Analysing the Significance of Work-Family Life Balance: A Study on Delhi Police

*Aishwarya, **Dr. Hunny Matiyani & ***Dr. Deepak Raj Rao G.
* Student, MA Criminology, NFSU, Delhi Campus
** Assistant Professor Criminology, NFSU, Delhi Campus (Corresponding Author)
*** Associate Professor Digital Forensics, NFSU, Delhi Campus

Abstract

Work-family conflict is a significant challenge faced by constables and head constables within the law enforcement sector. This study explores the experiences of both female and male officers in balancing their professional commitments and family responsibilities. The analysis of data reveals a moderate level of work-family conflict among constables and head constables, highlighting the complexities they encounter in managing their work and family domains. The findings emphasise the impact of societal expectations, role overload, gender biases, and limited supportive resources on work-family conflict. Female officers often struggle with conflicting expectations, navigating the demands of their law enforcement roles while fulfilling caregiving responsibilities. Male officers face pressure to prioritise work obligations over family commitments due to traditional gender norms. Both genders experience the challenges of role overload, as the demanding nature of law enforcement roles and exposure to stress contribute to conflicts in achieving work-life balance.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach. Implementing gender-sensitive policies, such as flexible work arrangements and family support programs, can provide constables and head constables with the necessary resources to manage their work and family responsibilities effectively. Fostering a supportive organisational culture that values work-life balance, providing leadership training, and addressing gender biases are essential steps toward reducing work-family conflict. Promoting gender equality within the law enforcement sector and collaborating with external stakeholder's further support efforts to alleviate work-family conflict. By implementing these measures, organisations can create an inclusive and supportive work environment that enhances the overall well-being, job satisfaction, and performance of constables and head constables. In conclusion, this study underscores the significance of work-family conflict among constables and head constables, highlighting the need for tailored interventions to address the challenges faced by officers in balancing their professional and family roles. The findings contribute to the development of strategies that promote work-life integration and foster a supportive environment within the law enforcement sector.

Keywords: Work Family conflict, Family work conflict, Police, Gender Equality, Supportive work environment

INTRODUCTION

The ability of an individual to fulfil their obligations to their family, their work, and other non-work obligations is referred to as having a "work-life balance." Work-life balance was described by Greenhaus (2002) as satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict. The link between institutional and cultural times and spaces of work and non-work in countries where money is primarily earned and dispersed through labour markets is what Felstead et al. (2002) refer to as "work-life balance."

Work-life balance is influenced by various factors. The primary determinant of work–life balance is the individual. American cardiologists Rosenman and Friedman identified two distinct personality types associated with heart disorders and individual behaviours: Type A and Type B. Type A individuals tend to be more active, work-focused, passionate, and competitive, whereas Type B individuals are characterised by calmness, patience, balance, and rationality. It can be argued that Type A individuals, being more work-oriented, may experience challenges in achieving a favourable work–life balance. Additionally, workaholism, characterised by an obsessive attachment to work, poses another threat to work-life balance. Workaholics often engage in excessive working hours and remain preoccupied with work even during non-work hours. As life extends beyond work, workaholics may encounter feelings of alienation, family issues, and potential health problems. Porter (1996) asserts that workaholics often neglect their families, friends, relationships, and other social responsibilities.

The second determinant of work–life balance is the family. Family life introduces demands that can significantly impact one's equilibrium. These demands include workload, time commitments, role expectations within the family, and the support provided to one's spouse. Additionally, life events such as marriage, child-rearing, and caregiving for elderly family members can affect work–life balance as they entail increased family responsibilities. Individuals responsible for children or elderly family members may, at times, need to make career sacrifices by reducing their working hours, leading to added stress. Conversely, those without such family obligations may experience less work-life imbalance.

The third determinant is the workplace and the organisation. The work environment often exerts a more significant influence on work-life balance than the family environment. The nature of one's job and the organisation's culture can demand a significant amount of an individual's time, effort, and mental capacity. Managers frequently strive to enhance employee organisational loyalty as part of their efforts to increase organisational efficiency. Another determinant of work-life balance is the social environment. Particularly in cultures characterised by collectivist values, individuals have responsibilities to various social groups to which they belong. These societal obligations can add another layer of complexity to an individual's work-life balance.

Consequences of Work-Life Imbalance

Stress-induced conflict arises when an individual's responsibilities at work or in the family generate stress that spills over into other areas of their life. Behavioural stress occurs when a person's behaviour at work clashes with their behaviour outside of work. As per Lowe (2005), work-life imbalance has far-reaching effects on an individual's overall well-being. This can result in issues such as life dissatisfaction, prolonged sadness, and potentially substance abuse. Organisations often demand more time and commitment from individuals, while families expect them to fulfil their domestic responsibilities. Those struggling to maintain work-life balance may encounter various family-related problems, including decreased satisfaction within the family and reduced participation in family roles. Individuals who find it

challenging to balance their family and personal interests may resort to sacrificing work hours to meet their personal needs. To mitigate the adverse consequences of work-family conflict on employees, organisations are increasingly focusing on creating family-friendly cultures and human resource policies. These include flexible working hours, childcare and eldercare programs, home-based work options, and job-sharing arrangements. Supportive programs for employees' family lives contribute significantly to achieving work-life balance, fostering motivation, enhancing attendance, and boosting overall efficiency. For instance, flexible working hours allow employees to fulfil their weekly work requirements while permitting variations in their schedules. Additionally, enabling employees to work from home, outside the traditional office environment, can further support work-life balance. (Delecta, 2011)

