MENTAL HEALTH STATUS OF WOMEN POLICE IN VARANASI DISTRICT

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Abstract: Mental health is the **emotional, psychological, and social well-being of an individual** often mental health and mental illness are used interchangeably but these two conditions are different. Policing is the law enforcement machinery of the nation hence requires 24/7 engagement and involves dealing with unpleasant situations, inhuman circumstances, and long working hours. The situation is especially demanding for females as they have additional responsibilities at home. This takes a tremendous toll on the mental health of female police personnel impacting their job performance and their family life and social well-being. This study aims to measure the mental health status of female police personnel working in Varanasi, the study indicates that none of the respondents have a very poor level of Mental Health Status and the majority 49% of the respondents have mental health status at an average level.

Keywords: Mental Health, Women Police, Well Being, Age

Introduction: Female police personnel are an integral part of law enforcement, they provide a healing touch to policing, especially when it comes to dealing with matters related to women and children but the demanding nature of the job, exposure to gruesome crimes, sleep deprivation and lack of nutrient intake create circumstances for deterioration of mental health of the female police. Also, women in police face unique gender based challenges include gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence both on and off the job, The World Health Organization (WHO, 2015) conceptualizes mental health as a "state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community

Review of Literature:

Mahesh Kumar Maurya (2017) conducted a study in Uttar Pradesh with a sample size of 350 with 102 females and 248 males to stud the relationship between Mental Health and Job Satisfaction of the respondents, mental health was assessed using the General Well Being-20 scale developed by Heubeck and Neil (2000) and job satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Scale by Dabtzker (1993), a positive correlation was found between the Mental Health and Job Satisfaction of the respondents.

Parsekar, Singh and Bhumika (2015) conducted a cross-sectional study on Occupation-Related Psychological Distress Among Police Constables in Udupi Taluk of Karnataka. The study found that 25% of the respondents have high level of psychological stress due to understaffing, lack of training, lack of modern equipment, lack of family time, overtime, irregular duty and fatigue.

The research conducted by Mohini M. Pandya and Yogesh A. Jogsan aimed to study the relationship between job stress and mental health among police personnel. The sample consisted of 80 police personnel and two research tools were used to measure job stress and mental health: the Job Stress scale developed by Shrivastva and A.P. Singh (1984), and the Mental Health Inventory created by D.J. Bhatt and Miss. Gida (1992). The t-test was applied to determine the significance difference between job stress and mental health, and the Karl Pearson Correlation Method was used to evaluate the relationship between the two variables. The results showed a significant difference in job stress and mental health among police personnel and a positive correlation between job stress and mental health. The study concluded that police work is highly stressful and can impact mental health due to the physical dangers and potential risk to life faced by police personnel on a daily basis.

Research Methodology:

The purpose of this study was to analyze the mental health status of female police personnel, a purposive sampling method was used for the study. 399 female police personnel from twenty-six police stations, including women police stations in the Varanasi district were identified. Post area and sample selection formal permission was obtained from Varanasi district's Senior Superintendent of Police

(SSP) followed by permission from the concerned Police Station In charge (SHO), a rapport building, and background briefing exercise was done with females, and then data was collected individually, all measures were taken to keep the data anonymized, the data was collected between March 2019 to January 2021.

Tool and Techniques Used:

The Socio-Economic data of Female Police Personnel was collected through a self-structured questionnaire while mental health status was recorded using Mnetal Health Inventory (MHI) developed by Jagdish,S. and Srivastava, A.K, this is a four-point scale with 56 statements. 4 alternative responses have been given to each statement are Always, Often, Rarely and Never, these responses are assigned a scores of 4 to 'Always', 3, scores to 'Often', 2 scores to 'Rarely', and 1 score to 'Never' marked responses as to be assigned for true keyed (positive) statements whereas 1, 2, 3 and 4 scores for 'Always', 'Often', 'Rarely', and 'Never respectively in case of false keyed (negative) statements. The reliability of the inventory was determined by a split half method using odd-even procedure the reliability was found to 0.54 and validity was found to be 0.79, which I is high reliability and validty

The 56 statements are further categorized in six categories namely Positive Self Evaluation (PSE), Perception of Reality (PR), Integration of Personality (IP), Autonomy (AU), Group Oriented Attitude (GOA), Environmental Mastery (EM) each dimension has Positive & Negative aspects. The total score of every statement measures overall mental health

Results and discussion:

1. **Distribution of Respondents according to their Age Group**

Age	No.	%
21-25	**205**	**51.3**
26-30	147	36.7
>30	48	12
Total	400	100
Avg Age ± SD = 26.34 ± 4.84		

The study found that the younger female has higher representation in the Police department of the Varanasi district as depicted in the table above, the majority 51.3% female were from the 21-25 years age group. 88% of females were under 30 years of age. The average age of female police in the Varanasi district was found to be 26.34 years with the standard deviation being ± 4.84.

2. **Distribution of Respondents according to their Marital Status**

Marital Status	No.	%
Unmarried	328	82.0
Married	67	16.7
Widow	5	1.3
Total	400	100

Table study deduced that the 328 of 400 respondents (82%) are unmarried, this finding is in lines of table 1 where average age of the respondent is 26 years, another important point to note is all **five widows** got employment on Compassionate ground (**"Ashrit Quota"**).

