

## **OCCUPATIONAL STRESS OF POLICE**

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### **Abstract**

The occupational stress of police studied on 120 police constables who were randomly selected from 22 police stations of Dharwad taluk of Karnataka in the year 2015. Occupational stress scale developed by Srivastav and Sing, 1984, socio-economic status scale by Agarwal *et al.*, 2005 and self structured questionnaire to collect auxiliary information were used for data collection. Results revealed that 58.33 per cent of police had moderate level of occupational stress while 35 per cent had high and only 6.67 per cent had low level of occupational stress. About 60 per cent of men and 56.67 per cent of women had moderate level where as 33.3 per cent of men and 36.67 per cent of women were in high and only 10 per cent of men and 3.33 per cent of women were in low level of occupational stress. Majority of rural and urban police had moderate occupational stress (56.67% and 60%) followed by high (38.33% and 31.67%) and low levels of occupational stress. Occupational stress was significantly and positively related to duty period and distance from residence to work place pointed out that higher the duty period and greater the distance from residence to work place higher was the occupational stress.

**Key words: Occupational Stress, Police men, Police women**

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## **Introduction**

Police are the first's line of protection between the criminals and the civilians. During their duty, unexpectedly they may encounter situations involving major crisis without any warning. There are several factors like 24 hours availability, administration problem were involved and make police as a most stressful job. Stress among police is often viewed as an unlucky, but expected part of police work. Police are like a real heroes, but most of people are unaware the amount of stress that police face every day. Police work involves protection of life, safeguarding property through vital patrol techniques, enforcement of laws and ordinances in the place for which the Police station is responsible. Police who are out in the street, every day during their duty are struggle police (Sundaram and Kumaran, 2012). They also experience lack of concentration, resulting in their making errors while passing orders or taking important decisions. Hence the present study is an attempt to focus on "occupational stress of police" with the following objectives: to assess the occupational stress of police and to know the relation between selected demographic variables and occupational stress of police.

## **Material and methods**

The study was conducted in Dharwad taluk of Karnataka state during the year 2014-15. The research design followed was correlation design and differential design with randomized technique. In Hubli-Dharawad there were about 22 police stations covering rural and urban areas of Dharwad taluk. There were 115-120 women police and 3000-3500 men police working in various police stations. Among total, 50 per cent of women police and 2-5 per cent of men police who were working at rural and urban police stations were considered for study. Hence, the study comprised of 120 police from 12 police stations, among which 60 were men and 60 were women police selected from rural and urban areas of Dharwad taluk.

The structured questionnaire was used to collect the personal information like name, age, education, number of family members, years of experience, location of police station, distance between residence and work place, duty period and opinion about the work. The Socio-Economic Status (SES) scale developed by Aggarwal *et al.* 2005 was used to know SES. Occupational Stress Index developed by Srivastav and Sing, 1984 was used to assess the

occupational stress of women and men police. The scale consisted of 46 items with 12 components viz., role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressures, responsibility of a person, under participation, powerlessness, poor peer relations, intrinsic impoverishment, low status, strenuous working conditions and unprofitability. Response to each statement was obtained using a 5 point likert type scale. Occupational stress was classified as low, moderate and high levels depending upon total scores.