In today's fast-paced world, achieving a healthy work-life balance has become increasingly important. This holds true for professionals in various sectors, including law enforcement officers. Balancing work commitments with personal life can be particularly challenging for police officers due to their demanding jobs, long hours, rotating shifts, and high levels of stress. The Delhi Police has a rich history dating back centuries, with the role of Kotwal (chief of police) being significant in maintaining peace and order. Over the years, the structure and responsibilities of the Delhi Police have evolved to meet the changing needs of the city. Police personnel, including constables and head constables, often experience work-family conflicts due to the nature of their work. Long and irregular hours, shift work, and exposure to stressful situations can lead to conflicts between work and family responsibilities. This can result in stress and strain, affecting both their professional and personal lives.

Significance of the Study

The findings of such a study can help shape public policies that promote work-life balance and assist families.

The study also focuses on improving officer well-being, that is, long working hours, night shifts, and high stress levels can all have a negative influence on police officers' physical and mental health.

It is feasible to identify and resolve the origins of stress and burnout among police officers by analysing work-family conflict

The findings of this study may be used to inform public policies encouraging work-life balance and supporting families. This may have a good impact on society as a whole, not just the police force.

Objective of the study
1. To ascertain the extent and type of work-family conflict among Delhi police personnel.
2. To investigate the association between work-family conflict, gender, and position.
3. To assess the impact of work family conflict on job satisfaction stress levels, and overall well-being of Delhi police officers, including physical and mental health

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach with a descriptive research design and employed a deductive methodology to examine work-family conflict and family-work conflict experienced by constable police officers. The research aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of work-family conflict on the personal and professional lives of these officers.

For data collection, a primary data collection method was utilised, involving an online survey questionnaire comprised of closed-ended questions. This approach allowed for the efficient collection of responses from a large number of participants and ensured ease of data entry and

analysis. The survey questionnaire was designed to capture relevant information on work-family conflict and family-work conflict, providing valuable insights into the challenges that police officers faced in balancing their work and family responsibilities.

To ensure a representative sample, a stratified sampling design was implemented, selecting 100 constable police officers from different ranks and backgrounds. This method allowed for a diverse representation of the target population, enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

To assess work-family conflict, a well-established scale developed by Singh and Singh (1996) was employed. The scale consisted of eleven items that gauged the extent to which work demands interfered with family responsibilities and vice versa. Additionally, the scale used to measure family-work conflict also comprised eleven items, reflecting the impact of family demands on work performance. Each item in the scale offered respondents five response options, providing a range of perspectives to consider.

The scale's reliability, which was determined to be 0.86, assured the accuracy and consistency of the measurements, enhancing the validity of the study's outcomes. By utilising a reliable scale, this research sought to obtain accurate and dependable data, facilitating a robust analysis. Once the data collection process was completed, the collected data were analysed using an Excel sheet. Excel offered various tools and functions to organise, summarise, and visualise the data, allowing for efficient data processing and insightful data representation. By employing Excel as the analysis tool, this research aimed to draw meaningful conclusions and derive valuable insights into the work-family conflict and family-work conflict experiences of constable police officers. The findings of this study could potentially contribute to the development of strategies and policies that addressed the challenges faced by police officers in managing their work and family responsibilities, ultimately promoting their well-being and overall job satisfaction.

 Ethical Consideration

This research study had received ethical clearance and approval from the institutional ethical committee on 28th March 2023. The study had adhered to a comprehensive list of ethical considerations to ensure the well-being and rights of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose and their rights before their involvement. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process to protect the privacy of the participants and their responses. Anonymity was strictly upheld, ensuring that no individual's identity could be linked to their data. Voluntary participation was emphasised, allowing participants to decide freely whether or not to take part in the study without any coercion. Respect for participants' dignity and autonomy was prioritised throughout the research. Additionally, the study upheld ethical standards for the use of existing data, ensuring that previously collected information was handled with integrity and in line with ethical guidelines.
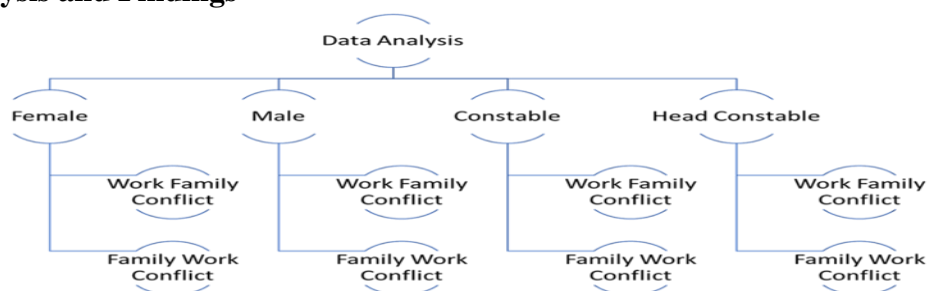
 Data Analysis and Findings

