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## A STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE AND STRESS OF POLICE PERSONNEL

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**Abstract:** *Police is recognised as the most stressful professions on the earth because of the multiple factors. The nature of work, prolonged working hours, critical incident exposure, strict organisational policies which form the climate of an organisation contribute to the stress levels in a big way. Such organisational conditions constitute the climate, the positive climate thus created have positive impact on the psyche of the people working in an organisation similarly vice versa is also true. The present study is an attempt to explore the impact of organisational climate at stress levels. Besides this its impact on both the sexes and personnel's working at different hierarchical levels is also explored. There is a significant relationship between perceived organisational climate and stress level of the group of police personnel but insignificant relationship exists between perceived organisational climate and stress for the police personnel at different hierarchical levels. No significant relationship between perceived organisational climate and & stress for both the sexes is seen.*

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Organizational Climate:**

Organizations differ in physical structures as well as in attitudes and behaviours they elicit in people. These differences are related to differing individual perceptions. Climate means all those characteristics that distinguish one organization from the other and influence the behaviour of the people in the organization. It not only affects the behaviour of the individuals but also how organizations interact among themselves. At an individual level the climate is an individual's description of the social setting (which comprise of physical structure, organizational policies and interpersonal relations developed within the group) or the context of which the person is the part. These individual descriptions are called "**Psychological Climate**" and aggregation of psychological climates has been used to represent the climate of larger units of analysis i.e. "**Organizational Climate**". Organizational climate is about the perceptions of the climate environment and about absolute measures.

### **Organizational climate defined:**

The concept of **organizational climate** is studied by various scholars and many of them have given their own definition of organizational climate.

According to **French, Katz and Rosenweig (1985)**, organizational climate is relatively an enduring quality of the internal environment of an organization **which is experienced by its members, influences their behaviour, can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics (or attributes) of the organization**. Climate is often defined as the recurring patterns of behaviour, attitudes and feelings that characterize the life in the organization (**Isaksen & Ekvall, 2007**).

Drawing on these definitions, organizational climate is the relatively persistent set of perceptions held by organization members concerning the characteristics and quality of organizational culture.

**Ekvall & Isaksen (2007)** described two ontological interpretations of the organizational climate.

**Realistic or Objectivistic view:** According to the Objectivistic view, climate refers to "a set of conditions that exist to have impact on an individual's behaviour." These are "objective" characteristic of an organization and can be observed in several ways e.g., by organizational members as well as by outsiders.



**Subjectivist view:** In this view, the organizational climate is regarded as the organizational members common perceptual and cognitive structuring of the situation. Organizational members construct climate over time and events.

**Measuring climate:**

Measurement of climate seeks to identify the components of climate both in absolute and perceptual terms. Generally, the areas of interest to be measured in climate are:

- External environment - organizational interface with it.
- Organizational leadership / mission.
- Organization structure / system
- Management practices.
- Working - co-workers! teams ! supervisor.
- Self - at work - your role, development, opportunities, motivation, commitment, stress.
- Self - outside work - how work affects your life (good/bad) - vice-versa.

**Stress:** Define Stress (The stress response of the body) somewhat like an airplane readying for takeoff virtually all system e.g. the heart and blood vessels, the immune system, the lungs, the digestive system, sensory organs, and brain are modified to meet the perceived danger. People can experience either external or internal stressors. External stressors include adverse physical conditions such as pain, hot or cold temperatures or stressful psychological environments such as poor working conditions or abusive relationships. Internal stressors can also be physical like infections, inflammations or psychological. An example of an internal psychological stress is intense worry about the harmful event that may or may not occur.

**Symptoms of stress:**

**Physical symptoms:** Headaches, Twitching eyelid, Twitching nose, Facial or jaw pains, Dry mouth or throat, Difficulty in swallowing, Ulcers on tongue, Neck pains, Dizziness, Speech difficulties, Back aches, Muscles ache, Weakness, Constipation, Indigestion, Nausea/vomiting, Stomach pains, Diarrhoea, Sexual inadequacy, Chest pains, Insomnia, Accident proneness, High BP & Heart burn.



**Emotional symptoms:** Irritability, Moodiness, Depression, Unusual aggressiveness, Loss of memory, Nightmares, Withdrawal, Neurotic behaviour, Anger, Thoughts of suicide, Feeling of helplessness, Impulsive behaviour, Restlessness, Frequent episodes of crying, Indecisiveness, Lack of sexual interest, Periods of confusion, Racing thoughts, Anxiety, Feeling of panic.

