

Quality of Work Life among Women Police Constables: Evidence from Field Study

* *Dr. Maheshwari S. Kachapur, Assistant Professor, Dept of Criminology and Forensic Science, Rani Channamma University, Belagavi, Karnataka*
E-mail: kmaheshwari82@gmail.com
mkachapur@rcub.ac.in

***Dr. Shivkumar M. Belli, Associate Professor, Dept of Business Studies, Central University of Karnataka*
E-mail: shivkumarbelli@cuk.ac.in

Abstract

The present study examines the Quality of Work Life (QWL) among women police constables, drawing on field-based empirical evidence from Belagavi, Karnataka. The objectives of the study are to analyze the socio-demographic and professional characteristics of women police constables and to assess their level of Quality of Work Life in the policing environment. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The universe consisted of women police constables working in Belagavi District. Data were collected from 304 respondents using a systematic random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was used to collect socio-demographic information, while the Quality of Work Life Scale based on Walton's QWL model was applied to measure different dimensions of work life. The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) with statistical techniques such as percentage analysis, bivariate tables, and chi-square tests. The results reveal that factors such as age, residential status, native place, family type, monthly income, motivational factors for joining the police department, department unit, and work schedule show a significant relationship with the Quality of Work Life. The study highlights the need for improved workplace support and gender-sensitive policies.

Key Words: Women police, Stressful Profession, Motivational factors, Quality of work life, and Organizational Polices.

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AMONG WOMEN POLICE CONSTABLES IN BELAGAVI DISTRICT

1. INTRODUCTION:

Women in India enjoy only a lower status in the society and they can be considered as a needy section of the society. They were not uplifted the equal status in all walks of life, political, social, economic, educational society (Bardhan, 1985). Indian women have a great part to play in progress of the country, as the mental and physical contact of women with life is much more lasting and comprehensive than that of men. Presently, women are actively participating in various economic activities and managing their roles in the organisation promptly. Their traditional role of home maker has been transformed into the new role of a professional woman (Gasti & Kachapur, 2023). In India, a number of women have successfully broken the glass ceiling and attained top positions (Kermode et al., 2007). Quality of work life enables them to participate at all levels actively and effectively in constructing an organisational environment, methods and outcomes. It involves job security, working conditions, compensation, employment opportunity, involvement and empowerment, and other organisational factors (Bhagyalaxmi & Ishwara, 2016). "The police are guardians of the poor and their success depends on their ability to win the confidence, respect and cooperation of the public." They are not a force, but a service to the public. 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. The women police personnel most of the time work under stress due to work load, extended duty hours, political pressures, personal/family problems etc (Bharti, 2006).

The integration of women into police departments, although increasingly widespread, has not occurred without considerable challenges (Evans & Davies, 2014). Female officers often encounter resistance, exclusionary workplace cultures, and gender-based discrimination, all of which can impact their quality of work life (Hassell & Brandl, 2009); National Center for Women and Policing, 2002; Texiera, 2002; Wells, 2005). These obstacles persist despite formal policies promoting equality, indicating the need for deeper cultural and structural reforms.

2. Quality of Work Life among Women Police Constables

Women police constables experience several workplace pressures similar to those of their male colleagues, but they also face additional gender-specific challenges that significantly affect their Quality of Work Life (QWL). These challenges stem from structural, cultural, and organizational factors within the policing system (Biradar & Kachapur, 2025). First, gender discrimination and stereotyping remain persistent issues. Women constables are often perceived as less capable of handling physically demanding or high-risk field duties. As a result, they are disproportionately assigned clerical, desk-based, or support tasks instead of operational policing roles. This restricts their career growth, reduces job satisfaction, and reinforces gender-related role bias (Rabe-Hemp, 2008). Second, work-family conflict (WFC) is a dominant challenge. Police work involves irregular shifts, long working hours, and emergency duty, which make it difficult for women—especially married women—to balance domestic responsibilities with professional obligations. This conflict contributes to stress, fatigue, and a decline in overall QWL (Sharma & Singh, 2018). Third, the absence of gender-sensitive infrastructure such as separate restrooms, changing areas, and safe night-duty accommodations negatively affects basic comfort and well-being. Many police stations across India lack even minimum facilities suitable for women staff, resulting in decreased morale, discomfort, and compromised dignity at work (Dharmadhikari & Pathak, 2021).