Figure 1: Data analysis chart

Figure 1: Designation wise Work-Family Conflict for Females
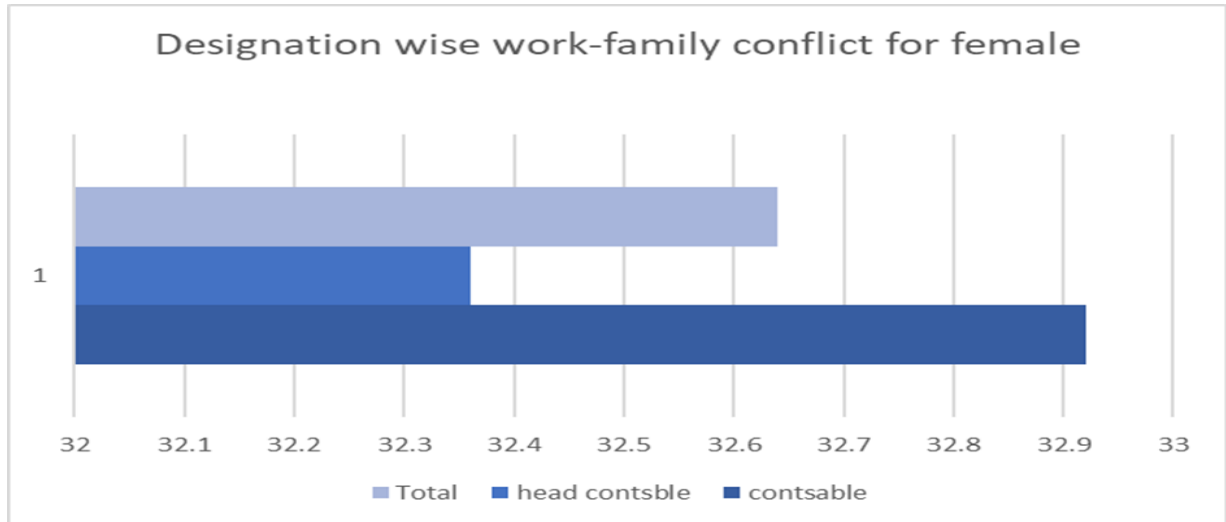

Figure 1 showed that female constables scored 32.92, indicating a moderate to somewhat greater level of work-family conflict. This could have been due to the demanding nature of their job, lack of schedule flexibility, and the stress and emotional demands they faced. Social gender role expectations could have also played a role in balancing work and family duties. Similarly, female head constables scored 32.36, facing challenges in balancing supervisory roles and societal gender role expectations. Organisational support was crucial for resolving work-family conflicts. Organisational culture, work-life balance, and support systems were essential in reducing conflicts. Theoretical frameworks such as role strain, social exchange, and resource conservation theories shed light on the complexities faced by female police officers and chiefs. Understanding these factors could guide interventions and policies to support their well-being.

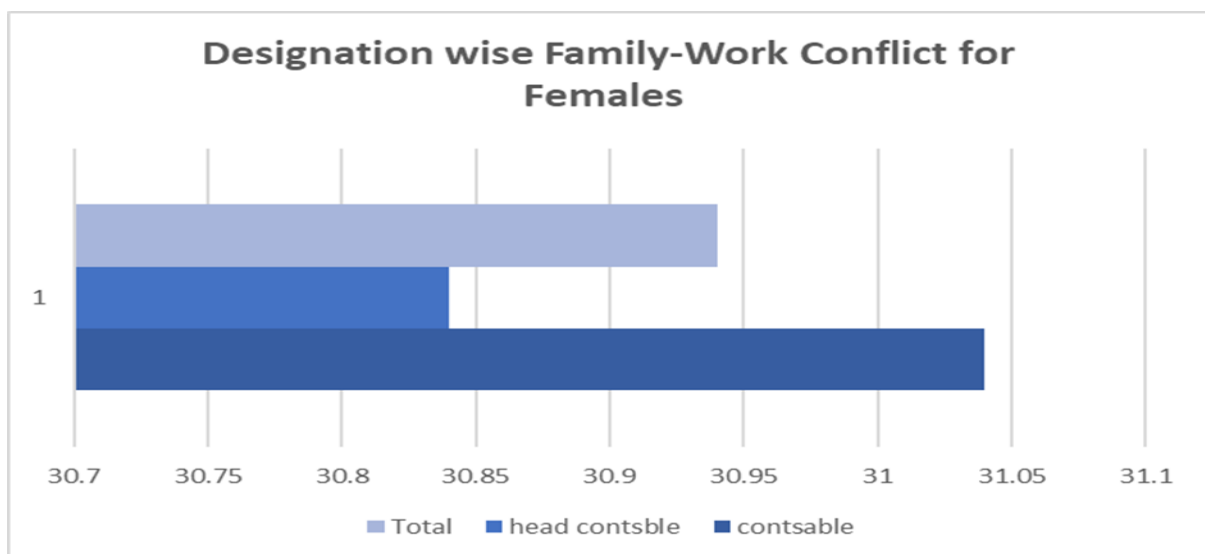**Figure 2: Designation wise Family-Work Conflict for Females**

