

## Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables among Police Constables

Dr Mahadevaswamy P<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Ranganatha, P.R<sup>2</sup>, Yunis<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

In modern society, crime multiplies and has become multi-dimensional with the latest disturbing behaviors such as cyber crime, white collar crime, money laundering, drug trafficking, pornography, digital counterfeiting, human trafficking, domestic violence, terrorism, frauds, sexual crimes. and so on. Some people have misused all modern technological innovations for criminal enterprise. The Indian criminal justice system has an important responsibility in managing crimes and crime-related matters in which police personnel play an important role. The present survey was aimed at assessing the levels of depression, anxiety and stress among police constables in and around Mysore. A total of 180 police constables were selected randomly and they were administered anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (ADSS) developed by Pallavi Bhatnagar et al., 1995). Independent samples t tests were employed to find out the significance of mean difference between gender, type of family and marital stress. The findings of the study revealed that On the whole, 22.2% of the police constables had high levels of anxiety, 22.8% of them experienced high levels of depression and only 6.1% of them experienced high levels of stress. Gender of the police constables did not have significant influence over anxiety, depression and stress. Type of family of the police constables did not have significant influence over anxiety, depression and stress. Married police constables had higher anxiety compared to unmarried/single police constables, however marital status did not influence depression and stress.

**Key Words:** *Depression, anxiety, stress, police, family type*

Experiencing occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. However, people with anxiety disorders frequently have intense, excessive and persistent worry and fear about everyday situations. Often, anxiety disorders involve repeated episodes of sudden feelings of intense anxiety and fear or terror that reach a peak within minutes' Anxiety can be considered as one class of responses to stressors that is influenced by the personal salience of the situation for the person. Most theorists interpret anxiety as including fear, shame and guilt, and other elements which have been suggested include distress, anger (Izard. 2013) and

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of studies and research in Psychology, Karnataka State Open University, Mukthagangothri, Mysuru, [drmahadevaswamyp@gmail.com](mailto:drmahadevaswamyp@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of studies in Psychology, Government First grade college for Women, Vijayanagar, Mysore-570 018

<sup>3</sup> Student, MSc in Psychology, Karnataka State Open University, Mukthagangothri, Mysore. Mail: [yunis.allamanuru@gmail.com](mailto:yunis.allamanuru@gmail.com)

\*Corresponding Author

Received: March 01, 2022; Revision Received: June 21, 2022; Accepted: June 30, 2022

## Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables among Police Constables

frustration (Gray, 1979). Neiss (1988) argued that any of these elements could degrade performance by introducing excessive tension. Bouras and Holt defined as “Anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness and worry, usually generalized and unfocused as an overreaction to a situation that is only subjectively seen as menacing (Kaur & Bhambri, 2016). Depression is a state of sadness that has advanced to the point of being disruptive to an individual's social functioning and daily activities requiring clinical intervention. “Depression” comes from the Latin word *depressio*, meaning to press down. Many researchers assume that the term "depression" refers not simply to a state of depressed mood, but to a syndrome comprising mood disorder, psychomotor changes and a variety of somatic disturbances (Knaus, 2006). Depression can be viewed as a persistent and recurring scourge that can involve multiple coexisting conditions such as anxiety and anger (Pettit & Joiner, 2006). This condition is clearly an equal opportunity disability that can affect anyone at any economic level, from childhood to old age. Kessler *et al.* (2003) found that approximately 16% of adults will experience depression in their lifetime. Depression is the most commonly encountered disorder among psychiatric outpatients (45%) and only 31% of depression sufferers are suffering from depression alone (Zimmerman *et al.*, 2008). In India, depression is a major public health problem resulting in increased suffering, diminished social and occupational functioning as well as high levels of suicide. A number of Indian studies (Amin *et al.*, 1998; Nambi *et al.*, 2002; Pothen *et al.*, 2003) have reported a wide range of prevalence of depression in India. There are numerous potential causes, and here and there, different components join to trigger side effects. Stress is in body's response to certain situations. Stress is subjective. Stress can affect physical health, mental health and behavior. In response to stressful stimuli, body turns on its biological response: chemicals and hormones are released that are meant to help body rise to the challenge. Stress fall into three categories (Bartlett, 1998; Goetsch & Fuller 1995): “Stress as a stimulus; Stress as a response; Stress as an interaction between an organism and its environment.” Stress can affect all aspects of one’s life, including emotions, behaviors, thinking ability, and physical health (Clark-Lempers, Lempers & Netusil, 1990). The causes of stress don’t exist objectively, and individuals differ in what they see as a stressor in the first place. Work pressure, relationship difficulties, financial problem, being too busy are major cause for stress along with others psychological and physiological factors.