3. **Age group wise distribution of the respondents according to the average scoring on different dimensions of Mental Health**

Dimension of Mental Health	Age Group							
	21 - 25 (204)		26 - 30 (147)		> 30 (48)		Total (399)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
PSE	33.79	3.1	31.87	3.49	33.29	2.58	33.02	3.31
	F =15.57 P <0.01 Significant Pairs = (**21 - 25** vs **26 - 30**) (**26 - 30** vs **> 30**)							
PR								

	24.27	3.39	25.35	2.99	25.65	2.59	24.83	3.2
	F =6.819		P <0.001		Significant Pairs = (**21 – 25** vs **26 - 30**, **> 30**)			
IP	35.69	4	36.71	5.29	38.85	3.78	36.91	4.54
	F =5.162		P <0.001		Significant Pairs = (**> 30** vs **21 - 25**, **26 - 30**)			
AUTNY	18.14	2.51	17.58	2.2	19.75	2.31	18.13	2.46
	F =15.092		P <0.001		Significant Pairs = (**21 – 25** vs **26 - 30**, **> 30**) (**26 - 30** Vs **> 30**)			
GOA	13.75	3.96	31.61	3.2	32.31	2.51	31.25	3.58
	F = 4.951		P <0.001		Significant Pairs = (**21 – 25** vs **26 - 30**, **> 30**)			
EM	29.06	2.16	29.6	1.98	29.35	2.82	29.3	2.2
	F = 2.576		P >0.05					
Overall Mental Health	172.59	11.63	172.71	13.09	179.21	10.07	173.43	12.18
	F =6.307		P < 0.01	Significant Pairs (**> 30** vs **21 - 25**, **26 - 30**)				

Table 3 shows the Age group wise distribution of the respondents according to the average scoring on different dimensions of Mental Health, the table depicts that Overall Mental Health of the respondents significantly increased for the respondents with more than 30 years of age (179 ± 10.07) compared to younger 21- 25-year age group (172 ± 11.63) and 26-30 years (172.71 ± 13.09). A pattern of significant improvement in the scoring on different dimensions of mental health with increase in age is observed except for EM where the improvement is not significant.

4. **Distribution of the respondents according to their different dimension of Mental Health**

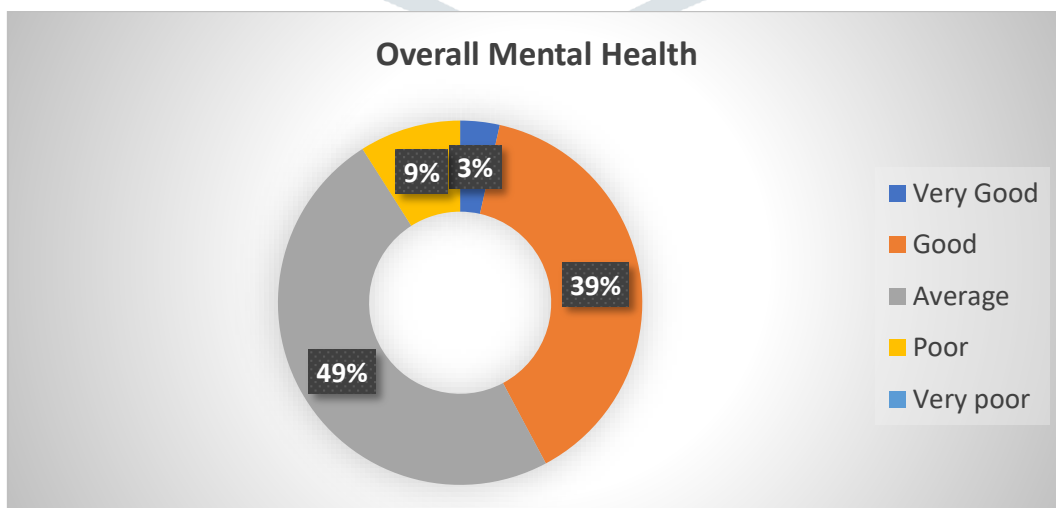| *Dimension of Mental Health*	*Levels of Mental Health*									
	Very Good		**Good**		**Average**		**Poor**		**Very poor**	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
PSE	52	13	125	31.3	180	45	43	10.7	0	0
PR	15	3.7	116	29	128	32	112	28	29	7.3
IP	4	1	111	27.7	235	58.8	42	10.5	8	2
AUTNY	15	3.7	163	40.8	170	42.5	50	13	0	0
GOA	0	0	151	37.7	163	40.7	81	20.3	5	1.3
EM	0	0	75	18.7	228	57	97	24.3	0	0
Overall Mental Health	14	3.5	155	38.7	195	48.8	36	9	0	0

Table 16 shows distribution of the respondents according to their Level of Mental Health, it is evident from the figure that none of the respondents have very poor level of Mental Health and only 9% of the respondents have Poor level of Mental Health, while 48.8% of the respondents have average Mental Health level, 38.7% of the respondents have good Mental Health level and 3.5% of the respondents had a very good Mental Health level. Majority 91% of the respondents have mental health level of average and above.

Conclusion:

This study was conducted to assess the Mental Health Status of Female police personnel. It is evident that the participation of women in the police is very less as females joining due to demanding, unpleasant and stressful working conditions, but one cannot evade this condition as it is the nature of job, to ensure a good mental well-being of female police personnel, regular evaluation and counselling of female should happen, yoga and meditation sessions should be regularly organized in order to improve overall well-being. Policing demands 24X7 engagement and hence generally female who have dual role of home maker too can become over strained leading to poor mental wellbeing, hence a proper roster planning should be done to provide adequate rest. It is clear in the study. In conclusion, the mental health of female police officers in India is a critical issue that must be addressed in order to ensure the well-being of these important members of the public safety community and to support their efforts to serve and protect the people of India.

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