 Figure 2 showed that female constables had scored 31.04, and female head constables had scored 30.84 on the family-work conflict scale, indicating moderate levels of conflict. These conflicts could have been attributed to various factors. For female constables, the demanding nature of their job, lack of schedule flexibility, and societal gender role expectations could have contributed to conflicts between family and work. Female head constables might have faced

similar challenges, along with increased responsibilities in their higher-ranking positions. Organisational support could have also played a role in family-work conflicts for both groups. Overall, the average family-work conflict reported by women in both positions could have been 30.94, indicating a moderate level of contention. Factors such as role strains, societal gender role expectations, and organisational support could have influenced these conflicts. Intersectionality, considering factors like race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, could have further impacted women's experiences. Additionally, organisational culture and leadership, along with supportive policies and programs, could have played vital roles in addressing these challenges and creating a more equitable environment for women to balance work and family responsibilities.

Figure 3: Designation wise Work-Family Conflict for Males
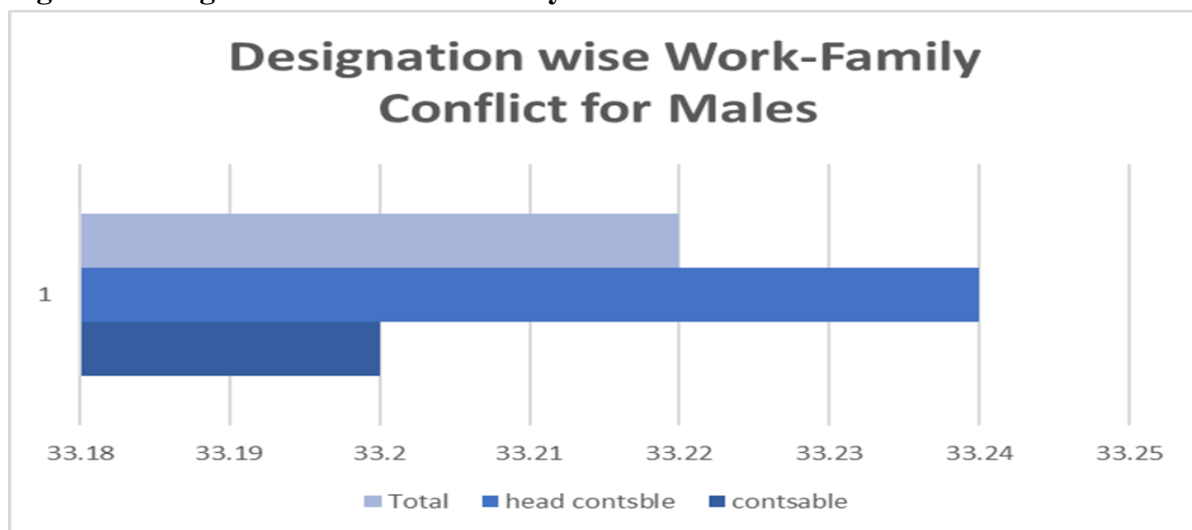

Figure 3 revealed that male constables had scored 33.2, and male head constables had scored 33.24 on the work-family conflict scale, indicating moderate levels of conflict. This had suggested that male police officers faced challenges in balancing work and family responsibilities. The moderate work-family conflict for male police officers could have been attributed to the demanding nature of their jobs, societal expectations of masculinity, and lack of organisational support. Similarly, male police chiefs could have reported a score of 33.24, reflecting increased responsibilities in their senior positions, gender role pressures, and the impact of organisational support. The overall average work-family conflict for men in both positions could have been 33.22, indicating moderate conflict. Factors such as societal expectations of masculinity, lack of supportive policies, and role pressures could have contributed to these conflicts. Intersectionality, considering race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, could have further influenced men's work-family conflicts. Organisations and policy makers should have considered these factors to create more inclusive and supportive work environments for men to achieve work-life balance effectively.

