An Empirical Study on StressAmong Women in Maldives Police Service

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been used for submission for any

other subject or course. All the sources used for the preparation of the report are clearly cited and

referenced.

Acknowledgement

This project would not have been possible without the help of people who supported me to through the course of the research. First of all I would like to express my thanks to my guide who helped me in selecting the topic and developing the questionnaire. My second vote of thanks goes to all the respondents who took out the time to fill in the questionnaire from their busy schedule.

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Abstract

Research has clearly indicated that women are better suited for some of the policing to roles because of their better diplomacy and communication. Moreover, women are also necessary in the police force for manning the areas like women search. Women police officials are also required to settle the sensitive cases like domestic abuse, rapes etc. Thus the role of women in the police cannot be denied. But in order to recruit and retain the women police officials in Maldives Police Service, special care needs to be taken to manage the stress and motivate the women officials. This research is conducted with the aim to understand the various causes of the stress and suggest the measures which can be used to mitigate the stress.

The questionnaire circulated among the female police officials indicated that much of the stress were caused by the absence of work-life balance, absence of child-care facilities and the time-management required to maintain the healthy lifestyle at the workplace. Keeping these major factors in view, it is recommended to conduct workshops on team building and time management, build the childcare facilities in each geographical location, to redistribute the work according to the capabilities and workload. Stress can cause physical as well as emotional damage to the individual and thus it is important to mitigate. The research suggests the steps that should be taken by the organization to mitigate the stress among the women police officials.

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MPS = Maldives Police Service

NSS= National Security Service

NGO =Non-Governmental Organization

1. Introduction

Maldives Police service (MPS) was established as a civilian institutional body in 2004. Women constitute 7.4% of the Maldives Police Service. The number of women in the National Security Service (NSS) which was in operation before MPS was very less with the first recruitment of women into NSS happening in late 1988. Though MPS has one of the best proportions of women police officers in the entire workforce as compared to the other police services in Asia, studies have found many factors which make service difficult for serving women police officers which contributes to their less numbers in the force. Hence, it is important to understand into the issues faced by women police officers in MPS and address them effectively as soon as possible to redress the gender gap in police service and make police service gender neutral. However, there is much left to be done to turn the police force to one which is suited to the times (CHRI, 2015). Policing is considered as most stressful profession than other professions and they have the greater risk of stress (Suresh et al, 2013). The job of the police is laden with many stressful factors like 24 hour availability, exposure to crime, administrative problems etc (Joseph & Nagrajamurthy, 2014). For females this becomes more of a problem as they juggle between their professional and personal life and try to find the right balance between the toughness and the compassion. The problem of stress is more highlighted in case of Maldives police because of various administrative problems it is facing.The MPS is an infant in terms of the year of it was established, and it is still undergoing through the stabilization process. Hence many new and improved changes are being brought in MPS. This adds the change management as an additional stress to the police officers.

Especially women police officers face more stress related problems than their male counterpart as they manage the family commitments and also working in law enforcement. Studies have

shown that working hours, education, age and relationship with co-worker and superior were the factors which led them to feel stressed (Mohanraj & Natesan, 2015). Stress is a widespread problem; it impacts the performance of both the individual and the organization (Leka et al., 2003). Stress contributes not only to the physical disorders, but also to emotional problems. Some research suggests that police officers commit suicide at a higher rate than other groups. Most investigators report unusually high rates of divorce among police (Yasodha & Kumudha, 2014).

There is no doubt about the fact that the stress can be harmful for the police employees. It can cause physical health problems among the police workers and can also cause psychological problems, especially in the decision making abilities of police force.

This project aims to study stress among the women in the Maldives police service so as to understand what the various reasons which are causing stress are. The project also aims to analyze the reasons and suggest the method of stress-reduction so that they can perform their duty to the best of their ability.

Project Background

The importance of having women police officers is highlighted by the fact that studies conducted since 1970s have shown that women are better in communication and settling disputes in a society (Horne, 2015). Contrary to popular belief and portrayal in visual media, police work involves a lot of duties such as desk work, entering complaints, looking into the complaints, processing records etc, which are not of a brutal and violent nature to handle a lot of duties in police service, diplomacy and communication is required for which women are better suited than men. Even then, the traditional belief in police being a man's work and the misconception that women are soft and cannot handle heavy workload have adversely affected the perception of the

general society. This has been found to be a major factor which deters women from applying for jobs in police service irrespective of high unemployment in many countries.

It has also been found through repeated studies that issues like domestic violence are best handled by women. Situations like domestic violence very often require the service of dispute settlement by the police including efforts to calm down the affected party and arrive at peace. Such duties are best done by women who are deemed more approachable and understanding by the public, to handle them. In situations of distress like sexual assault and other forms of assault which is mostly found to have female victims, the victims find is easier to relate the incident and share their problems with female police officers than males whom they think will not be able to understand their struggle properly (Parson &Bannon, 2014).

Security checks also need women police officers to do effective body checks of female to maintain safety and peace. Hence it can be clearly understood that the need for women in police service is very high and that police service is not necessarily restricted to use of superior physical strength and use of force for which men are more desirable. It is important that in any police service sufficient women officers are present to tackle issues of a sensitive nature like rape where the victims who are mostly women would not feel comfortable revealing or discussing their experience with men.

In Maldives the importance of having women in police service can be understood by the mere fact that the law states that some situations in which women need assistance of police personnel should be handled by women employees only. Moreover the geographical spread of the service in 92 islands makes it imperative that each island should have sufficient women police officers to be able to handle many issues effectively with maximum efficiency. Half the population constituted by women will be more comfortable approaching women police officers with their

problems rather than male police officers who are traditionally perceived as those who use force in exercising their duties. However, to meet this demand fairly the current recruitment rate as well as retention rate of women in MPS, the institution and practice in place have not effectively implemented ways to do it. There are many barriers to the recruitment, retention in service as well as promotion to higher posts for women police officersin MPS which needs careful inquiry and analysis to come up with effective solutions which can bring tangible change.

There is no doubt that police workers are under constant pressure. They are not only are supposed to deal with violent, antisocial, and mistrustful elements of society, they are also expected to exercise discretion under critical circumstances (Crank and Caldero, 1999). Research has shown in past that stress can be quite detrimental for the police force, especially the females in the police forde.

