. Even though all positions and ranks in the police department are common to both men and women, women are still under-represented and are not assigned to field missions to the extent

that men are assigned. The state of woman police in India is much worse when compared to the state of woman police in other countries.

Generally, working women are double burdened with the household chores at home and official tasks at the work places. However, the situation is much worse in the case of woman police. Woman police, as the law enforcement professional, feel more stress due to work load, lack of support from fellow police personnel, shift duty and lack of communication. Besides, there are certain factors that determine the job satisfaction of woman police: periodical promotion, salary hike and place of work. Regrettably, woman police suffer from mental stress and psychological disturbances regarding the matter of job satisfaction. There are several empirical evidences for the rising mental health issues in working women, woman police in particular.

This issue has aroused academic interest in students and researchers to focus on how work atmosphere and lifestyle affect the mental wellbeing of woman workers, who belong to different occupational groups. In this process, it is found that “the work environment of police has many occupational stressors and exposures that can lead to increased risk for mental health morbidities” (Purba & Demou, 2019). With this background, the researcher(s) of this study has made an attempt to measure psychological wellbeing of woman police and the factors associated with it in woman police in Madurai district, Tamil Nadu.

2.Review of Literature

A number of studies have examined the factors that are likely to influence the psychological wellbeing and/or other dimensions of mental health among police personnel. Yadav et al. (2022) in a study undertaken among 300 traffic police officers in Kathmandu, Nepal noted odds of symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress were higher among males and among those who had longer working hours (12+ hours) and worked both day and night shifts continuously. Further, it was found that the odds of depression and stress were higher among those perceived normal working environment. Huang et al. (2021) in a large-scale field survey of police officers (n=5,611; 23% females) in the northwestern part of China found that psychological distress (6-item scale) is negatively associated with their age, whereas positively with their work time, health risk perception and work stress. Hughes & Parkes (2007) in their study among 292 female employees in UK noted that psychological distress is positively correlated with work hours, whereas it is negatively correlated with family satisfaction and

work-family interference. Further, it is observed that psychological distress is negatively correlated with their age, marital status and number of children and positively with their education, but these findings lack statistical significance.

In Indian context, a study by Bapna et al. (2021) among 260 males working in police stations and check-posts in Haryana state found that the odds of stress (studied as part of DASS-21) are significantly higher among those whose duty hours are longer (9–16 and 17–24 hours), whereas the extent of anxiety is significantly higher among those who are not satisfied with duty hours. However, none of the outcome variables are significantly associated with their age, gender, designation and living with family. Singh et al. (2019) conducted a study among 300 police personnel drawn from six districts of Uttar Pradesh observed that mean score of occupational stress is higher among Inspectors as against constables, whereas mental health score is higher among Officers as against Inspectors as well as Constables. The study by Maurya (2018) among 350 civil police personnel working in seven districts of Uttar Pradesh revealed that psychological well-being (based on 10 items scale) is significantly higher among males as against females. Correlation as well as regression analyses demonstrated that among males, job satisfaction is positively correlated with salary and psychological wellbeing, whereas negatively with psychological distress. A study among 300 police personnel (150 each males and females) in Punjab state (Vinayak & Judge, 2018) demonstrated that psychological wellbeing and empathy scores are higher among SIs as against ASIs. Parsekar et al. (2015) in their study among 76 police constables of Udupi taluk, Karnataka state observed that the magnitude of occupational-related psychological distress (GHQ-12) is appeared to be higher among those who longer years of service than those who have less number of years of service. A study among 756 police women constables in Chennai city (Karunanidhi & Chitra, 2013) revealed that the overall occupational stress as well as its major domains such as operational hassles, external factors, hazards of occupation, physical working conditions, women-related stress and supervisory stress are found to be negatively correlated with their psychological wellbeing (GHQ-12). However, socio-demographic variables such as education, marital status, work experiences and family type didn't turn out as significant factors in influencing their psychological well-being.

The review of aforesaid studies highlights broadly the following points. Overall, though a small number of studies have been dealt with one or the other dimensions of mental health, but studies focusing on measuring psychological wellbeing and its associated factors are very limited, especially in Indian context. Further, few studies only have looked into the associations between socio-demographic characteristics and work-related factors, and psychological

wellbeing of police personnel. Moreover, almost none of the studies focused on all these aspects exclusively among women police.