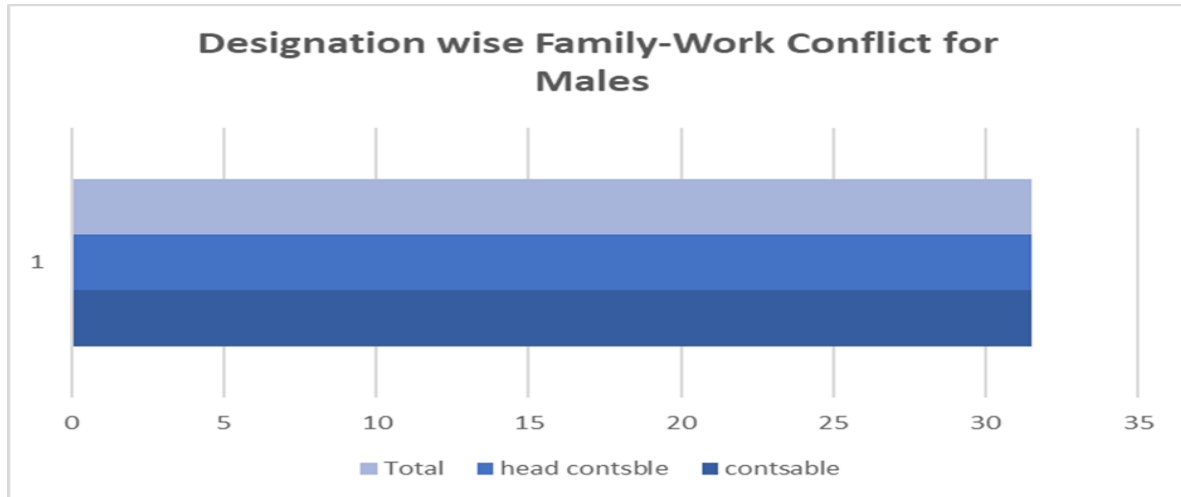**Figure 4: Designation wise Family-Work Conflict for Males**

Figure 4 showed that male constables and male head constables both had scored 31.52 on the Family-Work Conflict Scale, indicating a moderate level of conflict. This had suggested that male police officers faced challenges in balancing family and work responsibilities. The moderate family-work conflict for males could have been attributed to the demanding nature of their jobs, societal expectations of masculinity, and lack of organisational support. Similarly, male police chiefs also could have scored 31.52, reflecting increased responsibilities in senior positions, gender role pressures, and the impact of organisational support. The overall average family-work conflict for men in both positions could have been 31.52, indicating a moderate level of conflict. Factors such as societal expectations of masculinity, lack of supportive policies, and role pressures could have contributed to these conflicts. Considering intersectionality, factors like race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status could have further influenced men's family-work conflicts. To support men in managing family and work responsibilities effectively, organisations and policy makers could have created inclusive and supportive environments that addressed these factors.

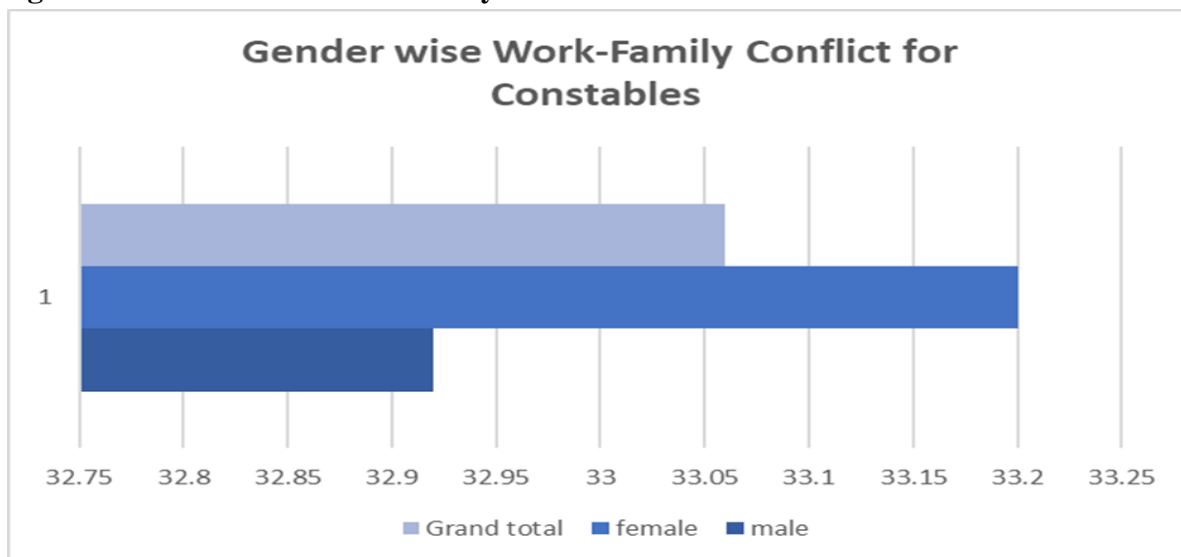**Figure 5: Gender wise Work-Family Conflict for Constables**

Figure 5 had shown that female police officers had scored 32.92 on the Work-Family Conflict Scale, while male police officers had scored 33.2. The overall average work-family conflict for all police officers could have been 33.06, indicating a moderate level of conflict regardless of gender. Both male and female officers could have faced challenges in balancing work and

family, which could have been influenced by societal expectations, gender roles, and the demanding nature of their jobs.

Female officers could have experienced conflict due to traditional gender roles and expectations, along with a lack of supportive policies and resources. Male officers could have faced conflict from societal expectations of masculinity and limited support systems. Role strain and job demands could have also contributed to work-family conflicts for both genders.