**Behavioural symptoms:** Wrinkling forehead, High pitched nervous laughter., Nail biting, Compulsive eating, Increased use of prescribed medicine, Loss of interest in physical appearance, Compulsive dieting, Chronic procrastination, Sudden change of social habits, Chronic tardiness, Foot or finger tapping, Hair pulling, Smoking, Drinking, Drug dependence, Gnashing or grinding teeth.

**Stressors at work place.**

Some of the intense stressors at work place are enumerated as below:

- Under participation in decisions that affect the work responsibilities.
- Unrelenting and unreasonable demands for performance.
- Lack of effective communication and conflict- resolution methods among workers and employers.
- Lack of job security.
- Long working hours.
- Excessive time spent away from home and family.
- Office politics and conflicts between workers.
- Non-commensurate wages with levels of responsibility.
- Political interference.
- Inadequate equipment and lack of training on equipment.
- Harassment at work place and so on.

**Definition of workplace stress:**

Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary (2005) defines stress as "the result produced when a structure, system or organism is acted upon by forces that disrupt equilibrium or produce strain". "Workplace stress" has harmful physical and emotional response that can happen when there is a combination of high demands in a job and a low amount of control over the situation.



Stress in the workplace can have many origins or come from one single event. It can influence both employees and employers alike. As stated by the **Canadian Mental Health Association (2000)**: Fear of job redundancy, layoffs due to an uncertain economy, increased demands for overtime due to staff cutbacks act as negative stressors.

Employees who start to feel the "pressure to perform" can get caught in a downward spiral of increasing effort to meet rising expectations with no increase in job satisfaction. The relentless requirement to work at optimum performance takes its toll in job dissatisfaction, employee turnover, reduced efficiency, illness and even death. Absenteeism, illness, alcoholism, "petty internal politics", bad or snap decisions, indifference and apathy, lack of motivation or creativity are all by-products of an over stressed workplace.

**Causes of work place stress: Some of the most visible causes of workplace stress include: Job insecurity, High demand for performance, technology, Workplace culture, Personal or family problems etc.** Job related stress is likely to become chronic because it is such a large part of daily life and stress in turn reduces a worker's effectiveness by impairing concentration, causing sleeplessness and increasing the risk for illness, back problems, accidents and loss. Work stress can lead to harassment or even violence while on the job. At its most extreme, stress that places such a burden on the heart and circulation can be fatal. The Japanese even have word for sudden death due to overwork, *Kauoushi*.

**Job stress and women:** Women may suffer from mental and physical harassment at workplaces, apart from the common job stress. Sexual harassment in workplace has been a major source of worry for women, since long. Women may suffer from tremendous stress such as 'hostile work environment harassment, which is defined in legal terms as 'offensive or intimidating behaviour in the workplace can consist of unwelcome verbal or physical conduct Subtle discriminations at workplaces, family pressure and societal demands add to these stress factors

**Police stress:** The police service has the highest level of stress and maximum consequences. Many studies have been conducted for understanding the level of stress among police personnel and most of them have revealed alarming negative effects of stress on these personals.

Police officers play a very significant role for maintaining law and order in the society despite all the shortcomings and limitations in the police department especially concerning



the infrastructural facilities, work force shortages and periodic training. Police officers are supposed to implement all the criminal laws for which they work round the clock and/ or without any leave/ break, which cause tremendous mental pressure and physical exertion on them. As a result, sometimes a few of them may have violent outbursts and/ or take leave without any prior notice. Police officers are at high risk of experiencing exposure to psychologically straining situations and potentially psycho-traumatic experiences.

A comprehensive review was done to develop an understanding about the nature of the research done on the proposed topic as given below.

### **Studies on Organizational Climate**

The police force faces demands and risks in the field of combat, over the course of their daily working lives. To cope with these risks, such as violent offenders and a hostile environment, police organizations have evolved into tightly organized hierarchies of authoritarian leadership. Police bureaucracies pride themselves upon loyalty to organizational rules and authority, much like a military organization obeys a strict chain of command when it is engaged in decision-making.