Researchers have argued that police officers' job performance can be affected badly when officers experience chronic stress (Goodman, 1990). The stress related with work adds up with the stress of family and other personal issues (Clay, 2011), and it makes the job more challenging. Researches show that workers bring their personal issues to the work environment and it has a major impact on the both the individual and the organizational performance. Dealing with people is the phenomena of 21st century. Hence, it is important todeal with the issues related with work environment and provide support to the individual's personal issues in parallel (Health Advocate, 2009).

Although a lot of research is available that looks in the causes of stress, sufficient research has not been conducted to establish the difference between the causes and the reaction of the stress

among the female police officers as compared to the male police officers. The research done in the earlier stages mainly focus on the male police officers.

These same analysis have been used for policy making, but the research in other professions have indicated that there are huge differences in the perceptions and coping skills of male and female workers. So, in order to truly counteract the causes for stress among women police officials, it is important to analyze the causes of stress among women independently.

This is more important in case of Maldives Police Service, where the foundation for the future career pathways is still being laid. In order to help in increasing the number of women police officials, it is quite necessary for the administrators to understand and keep in view the causes of stress among the women officials.

The aim of this project is to analyze the causes of the stress among the female police officers and how they differ from the stress causes among the males. The purpose is to understand these causes and suggest the methods that can be incorporated in the future five year plans so as to reduce the stress for the women officials.

The project will take reference from the other countries where the police force is considered exemplary and provide the policy framework needed to reduce the stress among the police official and help them perform better in interest of the public. Options and methods for controlling the stress and preventing the work burnout will also be identified and listed out based on the research.

Project Aim and Objectives

As described above the main aim of the project is to find and suggest the Study on Stress among Women in Maldives Police Service and define the policy framework that will help in reducing

the stress among the women officials. The project also endeavors to suggest some stress coping mechanisms for the factors which cannot be altered through the policy changes.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

i) To find out the reasons that cause stress in day to day working life of women in MPS.

ii) To suggest the techniques to manage the stress and reducing managerial problems.

The research will aim to answer the following questions:

i) What are the factors which contribute to their stress at the work place?

ii) Do they receive solutions to their problems from their managers?

iii) How can the stress be managed?

Project Framework

The project report will be divided into the following chapters and sections:

i) Introduction: The first chapter of the report will be the introduction which will explain the need for the project and the reason for which the topic was chosen. The Introduction will also explain the research problem and throw light on the method used for research in brief.

ii) Literature Review: This chapter will involve the review of all the major books, periodicals and journals which will take a look at the various shortcomings of the existing police force and the various methods that are practiced in other countries to understand the causes of stress and how the policies can be altered to control the stress.

iii) Research methodology: This chapter will explain in detail the methodology chosen for the project. The chapter will list out the steps taken to prepare the questionnaire and select the sample size of the project.

iv) Analysis: this chapter will analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire. The data obtained from the research will be analyzed with respect to the literature review to answer the question introduced in the introduction part.

v) Conclusions and Recommendation: This chapter will conclude the research and lay down the summary of the results of the research. The various recommendations for the change in the policy as well as for the stress-coping methods for women officials will also be suggested in this chapter.

vi) Future Research: This section will give an idea about the future research avenues available in case of the project. The limitation of the project if any will also be brought out in this chapter only.

2. Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to understand the need for the stress control in case of women officials, and substantiate the need with the help of the existing research and papers. The literature review is conducted to first understand the role and the need of the women police officials in a police force with special focus on MPS. The literature review further analyzes the theories related with the causes of stress in workplace with special focus on the causes of stress among the police force. Further the impact of the stress is also studied in brief to get an idea about the importance of stress management. Last part of the literature review studies the various stress management methods suggested by scholars and experts. These three portions together will help in developing the questionnaire and recommending the necessary changes/suggestions for mitigation of stress among the women workforce.
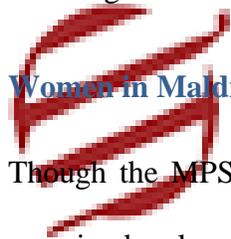
Women in Maldives Police Force

Though the MPS has a better image before, the reforms implemented in the police system is perceived as less than satisfactory. It has been found through studies that, contrary to the desire of the public to have an approachable police service, the dominant attitude of the MPS remains that of an assertive force that needs to be strict on the people to maintain peace. This masculine perception of police force is found to be true of majority of the countries in the world, including developed countries. This is proven by the fact that all over the world women are underrepresented in the police service of their country (CHRI, 2015). The UN women Report 2011 gives the estimate that women constitute only 9% of the police service all over the globe (Casserly, 2011). The situation of South Asia is more complicated as most of the police service departments in these countries had their origin during colonial times due to which they are primarily expected to be brutal forces which suppress all voices of dissent and acts of aggression

in the country. The transition to a more democratic and peaceful police force which primarily looks after the interests of the people is yet to fully permeate into these societies. This makes the situation of women in these police departments even dire as the department has a masculine personality where they are considered misfits(CHRI, 2015).

Diversity is desirable in the police force as the problems they are expected to handle are diverse. Incorporation of women into the workforce is believed to help the police better as they will be able to bring in their experiences, attitudes, knowledge and perception of culture of a place which will be different from the male perception. Moreover higher representation of women in police service will make the police service look more approachable in addition to the benefit of additional qualities the women recruits will bring into the police force. The interpersonal skills and communication skills of women have been proven to be better than that of their male counterparts through repeated studies (Sharpe, 2000). These skills are helpful in community policing as well as to handle issues like domestic violence. Sexual assault and gender based violence are found to be better handled by women police officers than male police officers (CHRI, 2015). Hence it is important that the presence of women in police service be actively encouraged and promoted.

The barriers faced by women who wish to enter the police force and are in the police force are many and varied. Primarily, women are reluctant to join police force as it is perceived as masculine field which is reliant mainly on superior physical strength of man. Hence women are considered ill-suited to "fight" crime in the society. Even within the police force it is believed that women will be better at desk jobs rather than as active police officers who go out to the field of activity and participate in maintaining peace in society. The police sub cultures which are predominantly male perceive women police officers as intrusions in their male dominion (CHRI,

2015). Even the Police Performance Review (2012) of the MPS does not even mention the women who serve in their department and acknowledge them as valuable part of the organization.

The traditional belief that women should look after the household and not men, is a primary patriarchal thought which work against women. They are expected to do all domestic work in addition to their official work and they often fail to get support of family who think that the choice to join police force which is masculine was the fault of the woman police officers. Moreover women police officers face sexual harassment and ridicule from their male counterparts who fail to accommodate them into the service. Sexual harassment is an issue with the MPS though the limited reports filed so far against it have meet with limited success. The lack of day care facilities are an added problem for them as it limits their activity after childbirth and prevents them from being valuable contributing parts of the organization. Very few women move up the career ladder in MPS since they have to work much more than men to prove themselves and face impediments like male insubordination and neglect by male superiors and counterparts in the day to day functioning. All these matters add to their stress and reduce their contributing potential (CHRI, 2015).