Addressing these factors within the framework of work-family conflict theory could have helped create a more supportive environment for police officers to manage their professional and family responsibilities effectively. Promoting gender equality and providing supportive policies could have reduced work-family conflicts for both male and female officers.

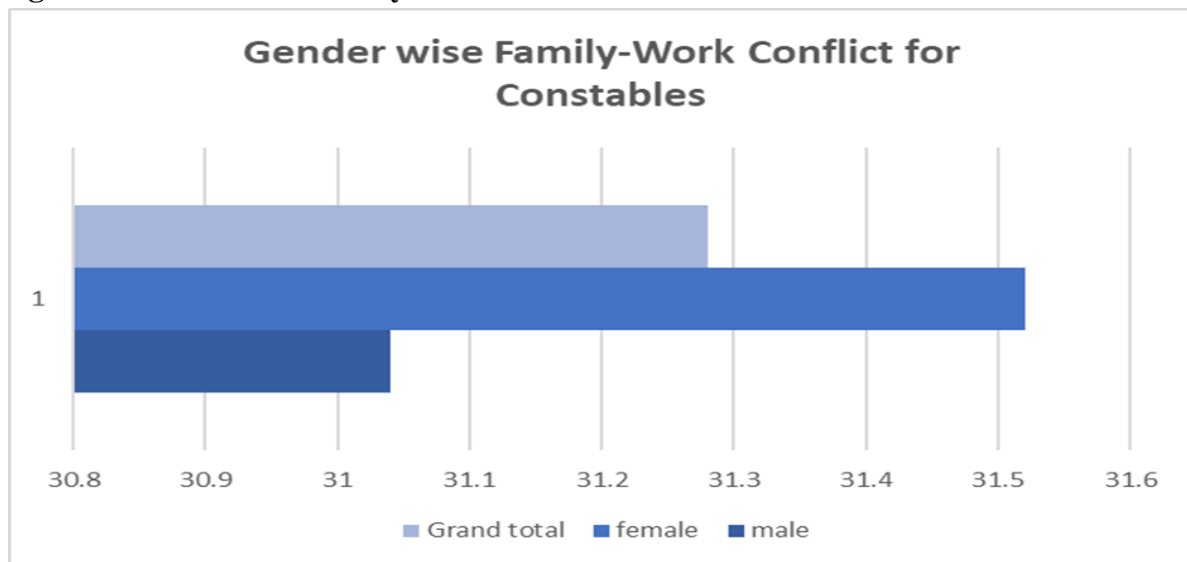**Figure 6: Gender wise Family-Work Conflict for Constables**

Figure 6 had shown that female police officers had scored 31.04 on the Family-Work Conflict Scale, while male police officers had scored 31.52. The overall average family-work conflict for all police officers could have been 31.28, indicating a moderate level of conflict regardless of gender. Both male and female officers could have faced challenges in balancing family and work, influenced by societal expectations, gender roles, and job demands.Female officers could have experienced conflict due to societal expectations and the need to juggle multiple roles. Male officers could have faced conflict due to societal expectations of masculinity and the challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities.The nature of their jobs, lack of supportive policies, and role stress could have contributed to family-work conflicts for both genders.

The average family-work conflict for police officers could have been 31.28, indicating challenges in managing family and work responsibilities.

For female officers specifically, factors such as gender roles and lack of supportive policies could have contributed to moderate conflict. Addressing these issues could have helped reduce family-work conflicts for female police officers.

For male officers, societal expectations of prioritising careers and limited support resources could have influenced moderate family-work conflict. Providing more supportive policies could have helped male police officers balance family and work responsibilities effectively.
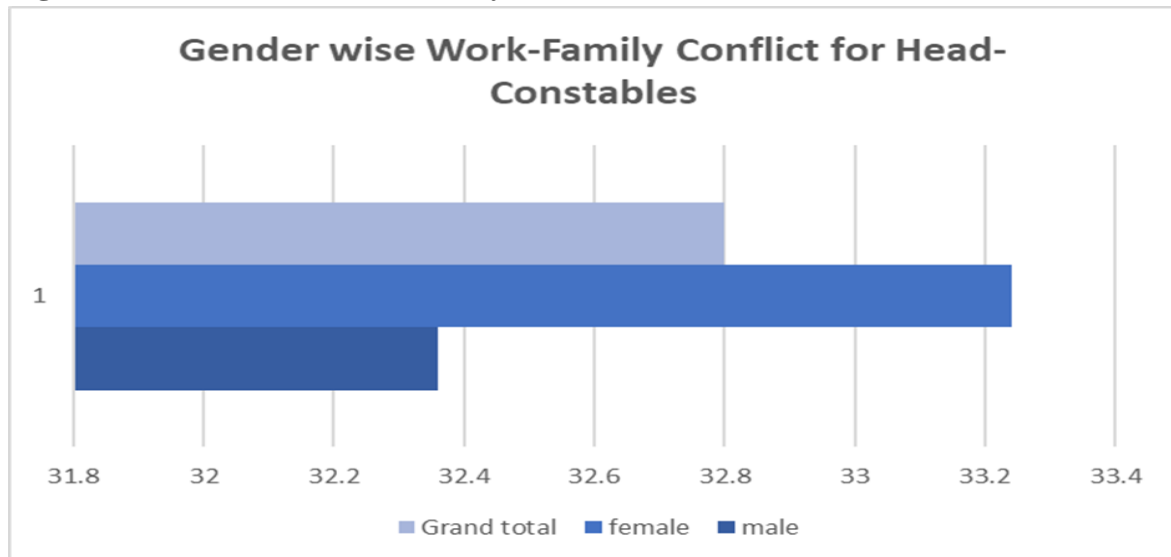
Figure 7: Gender wise Work-Family Conflict for Head-Constables

