



Content is available at: CRDEEP Journals  
Journal homepage: <http://www.crdeepjournal.org/category/journals/global-journal-of-current-research-gjcr/>

**Global Journal of Current Research**  
(ISSN: 2320-2920) (Scientific Journal Impact Factor: 6.122)

UGC Approved-A Peer Reviewed Quarterly Journal



## Research Paper

# A Study On The Mental Health Challenges And Coping Mechanisms Of Female Police Constables In Kumaun, Uttarakhand

Dr Pooja Hairiya<sup>1</sup> and Dr Neerja Singh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Uttarakhand Open University Haldwani, Uttarakhand, India.

<sup>2</sup>-Asst Prof. Department of Social Work, Uttarakhand Open University Haldwani, Uttarakhand, India.

## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Corresponding Author:

Dr Pooja Hairiya

### Key words:

Mental Health, Coping Mechanisms of Female Police constables Kumaun,

## ABSTRACT

The increasing participation of women in law enforcement has introduced new challenges, particularly concerning mental health. This study examines the mental health status, stressors, and coping mechanisms of female police constables in Kumaun, Uttarakhand. The paper highlights workplace challenges, social expectations, and psychological stress factors affecting these officers. Additionally, it discusses existing coping strategies and recommends improvements to mental health support services. The research is based on empirical studies and relevant literature, providing an in-depth analysis of the unique struggles faced by female police personnel in the region.

## 1. Introduction

The police force in India serves as the primary public authority responsible for law enforcement, maintaining public order, and responding to a wide range of emergencies. The profession is highly demanding, requiring round-the-clock availability and exposure to challenging work conditions. These factors significantly impact the mental well-being of police personnel, particularly female constables, who often juggle their professional responsibilities alongside family obligations. Despite the increasing participation of women in law enforcement worldwide, female officers remain underrepresented, especially in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), women constitute only 11.7% of the total police force in the country. Their presence in higher ranks is even lower at 8.7%, highlighting significant gender disparity. Societal norms and gender biases further exacerbate the challenges faced by female police personnel, contributing to workplace stress, discrimination, and mental health struggles. The specific region of Kumaun in Uttarakhand presents unique challenges for female constables. The division, comprising six districts, has both urban and rural policing requirements, each with its distinct stressors. Long working hours, inadequate rest, exposure to crime and violence, and a lack of psychological support contribute to mental distress among these officers. This study aims to analyze the mental health status, stressors, and coping mechanisms employed by female police constables in Kumaun, Uttarakhand, to provide insights that can inform policy reforms and intervention strategies. Women's participation in policing has been growing globally, yet they continue to face gender-specific challenges. In India, women constitute only a small percentage of the police force, with unique struggles affecting their mental health. Female police constables in Kumaun, Uttarakhand, face occupational stress, long working hours, family obligations, and societal stereotypes.

This study aims to explore these factors and identify coping mechanisms used by these officers. It also investigates the psychological impact of police work on female constables and proposes potential strategies to alleviate their mental health concerns.

## 2. Conceptual Study

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the following key areas:

1. **Mental Health and Policing:** Mental health, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), is "a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and contribute to their community". Police personnel, due to the nature of their work, are at high risk of stress-related

<sup>1</sup>Author can be contacted at: Uttarakhand Open University Haldwani, Uttarakhand, India.

Received: 22-02-2025; Sent for Review on: 28-02-2024; Draft sent to Author for corrections: 10-03-2025; Accepted on: 12-03-2025; Online Available from 20-03-2025

DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.2.10483.03368](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.10483.03368)

GJCR: -9900/© 2025 CRDEEP Journals. All Rights Reserved

disorders, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Studies have shown that occupational stress in law enforcement leads to decreased job satisfaction, health complications, and impaired work performance.

2. **Gender-Specific Challenges in Law Enforcement:** Policing has traditionally been a male-dominated profession, often characterized by aggression, physical endurance, and high-risk decision-making. Women in the police force face multiple layers of stress, including gender-based discrimination, workplace harassment, lack of career advancement opportunities, and an unsupportive work environment. Additionally, female officers often struggle with balancing their professional duties with societal and familial expectations.

3. **Coping Mechanisms:** Coping mechanisms among female police constables vary based on individual resilience, available institutional support, and socio-cultural factors. Common coping strategies include:

a. **Problem-focused coping:** Seeking solutions to work-related stressors, such as requesting better work conditions or engaging in professional development.

b. **Emotion-focused coping:** Managing emotional distress through activities such as meditation, social support, or seeking counseling.

c. **Avoidance coping:** Ignoring stressors, which may sometimes lead to negative behaviors such as substance abuse.

4. **Role of Institutional and Governmental Support:** Various initiatives have been proposed to support the mental health of police personnel, including psychological counseling services, mental health awareness programs, and flexible work schedules. However, the implementation and effectiveness of these programs remain inconsistent, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas like Kumaun

### 3. Mental Health Challenges Faced by Female Police Constables

❖ **Occupational Stress and Job Pressure:** The demanding nature of policing involves exposure to distressing situations, extended work hours, and physical strain. Many female constables report high levels of occupational stress due to the unpredictable nature of their work. Studies indicate that policing is one of the most stressful professions globally, with law enforcement officers often experiencing anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and depression (Natarajan, 2016).