## **Results and discussion**

The demographic characteristics of the men and women police included general characteristics, work related profile and socio economic status of men and women police, such as age, educational level, family size, marital status, caste, work experience, duty period, opinion about work and distance to work place. The general profile of police is indicated in table 1. The demographic characteristics of police indicated that, the age range of the police was between 21 and 60 years. Majority of the police (45.8%) were in between 21 and 30 years followed by 25 percent, 19.2 percent and 10 percent of them belonged to 31-40 years, 41-50 years and 51-60 years respectively (table 1). Around 52.5 percent of the police belonged to small sized family followed by medium and large sized families (42.5 and 5% respectively). Regarding educational level of the police, about half of the police (50.8%) had completed PUC followed by degree and above (43.3%) and SSLC (5.8%). Most of the police were married (68.3%) and 31.7 percent were unmarried. In case of caste, 48.3 percent of the police were from other backward caste followed by upper caste, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe. The study conducted by Sundaram and Kumaran (2012) and Onkari and Itagi (2015 and 2016) revealed that 56.6 percent of the participants were from 20-29 years of age followed by 30-39 years, 40-49 years and 50-59 years of age. 54 percent of them from other backward caste, 20.8 percent were from scheduled caste and 5.5 percent were from most backward caste. Socio economic status (SES) of police indicated that about 64.2 percent of the police were in upper middle SES followed by lower middle (31.7 %) and very few in high category of SES (4.2 %). The variation in the SES of police constables was observed because SES is measured as economic status from all the sources of income including their salary and contributions of family members. In case of rural and urban police, majority of the police (45.8%) were in between 21 and 30 years followed 31-40 years, 41-50 years and 51-60 years respectively. Around 52.5 percent of the police belonged to small sized

family followed by medium and large sized families (42.5% and 5% respectively). Regarding educational level of the police, about half of the police (50.8%) had completed PUC followed by degree and above (43.3%) and SSLC (5.8%). Most of the police were married (68.3%) and 31.7 percent were unmarried. In case of caste, 48.3 percent of the police were from other backward caste followed by upper caste, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe. Socio economic status (SES) of police indicated that about 64.2 percent of the police were in upper middle SES followed by lower middle (31.7 %) and very few in high category of SES (4.2 %).

The work related profile of police (Table 2) revealed that, the work experience of police ranges between 2-30 years. Majority of the police personnel (62.5%) had 2-10 years of experience followed by more than 21 years of experience. With respect to duty period, about 43.3 percent of the police indicated that they worked more than 17 hours per day followed by 29.2 percent worked for 9-16 hours and 27.5 percent worked for 8 hours per day. It is highlighted that 66.7 per cent of men work more number of hours when compared with women. As per the government rules it is compulsory to work for 8 hours per day, but in case of police it is observed that about 43 per cent of them worked and 29.2 percent indicated that they worked about 9-16 hours which is higher than minimum work hours per day. All men police worked for more than 9 hours per day which might be one of the reasons for stress among police. About 55.0 percent of the police had to travel up to 5 km distance to reach work place from residence and 22.5 percent of the police had to travel 6-10 km as well as more than 11 km of distance. Travelling from one place to another place might cause stress among police due to traffic, waste of time in journey, pollution, no facility to travel etc. With respect to opinion about the work, more than half of the police (52.5%) were satisfied with police work, 25.8 percent were not satisfied with work and about 21.7 percent of the police were in confusion state whether satisfied or not satisfied with police work. In case of rural and urban police, majority of the police personnel (62.5%) had 2-10 years of experience followed by more than 21 years of experience.. It is highlighted that 70.00 per cent of rural police and 75.00 per cent of urban police work more than 9 hours per day. As per the government rules it is compulsory to work for 8 hours per day, but in case of police it is observed that about 72.5 per cent of police worked more than 9 hours per day which is higher than minimum work hours per day. About 55.0 percent of the police had to travel up to 5 km distance to reach work place from residence and remaining 45 percent of the police had to travel

more than 6 km of distance to reach the destination of work. 52.00 per cent of police in rural area travel more than 6 km to reach the destination of work where as only 38 per cent of urban police travel more than 6 km to reach the work place. With respect to work satisfaction, more than half of the police (52.5%) were satisfied with police work, 25.8 percent were not satisfied with work and about 21.7 percent of the police were in confusion state whether satisfied or not satisfied with police work. The satisfaction towards the police work was expressed more in rural police (58.33%) than urban police (46.67%).The police personnel who expressed work satisfaction opined that they have respect towards their job, respect in society, helping people in difficult times or controlling anti social elements, patriotism, uniform, power and challenging nature of job. Those who have indicated as not satisfied with work were listed problems as, work load, problems with superiors, peers and juniors, inadequate resources and facilities, political pressure, allocation of leave, salary etc. Similar factors which deals with satisfaction of job has been observed in the study conducted by Nagar (2009).