Figure 7 had shown that female police chiefs had scored 32.36 on the Work-Family Conflict Scale, while male police chiefs had scored 33.24. The overall average work-family conflict for all police chiefs could have been 32.8, indicating a moderate level of conflict regardless of gender. Both male and female police chiefs could have faced challenges in balancing work and family, influenced by societal expectations, gender roles, and job demands.

Female police chiefs could have experienced conflict due to societal expectations and the struggle to balance career and caregiving responsibilities. Male police chiefs could have faced conflict due to societal expectations of prioritising work and the challenge of managing both job and family responsibilities.

The nature of their jobs, lack of supportive policies, and role overload could have contributed to work-family conflicts for both genders.

The average work-family conflict for police chiefs could have been 32.8, indicating challenges in managing work and family responsibilities.

For female police chiefs specifically, factors such as gender roles and lack of supportive policies could have contributed to moderate conflict. Addressing these issues could have helped reduce work-family conflicts for female police chiefs.

For male police chiefs, societal expectations of prioritising work and limited support resources could have influenced moderate work-family conflict. Providing more supportive policies could have helped male police chiefs balance work and family responsibilities effectively.
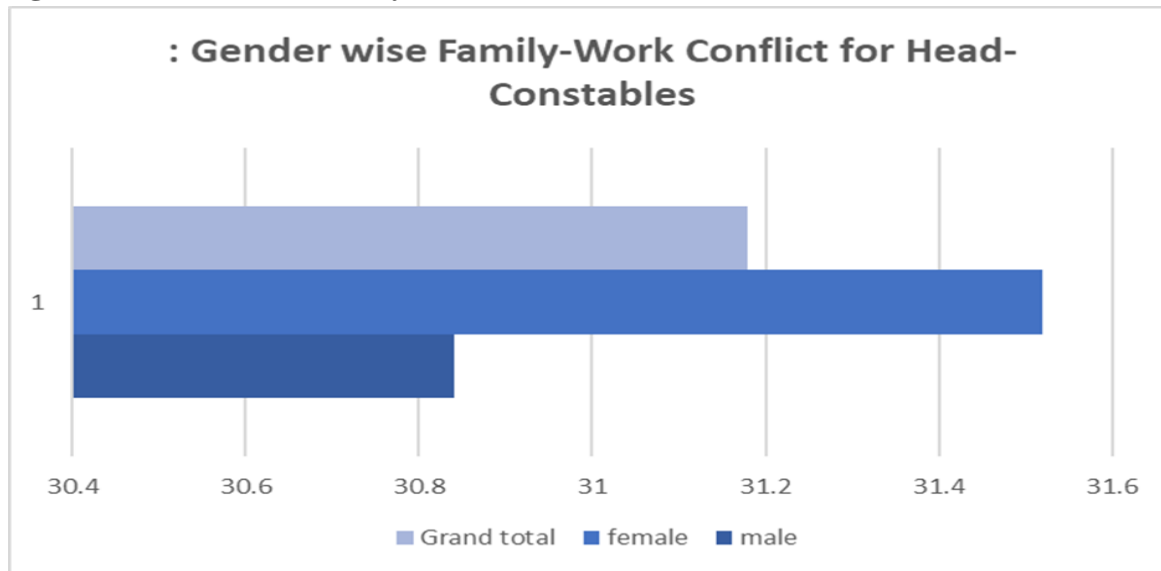
Figure 8: Gender wise Family-Work Conflict for Head-Constables

Figure 8, female police chiefs scored 30.84 on the Family-Work Conflict Scale, while male police chiefs scored 31.52. The overall average family-work conflict for all police chiefs is 31.18, indicating a moderate level of conflict for both genders.

Female police chiefs report slightly lower levels of conflict compared to male police chiefs, but both face challenges in balancing family and work. Factors such as societal expectations, gender roles, and job demands contribute to family-work conflicts for female police chiefs.

The demanding nature of the job, lack of supportive policies, and role overload are common factors influencing family-work conflicts for police chiefs regardless of gender.

Supportive policies and resources, such as flexible work arrangements, play a crucial role in managing family-work conflicts for police chiefs.

For female police chiefs specifically, gender roles and lack of supportive policies may contribute to moderate conflict. Promoting gender equality and providing supportive resources can help reduce family-work conflicts for female police chiefs.

For male police chiefs, societal expectations of prioritising work and limited support resources may influence moderate family-work conflict. Providing more supportive policies can help male police chiefs balance family and work responsibilities effectively.