Finally, harassment and safety concerns continue to hinder women constables' workplace experience. Incidents of sexual harassment, bullying, and the absence of accessible complaint mechanisms create a hostile work environment. These experiences not only reduce their sense of safety but also undermine trust in the institutional support system, thereby harming overall QWL (Silvestri, 2018). Collectively, these gender-specific challenges highlight the need for structural reforms, gender-sensitive policies, and improved organizational support to enhance the standard of living for female police constables at work.

3. Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- (i) To comprehend the socio-demographic and work-related characteristics of the women police constables in Belagavi District.
- (ii) To measure the level of quality of work life of women police constables in Belagavi District

4. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to explore the quality of work life among women police constables in Belagavi District, Karnataka. Data collection involved visits to women-only and general police stations, with prior permission from relevant authorities. A total of 310 women police constables were approached, and 304 consented to participate, forming the final sample selected through systematic random sampling. A structured questionnaire gathered socio-demographic information, and the Quality of Work Life (QWL) Scale based on Walton's QWL Model (2017) assessed aspects of their work life and workplace conditions. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), employing methods such as percentage analysis, bivariate tables, and chi-square tests to examine relationships between quality of work life and selected socio-demographic and professional variables, identifying significant patterns and associations.

5. Data Analyses and Interpretation:

Table No: 1 Personal Background of the Respondents

Variable	Responses	Frequency	Percent
Age Category of the Respondents	24 to 35	131	43.1
	36 to 45	97	31.9
	46 to 55	45	14.8
	55 and Above	31	10.2
	Total	304	100.0
Educational Qualification	PUC	44	14.5
	Under Graduation	139	45.7
	Post-Graduation	121	39.8
	Total	304	100.0
Religion	Hindu	213	70.1
	Muslim	59	19.4
	Christian	32	10.5
	Total	304	100.0
Caste	General	65	21.4
	OBC	137	45.1
	SC	64	21.1
	ST	38	12.5
	Total	304	100.0
Marital Status	Married	176	57.9
	Unmarried	128	42.1
	Total	304	100.0
Residing	Own house	84	27.6
	Rented house	145	47.7
	Police Quarters	75	24.7
	Total	304	100.0
Native place	Urban	192	63.2
	Rural	112	36.8
	Total	304	100.0
Type of family	Nuclear Family	199	65.5
	Joint Family	105	34.5
	Total	304	100.0
Monthly Income	Rs. 25,000/- to 35,000/-	28	9.2
	Rs. 36,000/- to 45,000/-	118	38.8
	Rs. 46,000/- to 55,000/-	32	10.5
	Rs. 56,000/- to 65,000/-	72	23.7
	Rs. 65,000 and Above	54	17.8
Total	304	100.0	

Table No. 1 presents the personal background characteristics of the respondents, including age, educational qualification, religion, caste, marital status, residence, native place, family type, and monthly income. These variables help in understanding the social and demographic profile of the women police constables included in the study.

The age distribution shows that a large proportion of the respondents are relatively young. About 43.1% (131) of the respondents fall within the 24–35 years age group, forming the largest segment of the sample. This is followed by 31.9% (97) respondents in the 36–45 years category. A smaller proportion, 14.8% (45), belong to the 46–55 years age group, while only 10.2% (31) respondents are aged 55 years and above. This distribution indicates that the majority of the respondents are young and middle-aged, suggesting an active and productive workforce in the police department. In terms of educational qualification, the findings reveal that most respondents are well educated. Nearly 45.7% (139) have completed undergraduate education, while 39.8% (121) possess postgraduate degrees. A smaller proportion, 14.5% (44), have completed education up to the PUC level. This reflects a relatively high level of education among women police constables. Regarding religion, the majority of respondents (70.1%) belong to the Hindu community. Muslims constitute 19.4% of the respondents, while Christians account for 10.5%. The caste composition indicates that 45.1% of the respondents belong to the OBC category, followed by 21.4% from the General category, 21.1% from Scheduled Castes, and 12.5% from Scheduled Tribes, reflecting diverse social representation. More than half of the respondents (57.9%) are married, while 42.1% are unmarried. In terms of residence, nearly half (47.7%) live in rented houses, while 27.6% live in their own houses and 24.7% stay in police quarters. A majority of respondents (63.2%) come from urban areas, while 36.8% belong to rural backgrounds. Additionally, 65.5% belong to nuclear families. The income distribution shows that most respondents fall within the middle-income group, with the largest proportion (38.8%) earning between ₹36,000 and ₹45,000 per month.