The climate of the organization is perceived either favourably or unfavourably and has its impact upon organizational effectiveness, stress and other variables. Various factors like organizational context (goals and objectives), organizational structure (size, degree of centralization), organizational processes (leadership style, decision making etc.), nature of work (shifts etc.) and physical environment (employee safety, rewards etc.) constitute the dimensions of the climate.

**Arvindsson et. al. (2004)** conducted a study on air traffic controllers at two levels in Sweden to investigate how different organisational aspects such as organisational climate, team climate, leadership, psychosocial work environment and safety culture will be affected by ongoing organisational and technical changes. Concerning the organisational climate, no statistically significant differences were found between the different groups studied. The climate was considered rather a stable and homogeneous attitudes and feelings that characterise the life of an organisation. On the other hand, the psychosocial work environment was considered more an expression of people's direct experience of their work situation making it more sensitive to differences in the kind of comparisons made.



Organisational climate may affect quality of service and organisational commitment, and "general organisational climate can influence perception of safety climate, and these influence safety performance through their effects on knowledge and motivation" For this reason it could be important for management to pay attention to climate to ensure safety and quality of healthcare.

Stress is a perceptual phenomenon arising from a comparison between the demand on the person and his ability to cope. More than any other service or job, the police service has the highest level of stress and maximum consequences because of the nature and demand of the service. A number of studies were carried out in different parts of the world for understanding the level of stress among police personnel. Most of the studies conducted in the past have revealed the alarming negative effects of stress on the police personnel. One of the recurring problems with stress studies is that they attempt to examine the phenomenon globally. This almost always has lead to generalized findings which may be representative of the overall problem, but have certainly failed to adequately micro-examine the intricacies of the issue. **Gaines and Norman Tubergen (1989)** examined perceptions of stress relative to the demographic and assignment characteristics of police officers in a medium sized city. The result of the study showed middle aged police personnel perceived more stress as compared to their younger counterparts. Also, line officers were more stressed than the ones posted at other places.

In a study conducted by **Brown et. al. (1999)** on police personnel conceptualized police operational stressors as traumatic, routine and vicarious. They also revealed that women officers were better at predicting psychological distress as compared to their male counterparts.

Certain conclusions based on the research work done on stress and alcohol abuse by **Frone (2000)** include:

- Research has expanded to include the sources of stress within the work role (i.e work stressors) as well as sources of stress representing the integration of work and family roles (work and family conflicts).
- Evidence is growing that work stressors and work- family conflicts are related to alcohol use.



- Research is beginning to move beyond simple studies suggesting that work stressors contribute to alcohol problems by moving towards examination of the more complex questions of why work stressors lead to alcohol use, and why only some people who encounter work stress develop alcohol problem.

**Pancheri et. at. (2002)** conducted a study to assess the subjective stress in the municipal police of the city of Rome. "The rapid-stress- assessment scale" was administered on clerical and traffic police officials of both the sexes. Significant differences between traffic and clerical police officers were found in RSA total score, which was higher among traffic agents. Traffic police officers were found significantly more often in the "high stress class". Gender difference analysis showed higher stress score among women. The assessment of the over-the-counter drug used showed that among the police officers habitually using drugs, only traffic police subgroup scored higher on RSA. The prevalence of stress amongst the police personnel was found at all levels as indicated in numerous studies conducted so far.

**Goldfarb & Aumiller (2002)** giving an overview of police work and analyzing the research of the biggest stressors for police officers found major stressors as:

- Killing someone in the line of duty.
- Having your partner killed in the line of duty
- Lack of support by the department bosses.
- Shift work and disruption of family time/family rituals.
- The daily grind of dealing with the stupidity of the public, or the "asshole factor".

The extreme form of stress manifests itself in the form of suicide. There seem to be four factors which find its expression along with the suicide:

- Divorce.
- Alcohol - not alcoholism. That was one of the early theories. But in actuality it was the use of alcohol right before the act to "get up the nerve".
- Depression.
- A failure to get help. (Most officers who commit suicide have no history of having sought counseling).

A survey on a population of 1206 police officers to assess levels of strain associated with a series of potential home and work related stressors was conducted by Collins & Gibbs (2003). The findings of the study indicated that occupational stressors ranking most highly





within the population were not specific to policing, but to organizational issues such as the demands of work impinging upon home life, lack of consultation and communication, lack of control over workload, inadequate support and excess workload in general. A significant association between gender and mental ill-health was found, with females more likely to be stressed than the males. This study confirmed previous findings of organizational culture and workload as the key issues in officer stress.

