

**AN ANALYSIS OF OCCUPATIONAL STRESS –  
A CASE-STUDY OF MUMBAI POLICE**

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**BY**

**ARUNDHATI SAMIR CHITRE  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
RAMNIRANJAN JHUNJHUNWALA COLLEGE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Notion of Stress:**

Stress is perhaps the most common problem of daily life. More so, it typifies modern life. This implies that stress is an integral part of everyone's lives.

All situations, positive and negative, that require adjustment can be stressful. Stress is not bad in or of itself. While stress is typically discussed in a negative context, it also has positive value. It is considered that some amount of stress is beneficial as it acts as a motivator to tackle or cope with an unfavourable situation. At its best, the presence of stress can be positive that urges the individual to strive for excellence. However excess amount proves to be hazardous as it acts as an obstacle in dealing with the stressful situation. It can blur an individual's judgement and coping abilities. Excess stress can cause significant physical, emotional, social implications which are unhealthy and unpleasant.

The notion of stress can be broken down further into eustress (positive stress) and distress (negative stress). Both types of stress tax a person's resources and coping skills, though distress typically has the potential to do more damage.<sup>16</sup>

### **Occupation:**

Work is an important aspect of human life. It can be economically productive or non-productive. Occupation is generally understood as economically productive work. It plays an important role in an individual's life. It forms an integral part of people's lives. It is not just a mode of survival. But in many cases, it is through occupation that an individual gets his social standing and his identity. It is through occupation that one's career and subsequently one's life can flourish. Occupation is responsible for creating a sense of achievement as well as satisfaction. Individuals spend quality time of their lives in their respective occupations. Occupation becomes an extension of their personalities and an integral part of their very existence.

### **Occupational Stress:**

An individual can contribute positively at the place of occupation only when the environment is conducive. By environment, we not only mean the physical environment but also the social and psychological environment. It essentially entails that occupation must be stress-free.

However, stress-free occupation is a hypothetical situation. Every occupation involves within itself certain factors that bring about stress. Thus occupational stress is an unavoidable concept. It is also a more serious aspect of stress. Stress related to occupation can have more severe implications for the individuals.

Occupational stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources or needs of the workers. The challenge at the work may get turned into job demands that cannot be met, relaxation may get turned to exhaustion, and a sense of satisfaction may get turned into feelings of stress.<sup>18</sup>

Nearly everyone agrees that occupational stress results from the interaction of the worker and the conditions of work. View differs, however, on the importance of worker characteristics versus working conditions as the primary cause of occupational stress. These differing viewpoints are important because they suggest different ways to prevent stress at work. According to one school of thought, differences in individual characteristics such as personality and coping style are more important in predicting whether certain job conditions will result in stress- in other words, what is stressful for one person may not be problem for someone else. This viewpoint leads to prevention strategies that focus on workers and ways to help them cope with demanding job conditions. Although the importance of individual differences can't be ignored, scientific evidence suggests that certain working conditions are stressful to most people. The excessive workload demands and conflicting expectations lead to occupational stress.<sup>18</sup>

Beehr and Newman (1978) outlined three categories of symptoms that occur under conditions of occupational stress: psychological symptoms, physical symptoms and behavioural symptoms.<sup>4</sup>

Psychological symptoms are those emotional and cognitive problems that occur under conditions of job stress. Job dissatisfaction is the most likely consequence of occupational stress, where a worker is dissatisfied with his or her job, dislikes coming to work and finds little reason for doing well on the job. Additional psychological symptoms are depression, anxiety, boredom, frustration, isolation and resentment. Some of these symptoms are problems in themselves in that they can make job stress worse: for example, a worker who finds himself increasingly frustrated by job conditions may become depressed and withdrawn, and therefore is less able to cope with job problems in ways that would improve his work conditions and enhance his mental outlook.<sup>14</sup>

Physical symptoms are more difficult to define because, while particular work conditions have been linked to certain physical ailments and conditions, it is difficult to know how much these ailments are caused by the job itself versus other aspects of the worker's life. One of the most common physical symptoms of job stress is cardio-vascular disease.<sup>14</sup>