Table No: 2 Information of the Profession by the Respondents

Variables	Response	Frequency	Percent
Motivational Factor for Joining Police	To Deliver justice to ordinary people	28	9.2
	To do public service	118	38.8
	To overcome from poverty	32	10.5
	Inspiration by the dress	72	23.7
	Motivation by Women Power	54	17.8
	Total	304	100.0
Department or unit	Law & Order	107	35.2
	Crime	107	35.2
	Traffic	90	29.6
	Total	304	100.0
Employment Grade	Constable	199	65.5
	Head Constable	105	34.5
	Total	304	100.0
Number of Years of Experience	0 to 5 Years	65	21.4

Work Schedule	6 to 15 Years	137	45.1
	16 to 25 Years	64	21.1
	26 and above years	38	12.5
	Total	304	100.0
	Day shift	124	40.8
	Night shift	97	31.9
	Alternative (morning and evening)	83	27.3
	Total	304	100.0

Table No. 2 presents the professional background of the respondents, including motivational factors for joining the police service, department or unit of work, employment grade, years of experience, and work schedule. These variables help in understanding the occupational characteristics of the women police constables included in the study. The findings reveal that the major motivating factor for joining the police service is the desire to perform public service. About 38.8% (118) of the respondents reported that they joined the police force with the intention of serving society. Another significant proportion, 23.7% (72), stated that they were inspired by the police uniform and the prestige associated with the profession. Additionally, 17.8% (54) respondents indicated that women empowerment motivated them to join the police department. A smaller proportion of respondents joined the police service to overcome poverty (10.5%) or to deliver justice to ordinary people (9.2%). These responses suggest that both social commitment and personal aspirations play an important role in motivating women to pursue a career in policing. With regard to departmental distribution, the respondents are fairly evenly spread across different units. About 35.2% (107) respondents are working in the Law and Order department, and an equal percentage are assigned to the Crime department. Meanwhile, 29.6% (90) respondents are working in the Traffic department, indicating that women police constables contribute to various operational functions within the police system. In terms of employment grade, the majority of respondents (65.5%) are serving as Police Constables, while 34.5% hold the position of Head Constables. The distribution of experience shows that 45.1% of respondents have 6–15 years of service, followed by 21.4% with 0–5 years and 21.1% with 16–25 years of experience. Only 12.5% have more than 26 years of service. Regarding work schedule, 40.8% work day shifts, 31.9% night shifts, and 27.3% follow alternating shifts, reflecting the continuous and demanding nature of police duties.

Table No: 3 Quality of Work life and Personal and Professional Background of the Respondents

Variable	Value	df	Sig. level	Result
Age	15.760	6	.015	Significant
Residential	18.712	4	.001	Significant
Native	8.420	2	.015	Significant
Type of family	6.722	2	.034	Significant
Monthly income	23.999	8	.002	Significant
Motivational factors for joining to department	23.999	8	.002	Significant
Department Unit	17.658	4	.001	Significant
Work schedule	11.414	4	.022	Significant

Table No. 3 presents the results of the Chi-square test conducted to examine the relationship between Quality of Work Life (QWL) and selected personal and professional background variables of the respondents. The significance of the relationship is determined based on the p-value at the 0.05 level of significance. The results indicate that age has a significant relationship with Quality of Work Life. The calculated Chi-square value for age is 15.760 with 6 degrees of freedom, and the significance value is 0.015, which is less than 0.05. This shows that age plays an important role in influencing how respondents perceive their quality of work life. Residential status also shows a significant association with Quality of Work Life. The Chi-square value is 18.712 with 4 degrees of freedom, and the significance level is 0.001. This implies that the type of residence, such as owning a house, living in a rented house, or staying in police quarters, affects the respondents' work-life conditions. Similarly, native place and type of family have significant relationships with Quality of Work Life. The Chi-square values for native place (8.420) and type of family (6.722) have significance levels of 0.015 and 0.034 respectively, both of which are below the 0.05 threshold. Monthly income also shows a strong association with Quality of Work Life, with a Chi-square value of 23.999 and a significance level of 0.002. Motivational factors for joining the department also significantly influence Quality of Work Life, as indicated by the same Chi-square value and significance level. Furthermore, department unit and work schedule are significantly related to Quality of Work Life. The Chi-square values are 17.658 and 11.414 respectively, with significance levels below 0.05. Since all p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that these variables significantly influence the Quality of Work Life of women police constables.