**Deschamps et. at. (2003)** attempted to find the most vulnerable group of employees within the organization to fall prey of stress in terms of age, tenure, sex and rank. The police officers with a high stress level belonged to the group with more than 15 years in service, sergeant, officers and administrative employee rank, divorced experienced, age over 30, no leisure time activities and no hobbies. In fact sources of stress in police population were found both in the weariness of the job and private life planning.

**Hea et. at., (2005)** conducted a study for finding interactive effects of race and gender in a multidimensional assessment of police occupational stress. The sample from a large urban police department was divided into four subgroups. Results showed that dynamic factors such as measures of work environment and coping mechanisms contributed more in explaining police stress than static factors such as race and gender. Additionally, destructive coping and work-family conflict (spillover) were the most stable correlates of police stress across all subgroups included in the analysis.

Women in police service experience tremendous stress. In a survey conducted on police personnel serving in Gujrat by **Patel (2006)** it was found that around 65 % women working in police were under tremendous work pressure and stress, which was badly affecting their family life. Erratic and long working hours were the main reason of stress resulting in manifestation of anger on their spouses and children. The sample under study consisted of group of constables, ASI's & PSI's. Reason for joining the police force for majority of the women was unemployment, financial needs and government job. Only for 2% of the surveyed women, wish to serve the masses was the motive behind. According to the researcher motivating factor behind joining the police force had impact on the experienced by the women.



## **METHODOLOGY:**

The present study is an attempt to study the organizational climate of the police organization and the stress experienced by the police personnel serving in the militancy affected state of Jammu & Kashmir. The **study aimed** to analyze the effect of organizational climate and stress on two demographic) variables viz, hierarchy and sex. The variables were studied using two **tools** viz. i.e. the organizational climate scale constructed for police organization and stress by using police stress questionnaires. Tools used in English language and were administrated on the group and experiment in Hindi and examples of local The high and low score for all the variables (perceived organizational climate and stress) were analyzed using **mean and standard deviation** whereas, the mean differences of scores between lower and middle hierarchical level and gender is analyzed with the help oft-score. The relationship between the variables was assessed using **correlation**.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To study the perceived organizational climate of police as perceived by the lower and mid level police personnel.
- To analyze the stress level experienced by lower and mid level police personnel
- To assess the relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of police personnel.
- To understand the impact of sex on the perceived organizational climate of police.
- To understand the impact of sex on the stress experienced by police personnel.
- To examine the relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of female police personnel.
- To examine the relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of male police personnel.

## **HYPOTHESIS:**

- There will be a significant difference in the perceived organizational climate of police as perceived by the lower and middle level police personnel.
- There will be a significant difference in the level of stress experienced by lower and middle level police personnel.
- There will be a significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of police personnel.



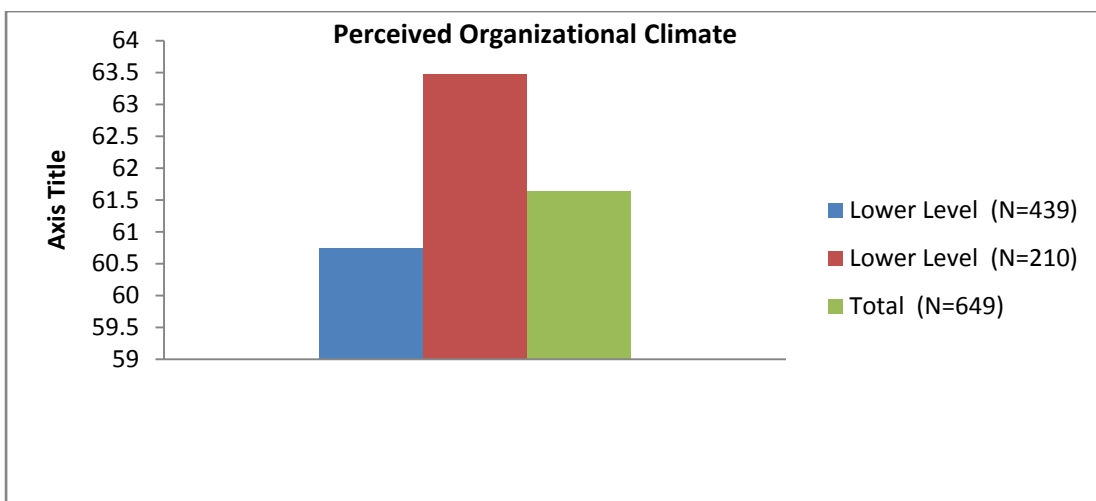
- There will be a significant difference in the perceived organizational climate of police amongst the female and male police personnel.
- There will be a significant difference in the level of stress experienced by female and male police personnel,
- There will be a significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of female police personnel.
- There will be a significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of male police personnel.

### RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION:

Hypothesis 1 states that there will be significant difference in the perceived organizational climate of police as perceived by the lower and middle level police personnel.

**Table (1): Mean S.D. & t-value for organizational climate of police personnel (lower & middle level functionaries).**

Variable	Lower Level (N=439)		Middle Level (N=210)		Total (N=649)		t-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
<b>Organizational Climate</b>	60.745	10.645	63.481	11.707	61.630	11.064	.003*



**Graph a: Indicating the mean values of perceived organizational climate of overall, lower and mid level police personnel.**



The mean score of perceived organizational climate is detailed in the Table (1) for the overall group of police personnel studied; lower and middle level police personnel studied as  $61.630 \pm 11.064$ ,  $60.745 \pm 10.645$ , and  $63.481 \pm 11.707$  respectively. The values for all variables are graphically represented as bar diagrams in Graph (a). The mean score for all the three groups is slightly higher than the norm mean score i.e. 60.00.

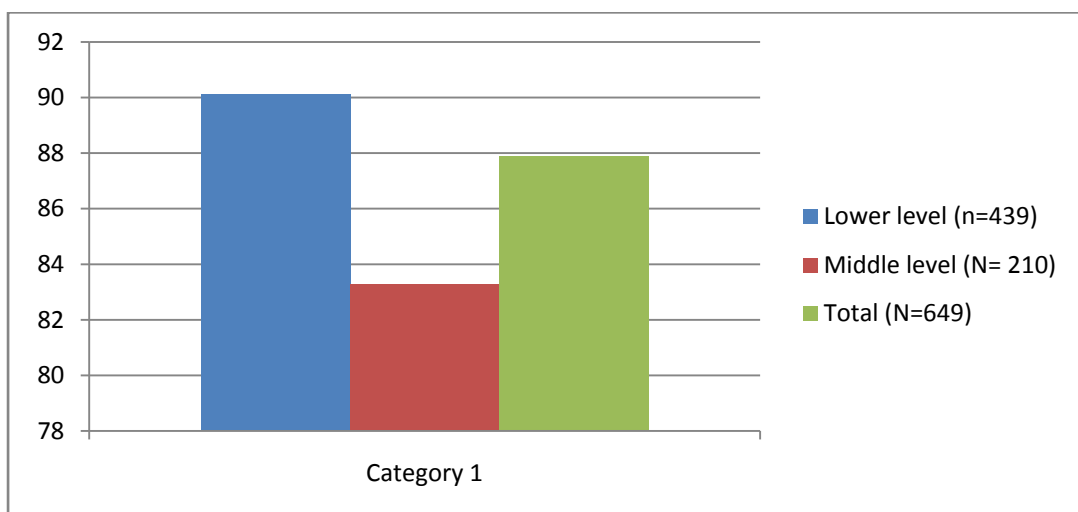
From table (1) and graph (a) it is observed that mean difference between perceived organizational climate between lower and middle level functionaries is highly significant. Hence, the hypothesis 2 is accepted for perceived organizational climate scores for police personnel at both hierarchical levels i.e. lower and middle level.

**Hypothesis 2** states that there will be a significant difference in the level of stress experienced by lower and middle level police personnel.