3.Methodology

3.1Objectives

The main objectives of this study are: (i) to comprehend the socio-demographic and work-related characteristics of the police women, (ii) to measure the psychological wellbeing of police women and examine the differentials, if any, exist in it across their socio-demographic and work-related characteristics, and (iii) to ascertain the major factors associated with the psychological wellbeing of police women.

3.2Research Design

Descriptive research design is primarily adopted as the data have been collected from police women on the basis of cross-sectional survey. Attempt is also made to make use of analytical design through which the researcher(s) examined the role of socio-demographic and work-related factors in influencing the magnitude of psychological wellbeing through statistical analyses.

3.3 Sample Frame, Sample Estimation and Sampling Procedure

The researcher(s) have purposively chosen Madurai district in Tamil Nadu state for this research work. At the time of survey, 990 women police were working in different ranks (such as Police – Grade I & II, Head Constable, Sub-Inspector and Circle Inspector) who form the sample frame (or universe) here. From this, adopting Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) formula of sample determination, the sample size is estimated as 278 police women. The sample police women are predetermined by adopting the stratified proportionate (random) sampling technique giving representation to different cadres under study. The individual sample police women have been selected by adopting simple random sampling technique and following the random sampling numbers' table developed by Tippett & Pearson (1927).

3.4 Tools of data and Variables

A structured questionnaire has been developed for this study which contains two parts. In the first part, questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics and work-related aspects of police women (respondents) are included, whereas the second part consists of details about various aspects related to mental health including psychological wellbeing (PW). In this research work, the PW of police women has been measured by adopting a sub-scale of a

standardized scale, viz., Global Mental Health or Mental Health Inventory (MHI-38), developed by Davies et al. (1988) on behalf of Rand Corporation. This sub-scale (PW) consists of 14 items (Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12, 17, 22, 23, 26, 31, 34 and 37) for which responses are elicited from the respondents on 6-point Likert-type coding pattern ranging from 1 to 6 (Always / All of the Time = 1 to None of the Time / No, Not at all = 6. However, such coding (scoring) is reversed (i.e., 6 to 1) for all the 14 items under study and then pooled the scores so as to get a cumulative score of PW, which ranges between 14 and 84. This pooled score for each respondent specifies her magnitude / extent of PW. On the whole, in the present context, one should interpret that higher the score value higher would be the respondents' PW and vice versa. The Chronbach's Alfa (∞) value is emerged out as 0.881, which is fairly high and therefore, the measurement of PW among the respondents by this scale can be said as modestly trustworthy (reliable). In the present context, the cumulative score of PW is considered as the dependent variable (which is discrete in nature). In all about 12 variables (factors) are considered as independent variables, which are mostly self-clarifying (Table 1).

3.5 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The data for this study were collected by visiting the police stations and interviewing the sample police women. After explaining the importance of the study and getting their informed consent, the questionnaire was handed over to each of the respondents and requested them to provide the answers mostly at the time of interview itself. Few of them said that they would do it leisurely and send them by post or hand it over to the researcher once it was completed. With all these procedures, the whole data collection was completed in about four months, i.e., May–August, 2021. The data were analysed using the software, SPSS-AMOS (IBM Corp., 2016), 24.0 version for windows. At first, the analysis of the socio-demographic and work related factors of the respondents as well as their PW was computed with frequency tables. At the next stage, the cross-tabulations were calculated to examine the differentials in the mean scores (as well as standard deviations) of PW across the different categories of respondents' background characteristics (socio-demographic and work related aspects) under consideration and with the application of one-way ANOVA / independent sample t-test of significance (Table 1). Finally, the step-wise regression technique was carried out to identify the major factors influencing the PW among respondents (Table 2).