A welcome move is that the new strategic plan of the MPS for 2014-2018 has included the concerns of women officers. They have addressed a few concerns of women and have made a good gesture towards attracting more women recruits into the police service. However a more intrusive study is required to arrive at the grassroots of the issues of women police officers and address them in the best way possible.

Stress and its Causes

The history of the word "stress" can be traced back to the Latin word "stringere" which

means to stretch (Thoresen & Eagleston, 1983). When an individual faces a difficult situation and tries to respond to that condition, the individual stretches beyond his or her normal limit, and this causes stress in the individuals.

Stress is not always harmful for the individual. In fact stress is divided into two different types based on whether it is harmful or not: eustress and distress. Eustress is the positive or good stress that motivates the people and bring them joy along with the change (Selye, 1974). The Eustress includes situation like birth of a newborn, winning a prize or award, marriage, promotion etc. which causes reaction in the individual, but the reaction is more of happiness. In case of police force, this reaction occurs when the police force are motivated to workout. Negative stress is called distress. Distress can be caused because of the disaster or a big event, or daily frustrating activities. Stress is necessary for the individuals to perform well as it motivates them towards their goal, but continuous stress, especially distress, can give rise to conditions like fatigue, depression and nervous breakdown in the person.

Causes for Stress

Many researchers have tried to understand the causes of stress in an organization. Vandenberg, Park, DeJoy, Wilson &Griffen(2002) lists out the following three major theories to explain the causes of workplace stress:

       i) **Person-Environment(PE fit theory):**According to PE fit theory, stress occurs when a person does not deem himself or herself fit for the work or the official environment. This can be true case of unsuitable qualification or it can be the case perceived situations where the individual feels that they are not suitable fit for the working environment.

ii) **Framework of Occupational Stress:** As per this theory, the environment alone is not responsible for stress. It states that thestress comes into picture when thedemand of the job exceeds the ability of the individual. This again might not be true case, but only a case of perceived difference between the demand and the ability.

iii) **Demand-Control-Support Theory:**This theory considers the work content as the main culprit of the stress. Work content includes tasks as perceived by the workers. The work content also includes the autonomy or the control the workers have over their job.

Causes of the Stress as per Murphy

Murphy (1995) has also explained the reasons for workplace stress. He has divided the stress into five major reasons jobs:

a) **Factors unique to the job:** These factors are associated with the job like working hours, autonomy in performing the job, how meaningful the employees perceive their job as, interaction with colleagues and supervisors *etc*.

b) **Role in the organization:** This category focuses on the amount of autonomy and control individual's control over decision making in the organization. The problem of control and autonomy are dictated by the hierarchy of the organization and the level of intervention required from the superiors in the decision making. The problem of role also arises when an individual has to report to two or more supervisors and there is the clash between the command of the superiors.

c) **Career development:**This section mainly focuses on career growth within the organization. The factors which causes stress under this head includes disappointment

because of appraisal, under/over promotion, non-transparent reward system, insecure future in the current role, and absence of future growth avenues.

d) **Interpersonal work relationships:** Organization is not a single person job, but it involves the interaction with multiple people and groups. The friction with colleagues and between the groups can add to the stress. Harassment, workplace bullying, threat of violence etc. are few of the extreme cases of the friction between the colleagues.

e) **Organizational structure/climate:** An individual's state of mind is also influenced by the structure of the organization, especially the management style followed by the top management. The indecisive and untrustworthy behavior by the top management can add to the stress. Similarly the organizational climate which decides the decision making authority of an individual also contributes to the stress in the employees.

Table 1: Causes of Stress as per Morphy (1995)

Categories of Job Stressors	Examples
Factors unique to the job Workload	i) Overload with excessive work. ii) Underload with little or no work. iii) Pace/ variety / meaningfulness of work iv) Autonomy in decision making. v) Stability in shift work. vi) Emotionally or physically isolated work profiles. vii) Physical condition of the workplace
Role in the organization	i) Conflict due to multiple supervisors. ii) Unclear expectations and roles iii) Little or excessive job responsibility
Career development	i) Under/ overpromotion ii) Non-Transparent Reward System. iii) Insecurity in job iv) Absence of future avenues of growth

Relationships at work (interpersonal)	i) Poor relation with colleagues and supervisors. ii) Friction between and among the teams. iii) Harassment. iv) Workplace Bullying v) Threat of violence.
Organizational structure / climate	i) Indecisive Management. ii) Decision making authority to the individual. iii) Non-trustworthy management decisions. iv) Miscommunication or lack of communication.

Stress in case of Women Police Officials in MPS

Analyzing the above factors and the description, following can be considered as the major

factors of the stress in the women police force in MPS:
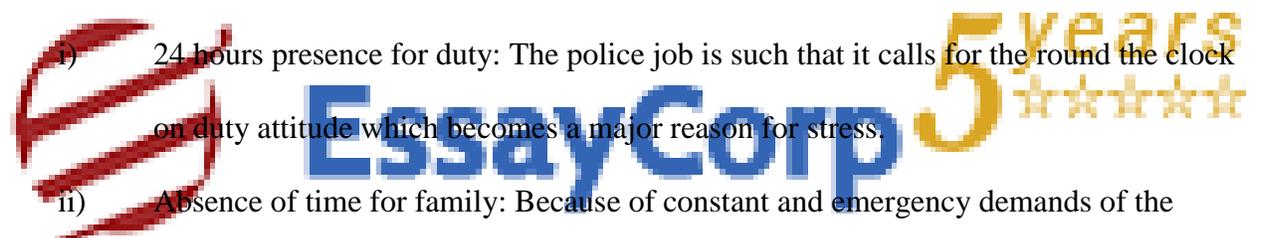
i) 24 hours presence for duty: The police job is such that it calls for the round the clock

on duty attitude which becomes a major reason for stress.

ii) Absence of time for family: Because of constant and emergency demands of the

colleague, it becomes difficult for the police officials to make a balance between

friends and family. Also, for the mothers who are responsible for the children, making

out time for both children and job becomes a major concern in their career.

iii) Inadequate salaries: The police department comes under government control, and

because of this reason the salary provided are not competent to the private companies.