Today world over security has become a casualty and to counter such crimes, society must constantly strive to find newer methods. For the purpose, the Police Department is created by the society to protect life and property in order to live a peaceful life. Among the different ranking officials, police constables happen to be the lowest ranking officers. Their work is to execute the orders of the superior officers and in turn to serve the public. These constables, being the lowest ranking officials, have direct contact with the general public. They know the pulse of the people and handle situations accordingly. Hence, the police constabulary is the nerves of the department and decides the image of police in a society. For them to respond positively, their needs and expectations should be met. Irrespective of whether police constables are interested in their job or not, atmosphere at their work place as well as in the family should be harmonious. If they are provided with healthy atmosphere for their work and social living, even those who are not interested may develop an interest in the job. Hence, good working conditions and social life of the police would help them to get good cooperation from the people as police cannot function in isolation. Moreover, as police are an inseparable part of society, it views them not only as a law-enforcing agency but also as an instrument of social service, an agent of social change and the protector of rights and duties of the people. Normally, the policemen are not armed with any weapon except a ‘lathi’ but on

## **Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables among Police Constables**

special occasions they are provided with arms. They are expected to be in their uniform while on duty. Their job is mostly manual in nature. They execute the orders of their superiors without any discretion to take any independent decision. In the entire police force they form the majority. As per the basic Police Act, the constable in India is just class IV servant (Alexander, 2006).

Researchers have hypothesized that each of these issues may be linked to job performance, dissatisfaction with the workplace, and interpersonal skills, all of which affect on service delivery, and peer relationships at work (Fifer et. al, 1994; Lovibond, 1998). It is frequently noted that one of the most demanding professions is law enforcement (Carlier, Lamberts & Gersons, 1997). Most people consider being an enforcement officer to be a very demanding job. Police officers constantly deal with upsetting situations such dangers to their own safety and the safety of their coworkers, riots, the shooting or killing of bystanders, bombings, criminal activities, and frequently the lethal shooting of criminals. (Francis, Godofredo & McCafferty, 1990). They must deal with hostile members of the public, work in hazardous conditions, apprehend violent criminals, cope with the unavoidable political restrictions of public life, and arrest violent offenders (Violanti & Paton, 1999). Studies have linked a number of stresses related to police work to psychological distress, depression, anxiety, alcoholism, burnout, heart conditions, suicide, family and marital problems, and psychological agony (Kop, Euwema, & Schaufeli, 1999; Loo, 1999). The purpose of the current study is to assess the extent of anxiety, stress and depression experienced by the police constables and to evaluate influence of various demographic variables on the levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.

### **METHOD**

The main objective of the study was to assess Anxiety depression and stress relation to demographic variables among police constables. Survey is used for the techniques of investigation when adequate information about certain problem is not available in records, files and other sources.

#### **Participants**

A total of 180 police constables including male and female constables were selected from there districts of Karnataka State for the study through stratified random sampling technique was used.