**Table (2): Mean S.D. & t-value for stress level of police personnel (lower & middle level functionaries).**

Variable	Lower Level (N=439)		Middle Level (N=210)		Total (N=649)		t-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Stress	90.100	17.38	83.286	20.789	87.895	18.806	.000*

**STRESS LEVEL**



**Graph b: indicating the mean values of stress scores of overall, lower and mid level police personnel.**



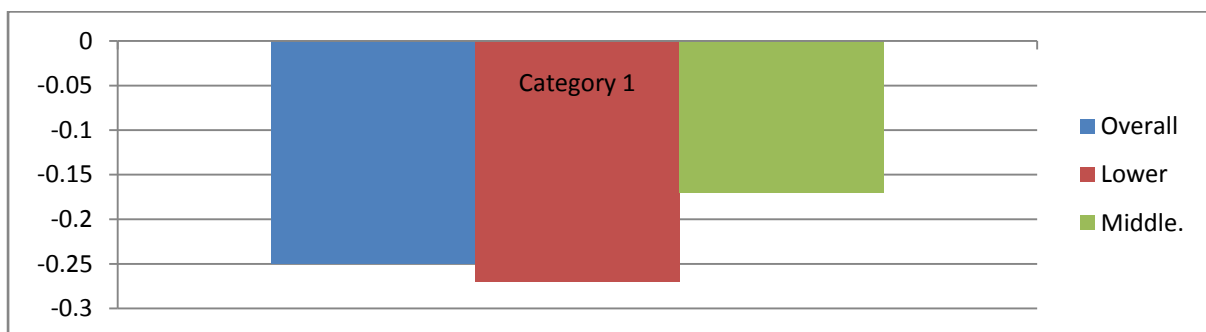
The mean score for stress for overall group of police personnel, lower and middle level police personnel is  $87.895 \pm 18.01$ ,  $90.100 \pm 17.38$  &  $83.286 \pm 20.79$  respectively. The mean score for all the three groups is above the norm mean score i.e. 80.00.

From table (2) and graph (b) it is observed that mean difference of stress between lower and middle level functionaries is highly significant. Hence, the hypothesis 2 is accepted for significant difference in the stress level of police personnel at two hierarchical levels i.e. lower and middle level.

**Hypothesis 3** states that there will be a significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of police personnel.

**Table (3): Showing correlations between perceived organizational climate and stress for overall, lower and mid level police personnel.**

Variable	Organizational climate & Stress
Overall	-0.25*
Lower level	-0.27*
Mid level	-0.17



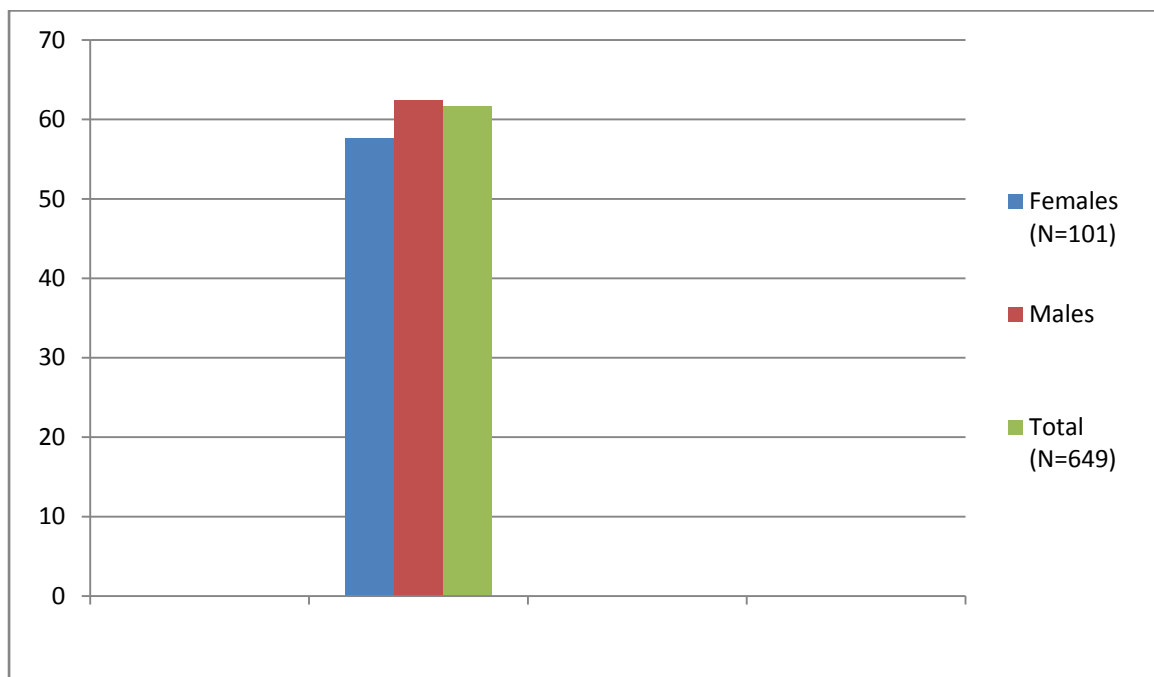
The overall, lower and mid level correlation score between perceived organizational climate & stress is -0.25, -0.27 and -0.17 respectively. It is observed that moderate significant negative correlation exists between the two variables i.e. perceived organizational climate and stress. So, the hypothesis 3 is accepted for significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of lower and mid level police personnel.



