

Issues in Work-Life Balance of Female Police Personnel of Rajasthan During COVID -19:

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Abstract: It is now universally accepted that the Coronavirus has affected everyone's lives. Dealing with the unforeseen challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on people all across the world. Most of the countries have enforced restrictive measures, such as Lockdown, shelter in place, or stay at home to contain the pandemic at a local level. The employees and personnel who are involved in providing essential services are exempted from stepping out from home. The key personnel whom all are playing a pivotal role in serving nation widely are Doctors, medical staff, Police personnel, Bankers, Govt. Officials, Vendors, Volunteers and allied great staff. This paper aims to discuss the role of the women police force in combatting Covid-19 along with managing home and family. This study further examines how they are maintaining work-life balance during this pandemic situation. Rajasthan case study will be incorporated to highlight the challenges in front of Female Police workforce in terms of performing domestic activities, long duty hours and work stress. The finding of the study attempts to reveal the actual scenario of Women Police lives during Covid-19. The review can be helpful to have a better insight into the problems of women workforce during emergencies like a pandemic or similar disasters. Better disasters management policies can be drafted for such outbreaks. Data has been collected from primary sources mainly through the telephonic interview, and Google forms due to Lockdown and also from secondary sources like articles published on newspapers and some from social media posts.

Keywords: Female Personnel, Work-life Balance, Covid-19, Rajasthan

1. Introduction:

The COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak that began in late 2019 engulfed masses rapidly and worldwide that it was qualified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). COVID 19 has caused capitulation from healthcare entities all over the world. The first case depicted in Hubei, China and the virus has spread to 185 countries, showing little cypher of eradication. The Scientist and researchers are still finding a medical treatment regimen or a vaccine to address COVID 19 definitively. The best response to date has been early diagnosis and instant isolation or quarantine of the patient, with supportive care. The rapid spread of the virus worldwide and uncertainties as to its evolution demand a global response.

As medical institutions all around the world struggle to keep up with this pandemic and in the same scenario, law enforcement plays a decisive role by contributing to the effort to control the disease, promoting safer communities, and fighting criminals who see the outbreak as an

opportunity to increase, expand their activities. Our Police Personnel are regularly operating into a dangerous state of affairs to shield their communities 24/7. Police personnel face work overload, increasing time pressure and growing obstacles prevent them from satisfying both their work and family demands. A healthy work-life balance assumes paramount significance for police personnel; the family and the workplace have posed several challenges and problems for the police during Lockdown.

Created by international best practices and the World Health Organization's (WHO) recommendations, the guidelines provide information on how officers can protect themselves and their families, and outline the various roles carried out by law enforcement during a pandemic. These include:

- Border control and maintaining public order
- Assisting national health authorities in identifying cases and their origin
- Relaying public health measures to the population
- Securing deliveries of medical equipment or transfers of patients.

All the states in the country have almost shut down the government mandating public places like schools, colleges, malls, pubs and clubs to close and urging citizens to stay indoors till Govt would address any authentic news. Officials.

What would be the effect of such restrictions on the working of the police? Here, the research scholar would like to discuss the challenges and the management of the work-life balance of Female police personnel. Such restrictions over a considerable length of time will affect their family life the most individually and in the medical ground too.

2. Objectives:

- To discuss the duties assigned to the Women Police force during Lockdown.
- To discuss the achievements by Female Police Staff personnel to the general public so far during Lockdown.
- To identify the challenges, they are facing at home and work during Lockdown.
- To discuss the safety measures they are taking at home.
- To examine family support, especially during Lockdown.
- To give suggestions about the improvement of work-life balance and family life balance in such type of pandemic situation if occurred in future.