#### **Instrument**

Anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale (ADSS)-Pallavi Bhatnagar, Megha Singh, Manoj Pandey, Sandhya and Amitabh (1995). This scale comprises of 42 items. It is a self-report inventory that deals with three different but relevant factors i.e. depression, anxiety, and stress. Each of the three ADSS scale contains 14 items, divided into subscales of 2-5 items with similar content. The reliability of the total scale is measured by Cronbach's Alpha and Spearman-Brown coefficient found 0.81 and 0.89 respectively. The obtained reliability for Anxiety, Depression and Stress subscales as measured by Cronbach's Alpha is 0.76, 0.75 and 0.61 and by Spearman Brown coefficient is 0.86, 0.86 and 0.76 respectively.

#### **Procedure**

After acquiring a written permission from the Inspector General of the Police, the participants of the research were individually approached by the researcher in three districts of the Karnataka. The officer's in-charge of different police stations facilitated the research

## Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables among Police Constables

procedure. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their consent to participate was obtained. The participants responded to the instrument in individual settings and the issues of confidentiality and secrecy were also made clear to them. Demographic information was collected after establishing a satisfactory level of rapport with them. This information did not include their identities. The instructions which were already mentioned in the instrument were also made clear to them. The researcher was available for the respondent in case the respondent needed help in translating / understanding difficult words. The subjects and the facilitators were acknowledged for their cooperation. The scores obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### RESULTS

*Table 1*

*Distribution of the selected sample by various levels of anxiety, depression and stress and results of chi-square tests*

Variable	Levels	Frequency	Percent	Test statistics
Anxiety	Low	48	26.7	$X^2=26.133$ ; P=.001
	Average	92	51.1	
	High	40	22.2	
Depression	Low	44	24.4	$X^2=30.70$ ; P=.001
	Average	95	52.8	
	High	41	22.8	
Stress	Low	89	49.4	$X^2=60.70$ ; P=.001
	Average	80	44.4	
	High	11	6.1	

**Anxiety:** 51.1% of the respondents experienced average levels of anxiety, 26.7% of them experienced low levels of anxiety, and 22.2% of them experienced high levels of anxiety. Chi-square test revealed a significant frequency difference in the levels of anxiety ( $X^2=26.133$ ; P=.001), confirming that a large majority of them experienced average levels of anxiety and rest of them had low and high levels of anxiety.

**Depression:** 52.8% of the respondents experienced average levels of depression, 24.4% of them experienced low levels of depression, and 22.8% of them experienced high levels of depression. Chi-square test revealed a significant frequency difference in the levels of depression ( $X^2=30.70$ ; P= .001), confirming that a majority of them experienced average levels of depression and rest of them had low and high levels of depression.

**Stress:** 49.4% of the respondents experienced low levels of stress, 44.4% of them experienced above average levels of stress, and 6.1% of them experienced high levels of stress. Chi-square test revealed a significant frequency difference in the levels of stress ( $X^2=60.70$ ;P=.001), confirming that a most them experienced low and average levels of stress and very few of them experienced low levels of stress

**Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables  
among Police Constables**

**Influence of Gender on anxiety, depression and stress**

**Table 2**

*Mean anxiety, depression and stress scores of male and female police constables and results of Independent samples t tests*

COMPONENTS	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' Value	'P' Value
Anxiety	Male	114	6.16	3.59	.194	.846
	Female	66	6.05	3.41		
Depression	Male	114	5.36	3.47	-1.162	.247
	Female	66	5.98	3.26		
Stress	Male	114	4.63	2.53	-.856	.393
	Female	66	4.97	2.31		

Note: df=218

Gender of the participants did not have significant influence over anxiety, depression and stress scores. The t value obtained for the Anxiety ( $t=.194$ ;  $p=.846$ ), depression ( $t=-1.162$ ;  $p=.247$ ), and stress ( $t=-.0856$ ;  $p=.002$ ), were found to be non-significant. From the mean values, it is clear that in all these components, male and female police constables had equal levels of anxiety, depression and stress.