iv) Friction between the police staff: Police officials are required to deal with multiple

departments. The friction between different departments can add up to the stress.

v) Poor or outdated equipment: Poor equipments including the arms and armaments can

become one of the causes of the stress for the police officials.

vi) Lack of recognition: There is little to no recognization involved in the police job. This can increase the dissatisfaction among the officials.

vii) Lower Manpower leading to overwork: The police services like MPS suffer from lower manpower which increases the workload for the existing officials, thereby adding up to the stress for the officials.

viii) Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment includes using lewd gestures and language and the molestation. In the case of women police officials who have to deal with the "rough" public, the chances of sexual harassment are higher.

ix) Workplace Bullying: Workspace bullying involves attacking a person's self-esteem through online means. This can become a major cause of stress if not handled effectively.

x) Criticism by superiors: Severe criticism by superior can affect the performance of the employees, and can result in stress as well.

xi) Absence of any kind of reward system: There is no provision for regular reward system in MPS. Absence of such reward system can make the employees demotivated and stressed.

xii) No value given to the individuals' commitment to the public: The job of the police is dependent upon co-operation between many groups, teams and departments. The individuals' commitments take a backseat, but this can add up to the stress of the officials.

xiii) No satisfaction from work: Constant paperwork and hierarchy in the system can result in little to no satisfaction from the job, thereby adding to the stress. Dissatisfaction

can also occur if the person is overqualified or underqualified for the job. (Mohanraj, 2015).

xiv) Patriarchal Outlook of the Society: The general outlook of the public is that policing is the men's job and women are not suitable to perform in the police service. This adds extra pressure on the women officials as they strive to perform better than their male counterparts. The research has indicated this as one of the major reason for the stress among the women officials.

xv) Threat to Health and Safety: Policing is a risky job especially if the women are in frontline and operational role. This threat to the safety can also add up to the stress. Also, the police officials need to maintain their physical health. Managing the time for the same along with the busy routine also adds up to the stress among the women police officials.
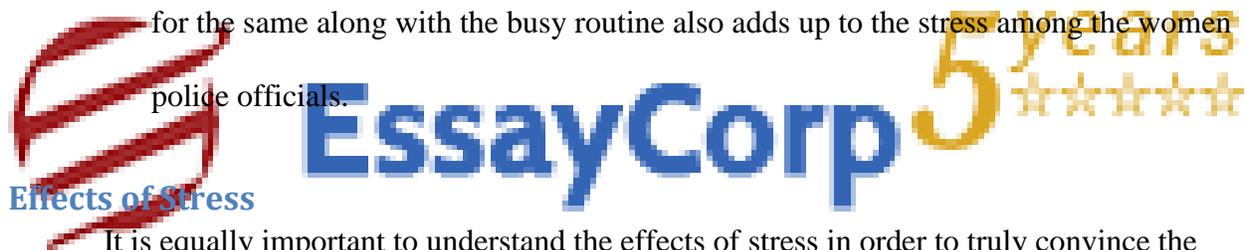
Effects of Stress

It is equally important to understand the effects of stress in order to truly convince the government to bring about the change.

Terry, Neilsen & Perchard (1993) lists out the following major results the induced stress can bring in an individual:

A. Physiological Effects

Stress is one of the major reasons of many of the diseases. The authors with the help of the past research states that the stress can adversely influence the immune system and cardiovascular systems, and may cause problems like heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, depression and anxiety, indigestion, heartburn, etc.

B. Psychological Effects

Stress is also responsible for the psychological changes in an individual and can aggravate the already existing problems like exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, professional and familial clashes etc. Issues of anger management are commonly found under the employees who are stressed.

C. Behavioral Effects

Stress also results in changes in the behavior of employees. It can give rise to the mood disorders, and abusive or violent behavior, which further causes the problems of drug and alcohol abuse and smoking.

Table 2: Impact of WorkPlace Stress (Michie, 2002)

Impact of Stress	
For the individual	**For the workplace/organization**
Threats to:	
Physical Health of the individual	Increased absence due to various reasons
Emotional Well Being of the individual	Reduced quality and quantity of work handled by the individual
Performance in the personal and professional life of the indivdual	Job dissatisfaction and lower morals.
Self-Confidence	Increased conflict among the employees
Personal emotional, physical and mental growth of the individual	

Effects of Stress in Women Police Officials

Morash, Harr and Kwak(2006) have listed out a few of the effects of stress on the police officials:

i)   Poor health because of the unhealthy lifestyle and the diseases

ii)   Absence from work due to various reasons.

iii)   Burnout from the job resulting in early retirement.

iv)   Job Dissatisfaction resulting in poor performance of the employees both in terms of quantity and the quality of the work.

v)   Lower organizational commitment resulting in incomplete investment in the work.

vi)   Higher chances of Divorce are found in the officials who are suffering from stressful work situations.

vii)   Drug Abuse

viii)   Alcohol Abuse

ix)   Suicide Attempts in rare cases

x)   Impaired Judgment is a major concern especially for police officials whose job are defined by their instincts.

xi)   Strained interpersonal Relation with Colleagues and Supervisors.

Thus it can be concluded that it is important to identify the causes of the stress and mitigate and control these causes in order to ensure that the women officials are enticed to select the police force as their primary occupation. Also, mitigating these stressors will help in retaining the women employees and in enhancing the performance of the existing women employees.

Stress Management

Since there is no way to completely make the stress zero, the stress needs to be managed. There are two different ways by the stress can be managed. The first method involves finding the cause of the stress and then making the changes in the policy and organization structure to mitigate it at the organizational level by restructuring and redesign.

The second method is to make provide individuals with the training and make them stronger in terms of the stress management to help them to weather the stress. One technique at a time

cannot bring about the similar result. Thus, it is important to use both the techniques together by changing the organizational structure as well as by providing the training and support to the women officials (Cahill, Landsbergis, & Schnall, 1995).