3. Literature Review

- *Women police officers in Orissa postpone her wedding.* They had to choose between conjugal bliss and the call of duty. She has given priority to her task. At a time when the police are at the forefront of the fight against the Coronavirus, two women police personnel in Orissa-Sundergarh district have postponed their wedding, setting an example of unwavering commitment to duty. Home guard Tilotama Meher's wedding was scheduled for April 12 while Constable Sunita Adha was expected to tie the knot on April 25.
- *Article published on BBC E-portal* regarding the powers of police during Lockdown. The three essential tools they have been given are The power to detain someone to be tested if they are believed to be infectious, to close a wide range of non-essential businesses and to restrict the right to move around and be part of a social gathering. They can also impose the two critical social estrangement rules which ban: Leaving the place where you live "without reasonable excuse" and being in a public gathering of more than two people.
- *Times of India E-paper* published an article on "Call of duty: Pregnancy no hurdle for this Rajasthan cop".: This article depicts the passion and dedication towards the nation. Seven-month pregnancy has never daunted this 26-year old Constable Santosh Jat to get relief from duty in this pandemic situation. She has voluntarily chosen to discharge her duties. She asked to continue her services on roadblock duty, but management gave her duty in control room for her safety.
- On April 29 2020. Rajasthan Police conduct flag march to raise awareness against Covid-19 pandemic amidst the ongoing nationwide Lockdown in Jaipur. A motorcade, featuring hundreds of Police Control Room (PCR)vans and motorcycle road through the city during the flag march. It's a matter of pride that most of the motor riders are women police force.
- *Article published in India Mail Today* on Coronavirus in India: How cops are fighting Covid-19 surge in ranks. The main highlights of the report were. First, Cops remain vulnerably exposed to rising Covid-19 infections. Secondly, Cops are guarding

containment zones, enforcing the Lockdown. Thirdly, South-West DCP in self-quarantine after a junior cop he met tested positive.

- *The story published on Times of India portal about the Woman Cop (Bhilwara)* along with her husband leave 7 yrs.' old daughter at their home to serve people during Lockdown. A woman constable and her husband, who works in an isolation chamber for COVID -19 patients leave their little toddler at home alone to perform their respective duties.
- *McCarty et al. (1999)* premeditated the impact of the HeartMath self-management skills program on physiological and psychological strain in police officers. They examined that the physiological, psychological and behavioural effects of anxiety in the police can be severe, and it includes exceptionally high rates of suicide, alcohol use, cardiovascular diseases and other stress-related illness. They have emphasized that the chronic anxiety, depression, psychological burnout and disrupted family relationships are other common manifestations of prolonged unmanaged stress in police officers. They provided convincing evidence that the application of practical pressure and emotional management techniques can reduce the damaging physiological and psychological responses to both acute and chronic stress in the police, and positively impact a variety of significant life areas in a relatively short period.
- *E-patrika –Madhya Pradesh* roofed the bravery news of female police officer at corona lockdown duty. She has not seen and pours her love and affection to 3yrs old son for 20 days. Her commitment is her first precedence. The efforts and sacrifice of these real heroes are commendable.
- *News published in Rajasthan Patrika* regarding the extension of duty hours of women police force during Lockdown. They all are performing sturdy duty on roads in these boiling days with full dedication in serving people during Coronavirus lockdown. In her absence, the primary responsibilities of their kids are performed by her spouse or in-laws. The effects of extra duty hours and busy schedule are also affecting their family life.
- *Khanna (2011)* investigated the work-life balance as a device for amplified employee output and retention. He said that ensuring a 'quality time with the family' or such approach as work-life balance should be a dual effort by the employee and the management. While an individual needs to work for his livelihood, he has to bestow himself a good break from the daily schedule in the concern of his body, mind, family

and society. He should be enabled to achieve this balance so that the employer derives the benefit of having a satisfied employee. As a result, the subject of 'work-life balance' is now becoming a crucial point of study by Human Resource Management experts and their managing teams. To an employee, WLB means stress-free enjoyable work-life. They provided an understanding of the term WLB as well as the conceptual exemplar of work-life balance, discussion of different causes and consequences of WLB, and the importance as well as the benefits of WLB.

- *The study was conducted in Andhra Pradesh, India on Female Police Personnel to find out the impact of support of family on work-life balance. The support of family members in every stage of life is essential but more emphasis in this study was given to provide a helping hand to women if in the family there is either child age category or senior citizens to manage their personal and professional life. (Padma and Reddy, 2013)*

4. Research Methodology

- **Data Collection:**

A-Primary sources: Data has been collected with the help of well-designed open and close structured questionnaire (Google Forms) and semi-structured telephonic interviews & Video calls of the higher rank female police officers keeping in mind the current circumstances of Lockdown due to Covid-19.

B-Secondary Sources: will be collected from articles published on newspapers, some from social media posts and Rajasthan Police official website.

C-Research Site: Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Kota, Sikar and other nearby districts (Rajasthan)

D- Sample Size-For the purpose of this study, a sample from both the segments of female police, i.e. Non-Gazetted Officers (NGO's)-Inspectors, SHO's, Sub Inspectors, Assistant. SI and Other Ranks (OR's) Head Constables and Constables have been will be taken. The sample of this study consists of 100 Female police personnel drawn from the districts mentioned above.