Behavioural symptoms occur in two categories. The first are symptoms that can be said to 'belong' to the worker. This group includes such behaviours as avoidance of work, increased alcohol and drug use, overeating or undereating, aggression towards fellow workers or family members, and interpersonal problems in general. Other behavioural symptoms 'belong' to the organization: absenteeism, leaving the job, accident proneness and loss of productivity.<sup>14</sup>

It can be claimed that nearly all occupations create stress for the employees. However there are certain occupations which are essentially more stressful than others. Policing is one such occupation. Hence an attempt is being made through this research project to highlight the 'Stress Quotient' and contemplate on feasible solutions.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Occupational stress is a term used to define ongoing stress that is related to workplace. All occupations involve a certain degree of stress which in fact is a natural/normal aspect. However there are certain occupations which prove to be more stressful. The profile of the job, the expectations, the social attitudes play an important role in determining stress. One occupation which qualifies for these determinants and essentially is stressful in nature is that of police personnel. The police fulfil an essential role in the society and stress potentially reduces the effectiveness of the personnel to carry out their jobs. Hans Selye, the foremost researcher in stress in the world, said that police work is "the most stressful occupation in America even surpassing the formidable stresses of air traffic control."

Police personnel of different ranks may or may not differ both quantitatively and qualitatively in their experience of stress. The aim of this study is to understand and analyse the specific stressors experienced by the police personnel of different ranks.

The police department is characterized by a well-defined hierarchy. As one descends on this hierarchy ladder, the strength of the cadre increases in number. Absolute confidence and obedience of lawful orders are necessary from each member of the force if the force has to function efficiently. A weak coupling in the chain of command would tend to degenerate the competency of the force. Hence it is essential to overcome this lacuna. One important aspect is to identify the sources of stress and related symptoms which may prove hazardous to the competency of the police personnel. The findings of the proposed study can act as pointers to the causes of stress as well as the symptoms of stress. Factors causing maximum amount of stress can be tapped so also the severe manifestations of it through the symptoms. These findings may prove to be helpful in providing a direction in adopting remedial measures for the benefit of the Mumbai police personnel.

The police shoulder a very significant responsibility of maintaining law and order in the society. Hence the contribution of police personnel in the process of social stability cannot be undermined. This mammoth responsibility necessitates effective group behaviour strategies such as team-work, cooperation, coordination, communication channels, delegation of power and

authority among others. Every single individual in the group becomes accountable for his/her actions. This relates to the social behavior.

However it is important to note that every single policeman brings to the job, his/her own individuality and mental makeup which play a very important role in dealing with stressful situations and managing them. This brings to fore the psychological perspective.

Apart from this, certain other factors such as their economic status, power play within and outside the organization also play a crucial role. These problems can act as significant stressors and hence can affect the behavior of the police personnel.

As a sociologist, my aim is to co-relate these interdisciplinary views and present a more comprehensive scenario.

It is widely assumed that the police personnel experience more occupational stress than most of the other working people. Some of the significant issues that even a stark outsider can identify are long working hours, relatively low salaries, physically taxing job profile to name a few. It is also perceived as a thankless job. This understanding of policing is strictly a general and outsider's perspective, but one which is based on observation and commonsense assumptions. Hence my aim is to understand the intricacies of policing and verify whether the outsider's perspective does hold true or not.

I have proposed the hypothesis that the overall stress levels of the police personnel will be on the higher side. Additionally, there are two more hypotheses that have been proposed. One, there will less significant difference in the degree of stress experienced by the police personnel at the top, middle and bottom levels. Second, there will be less significant difference in the degree of stress experienced by the police personnel having service of less than 15 years and more than 15 years.

The present study attempts to analyse the hypotheses with the aid of relevant research design and statistical tools.



## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The police, as it exists in India, are the creation of the British. The basic structure of the police in India can be traced back to the Police Act of 1861. The Police Act of 1861 was on the recommendations of Police Commission Report of 1860. The laws on which the country's criminal justice system rests, the Indian Penal Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and the Indian Evidence Act were enacted during the British rule.<sup>17</sup>

There were no significant moves to reform the police in India while the country was under the Crown except by the formation of the 1902 Police Commission known as the 'Fraser Commission'. Throughout the period of national struggle for freedom, the police and regulatory departments were clearly on the side of their British masters which did not endear them too much with the Indian people.<sup>2</sup>

However, after the attainment of political freedom, when the Constitution of India was framed the two covenanted services – the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.) and the Indian Imperial Police – were retained to ensure continuity in administration and were christened as the Indian Administrative Service (I.A.S.) and the Indian Police Service (I.P.S.). There were no structural changes with regard to the criminal law and administration when the States were reorganized on the basis of the linguistic formula and new States came into being with new police cadres. These new States increasingly felt the need to reform and reorganize their police. A number of States appointed Police Reorganisation / Police Reform Commissions. The Maharashtra Police Commission was appointed on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1962.<sup>2</sup>

According to Police Act, 1861, police functions are to prevent commissions of offences and public nuisances, to bring offenders to justice, to collect information affecting public peace, and to keep order in all public places keeping in view the social and political changing scenario.<sup>18</sup>

It was the British who introduced the concept saying; let nine guilty persons escape rather than one innocent person be punished. The benefit of doubts was given to the accused and the individuals and not to the State.<sup>17</sup>

The law of the land distrusts the police to its own disadvantage. It has placed so many restrictions on them, that a policeman finds himself in the dock, when he puts up an accused in court for trial. To avoid this trauma, in course of time, short-cuts have been evolved in police

methodology. The use of third degree is one of them. In fact, the entire administrative system is directly or indirectly responsible for this state of things.

The concept of the police as the strong arm of the administration, charged with the duty of keeping a political party in power, is not contemplated in the laws. But it has become so in practice in some places. The entire police concept of a people's police gets distorted when the police start acting as the private army of a select set of people, operating at their behest and in their interest.<sup>17</sup>

The police personnel are subjected to the grim reality of occupational stress in addition to the life events stress. This does not depict a good omen for the nation and society because physical and psychological health of police personnel is an important prerequisite for country's march ahead.

During the last six decades, various national and state commissions have made suggestions to make the police responsible and effective. But there are various issues confronting police. Neither organizational nor personal issues have been addressed.<sup>18</sup>

Some degree of occupational stress is common to every organization at various levels of its hierarchy. The police organization is no exception to this rule. Infact policing is widely recognized as more stressful than most other occupations.

The functions of the police encompass preservation of law and order, to safeguard people from attack and to protect property among others. The society expects the cop to play the varied roles with equal elan. He is a helper, savior, friend and referee. Then as a law enforcer he makes an arrest or uses force to enforce the rule of law. This roller-coaster ride is a process difficult to understand functionally and incomprehensible emotionally. Police in India are showing clear signs of work-related stress experiencing its negative impact on mental and physical health. Various segments of the police hierarchy differ in their experience of work stress.<sup>11</sup>

Neglect of family, performance of VIP security duties, frequent transfers, role ambiguity, role conflict,, work overload, conflicting orders, abnormally extended hours of work both in day and night shifts, criminalization of politics, close nexus among criminals, politicians and bureaucrats, public apathy, outdated laws and collapse of other agencies of criminal justice system are some of the major stressful factors for police personnel.<sup>11</sup>

The police are much more than a segment in the civil administrative system. Even a broad survey of police functions and duties in this country would show that the police are not just a

part of civil administration but a very important and critical component. This is particularly so in a country like India where they perform a wide range of functions. The manner in which they respond to violations of law and order, place restraints on personal freedom, prevent the occurrence of crime and detect crime, all generate debates and controversies. On one hand they are accused of going into excesses, while on the other hand, they are accused of doing too little. Suffice it is to say that at no point of time can it be said that police action went by the book. This dilemma is related to our perception of rule of law itself. While we proclaim that “all are equal before the law”, we also concede or canvass that “some are more equal than the rest”. As a result, in the enforcement of law, all are not considered equal at all time. Herein lies the basic hazard to proper policing in this country.<sup>2</sup>

In India, the presence of stress among policemen is felt but still not recognized as a major enemy of law-enforcement professionals as yet. Media reports of police brutality and indiscipline can be perceived as warning signals of job stress, emphatically pointing to the mismanagement of this crucial problem so far. Society views the police not only as a law-enforcing agency but also as an instrument of social service, an agent of social change and the protector of rights and duties of the people. The numerous incidents of police brutality and high-handedness, excessive use of physical violence and verbal abuse, negative image of the police as being discourteous, inhuman, sadistic and inefficient prompt a curious observer to look beyond the surface and discover the underlying strain that exists.<sup>11</sup>