The percentage distribution occupational stress of police in presented in Table 3. In case of overall occupational stress, majority (56.67 % and 60%) of men and of women police had moderate levels of stress followed by high (33.3% men and 36.67% women) and low levels (10% men and 3.33% women) of stress. In case of locality, majority (56.67 % and 60%) of rural and urban police had moderate levels of stress followed by high (38.3% rural and 31.67% urban) and low levels (5% rural and 8.33% urban) of stress. These results are in lined with the study conducted by Nagar *et al.* (2009) pointed out that majority of the police had moderate stress followed by high and low stress level. As per mean men had high stress than women police. The reasons could be having to work for more than 17 hours per day, distant travelling from residence to work place, lack of facilities in the department, dealing with criminals, more work load, alertness during duty hours. There was negative relationship between emotional intelligence and occupational stress indicating higher the emotional intelligence reduces stress.

The results of comparison between men and women police on components of occupational stress is presented in table 4. There was significant difference between men and women police in role overload, role conflict, responsibility of a person, under participation, powerlessness and strenuous working conditions. As per mean men police had high occupational stress from role

overload, role conflict, responsibility of a person and strenuous working conditions, women police had high occupational stress from under participation, powerlessness. Remaining components of occupational stress not had significant difference between men and women police. There was no significant difference between locality and all the component of occupational stress. However the mean scores of rural police were high on role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure, responsibility of a person, strenuous working condition, under participation, intrinsic impoverishment, , powerlessness and unprofitability. Mean scores of women police were high on powerlessness, poor peer relation and low status. In case of overall occupational stress also there was no significant difference between rural and urban police (Table 5).

Relationship between demographic variables and occupational stress is given in Table 6. It revealed that there was significant and positive relation between duty period, distance between residence and workplace and occupational stress which indicated that higher the duty period increases the occupational stress of police. It might be due to long hours of duty, no rest and no time for family. It also indicated that distance between residence and work place increases occupational stress of police which might be due to the pollution, transport problem and long hours of journey. There was significant and negative relationship between family size, work satisfaction and occupational stress which indicated that higher the family size increases stress among police and those who were not satisfied with job were more having higher occupational stress than other. These results are supported by the study conducted by Solekar *et al.* (2011) revealed that number of working hours has significant association with stress among police personnel. He *et al.* (2005) revealed that work environment problems explained more stress when compared with gender and race. Sibnath *et al.* (2008), Onkari *et al.* (2016) and Onkari and Itagi (2015 and 2016) expressed that stress was due to long duty hours, political pressure, excessive work load, lack of coordination among colleagues. Sekar *et al.* (2013) pointed out that there was no association between gender, years of service and income with occupational stress.