D- Data Collection Tools: All the respondents were requested to complete the following two sections:

- Demographic details which may include age, marital status, Educational qualifications, Designation and location.
- Family Characteristics
- Safety measures
- Work-Family conflict
- Work-life balance
- Challenges at work and home

5. Results & Discussion

A. Demographic Profile:

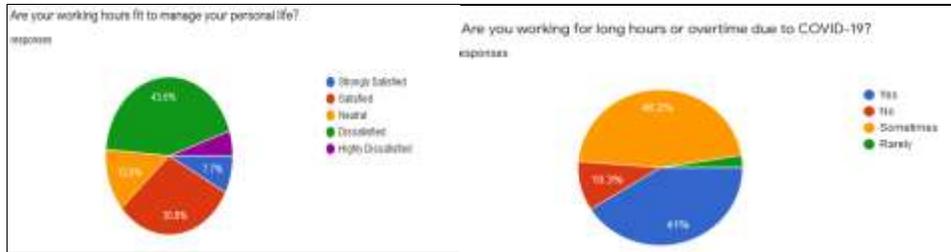
- **Age:** A review of the demographic profile of respondents indicates that the majority of them (65%) were in the age group of 31- 50 years with one or two children.
- **Family Type:** A vast majority (59%) of the respondents belonged to a joint family consisting of in-laws. While 31% of the respondents had no elderly support to care for.
- **Service Level:** Almost all the respondent belong to the middle and lower level. Approximately 50% sample of female police personnel selected from the post of Constable, Sub-inspector (31%), Head-Constable (14%) and SHO (5%).
- **Education:** Most of them (60%) were postgraduates, a small proportion (8%) had a professional degree, and about (32%) had a Graduation Degree or some other degree.
- **Marital Status:** 80% of the respondents were married, and 2.6% were separated, divorced or widowed, and 18% were unmarried.
- **Duty Location:** Majority of the respondents (62%) were from the urban area of Rajasthan, and (38%) respondents were from the rural areas of Rajasthan like Jhunjhunu, Churu, Fatehpur etc. where the corona positive cases are comparatively low as compared to urban areas.

B. Factors affecting work-life balance

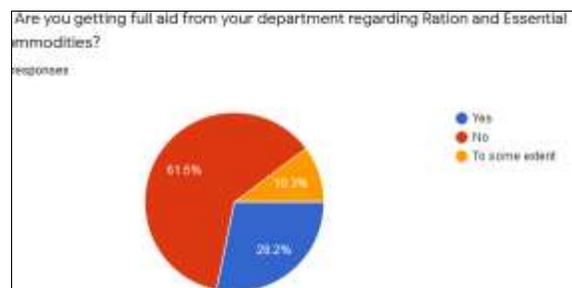
- **Long Working Hours**

It was observed that while by an large the respondents had no grudge on the issue of working hours which are defined and prescribed as per the law of the land butpredominantly they are finding it challenging to manage and balance their personal and family life. While 64% of the respondent appears to be strongly satisfied (12.8%) with 17.9% strongly dissatisfied. However decentchunk had a secure reservation on the

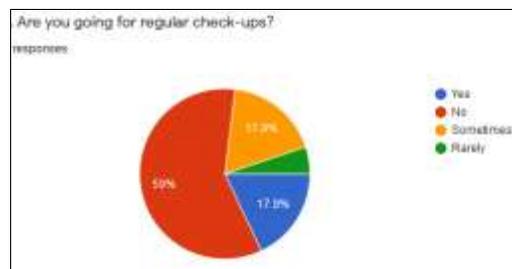
issue of managing their family life. Almost 50% were either dissatisfied (43.6%) or highly dissatisfied (5.1%). Even some persons are either strongly satisfied (7.7%) or satisfied (30.8%).