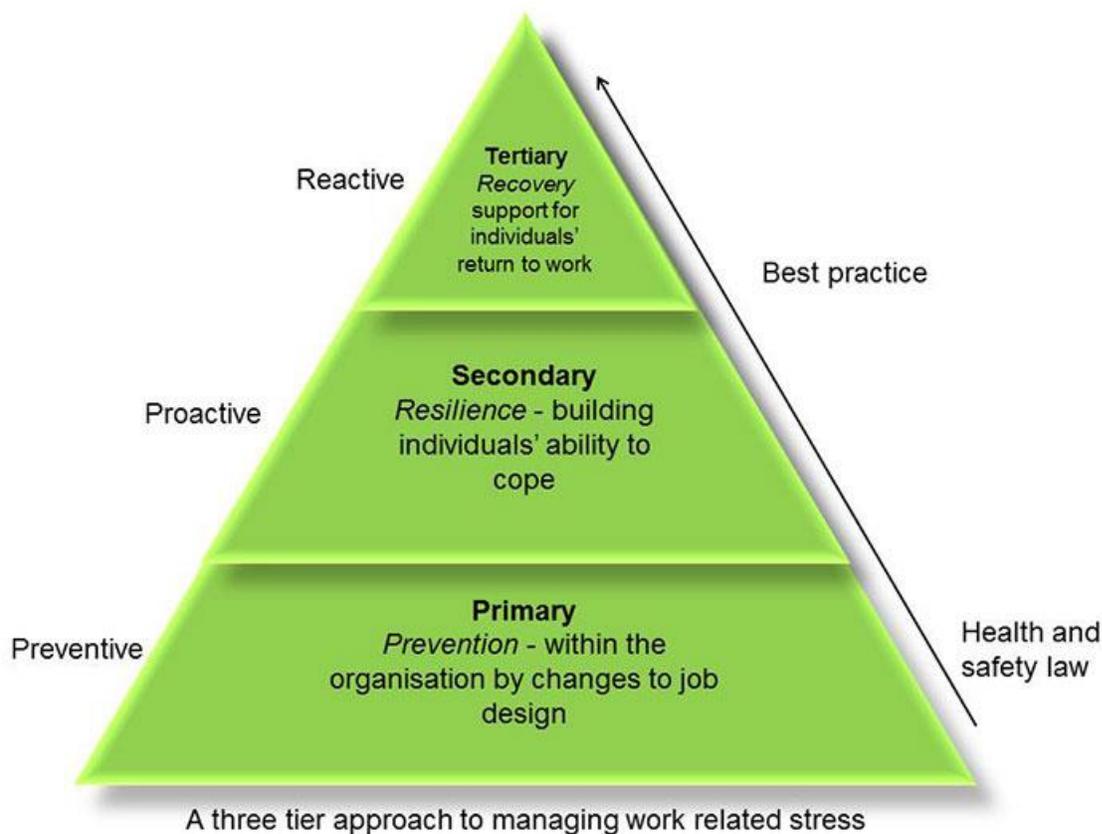Lazarus(1991) has suggested three ways to help the employees in coping up with the stress.

Figure 1: Stress Management As Per Lazarus

The first method in the above pyramid involves improving the working condition. This means that the manager need to identify and remove the stressors like work overload, environmental problems, lack of autonomy etc. to provide employees with a less stressful working place.

Following are few of the steps that can be taken to improve the working condition primarily itself.
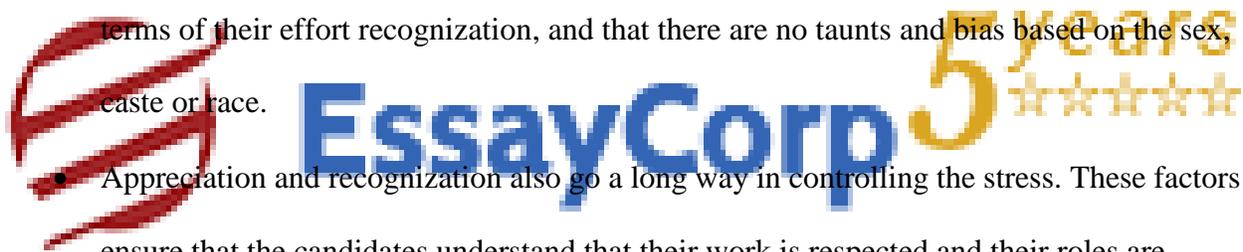
- Redesigning of the task so that employee's role is clear: The orders shall be such that they are clear to the women. There should be the division of hierarchy in the department.

- Clear guidelines opportunities for promotion and career or skill development: These provide the major bonus for the better performance. The promotion shall be based on the performance rather than the gender and other such criteria.

- Redesign the work environment in order to make it relaxed for employees: Work schedules should be set in such way that they are compatible with the demands and responsibilities of the employees outside the job. The modern trends like the flexi-time, a compressed work week, and job sharing are some of the examples how the work schedules can be managed. The rate of rotation, if required, should be stable and predictable, and not too disruptive for the employees.

- Establishing work structure to ensure that no employee is overworked or underworked is one of the major step management can take to control the stress among the employees. Moreover, the demands of the jobs (both physical and mental kinds) should be set according to the capabilities and resources of workers so that they can easily cope up with the job. In case the work is too arduous, steps should be taken to allow the employees to recover from the demanding tasks.

- Including the employee in career development can provide better performance of the employees and can help in sorting out the manpower problem of an organization.

- The employees should be provided with the social support and feedback at regular intervals. This feedback and social support will ensure that the employees feel that the management cares for them.

- Team building is very important to mitigate the stress. The cohesive teams provides much needed social and emotional support to the employees, thereby improving the performance of the employees. In such teams there are more opportunities for personal interaction. Moreover, the performance of the work is also improved due to the better co-ordination among the team members.

- Fair employment policies should be established to ensure that nobody feels belittled in the company. Fair policies means that the employees are able to trust the company in terms of their effort recognition, and that there are no taunts and bias based on the sex, caste or race.

- Appreciation and recognition also go a long way in controlling the stress. These factors ensure that the candidates understand that their work is respected and their roles are valued in the organization.

Beyond the above mentioned steps, the second method involves empowering the employees. Lazarus(1991) expresses that the employee empowerment can be done stress management resources. These resources help the employees in tackling the individual issues causes them the stress. This can involve the functional training or behavioral workshops like improvement in diet, training about meditation techniques, and training about relaxation techniques. These trainings help the employees in coping up with the physical, behavioral and psychological effects of stress.

Time management training can also be used to mitigate the stress. Time is one of the biggest reasonof the stress. Time management skills can help the individuals in developing the right kind of attitude and help them in juggling their various personal and professional responsibilities. Time management can also help in maintaining the balance between the work and personal life.

The other behavioral trainings which focus on changing the attitudes and behavior of the individuals can also be used to control the stress. These trainings can either help in coping up with the aggressive nature and some can focus more on opening of the employees on the emotional level.