4. Results

Table 1: Distribution of Women Police and Mean Score of Psychological Wellbeing across their Socio-Economic Characteristics

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Women Police	%	N	Mean	S.D.	d.f.	F / t-value p-value
1. Current Age (in Years)						
32 or less	32.4	90	41.09	9.9		
33 – 38	37.4	104	40.12	10.5	2	1.891
39 +	30.2	84	43.08	11.1	275	0.153
2. Education						
High / Higher Sec. School	27.7	77	38.83	9.5		
Undergraduate	58.3	162	41.08	10.0	2	9.039
Post-graduate	14.0	39	47.31	12.1	275	0.001
3. Monthly Income (in Rs.)						
≤ 35,000	34.5	96	39.82	10.0		
35,001 – 45,000	33.1	92	40.21	10.7	2	4.746
45,001 +	32.4	90	44.09	10.4	275	0.01
4. Family Monthly Income (in Rs.)						
< 60,000	34.2	116	38.42	9.4		
60,000 – 80,000	37.4	101	41.48	9.5	2	13.286
80,000 +	28.4	61	46.62	12.0	275	0.001
5. Type of Family						
Nuclear Family	78.8	216	40.28	10.3		3.275
Joint Family	28.2	62	45.00	10.6	276	0.001
6. Type of Station Working						
All Women Police Station	18.7	52	46.02	10.4		3.649
General Police Station	81.3	226	40.25	10.3	276	0.001
7. Current Dept. Working						
Law & Order	60.0	167	39.50	10.3		3.637
Others Departments	40.0	111	44.08	10.3	276	0.001
8. Hours Working / Day						
≤ 10	27.0	75	43.13	11.8		
11 – 12	38.5	107	41.91	10.0	2	3.142
13 +	34.5	96	39.28	9.7	275	0.05
9. Days on Night Duty / Month						
0	14.4	40	45.82	11.3		
4 – 6	30.2	84	42.27	10.5	2	6.300
7 +	55.4	154	39.65	9.9	275	0.001
10. No. of Transfers by Request						
No Transfer	29.1	81	39.07	9.1		
1 Transfer	36.0	100	41.34	10.2	2	3.478
2 + Transfers	34.9	97	43.21	11.6	275	0.05
11. Wellbeing Programs Attended						
Not Attended	7.6	21	39.14	8.2		
Attended 1 Programme	73.7	205	40.46	9.8	2	5.510
Attended 2 Programmes	18.7	52	45.56	12.8	275	0.01
12. Problems Faced while Working Outside Station						

Any 1 Problems	15.1	42	44.93	10.5		
Any 2–4 Problems	15.5	43	41.56	12.7	2	3.130
All 5 Problems	69.4	193	40.50	9.8	275	0.05
Total	100.0	278	41.33	10.5		

4.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics and Work-Related Aspects of the Respondents

Data on current age (Table 1) shows that about 37.4% of the sample respondents have completed 33-38 years of age, whereas 32% of them belong to relatively younger age (≤ 32 years) and the rest 30% of them are at 39 years & above. The average age of the sample women is 35.3 years (Range: 23–51 years). While majority of the respondents have (58.3%) completed graduation, 28% of them studied up to high school / higher secondary school level and the rest 14% have studied post-graduation and above. Around one-third each of the respondents are earning a monthly income of Rs. 35,000 & less, Rs. 35,001–45000 and Rs. 45001 & above. The average income of the respondents is Rs. 41,771/- (Range: Rs. 20,000–82,000). On the other hand, a simple majority of the respondents (37.4%) belonged to families that had a monthly income of Rs. 60,000–80,000 closely followed by the income bracket of Rs. <60,000 and the rest of them (28.4%) are part of families that have fairly higher monthly income bracket (Rs. 80000 & above). The average monthly income of a respondent's families comes to Rs. 65,809/- (Range: Rs, 31,000–1,35,000). Majority of the respondents are living in nuclear family set up and the remaining are part of joint /extended families.

A greater percentage of the respondents (81%) are working in general (men and women) police stations whereas the remaining 19% of them are attached to 'All Women police stations'. A large percentage of them (60%) are engaged in general duties of police women (i.e., related to Law & Order), whereas the rest of them (40%) are involved in carrying out the responsibilities/tasks of Writer, Computer Operator (CD File Writer) and the works connected to Court Duty, Traffic regulation, Forensic Lab, Crime and Criminal Tracking Networking System (CCTNS), Armed Reserve Police etc. Nearly two-fifth of the respondents stated to be working on an average about 11–12 hours (38.5%) followed by 13 hours & above (34.5%), whereas the remaining 27% of them stated to be working about 8–10 hours. Hence, the average working hour of the respondents comes around 13 hours per day (Range: 8–18 hours). More than half of the sample police women (55%) reported that they had to perform night duty for about 7 days or more each month and three-tenth of them (30%) had to be on night duty for about 4–6 days per month, whereas the remaining few of them (14%) reported that they never had worked night shift at all (till the date of survey). About 36% of the respondents stated that they were transferred one time by request, 35% of them got transferred two times and the