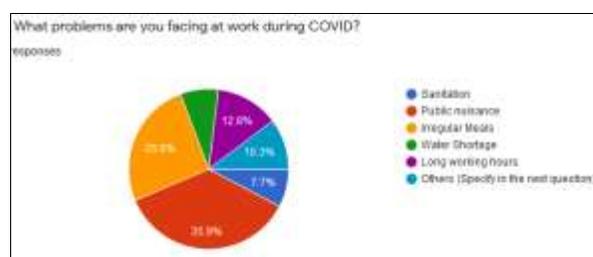
- Department Support:** Decent numbers of respondents (62%) were quite assertive that other than provision for remuneration for rendering robust services during Lockdown and sometimes meals provided by the department they were not getting any aid or support in terms of providing essential commodities to their family members. After the announcement by PM regarding Lockdown in Pan India, entire nation adhered to stay at home. The Police Department family members followed the same rules. In that scenario, these female police personnel did face a lot of problems to purchase ration and other essentials after performing (8-12hrs) duty hours.



- Health concern:** Surprisingly good percentage. (59%) of respondents were not able to go for medical check-ups not even on initial symptoms of COVID 19 as they were so much engaged in performing duties in this pandemic. (17%) respondents did somehow managed to check the temperature and other significant symptoms themselves by self-monitoring. These were those respondents who used to go to their home after duty hours.

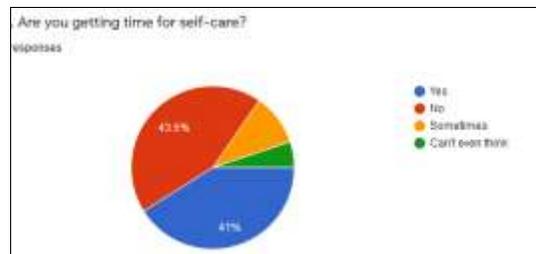


- Public nuisance:** Although the significant responsibility of the police is to provide citizens with a sense of safety and security, the first time they were on their toes during COVID for their safety and well-being from the vulnerable disease. In the process of their role of law enforcers, they had to tune themselves to make sure that everyone should stay at home and maintain social distancing. In the research survey (36%) of respondents did find themselves quite uncomfortable to face this challenge while enforcing public code of conduct.
- Sanitation:** While sanitation being the prime concern of the Govt as well as society at large, to ensure adequate sanitation everywhere including at the workplace of the staff and personnel at the workplace, some respondent (7%) did not fail to emphasize the issue of hygiene. Obviously for female person sanitation arrangements do attain added significance.

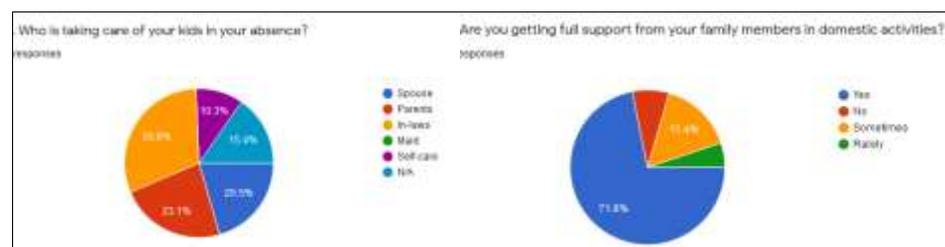


C. Consequences of poor work-life balance

- No time for oneself:** Majority of the respondents (43.6%) agreed that they had no time for themselves and 15% proportion were not able to think for any other stuff like personal care and spiritual pursuits other than duty. 41% of respondents agreed that they had time for themselves but that spell only for relaxation of their body as they were so strained and mugged in discharging duties and in domestic chores.



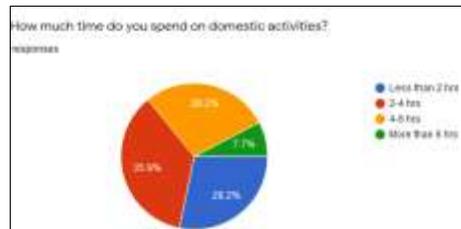
- Child Care:** Majority of the respondents agreed that the impact of Covid-19 Lockdown not only affected their professional life and well-being but also did affect their child growth and care. This may be attributed to the fact that most working hours are not now limited to 7 or 8 hours in a day; they had almost to spend 12-16 hours at work. After announcing Lockdown, most of them are not stepping into their home due to precautionary measures. Even when they were at their home over exhaustion and fear to protect the child from any infection made them separate themselves from the child. They were applauded to the concept and practice of joint family, as a result (34%) of respondents children were taken care by their in-laws, (23%) by their parents and (20%) by their spouse. Some respondents were disheartened to share personal problems like distressing for 5month year's old toddler, a single mother with no family support, past and physically confronted in-laws and other genuine issues.