**Table 1. General Characteristics of police**

**N=120**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Men (60)</b>	<b>Women (60)</b>	<b>Rural police (60)</b>	<b>Urban police (60)</b>	<b>Total Police (120)</b>
<b>Age (years)</b>					
<b>21-30</b>	33 (55.0)	22 (36.7)	35(58.33)	20(33.33)	55 (45.8)
<b>31-40</b>	14 (23.3)	16 (26.7)	10(16.67)	20(33.33)	30 (25.0)
<b>41-50</b>	07 (11.7)	16 (26.7)	10(16.67)	13(21.67)	23 (19.2)
<b>51-60</b>	06 (10.0)	06 (10.0)	05(8.33)	07(11.67)	12 (10.0)
<b>Family size</b>					
<b>Small</b>	30 (50.0)	33 (55.0)	26(43.33)	27(45.00)	63 (52.5)
<b>Medium</b>	27 (45.0)	24 (40.0)	23(38.33)	28(46.67)	51 (42.5)
<b>Large</b>	03 (5.0)	03 (5.0)	1(1.67)	05(8.33)	06 (5.0)
<b>Educational level</b>					
<b>SSLC</b>	03 (5.0)	04 (6.7)	03(5.00)	04(6.67)	07 (5.8)
<b>PUC</b>	28 (46.7)	33 (55.6)	33(55.00)	28(46.67)	61 (50.8)
<b>Degree and above</b>	29 (48.3)	23 (38.3)	24(40.00)	28(46.67)	52 (43.3)
<b>Marital Status</b>					
<b>Married</b>	38 (63.3)	44 (73.3)	35(58.33)	47(78.33)	82 (68.3)
<b>Unmarried</b>	22 (36.7)	16 (26.7)	25(41.67)	13(21.67)	38 (31.7)
<b>Caste</b>					
<b>Upper cast</b>	19 (31.7)	26 (43.3)	27(45.00)	18(30.00)	45 (37.5)
<b>OBC</b>	33 (55.0)	25 (41.7)	28(46.67)	30(50.00)	58 (48.3)
<b>Scheduled cast</b>	07 (11.7)	07 (11.7)	04(6.67)	10(16.67)	14 (11.7)
<b>Scheduled tribe</b>	01 (1.7)	02 (3.3)	01 (1.67)	02(3.33)	03 (2.5)
<b>Total</b>	60 (100)	60 (100)	27(45.00)	18(30.00)	120 (100)
<b>Socio-economic status</b>					
<b>Upper High</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>High</b>	02 (6.7)	03 (5.0)	03(5.00)	02(3.33)	05 (4.2)
<b>Upper Middle</b>	40 (66.7)	37 (61.7)	40(66.67)	37(61.67)	77 (64.2)
<b>Lower Middle</b>	18 (30.0)	20 (33.3)	17(28.33)	21(35.00)	38 (31.7)
<b>Poor Middle</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Very Poor</b>	-	-	-	-	-

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

**Table 2. Work profile of police**

**N=120**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Men (60)</b>	<b>Women (60)</b>	<b>Rural police (60)</b>	<b>Urban police (60)</b>	<b>Total police (120)</b>
<b>Work experience (no of years)</b>					
2-5	16 (26.7)	22 (36.7)	24(40.0)	14(23.33)	38 (31.7)
6-10	19 (31.7)	18 (30.0)	17(28.33)	20(33.33)	37 (30.8)
11-15	02 (3.3)	04 (6.7)	4(6.67)	2(3.33)	06 (5.0)
16-20	13 (21.7)	05 (8.3)	7(11.67)	11(18.33)	18 (15.0)
>21	10 (16.7)	11 (18.3)	8(13.33)	13(21.67)	21 (17.5)
<b>Duty Period (hours per day)</b>					
8	-	33 (55.0)	18(30.00)	15(25.00)	33 (27.5)
9-16	20 (33.3)	15 (25.0)	20(33.33)	15(25.00)	35 (29.2)
>17	40 (66.7)	12 (20.0)	22(36.67)	30(50.00)	52 (43.3)
<b>Distance between residence and work place (km)</b>					
0-5	37 (61.7)	29 (48.3)	29(48.33)	37(61.67)	66 (55.0)
6-10	14 (23.3)	13 (21.7)	11(18.33)	16(26.67)	27 (22.5)
>11	09 (15.0)	18 (30.0)	20(33.33)	07(11.67)	27 (22.5)
<b>Work satisfaction</b>					
Not satisfied	28 (46.7)	03 (5.0)	09(15.00)	22(36.67)	31 (25.8)
Neither satisfied or not satisfied	15 (25.0)	11 (18.3)	16(26.67)	10(16.67)	26 (21.7)
Satisfied	17 (28.3)	46 (76.7)	35(58.33)	28(46.67)	63 (52.5)