**Influence of type of family on anxiety, depression and stress**

**Table 3**

*Mean anxiety, depression and stress scores of police constables from joint and nuclear families and results of Independent samples 't' tests*

COMPONENTS	Family	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' Value	'P' Value
Anxiety	Joint	114	5.79	3.42	-1.675	.096
	Nuclear	66	6.70	3.64		
Depression	Joint	114	5.25	3.24	-1.670	.097
	Nuclear	66	6.12	3.64		
Stress	Joint	114	4.61	2.18	-.934	.352
	Nuclear	66	4.97	2.89		

Type of family of police constables did not have significant influence over anxiety, depression and stress scores. The t value obtained for the mean difference between police constables hailing from joint and nuclear families for Anxiety ( $t=-1.675$ ;  $p=.096$ ), depression ( $t=-1.670$ ;  $p=.097$ ), and stress ( $t=-.934$ ;  $p=.352$ ), were found to be non-significant. From the mean values, it is clear that in all these components, police constables hailing from joint and nuclear families had equal levels of anxiety, depression and stress.

**Influence of Marital status on anxiety, depression and stress**

**Table 4**

*Mean anxiety, depression and stress scores of police constables with married and single status and results of Independent samples 't' tests*

COMPONENTS	Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' Value	'P' Value
Anxiety	Single	111	5.52	3.29	-2.962	.003
	Married	69	7.09	3.69		

**Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables  
among Police Constables**

COMPONENTS	Marital status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' Value	'P' Value
Depression	Single	111	5.33	3.43	-1.167	.245
	Married	69	5.94	3.35		
Stress	Single	111	4.63	2.49	-.786	.433
	Married	69	4.93	2.42		

Marital status of the police constables had significant influence over only anxiety ( $t=-2.962$ ;  $p=.003$ ), where married police constables had higher anxiety compared to unmarried/single police constables. The mean anxiety scores for married and single status police constables were 7.09 and 5.52 respectively. However, married and single status police constables did not differ significantly in depression ( $t=-1.167$ ;  $p=.245$ ) and stress ( $t=-.786$ ;  $p=.433$ ) scores, as the mean depression and stress scores were statistically the same for them.

## DISCUSSION

### Major findings

- On the whole, 22.2% of the police constables had high levels of anxiety, 22.8% of them experienced high levels of depression and only 6.1% of them experienced high levels of stress
- Gender of the police constables did not have significant influence over anxiety, depression and stress
- Type of family of the police constables did not have significant influence over anxiety, depression and stress
- Married police constables had higher anxiety compared to unmarried/single police constables, however marital status did not influence depression and stress

According to Cox and Mackay (1981), a workplace "stressor" is a crucial aspect and is connected to the workplace. On the other hand, workload is said to be positively connected to sadness, anxiety, and irritability and adversely related to job satisfaction (French, Caplan & Van Harrison, 1982). Police personnel are more prone to psychological anguish when transferred to or stationed at police stations that they do not enjoy or that demand more risk. According to Rothman and Pienaar (2003), policing's environmental component is a substantial source of stress. Studies conducted by Rothman and Van Rensburg on South African police personnel in 2002 similarly revealed low levels of job satisfaction and high levels of occupational stress related to the workplace. The external work environment is different in nature from place to place since crime patterns in certain localities may differ. Studies conducted in India and abroad also support the findings of the present study. Lipp (2016) aimed to investigate the levels of occupational stress on the police force of four Brazilian states, and found that police officers consider their job to be very stressful and between 43% and 57% exhibited symptoms of stress. The most common symptoms were irritability and feeling constantly tired. The standard of quality of life was found to be poor, primarily with regard to health. The study shows that there is a need for action for organizational change within the civil police institution itself in order to stimulate a change in life habits, as well as the acquisition of coping strategies that can promote a better quality of life among public security personnel in the country.