3. Methodology

The dictionary meaning of the research is the systematic study of resources and material to establish facts and reach the conclusion. The type of research selected is dependent upon the kind of data collection methods used. Following are the major kinds of researches that can be conducted:

i)   Analytical and Descriptive research: The descriptive research is the kind of research which is conducted with the help of surveys and fact-finding enquiries done by the researcher, while the analytic research focuses on use of already available facts and information. In this research, the data will be collected with the help of questionnaires and hence the research will follow the descriptive research model (Kothari, 2012).

ii)   Quantitative and qualitative research: Quantitative research is the research where analysis of the collected data is done on the basis of the quantity or numbers, while the qualitative research is associated with analyzing the quality of the response submitted by the respondents. The research will be a mix of two as the research finally will use the quantity as the way to confirm the role of each stressor, while the causes for the stress will be identified qualitatively.

Both secondary and primary researches are going to be the underlying methodology of the project. The project will be based on the primary data that will be collected by the means of the survey to understand causes of stress among the women officials in police force. Secondary sources available on internet and library about the subject matter will be referred to create the questionnaire. With the help of the survey findings, the existing and researches and papers will be used to draw on the conclusions required for achieving the project objectives.

Sample Population

A sample population will be selected such that it includes women police officers belonging to different regions, cultural backgrounds as well as age groups in equal proportion to avoid the study being adversely affected by parameters external to that of the empirical study. The questionnaires will be distributed to the sample population and responses will be collected in the first phase of the research.

Commercial or Industrial Collaboration

The collaborator of this project is mainly the MPS. The MPS expects insight into the problems faced by their women employees and their suggestions into how to address them to make the Police Service more attractive for future female recruits. The MPS will find the project useful since it would help them to get feedback from a vital section of its workforce who have major stake in upholding the reputation of the police service as well as making the police service look approachable to the general public. This project will help MPS to address the issues in the system and make informed decision to employ remedial measures to rectify them.

Primary Data

Primary data is the data collected during the due course of result. This empirical study will be qualitative research which employs questionnaires. A questionnaire with both open ended and close ended questions will be formulated such that it clearly brings out the situation and comfort level of women in the MPS. The qualitative research are being relied on so that the problems faced by women police officers in the MPS may be clearly understood and analyzed for deeper insight into the problems faced by them and reach the root of the issue.

Secondary Data

An elaborate review will be done which is primarily dependent on the publications of planning and strategy released by the MPS as well as NGOs and other organizations that have done surveys and studies on the women policing in Maldives. The data about the number of female

police officers in Maldives will be obtained from relevant sources and their geographical distribution between the islands will be co-related to arrive at a better understanding of the female workforce in MPS.

Data Collection Method

The mail survey was chosen as the method to collect the data. It is one of the most common methods of survey research. It is also the most cost-effective way to collect the data associated with the research. The cost involved includes the postage cost of sending the questionnaire and cost of including a stamped return envelope. Some of the advantages this method includes:

- Reduction of chances of biasness on the part of the respondents as the survey can be filled at their place of choice.
- Compilation rate is quite high despite as compared to the other means of data collection.
- It helps in contacting the people over the large geographical area.

  The mail method also suffers from some disadvantages as well which are listed below:

- The major drawback is relating to its response rate. The researcher have no control over the respondents who may or may not send the survey data in time. However, this response rate can be improved if the respondents are provided by some kind of incentive to complete the survey. Our study did not offer any material incentive for the research questionnaire, but it did mention that the survey is being done as the part of the MBA thesis to convince them to offer their support for the survey.

- There is no way to ensure that the questionnaire has been filled by the respondent only and not some of the family member or colleague.

- Most of the open-ended questions are left unanswered in the surveys (Bailey, 2009).

Questionnaire and its Design

The Empirical Research uses questionnaire as the main instrument of the research. In order to truly gauge the reaction of the questionnaire, special care needs to be taken while making the questionnaire. Certain factors need to be understood before preparing and administering a questionnaire. The following portion takes look at the process of developing and administering the questionnaire. Bailey (2008) has also explained that the poor design of the questionnaires can affect the result of the questionnaire. Thus it is necessary to carefully and stepwise construct the questionnaire (Punch, 2003). In the case of this research, the questionnaire needed to cover all the major portion of stressors so that the women police officialscan identify the right causes for the stress. For the purpose of this research, following steps mentioned by Punch (2003) were used, and based on the literature review the questionnaire was prepared.

Table 3: Steps to Developing A Questionnaire

Step 1	Specify the object of the questionnaire
Step 2	Define the object in operational terms
Step 3	Design the questionnaire
Step 4	Test questionnaire
Step 5	Apply for item and factor analysis
Step 6	Item analysis
Step 7	Factor analysis
Step 8	Reliability
Step 9	Validity
Step 10	Determine norms
Step 11	Standardize
Step 12	Revision

4. Analysis and Discussion

Personal Profile of the Women Police Officials

The survey results were obtained for 73 women police officials from different geographical regions of

Maldives. Most of the respondents belonged to operation and frontline. 34.2% of the women worked in

the administration roles. Only 11% were involved in the investigative jobs.
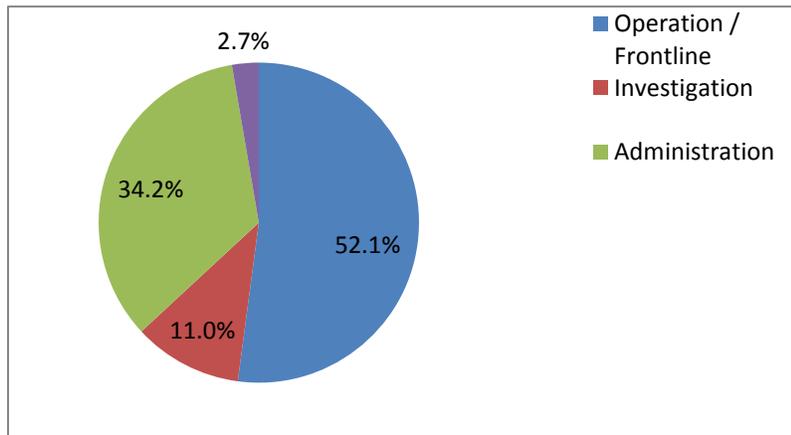

Figure 2: Work Distribution of Respondents

Personal profile of women officials shows that 64.3 percent of the respondents were in the age

group of 25-35, and only 10% of the women were above 35 years of the age.