Limitations

The study faced several limitations that need acknowledgment. The use of a research tool in Hindi created a language barrier for some participants, potentially affecting response accuracy. Time constraints hindered the establishment of a strong rapport with police officers, possibly impacting the depth of information gathered. The ongoing increase in Covid-19 cases limited face-to-face interactions, affecting data collection. Despite efforts to mitigate these limitations, they should be considered when interpreting the findings. Future research could explore multilingual tools, allocate more time for rapport building, and adapt to unforeseen circumstances like the Covid-19 pandemic.

Suggestions

Here are some suggestions for resolving and reducing the issues discovered based on the data and findings generated from the investigation of work-family conflict among constables and head constables:

1. **Develop and execute Gender-Sensitive Policies**: Create and execute gender-sensitive policies that meet the unique demands and challenges that female and male constables and chief constables confront. To encourage a fairer work environment, policies on flexible work

arrangements, parental leave, childcare help, and professional development opportunities may be implemented.

2. **Increase Supportive Resources**: Allocate resources to assist constables and chief constables in balancing work and family commitments. Establishing employee support programmes, wellness initiatives, and counselling services to address officers' mental health and well-being is one example. Access to services and support networks can help to reduce work-family conflict and create a healthy work-life balance.

3. **Raise Education and Training:** Educate constables, chief constables, and organisational leaders about work-family conflict, gender prejudices, and the necessity of work-life balance through education initiatives and training programmes. Raising awareness may assist in challenging cultural conventions, reducing gender prejudices, and fostering a more welcoming and encouraging work environment.

4. **Create and Nurture a Friendly Organisational Culture:** Foster a supportive organisational culture that values work-life balance, fosters open communication, and promotes the well-being of constables and chief constables. This may be accomplished through fostering a healthy work atmosphere, recognising and applauding efforts to attain work-life balance, and offering chances for professional growth and advancement.

5. **Give Leadership Education**: Provide supervisors and managers with leadership training programmes to empower them with the skills and knowledge needed to help their team members in handling work-family conflict. A strong management style that prioritises balancing work and life and exhibits understanding and empathy may significantly reduce work-family conflict between constables and head constables.

6. **Frequent examine and Evaluation:** Evaluate and examine the efficacy of adopted policies and practises in managing conflict between work and family life on an ongoing basis. Solicit feedback from constables and the head constables in order to pinpoint areas for development and implement required changes to provide continuing support and enhancement of the integration of work and life.

7. **Collaboration with External Stakeholders**: Advocate for supporting regulations and assets for constables and chief constables with external stakeholders such as law enforcement groups, community organisations, and government agencies. Collaboration can help to enhance teamwork to manage work-family conflict and promote a positive work atmosphere.

 It should be noted that these recommendations should be customised to the unique context and needs of constables and the head constables in the law enforcement sector. Regular assessment and tracking of implemented approaches will aid in ensuring their efficacy in decreasing work-family conflict and improving officers' well-being and fulfilment with their jobs.

Conclusion

The study focused on investigating the relevance of work-family life balance among Delhi Police officers, specifically Head Constables and Constables, who often grapple with the intricate balance between their professional and family responsibilities. This research was deemed vital as work-family balance had been a relatively overlooked aspect within the law enforcement sector.

The study utilised comprehensive research methodologies, including surveys, to gain a holistic understanding of how work-family balance influenced the participants' lives. The findings revealed several key outcomes, emphasising the significant impact of a healthy work-family life balance on officers' job performance and overall well-being.

A balanced work-family life directly enhanced officers' job satisfaction and engagement, resulting in increased enthusiasm, reduced stress, and improved interpersonal interactions both within the police force and at home.

The study identified critical elements for establishing this equilibrium, including workplace flexibility, supportive policies, and access to mental health resources. Officers who could adapt their work hours to accommodate family needs reported improved work-life balance. Additionally, the availability of counselling facilities and stress management programs aided officers in navigating the challenges inherent in their roles.

Concrete recommendations were provided for the Delhi Police administration based on the study's findings. These recommendations highlighted the importance of recognizing officers' diverse responsibilities and urged the administration to implement measures such as flexible work hours, family support initiatives, and resilience and stress management training programs. Prioritising officers' well-being and work-family life balance was emphasised as a means to enhance the overall performance of the entire police force.

The study also addressed the scarcity of research on work-family balance in law enforcement and shed light on its critical role in job performance and general well-being among Delhi Police officers. It not only increased our understanding of the challenges and benefits of work-family balance in this context but also provided practical insights for the Delhi Police administration to improve the well-being of its officers.

Overall, the study underscored the need for a holistic approach to tackle work-family conflict among constables and head constables, highlighting the challenges faced by both male and female officers in reconciling their professional and family obligations. The study recommended gender-inclusive policies, expanded resources, a supportive organisational culture, and leadership training as strategies to reduce work-family conflict. Creating an inclusive, supportive, and balanced work environment through these measures could enhance officers' job satisfaction, performance, and overall well-being, ultimately benefiting both the police force and the communities they serve.

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