remaining 29 per cent of them never had transfer till the date of survey. About three-fourth of the respondents (74%) attended at least one wellbeing programme stipulated for police personnel and 19% of them have attended two of such programmes and remaining of them (7%) never had attended any of such wellbeing programmes. A large percentage of them stated that they had faced (five) difficulties in attending nature's call, managing menstruation, accessing food and water and accommodation and in securing safety while working outside police stations, whereas 16% and 15% of them, respectively reported to be facing 2–4 and at least one such problem(s).

4.2 Psychological Wellbeing Score of Police Women

As stated earlier, based on the MHI-38 sub-scale of psychological wellbeing, the average cumulative score is computed as 41.33 ± 10.5 (last row of Table 1). This score is relatively higher than the average expected PW (i.e., 35.0) and thus, it appears that the sample police women are experiencing somewhat better psychological wellbeing.

4.3 Differentials in Psychological Wellbeing of Police Women by their Background Characteristics

Results from Table 1 demonstrate that the PW is higher (43.05) among those police women who are little older in age (39+ years) as compared to those who are somewhat younger in age (32–38 years). It is striking to note that the PW score appears to be increasing consistently with an increase in the police women's education (from 38.83 for those studied up to high / higher secondary school level to 47.31 for those completed post-graduation education). Likewise, an increasing trend in PW is noted when there is an increase in their monthly income and family monthly income (from 39.82 and 38.42 for those earning and belonged to families of lower levels of income to 44.09 and 46.62 for those earning and part of families that are having fairly higher monthly income, respectively). It is pertinent to note that PW of police women is observed as higher among those who belonged to joint/extended families as against to those living as nuclear families (45.00 vs. 40.28) and among those who are working in specialty departments as against to those working in 'law and order' department within police division (44.08 vs. 39.50). Conversely, police women working in general (wherein both men and women work) police stations have exhibited lower score of PW as against to those working in All Women Police Stations (40.25 vs. 46.02).

It is conspicuous to note that the PW (score) of women police observed to be decreasing with an increase of working hours per day (from 43.13 for those working 8–10 hours to 39.28 for those work 13 hours & above) and numerous night shifts in a month (from 45.82 for those who are not on night duty to 39.65 for those who used to be on night duty for about 7 days or

more in a month). Such pattern is also seen when police women reported to be facing more number of problems (44.93 for those reported to be facing at least one problem to 40.50 for those who stated to be facing more number of problems). On the other hand, it is worth noting that the PW of police women tend to increase with an increase in the number transfer(s) they have by request (39.07 for those not requested any transfer to 43.21 for those who requested 2 or more transfers) and number of specific wellbeing programmes attended by them (39.14 for those not attended any wellbeing programme to 45.56 for those who attended two such programmes). The one-way ANOVA and t-test results associated with the differentials in mean scores of PW across all the factors under investigation have turned out as significant at different levels ($p < 0.001$ or $p < 0.01$ or $p < 0.05$), except current age of respondents.

4.4 Major Factors Associated with the Psychological Wellbeing of Police Women

Table 2: Results of Step-wise Regression Analysis on Police Women's Psychological Wellbeing Score

Explanatory Variables	β Co-efficient	t-Value	p-Level
Constant	--	5.518	0.000
Type of Police Station Working (General)	-0.234	-4.218	0.001
Monthly Family Income	0.214	3.946	0.001
Problems Used to Face at Outside Work	-0.178	-3.251	0.001
Type of Family (Joint)	0.155	2.846	0.01
Education (Years of Schooling)	0.153	2.781	0.01
No. Hours Worked per Day	-0.148	-2.714	0.01
R² (in %); N F-Value; Sig. Level	21.6; 278 12.434; 0.001		