The highly paradoxical nature of the policemen’s job makes it like tightrope walking and deserves a closer scrutiny than accorded to it so far in our country. Due to constant and prolonged stress, anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, dysthymia, adjustment disorders, somatoform disorders, alcohol-related problems and other psychiatric disorders are some of the mental health problems among police personnel.<sup>11</sup>

There are specific work setting variables that are linked to occupational stress and how they relate to intervention. They are role characteristics, job characteristics, interpersonal relationships, organizational structure and climate, human resource management practices, and physical qualities and technology.

Role ambiguity occurs when individual’s role is not clear, when there is a lack of clarity about the objective of the job or the scope of an individual’s responsibilities. Stress is experienced when an individual loses a sense of certainty and predictability in the work role. However, role

ambiguity is not only the experience of new employees. Even the veteran employees experience it in the case of major reorganization at the workplace.

Role overload occurs when an individual is not able to complete the work that is part of a particular job. The concept of 'too much work' can be divided into two categories. The first is quantitative role overload which occurs when the individual does not have enough time to complete all of the work that is required of a job. The other is qualitative role overload which occurs when employees do not believe they can perform adequately with the efforts or skills they possess.

One of the characteristics that influence occupational stress is the pace at which an individual must do work. Work pace is concerned with who or what controls the pace of work, particularly the amount of control an employee has over the work process.

The amount of repetition in work is another job characteristic that can influence occupational stress. The more repetitive a particular job, the more likely the employee can experience stress. Repetition has been defined as work in which a discrete set of task activities are repeated over and over in the same order without planned interruptions by other activities. A related term, monotony, has been used to describe the nature and impact of stimulation provided by work. Finally, a third related variable, boredom, is an ill-defined concept with strong emotional correlates.

Having to work at times other than the traditional 9am to 5pm day is another factor that might lead to occupational stress. Some occupations, such as hospitals and policing, involve shift work out of social necessity where there is a social need to have around-the clock coverage. Both mental efficiency and work motivation are directly and indirectly affected by shift work. Shift work has also been associated with psychosocial difficulties. These difficulties arise from the fact that our society is daytime oriented. Shift work might lead a worker to experience domestic pressure, spousal/familial difficulties and social isolation.

The relationship an employee has with a boss or supervisor can determine the amount of stress. Having 'considerate' leadership from supervisors leads employees to experience less job stress. The leadership style that will be most effective in helping employees deal with stress will vary across individuals and situations.

Still another potentially stressful relationship within the workplace is found in interactions with customers or clients. The potentially stressful nature of relationships with clients has been

examined in the light of occupational burnout. Service providers may become easy targets for job stress because of the strong feelings of personal responsibility they experience in helping others and because of the infrequent feedback about work success that they receive.

Organizational structure plays a significant role in determining occupational stress. In general, structures which allow individuals more decision making power produce less stress. Increased decision making enhances the meaningfulness an employee finds in work and provides the employee with a greater sense of autonomy, responsibility, certainty, control and ownership.

A related organizational variable associated with job stress involves the position or level an individual occupies within the organization. Employees who hold jobs at the low end of organizational hierarchy are more likely to experience stress.

The culture or climate has also been suggested to be a source of occupational stress. The 'culture' of an organization is defined by the beliefs and expectations shared by the organizational members. Office politics is said to be an important factor in a number of organizational practices, promotions or transfers, division of authority, etc.

Organizational Territory is the personal space or arena of activities within which an employee works. Working within one's own department or being transferred to a new department can play significant role in creating stress.

Certain stressors are associated with the mid-career development of individuals. Occupational locking-in is a situation when people feel boxed-in because they have no ability to move from their present job or when the only job for which they are qualified is the one they already hold. Stress results as individuals become aware of their advancing age and mortality, career/life goals that will not be attained, decreased potential for job mobility, etc.

If employees feel that they are not being adequately rewarded for performance, they are likely to encounter stress. Rewards for performance include the traditional monetary compensation and benefits in organizations. In addition, stress might result if employees feel they are not receiving adequate informal rewards. Such rewards might involve special treatment, privilege, recognition, perks.