- Disharmony at home**

As against the usual belief and understanding that after performing duties at the workplace one can establish a commonly accepted practice to devise and share the time available at home for domestic and family activity, the COVID 19 has suddenly uprooted this practice. Apart from extra duty hours and additional time at home to adhere to sanitization process added with anxiety to maintain social distancing at home and taking extra precaution to safeguard themselves and family the respondents could spare very less time at their home to fulfil their domestic duties. A large chunk (64%)

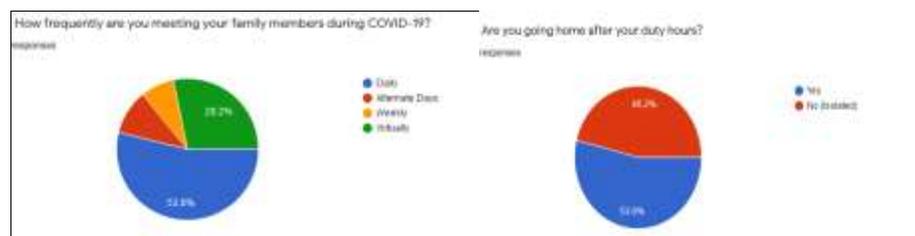
of the respondents reported that they could now devote less than 4 hours (36% less than 2 hours) for family duties. Only 8% could spend more than 6 hours. This has strongly disrupted their family harmony. We wish this be a temporary phenomenon and should not have a lasting effect on their long term familyharmony.



• **Challenges stimulated during COVID**

The norms to be followed at home as consequential to safety measure to safeguard from COVID have added more challenges in the Family life. Wearing a mask, have proper sanitization, keeping social distance has made these persons more susceptible in day to day living. Providentially, the outcome of the research has led to following the norms strictly and added other methods to improve the immunity system. To be specific, it was noted that 44% of the respondents wear mask regularly and consuming sanitizer as a regular practice at home too. 54% of respondents can follow the norms of social distancing strictly in the case of joint family, laundry uniforms by their own, prioritize personal hygiene factor. While taking all these precautionary measures, they believe that the norms are to be followed strictly, omitting any step may lead to making their family and the society venerable to looming risk of exposure to the dreaded disease.

- Others: Majority of the respondents were so much disheartened due to staying away from family, and some respondents were not hesitant to share that are unwilling to have Home-Made foods since 2months. This may be attributed to the significant emotional instability consequences.



6. Suggestions for the study:

- The NGOs and Volunteers either attached to any NGO or those coming forward on their own, have a significant role in serving the society. However, it needs to be ensured that such help is not limited merely in should come forward and take the initiative to aid police offices in evading public nuisance and spreading awareness amidst COVID -19 under the supervision of trained professionals.
- The flexibility of working hours by giving them the option of selecting their preferred working hours.
- Monetary and Non-monetary incentives.
- Providing Motivational lectures and videos
- Crèche Facilities for officers who do not have any other means of taking care of their family.
- Providing essential commodities at subsidized rates of products like that supplied in Army Cantonments. This would prove to be an incentive for the officers to come to work more enthusiastically and reinstate their belief in the support provided by the department.
- Special Awards and recognition related to the current COVID situation should be given according to the exceptional work done by the officers and measures taken to curb the virus.
- Taking regular and anonymous feedback by the officers so that the problems they are facing can be conveyed to the relevant authorities without any fear or apprehension. This would also help the department in addressing the issues and finding viable solutions to it.
- Providing proper sanitary products before and after shifts to maintain their safety.
- Since females are more vulnerable to sanitary problems related to defecation, the facility of movable toilets should be given.

7. Limitation of the study:

- This study was limited with the State of Rajasthan only; the study can be extended in other states of India and outside India too.
- Due to tough duty hours and strict adherence of the law of the land, the survey was done through Google e-forms and with a telephonic conversation. This lead to the sample size was minimal, i.e. 100 respondents.
- The higher-level management personnel were engaged in structuring strategies and controlling measures which leads to difficulty in contacting and taking interviews with them.

8. Scope of the research: This is perhaps the first case of a disaster of such category in decades. Any study relevant to such disaster management on social, psychological, family impact while discharging duty will go a long way as background feedback. The police department can redesign the working conditions and work times to make a healthy work-life balance. The study can be helpful to have a better insight into the problems of women workforce during emergencies like pandemic or disasters. Better disasters management policies can be drafted for such outbreaks. The findings can help to review and improvement in the existing pattern in such or similar type of eventualities.

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