Results of step-wise regression analysis (Table 2) highlight that 6 factors (variables) under investigation have demonstrated statistically significant association with the PW of police women and all these factors together have explained 21.6 per cent variation in respondents' PW. Of these, type of police station in which police women working has been turned out as the prime factor associated with their PW indicating those working in general police stations

(wherein both men and women work) have poor PW as against their counterparts in All Women Police Stations ($\beta=-0.234$; $p<0.001$). It is also noted that police women's PW is becoming poor with the increase of problems they face while working outside of the police stations ($\beta=-0.178$; $p<0.001$) and increase of working hours per day ($\beta=-0.148$; $p<0.01$). Conversely, it is pertinent to note that the likelihood of having better PW among police women is positively associated with their monthly family income ($\beta=0.214$; $p<0.001$) and years of schooling ($\beta=0.153$; $p<0.01$). Further, it is eye-catching to observe that joint / extended family environment appeared to be a positive factor in enhancing PW of police women ($\beta=0.155$; $p<0.01$).

5. Conclusions And Discussion

On the whole, this study highlights that the psychological wellbeing (PW) among women police is slightly better (than the average level). The psychological wellbeing of police women is positively associated with their level of education, monthly income and family's monthly income. These findings indicate that police women, who have higher educational qualification and higher monthly income or who are part of families that have higher monthly income, have better psychological wellbeing. This is possible because of their ability to understand their type of work in which they engaged in and it is possible for those who deserve higher ranks – SIs or ASIs (Vinayak & Judge (2018) and Officers (Singh et al., 2019) and thereby, deserve higher income. Beside, higher income of the families also causes mental satisfaction. Those who are from joint/extended families, those who get one or two transfers on request and those who participate in wellbeing programmes organized exclusively for police personnel are capable of enhancing their psychological wellbeing. These findings indirectly indicate that family support, department of their own choice, transfers of their preference, job satisfaction and in-service trainings (Maurya, 2018) together create a situation conducive for police women's psychological wellbeing.

It is conspicuous to note that compared to the police women working in 'All Women police stations, police women working in general police stations exhibit poor psychological wellbeing. This may be due to the gender specific roles and responsibilities at general police stations and mainly due to their concern over their safety at the general police stations. On the other hand, it is worth to note that when it comes to specialty departments, women have exhibited better psychological wellbeing. This indicates women police's way of adjusting to

work with responsibilities related to other than law and order work (main work of police personnel, which is laborious and strenuous).

This study strikingly demonstrates that police women working for long duration (say about 13 or more hours per day) and have several night shifts in a month tend to experience poor psychological wellbeing. These findings are mostly in concurrence with similar findings observed at different settings at abroad and India wherein psychological distress is positively correlated with such timings and night shifts (Yadava et al., 2022; Haung et al., 2021; Parsekar et al., 2015; Hughes & Parkes, 2007). This study also discloses that psychological well being of police women is higher / better among those who belong to higher age group. Such finding is possible because of the reasons that police women of higher age group may be better placed in their positions and getting higher incomes, besides happened to be participated / undergone more number of in-service training / wellbeing programmes. Another interesting finding of this study is that police women are experiencing poor psychological wellbeing when they are facing more number of problems while working outside police stations. It is obvious that managing physiological needs and nature's call is a big problem and they cause much stress in police women who work outside the police stations.

Taking the findings and conclusions stated above into consideration, some of the suggestions are postulated for enhancing the psychological wellbeing in police women. It is suggested that police women may be allowed to have little time and space for relaxing over the stress cause by the work environment. They must be posted on night shifts and on duties outside the police stations for a fewer days. Time and space must be provided to them for relaxing stress and worries caused by the nature of job. Joint family norms could be promoted so as to ensure familial support to police women. Women have their own physiological urges and therefore, their counterpart policemen must be sensitized on the specific issues concerned with police women for making adjustments and extending a helping hand while working together. Police women who are experiencing poor psychological wellbeing may be allowed to participate in wellbeing programmes and similar in-service training programmes, besides providing counseling services. A logical timeframe must be structured so as to motivate police women to work enthusiastically and briskly. On research front, large-scale surveys taking into consideration of gender-specific and different cadres of police may be carried out across states / regional levels. Studies may also be conducted among police women for exploring various aspects that will help ensure psychological wellbeing.

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