Discussion

The findings of the study provide important insights into the socio-demographic and professional characteristics of women police constables and the factors influencing their quality of work life. The age distribution indicates that a majority of the respondents belong to the 24–35 years age group, followed by those in the 36–45 years category. This suggests that the police workforce largely consists of young and middle-aged women who are actively engaged in their professional responsibilities. Individuals in this stage of life are generally energetic and productive, but they may also face challenges in balancing professional commitments with personal and family responsibilities. Since a considerable proportion of the respondents are married, managing family duties alongside demanding work schedules can influence their overall work-life balance. The educational background of the respondents shows that most of them have completed undergraduate and postgraduate education. This reflects the increasing participation of well-educated women in the police service. Higher educational qualifications may enhance professional competence, communication abilities, and decision-making skills. However, despite these qualifications, women police personnel may still encounter certain barriers in career progression due to hierarchical structures and gender-based perceptions within the policing system.

Housing conditions also appear to be an important aspect affecting the quality of work life. A large number of respondents reported living in rented houses, while a smaller proportion had access to their own houses or official police quarters. Living in rented accommodation may create financial pressure and practical difficulties, particularly for personnel who are required to work long or irregular hours. Adequate housing facilities and stable living arrangements are essential for maintaining psychological well-being and improving job satisfaction among police personnel. The motivational factors for joining the police service reveal that a majority of respondents were driven by the desire to serve the public. This reflects a strong sense of social responsibility among women police constables. Other motivating factors included inspiration from the police uniform, the idea of women empowerment, overcoming economic difficulties, and the intention to deliver justice to ordinary citizens. These factors demonstrate that both personal aspirations and social commitments play an important role in influencing the decision to join the police force.

The distribution of respondents across different departments such as law and order, crime, and traffic indicates that women police constables are actively involved in various operational duties. However, the nature of police work requires personnel to follow shift-based

schedules, including day, night, and alternative shifts. Such irregular work patterns can affect personal life, disrupt family routines, and lead to fatigue and stress. The chi-square analysis further indicates that variables such as age, residential status, native place, family type, monthly income, motivational factors, department unit, and work schedule have a significant relationship with the quality of work life. This suggests that the quality of work life of women police constables is influenced by a combination of personal, social, and professional factors. Improving working conditions, providing supportive policies, and ensuring gender-sensitive practices can play a crucial role in enhancing their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

Suggestions

Based on the study's findings, several measures can improve the quality of work life for women police constables. First, workplace infrastructure needs enhancement. Police departments should provide gender-sensitive facilities, such as separate restrooms, changing rooms, and safe accommodations for women on night duty. This ensures dignity and creates a supportive environment. Next, work scheduling must be more flexible. Long and irregular hours can complicate family responsibilities, so implementing balanced shift systems would help women manage their work and personal lives more effectively. To address the inherent stress of policing, regular stress management and counseling services are essential for maintaining mental health. Additionally, better housing options, such as increased availability of police accommodations, can reduce financial and logistical challenges for women constables.

Strengthening career development opportunities through training and equal promotion chances can boost professional confidence and enhance organizational efficiency. Moreover, establishing clear grievance redressal mechanisms is vital for addressing harassment and discrimination, creating a safer workplace. Finally, promoting a supportive culture through gender sensitization programs and policies that support work-life balance—like maternity benefits and childcare facilities—will significantly enhance the quality of work life for women police constables.

Conclusion

The findings of the study provide important insights into the working conditions and life situations of women police constables. They highlight how both personal background and professional circumstances influence their overall quality of work life. Most of the respondents belong to the 24–35 years age group and possess relatively good educational qualifications, with many having completed undergraduate and postgraduate studies. A large proportion of them are married and belong to nuclear families, indicating that women police constables often need to balance demanding professional responsibilities with family commitments. In addition, the housing conditions of many respondents show that a considerable number live in rented accommodation rather than official police quarters, which may create financial and practical difficulties. From the professional perspective, many respondents reported that their primary motivation for joining the police service was the desire to serve society. The majority are working at the constable level and have moderate professional experience. Women police personnel are involved in different functional units such as law and order, crime, and traffic departments, reflecting their active role in the operational functioning of the police system. However, the nature of police work requires personnel to work in different shifts, including night and alternative shifts, which can affect their physical well-being and work–life balance.

The statistical analysis indicates that several variables—such as age, residential status, native place, type of family, monthly income, motivational factors for joining the department, department unit, and work schedule—have a significant relationship with the quality of work life. These findings suggest that the quality of work life of women police constables is influenced by a combination of personal, social, and occupational factors. Overall, improving workplace infrastructure, strengthening welfare facilities, and implementing supportive and gender-sensitive organizational policies can significantly enhance the quality of work life of women police personnel. Such improvements can contribute not only to their well-being and job satisfaction but also to the efficiency and effectiveness of policing services.

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