Age of Sample Women Police Officials

Legend:
- 18-25
- 25-35
- 35 and above
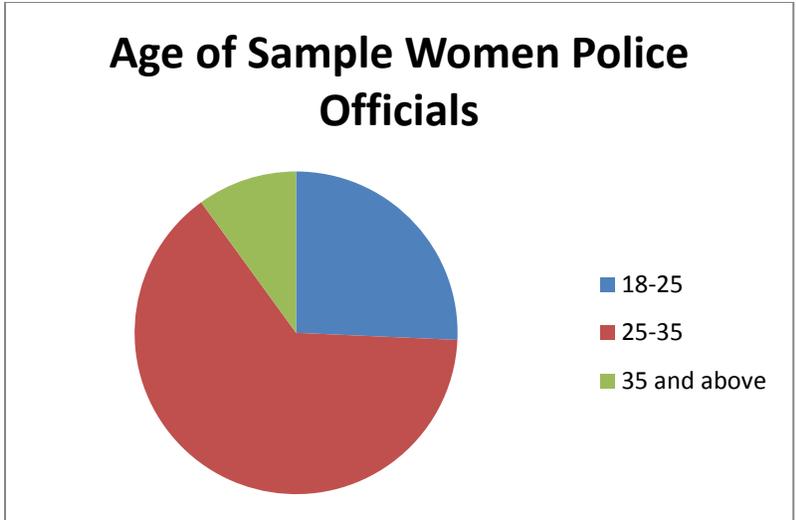
Figure 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

Out of all the respondent, 64.3% women officials were married while 7% were divorced.

Figure 4: Marital Status of Respondents

The single women officials were around 20%. 65.3% of the respondents had one or two child, while 34.7% had no children.

26.4% of the respondents had the professional experience of 1-5 years. Among the respondents 36.1 percent of them have experience between 5-10 years. Only 1.4% women had the experience beyond 20 years.

Figure 5: Experience of Respondents

Causes of Stress As Per Survey

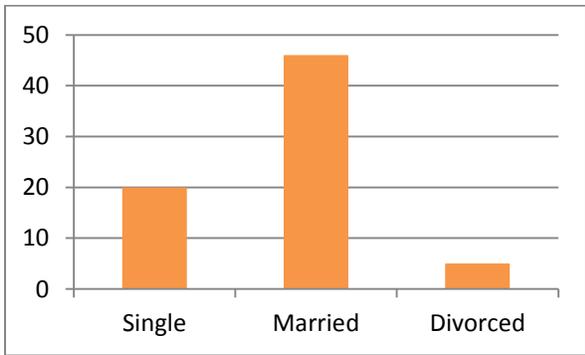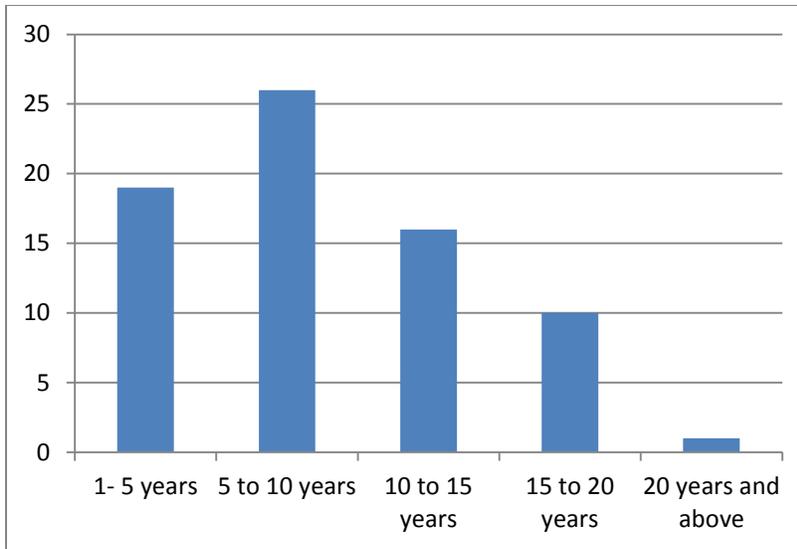The survey questionnaire also asked the respondents to list the various causes as the reason for stress. The following table lists out the various causes as per the survey results in descending order. The weighted average is used as the means to sort out the results from most stressful stressor to the least stressful stressor.

Table 4: Stressor and Their Weighted Average As per Survey Results

Stressor	Weighted Average
Finding Time to Stay in Good Condition	3.76
Duty	3.66
Eating Healthy at Work	3.64
Overtime Demands	3.54
Feels Like you are always on job	3.45
Childcare while on job	3.32
Coworkers	3.31
Risk of Being Injured	3.08
No time to spend with family and friends	3.03
Limitation on Social Life	2.93
Managing your social life outside work	2.89
Unsupportive Supervisors	2.88
Negative comments from Public	2.81

Traumatic Events	2.78
Upholding High Image	2.74
Friends and Family feel Stigma associated with Job	2.64
Lack of Understanding among Family and Friends	2.62
Promotion	2.36
Too much of paperwork	2.32

Analysis of the above table indicates following as the biggest reason for stress among the female police officials:

i)   Finding time to stay in good condition.

ii)   Duty

iii)   Eating Healthy food at work

iv)   Overtime Demand

v)   Feels Like you are always on job

vi)   Childcare at work
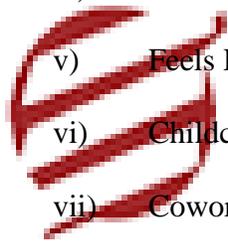
vii)   Coworkers.

This indicates that most of the female employees have concern regarding the operational part of the job rather than the organizational part of the job. The organizational part prominent is the relation with the coworkers and the child care.

Other organizational reasons like paperwork and promotion are on the lowest side of the stress reasons. Also, personal reasons like family and society are also rated lower by the respondents. The questionnaire also asked an open ended question about other stressors, where money, work-life balance and other facilities were included. While other two were included in the questionnaire in one or the other way, no opinion was asked about the compensation benefits and hence it cannot be ascertained whether other respondents also felt the same regarding the money or not.