**Hypothesis 4** states that there will be a significant difference in the perceived organizational climate of police amongst the female and male police personnel.

**Table (4): Showing means, S.D & t-value for organizational climate of female and male police personnel.**

VARIABLE	Females (N=101)		Males (N=548)		Total (N=649)		t-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
Organizational Climate	57.673	10.906	62.359	10.948	61.630	10.948	.00*



**Graph C:** indicating the mean values of perceived organizational climate of police amongst the females and male police personnel.

The mean score of perceived organizational climate for the overall group of police personnel studied, for female and male police personnel are  $61.630 \pm 10.948$ ,  $57.673 \pm 10.906$ , and  $62.359 \pm 10.948$  respectively. The mean score of perceived organizational climate for overall group and male police personnel is slightly higher than the norm mean scores i.e. 60.00.

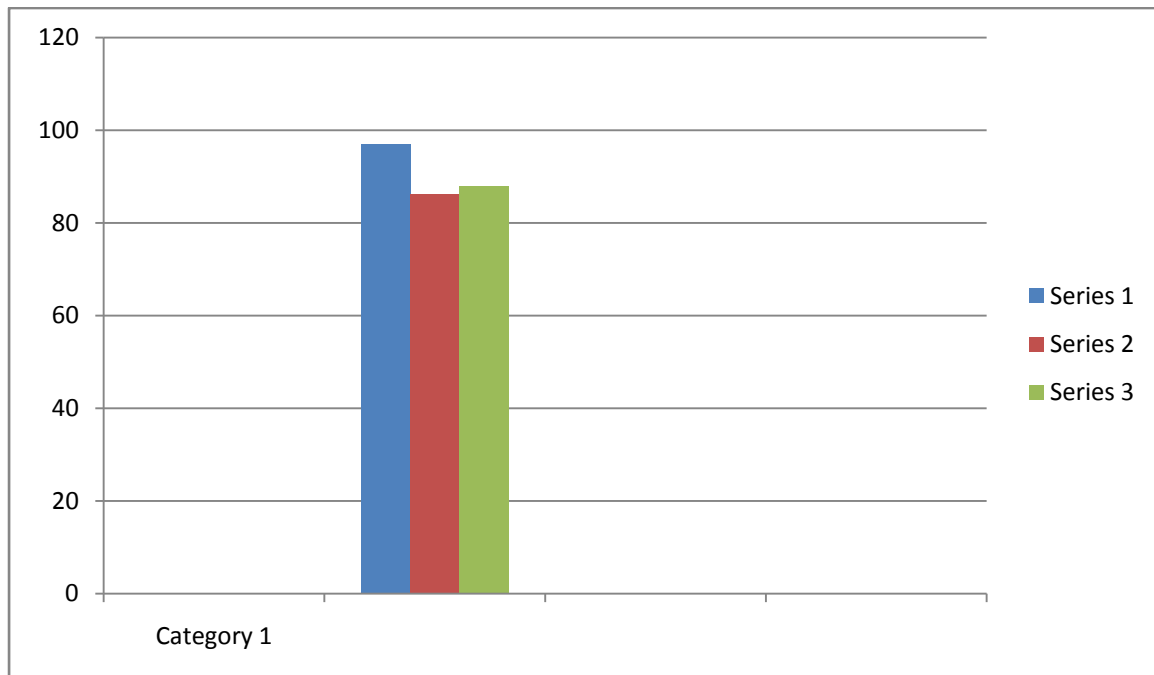


From table (4) it is observed that the mean difference in the perceived organizational climate between female and male police personnel is highly significant. Ice, the hypothesis 4 is accepted for significant difference in the perceived organizational climate scores for female and male police personnel.

**Hypothesis 5** states that there will be a significant difference in the level of stress experienced by female and male police personnel.