Gender as well as type of family of the participants did not have significant influence over anxiety, depression and stress scores. A study by Hi, Zhao and Archbold (2002) did not

## Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables among Police Constables

suggest that male and female police officers differed statistically in the clinically developed measure of anxiety. In reference to coping mechanisms and physical and psychological stress, the study found convergent and divergent effects. For both males and females, there appeared to be convergent impact of spillover and destructive coping on three measures of stress, somatization, anxiety, and depression. Griffin (2006) argued that there were few differences in the amount of professional stress that male and female police officers experienced. Wells, Colbert and Slate (2006) noted that whereas their male counterparts expressed burnout, female cops reported physical indications of stress. Men are accustomed to repressing their feelings during stressful times at work. According to Agolla (2008), some male police officers find it challenging to ask their friends for professional advice when they face work-family conflict and negative coping mechanisms because they fear being perceived as weak. A study by Li., Cheung, Jacky and Sun (2019) revealed that Family-work conflicts, organizational and operational factors affected work stress and work engagement among police officers.

Being one of the few professions where personnel are regularly expected to face bodily threats and put their lives on the line at any moment, police employment is extremely stressful. The majority of law enforcement stresses fall into one of four categories: (1) organisational practices and characteristics, (2) practices and characteristics of the criminal justice system, (3) practices and characteristics of the general public, and (4) police job itself. The effectiveness of pre-employment screening to weed out candidates who cannot handle a high-stress job, the increased practical stress training for police officers, and the training programmes for spouses to better understand potential issues are just a few similarities between organisational and individual programmes for coping with stress.

### REFERENCES

- Agolla, J. E. (2009). Occupational Stress among Police Officers. The Case of Botswana Police Service. *Research Journal of Business Management*, 3:25-35.
- Alexander, K. (2006). Police reforms in India: An analytical study. Discovery Publishing House.
- Al-Gelban, K. S. (2007). Depression, anxiety and stress among Saudi adolescent school boys. *The journal of the Royal Society for the Promotion of Health*, 127(1), 33-37.
- Amin, G., Shah, S., & Vankar, G. K. (1998). The prevalence and recognition of depression in primary care. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 40(4), 364.
- Bakare, A. T., Panti, A. A., Yunusa, M. A., & Obembe, A. (2019). Correlates and self-management strategies of premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) among nursing students in a Nigerian teaching hospital. *International Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences*, 11(3), 20-26.
- Bartlett, D. (1998). *Stress: Perspectives and processes*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Bhatnagar, P., Singh, M., Pandey, M., Sandhya, Amitabh. (2011). Manual for anxiety, Depression and Stress Scale. National Psychological Corporation.
- Carlier, I. V., Lamberts, R. D., & Gersons, B. P. (1997). Risk factors for posttraumatic stress symptomatology in police officers: A prospective analysis. *The Journal of nervous and mental disease*, 185(8), 498-506.
- Clark-Lempers, D. S., Lempers, J. D., & Netusil, A. J. (1990). Family financial stress, parental support, and young adolescents' academic achievement and depressive symptoms. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 10(1), 21-36.

**Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables  
among Police Constables**

- Cox, T., & Mackay, C. J. (1981). A transactional approach to occupational stress. In Corlett E. N., J. Richardson, (Eds.) *Stress, Work Design and Productivity*. Chichester, UK: Wiley.
- Francis, M. L., Godofredo, D. D., & McCafferty, M. J. (1990). Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the Police: Paradigm of Occupational Stress. *Southern Medical Journal*, 83, 543-547.
- French, J. R. P., Caplan, R. D., & Van Harrison, R. (1982). *The Mechanisms of Job Strain Stress & Strain*. Chichester, UK: Wiley
- Goetsch, V. L., & Fuller, M. G. (1995). *Stress and stress management. Behavior and Medicine, 2nd edn. St Louis, MO: Mosby.*
- Gray, J. A. (1979). A neuropsychological theory of anxiety. *Emotions in personality and psychopathology*, 301-335.
- Griffin, M. L. (2006). Gender and Stress. A Comparative Assessment of Sources of Stress Among Correctional Officers. *Journal of Contemporary Justice*. 22(1), 4-25.
- He; N., Zhao, J., & Archbold, C.A. (2002). Gender and Police Stress: The Convergent and Divergent Impact of Work Environment, Work-Family Conflict, and Stress Coping Mechanisms of Female and Male Police Officers. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies & Management*, 25 (4), 687-708.
- Izard, C. E. (2013). *Patterns of emotions: A new analysis of anxiety and depression*. Academic Press.
- Kaur, K., & Bhambri, E. (2016). Well-being through Reiki in individuals with trait anxiety. *Indian J Psychol Sci*, 6(2), 107-119.
- Knaus, W. J. (2006). *The cognitive behavioral workbook for depression: A step-by-step program*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Kop, N., Euwema, M., & Schaufeli, W. (1999). Burnout, job stress and violent behaviour among Dutch police officers. *Work & stress*, 13(4), 326-340.
- Kuehner, C. (2003). Gender differences in unipolar depression: an update of epidemiological findings and possible explanations. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 108(3), 163-174.
- Li, Jessica C.M.; Cheung, Jacky C.K.; Sun, Ivan Y.(2019). The impact of job and family factors on work stress and engagement among Hong Kong police officers. *Policing*, 42( 2), 284-300.
- Lipp, M. E. N. (2016). Stress and quality of life of senior Brazilian Police Officers. *Revista Brasileira de Terapias Cognitivas*, 12(2), 100-104.
- Lipp, Marilda E. Novaes. (2016). Stress and quality of life of senior brazilian police officers. *Revista Brasileira de Terapias Cognitivas*, 12(2), 100-104. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5935/1808-5687.20160016>
- Nambi, S. K., Prasad, J., Singh, D., Abraham, V., Kuruvilla, A., & Jacob, K. S. (2002). Explanatory models and common mental disorders among patients with unexplained somatic symptoms attending a primary care facility in Tamil Nadu. *National Medical Journal of India*, 15(6), 331-335.
- Neiss, R. (1988). Reconceptualizing arousal: psychobiological states in motor performance. *Psychological bulletin*, 103(3), 345.
- Ortega, A. N., Feldman, J. M., Canino, G., Steinman, K., & Alegria, M. (2006). Co-occurrence of mental and physical illness in US Latinos. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 41, 927-934.
- Pettit, J. W., & Joiner, T. E. (2006). *Chronic depression: Interpersonal sources, therapeutic solutions*. American Psychological Association.
- Pothen, M., Kuruvilla, A., Philip, K., Joseph, A., & Jacob, K. S. (2003). Common mental disorders among primary care attenders in Vellore, South India: nature, prevalence and risk factors. *International journal of social psychiatry*, 49(2), 119-125.



**Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables  
among Police Constables**

- Rothman, S., & Pienaar, J. (2003). Job stress in the police service. Paper presented at the 15th conference of the South African Institute for Management Scientist, Potchefstroom.
- Violanti, J. M., & Paton, D. (1999). *Police trauma: Psychological aftermath of civilian combat*. Charles C Thomas Publisher.
- Wells, T., Colbert, S. & Slate, R. N. (2006). Gender Matters: Differences in State Probation Officer Stress. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*. 22(1), 63-79
- Zimmerman, M., & McGlinchey, J. B. (2008). Why don't psychiatrists use scales to measure outcome when treating depressed patients?. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 69(12), 1916.

***Acknowledgement***

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Mahadevaswamy P, Dr. Ranganatha, P.R. & Yunis (2022). Assessment of Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Influence of Selected Demographic Variables among Police Constables. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 10(2), 1630-1638. DIP:18.01.164.20221002, DOI:10.25215/1002.164