Organization Initiatives Response

The questionnaire also involved an open ended question which asked the respondents to list out the various initiatives the organization should take to ensure less stress. 38 responses were received for the same, and some of them were repeated by the majority of the respondents. These responses are:

i) Fair Rewards and Promotion System: Although the respondents did not put as the major stressor, they marked this as an organizational initiative to manage the stress.

ii) Motivational Activities and Behavioral Training: Many of the respondents felt the need for the motivational activities and behavioral training to manage the stress.

iii) Team Building Activities: This also emerged as one of the major initiatives marked by the employees. This is in line with the survey results as well because most of the respondents did feel that the stress is caused by coworkers.

iv) Work Facilities: Need for facility was also highlighted by couple of respondents. This is inl ine with the need for the childcare that emerged as one of the leading cause of the stress from the survey.

v) Work Life Balance: This emerged as another initiatives needed in the department. Although the same was not highlighted by many of the respondents in the survey results, the need to maintain this balance for managing the stress was indicated.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It is important for the women officials to feel motivated in the police force. The above survey gave an idea about the various reasons for stress.

Keeping in view the analysis done above, following can be considered as the major reason for

the stress among the women officials:

    i)   Absence of Work-Life Balance

    ii)   Absence of Child-care Facility at the workplace.

    iii)   Stress due to the work profile

    iv)   Inability to maintain healthy lifestyle during the working hours.

    v)   Gender Discrimination for promotion and work distribution

    vi)   Friction with coworkers and supervisors.

We have already understood the impact the stress can have on the women police officials. Thus in order to ensure the efficiency of the employees as well as to retain the employees, it is important to create a work culture which will help in managing the stress among the employees.

Following are the suggestions that can be implemented by the department and the management

to ensure the proper management of stress:

    i)   Redistribution of work according to capabilities and the training of the officials to ensure that the PE fit for the officials are such that the officials feel no stress. If required, special functional trainings for the officials can be included in the system.

    ii)   Setting up of child care facility within the geographical area to allow the working mothers to be stress free from that end.

    iii)   Inducting the new officials and creating the shift charts to allow each official to have sufficient off-duty time.

iv) Incorporation of behavioral training which teaches the officials healthy lifestyle during the busy office hours.

v) Slating particular time for training of employees to keep them physically fit and active for the job.

vi) Promoting the fair promotion and working policies which are transparent to all the officials of MPS.

vii) Arranging team building activities to build up a cohesive team.

viii) Arranging camps like meditation, fitness camps etc. which provides the officials with opportunities to manage stress.

ix) Develop self-motivation reward system to promote self-motivation among the officials.

x) Maintaining a suitable compensation package.

xi) Public recognition system for the employees who give better performance.

The above recommendations are based on the various inputs received as answers to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. It also takes into account the literature review done to find the stress management solutions for the organization.

The research was started with an objective of understanding various causes of the stress in women official in MPS, and to further suggest the plausible solutions to combat these causes. The above recommendation and causes answer the research questions posed at the beginning of the research.

The research found out the various causes of the stress with the help of the questionnaire and with the help of the literature review and research and the above indicated methods are suggested to manage the stress.

5. Future Research

The current research is a broad research on the various causes of stress. The research does not measure the effect of stress on the officials and hence is not able to gauge whether the employees are truly stressed or if these are the perceived causes of stress. Further research can be conducted to include the impact of stress on the women officials. This will give an idea about how urgent the situation is in the police service of Maldives with respect to stress, and how urgently the changes are needed in the system to ensure a stress-free environment. Such a research will also give an idea about the depression or anxiety or any such extreme condition existing in the system.

The research also does not differentiate between the responses as per the rank of the police officials. Such study can also give an idea about the stressful conditions existing in the current system at different levels of the organization.

Stress is a factor which decides the performance of the officials. There are many unexplored venues which could be taken up as future research topics.

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Appendix 1: Work Related Stress Questionnaire

It is recognized that working related stress affect worker well-being. Your response will help to

identify the work related stress amongst women of Maldives Police Service.

This survey is being conducted as a part of MBA program and the questionnaire will be used

solely for research purpose only.

Please tick how much stress it has caused you over the past 6 months, using a 5 point scale (1

"No stress", 3 "Moderate Stress" and 5 "A lot of Stress")

1- Area of Work
   a. Operation / Frontline ◯
   b. Investigation ◯
   c. Administration ◯

2- Duty

	1	2	3	4	5	
No Stress	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A lot of Stress

3- Over-time Demands (eg: Court, Community events, alert, other)

	1	2	3	4	5	
No Stress	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A lot of Stress

4- Risk of being injured on the job / Health and safety issues

	1	2	3	4	5	
No Stress	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A lot of Stress

5- Traumatic events related to work

	1	2	3	4	5	
No Stress	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A lot of Stress

6- Managing your social life outside of work

	1	2	3	4	5	
No Stress	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A lot of Stress

7- Not enough time available to spend with family and friends

	1	2	3	4	5	
No Stress	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A lot of Stress

8- Too much of Paper Work

	1	2	3	4	5	
No Stress	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	A lot of Stress

9- Eating healthy at work

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

10- Finding time to stay in physically good condition

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

11- Lack of understanding from family and friends at work

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

12- Upholding a "high image" in public

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

13- Negative comments from public

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

14- Limitations of your social life (eg: who your friends are, where you socialize)

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

15- Feeling like you are always on the job

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

16- Friends / family feels the effects of the stigma associated with your job

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

17- Childcare while you are on the job

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

18- Co-worker

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

19- Unsupportive supervisors

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

20- Promotion

No Stress   1   ◯   2   ◯   3   ◯   4   ◯   5   ◯   A lot of Stress

21- Mention any other stress related to work
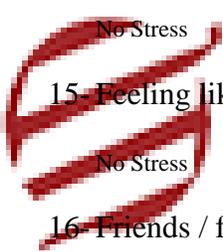
22- Suggest 3 things that the organization can do to reduce work related stress

23- Years in Service
   a. 1- 5 years   ○
   b. 5 to 10 years   ○
   c. 10 to 15 years   ○
   d. 15 to 20 years   ○
   e. 20 years and above ○

24- Rank
   a. Constable   ○
   b. L/Cpl   ○
   c. Cpl   ○
   d. Sgt   ○
   e. S/Sgt   ○
   f. St. Inspector   ○
   g. Ch. St. Inspector ○
   h. Sub Inspector   ○
   i. Inspector   ○
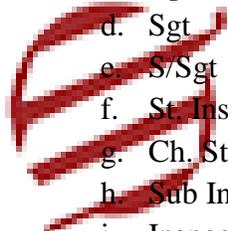
25- Age
   a. 18-25   ○
   b. 25-35   ○
   c. 35 and above ○

26- Marital Status
   a. Single   ○
   b. Married   ○
   c. Divorced ○

27- No. of. Children
   a. 0   ○
   b. 1   ○
   c. 2   ○
   d. 3 and above ○