**Table 5 Showing means, S.D & t-value for stress level of female and male police personnel**

VARIABLE	Females (N=101)		Males (N=548)		Total (N=649)		t-value
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
<b>Stress</b>	97.089	17.657	86.201	18.533	87.895	18.806	.00*



**Graph d: indicating the mean values level of stress experienced by female and male police personnel.**

The mean score for stress for overall group of police personnel, female & male police personnel is  $87.895 \pm 18.806$ ,  $97.089 \pm 17.657$  &  $86.201 \pm 18.533$  respectively. The mean score



for the female group is above the norm mean score i.e. 80.00. From table (5) and graph (d) it is observed that mean difference of stress between female and male police personnel is highly significant. Hence, the hypothesis 5 is accepted for existence of a significant difference in the level of stress for female and male police personnel.

**Hypothesis 6** states that there will be a significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of female police personnel.

**Table (6): Showing correlation between perceived organizational climate and stress level of female police personnel.**

Variable	Perceived organizational climate and stress level
Female Police personnel	-0.18

The correlation score between perceived organizational climate and stress is -0.18, which is not significant. So, the hypothesis 6 is rejected for significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress for female police personnel.

**Hypothesis 7** states that there will be a significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress level of male police personnel.

**Table (7): Showing correlations between perceived organizational climate and stress level of male police personnel.**

Variable	Perceived organizational climate and stress level
Male Police personnel	-0.23

It can be observed from table (5) that the correlation scores between perceived organizational climate and stress for male police personnel is -0.23, which indicates low or insignificant correlation between the variables. So, the hypothesis 7 is rejected for





significant relationship between perceived organizational climate and stress for male police personnel.

### **SUMMARY:**

The present research is an attempt to study the organizational climate of the police organization in the militancy affected state of Jammu & Kashmir. The researcher aimed to ascertain the stress level of police personnel. The study also aimed to analyze the effect of organizational climate and stress on two demographic variables viz, hierarchy and sex. The results of the study were analyzed in line with the hypothesis framed for the study. The organizational climate was assessed by using organizational climate scale constructed for police organization and stress with the help of police stress questionnaire. The high and low score for the two variables were analyzed using mean and standard deviation whereas, the mean differences of scores between lower and middle hierarchical level and two genders is analyzed with the help of t-score. The relationship between the variables was assessed using correlation.

### **CONCLUSIONS:**

All the conclusions are based on the formulated hypothesis and the findings.

1. The total perceived organisational climate score is higher amongst middle level and high significant difference is found between two groups perceived organizational climate.
2. The total stress score is higher for lower level police personnel and there is a non significant difference between lower and middle level police personnel in stress.
3. There is a significant relationship between perceived organisational climate and stress for the total group of police personnel but insignificant relationship exists between perceived organisational climate and stress for the lower and mid level police personnel.
4. The total perceived organisational climate score is higher amongst male police personnel and there is a significant difference between male and female police personnel in the perceived organizational climate.
5. The total stress score is higher for female police personnel and there is a significant difference between male and female police personnel in stress.



6. There is non significant relationship between perceived organisational climate and & stress for the female and male police personnel.
7. Amongst demographic variables sex and designation both contribute in elevating stress level.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY:**

1. Police personnel serving in Jammu province were only considered for present study.
2. The investigator has quoted most of the refereilces from western countries as very few such type of studies have been conducted in India.

#### **IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH:**

1. The present study indicates the specific areas of organizational climate of police organization which require improvement. Police administration can take appropriate action to improve the areas requiring attention.
2. Comprehensive stress management training/ programmes could be formulated and conducted for police personnel to reduce the stress level of police personnel.
3. The organizational climate scale developed and standardized for the Jammu police could be further standardized on larger population for its wider application.

#### **SUGGESTIONS' FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH:**

1. The sample of police personnel was drawn from three districts of Jammu province of J&K state, for broader generalizations, it is suggested to undertake similar researches in other parts of the state as well.
2. The tools used for the data collection were lengthy and direct questions were asked on various issues pertaining to organization. This may have led to eliciting socially desirable responses. Future researches may use certain projective techniques to study the issues undertaken.
3. Tools to be used for study need to be translated in the local languages, especially for the lower level police personnel, who have lower educational levels.
4. The scale constructed for assessing the organizational climate of police could be standardized on larger population by the future researchers for wider usage.

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