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages



**Table 3: Percentage distribution of occupational stress of police**

Variables		low	Moderate/Average	High
Gender	Men	6(10.00)	34(56.67)	20(33.33)
	Women	2(3.33)	36(60.00)	22(36.67)
Locality	Rural	3(5.00)	34(56.67)	23(38.33)
	Urban	5(8.33)	36(60.00)	19(31.67)

**Table 4. Comparison of mean scores of components of occupational stress between men and women police**

N = 120

Sl. No.	OS components	Men	Women	t-value
		Mean Scores ± SD	Mean Scores ± SD	
1	Role overload	24.92 ± 3.28	23.27 ± 3.79	2.55*
2	Role ambiguity	10.98 ± 2.56	11.02 ± 1.71	0.084
3	Role conflict	16.27 ± 2.39	15.47 ± 1.84	2.05*
4	Unreasonable group and political pressure	14.27 ± 3.44	13.30 ± 3.17	1.60
5	Responsibility of a person	10.17 ± 2.04	8.58 ± 1.78	4.54**
6	Under participation	12.28 ± 3.33	13.73 ± 2.46	2.71*
7	Powerlessness	8.48 ± 2.32	9.28 ± 2.04	2.06*
8	Poor peer relations	12.10 ± 1.63	12.58 ± 2.12	1.40
9	Intrinsic impoverishment	10.13 ± 2.89	10.93 ± 2.15	1.72
10	Low status	7.40 ± 2.11	7.38 ± 1.95	0.04
11	Strenuous working conditions	14.00 ± 3.32	12.65 ± 2.12	2.65*
12	Un profitability	7.38 ± 1.74	7.03 ± 1.69	1.20
<b>Occupational stress</b>		148.20 ± 17.80	145.23 ± 9.60	1.14

**Table5: Comparison of mean scores of components of occupational stress between rural and urban police**

N=120

Sl. No.	OS components	Rural	Urban	t-value
		Mean Scores $\pm$ SD	Mean Scores $\pm$ SD	
1	Role overload	24.63 $\pm$ 2.59	23.55 $\pm$ 4.37	1.65
2	Role ambiguity	11.13 $\pm$ 2.41	10.86 $\pm$ 1.90	0.67
3	Role conflict	15.86 $\pm$ 2.02	15.86 $\pm$ 2.30	0.00
4	Unreasonable group and political pressure	13.93 $\pm$ 3.18	13.63 $\pm$ 3.48	0.49
5	Responsibility of a person	9.40 $\pm$ 2.05	9.35 $\pm$ 2.08	0.13
6	Under participation	13.42 $\pm$ 3.03	12.60 $\pm$ 2.94	1.49
7	Powerlessness	8.86 $\pm$ 2.17	8.90 $\pm$ 2.94	0.08
8	Poor peer relations	12.13 $\pm$ 1.73	12.55 $\pm$ 2.04	1.20
9	Intrinsic impoverishment	10.75 $\pm$ 2.58	10.31 $\pm$ 2.56	0.92
10	Low status	7.28 $\pm$ 1.97	7.50 $\pm$ 2.08	0.58
11	Strenuous working conditions	13.53 $\pm$ 2.85	13.12 $\pm$ 2.87	0.79
12	Un profitability	7.42 $\pm$ 1.46	7.00 $\pm$ 1.92	1.33
<b>Occupational stress</b>		148.37 $\pm$ 14.18	145.00 $\pm$ 14.38	1.26

**Table6. Relationship between demographic characteristics and occupational stress of police**

N=120

Sl. No.	Demographic Variables	Occupational Stress (r)
1	Age	-0.11
2	Education	-0.04
3	Marital status	0.01
4	Family size	-0.18*
5	Work experience	-0.12
6	Duty period	0.18*
7	Work satisfaction	-0.33**
8	Distance from residence to work place	0.18*
9	Socio economic status	0.05

\*significant at 0.05 level of significance

\*\*significant at 0.01 level of significance

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