❖ **Gender Discrimination and Workplace Bias** Despite legal protections, gender discrimination remains prevalent in law enforcement. Female officers often receive fewer opportunities for promotion and leadership roles. They are also expected to balance their professional duties with traditional family responsibilities. A study by Sukhtankar et al. (2022) highlights the systemic biases against women in Indian police forces, where female officers are often relegated to administrative roles rather than active law enforcement.

❖ **Work-Life Balance and Family Responsibilities** Many female police constables struggle to balance their professional and personal lives. Cultural expectations often place the burden of childcare and household responsibilities on women, leading to additional stress and mental health concerns. Research conducted by Dikshit & Panda (2020) indicates that work-life balance is a significant issue for female officers, with many reporting feelings of burnout and emotional exhaustion.

❖ **Physical and Psychological Health Concerns** The constant pressure to perform can lead to various physical and mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and fatigue. Studies indicate that female constables frequently experience sleep disturbances, appetite loss, and difficulty concentrating (Queirós et al., 2020). Additionally, prolonged exposure to high-stress environments can result in chronic illnesses such as hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

❖ **Lack of Support Systems** The lack of dedicated mental health programs, counseling services, and peer support systems further exacerbates stress levels among female police personnel. According to the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI, 2019), many women in the Indian police force lack access to psychological support and wellness programs, making it difficult to address their mental health concerns effectively.

### 4. Coping Mechanisms

❖ **Social Support and Peer Networks** Strong peer support plays a crucial role in mitigating stress. Many female constables rely on colleagues and family members for emotional support. Studies suggest that informal support networks within the police force can help officers manage stress better and improve job satisfaction (Maurya & Agarwal, 2018).

❖ **Workplace Coping Strategies** Some officers adopt workplace coping strategies such as prioritization of tasks, communication skills development, and conflict resolution techniques to manage workplace stress. Organizational reforms such as flexible working hours and improved grievance redressal mechanisms can significantly improve their work conditions (Rief & Clinkinbeard, 2020).

❖ **Psychological and Physical Wellness Programs** Engagement in yoga, meditation, and stress management workshops has been shown to improve the mental well-being of female police personnel. Research by Chitra & Karunanidhi (2021) indicates that resilience training programs can enhance coping skills and reduce workplace stress among female officers.

❖ **Counseling and Government Support Initiatives** Access to professional counseling and mental health programs can significantly enhance the coping mechanisms of female police constables. Government intervention in terms of policy changes and institutional support is crucial. The Ministry of Home Affairs has recommended increasing women's representation in the police force to 33%, which could potentially improve workplace inclusivity and support systems (Indian Express, 2019).

5. **Conclusion** The mental health of female police constables in Kumaun, Uttarakhand, is a significant concern. Workplace stressors, gender discrimination, and societal expectations contribute to their challenges. Implementing targeted mental health programs and structural reforms can improve the overall well-being of these officers. A supportive and inclusive

law enforcement system is essential to ensure both the professional success and mental health stability of female police constables.

## 6. Recommendations

- ❖ **Regular Mental Health Assessments:** Implementing regular psychological evaluations can help identify stress-related issues at an early stage.
- ❖ **Better Work-Life Balance Policies:** Introducing flexible work schedules and ensuring adequate rest periods can improve mental well-being.
- ❖ **Gender Sensitization Training:** Awareness programs can help create a more inclusive and supportive work environment.
- ❖ **Increased Access to Mental Health Resources:** Counseling services, stress management workshops, and peer support programs should be made readily available.
- ❖ **Encouraging Leadership Roles for Women:** Providing female officers with leadership opportunities and professional development programs can enhance job satisfaction and morale.

## 7 Reference

- Natarajan, M. (2016). *Women police in a changing society: Back door to equality*. Routledge.
- Sukhtankar, S., Kruks-Wisner, G., & Mangla, A. (2022). *Policing in patriarchy: An experimental evaluation of reforms to improve police responsiveness to women in India*. *Science*, 377(6602), 191-198
- Dikshit, S., & Panda, A. (2020). *Impact of demographic variables on work-life balance of police personnel*
- Queirós, C., et al. (2020). *Job stress, burnout, and coping in police officers*. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(18), 6718
- Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI). (2019). *Women in policing in India: A status report*
- Maurya, M. K., & Agarwal, M. (2018). *Relationship between motivation to lead, mental health status, and job satisfaction of male and female civil police constables*. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 33, 9-20
- Rief, R. M., & Clinkinbeard, S. S. (2020). *Exploring gendered environments in policing: Workplace incivilities and fit perceptions in men and women officers*. *Police Quarterly*, 23(4), 427-450
- Chitra, T., & Karunanidhi, S. (2021). *The impact of resilience training on occupational stress, resilience, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being of female police officers*. *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology*, 36(1), 8-23
- Indian Express. (2019). *Telling numbers: Target 33% women in state police forces add up to 7%*. Retrieved from [https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/telling-numbers-target-33-women-in-state-police-forces-add-up-to-7-5647589/]