Transitions in work can be stressful because of the changes an individual must make in work and in life outside of work. An individual might feel uncertain, helpless and afraid of unknown work demands.<sup>14</sup>

A number of studies, although insufficient and incomprehensive, have been undertaken in India investigating the problem of job stress in police work.

Clinton (1981) discussed stress and pointed out that there are four types of stressors, (1) External, (2) Internal, (3) Individual, and (4) Task oriented.<sup>6</sup>

Smith (1981) found characteristics of the police organization and its administration as a source of stress among police personnel.<sup>19</sup>

Bhaskar (1986) studied the relationship between job stress and personality variables among police officers and constables. She noted that a majority of the policemen are hard working and conscientious. However, their job leads to mental stagnation, psychological fatigue, growth of personality in one direction, dehumanizing working conditions, task pressures, lack of proper training and professional as well as personal obligations which produce anxiety and mild to severe stress.<sup>5</sup>

Pillai (1987) concluded that stresses produce not only physical and mental disorders but also adversely affect the normal and effective functioning of the police department.<sup>12</sup>

It is clear that mental health problems of police personnel have been one of the most neglected areas of research. While reviewing the literature on the police studies, Bhaskar (1986) observed that studies in India have focused either on police administration or on secondary aspects of the police system and in the process, issues pertaining to job stress among police personnel have been largely neglected.<sup>5</sup>

Increasing rate of negative incidences calls for urgent empirical research pertaining to police organization in order to take remedial measures. It is important to eliminate the sources of stress, to reduce the effects of stressors and to develop a police specific module to help the stressed police personnel.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The aim of the following study was to analyse occupational stress that is experienced by the Mumbai Police Force. The focal point was the individual police stations. The enquiry was based on both primary as well as secondary data.

The primary data was generated by carrying out survey of the police personnel of the top-order, middle-order and lower-order within a police station through a questionnaire method. The hierarchy within the police station is as follows:

1. Senior Police Inspector
2. Police Inspector
3. Assistant Police Inspector
4. Police Sub-Inspector
5. Assistant Police Sub-Inspector
6. Head Constable
7. Police Naik
8. Police Constable

The demarcation between the top, middle and lower levels was done in the following manner:  
Top level – 1, 2; Middle level – 3, 4, 5; Lower level – 6, 7, 8.

The sample size was 500 and stratified random sampling type was adopted to collect the primary data. The questionnaire was drafted in a suitable manner so as to elicit reliable responses which could then be subjected to analysis and interpretation using suitable statistical tools and techniques. The respondents were instructed beforehand not to mention their names, badge numbers and the area of posting while filling up the personal information.

The questionnaire was spread over three pages. The first page carried questions pertaining to personal details. The main crux of the questionnaire was divided into 2 sections. The first section required the respondents to identify the causes of stress. 30 probable causes of stress were listed in this section. The second section required them to identify the various symptoms of stress. 30 types of symptoms falling under four broad categories such as physiological, psychological, behavioural and organisational were listed in this section. (Appendix 1 – Copy of Questionnaire)

The questionnaire was made available in English as well as in Marathi to facilitate the valid responses from the target group. The purpose of the study was explained to the police personnel. Respondents willingly participated in the survey. Majority of them chose the Marathi questionnaire.

The questionnaire method was supplemented with the interview method. Personal interviews of an informal nature were conducted in order to elicit additional but vital information. Interviewing the respondents in an informal manner allowed them to open up and facilitated in acquiring in-depth information which may have not been covered in the questionnaire. The element of informality was maintained to put the respondents at ease. Majority of the times the police personnel chose to open up on their own. This helped in making the data as much comprehensive as possible in nature. We shall take up these questions later on in the discussion section.

Under the proposed study, I covered the area from CST to Mulund in Mumbai. The police personnel belonging to different police stations within the said area were randomly chosen as respondents. The collected data was tabulated and analysed using statistical tools. such as Frequency Table, Mean Table, One-way Anova and Group T-Test.

The secondary data was drawn from books and research articles.



## **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

As mentioned in the research design, questionnaire method was adopted as the primary method to collect data. The sample size was pre-decided as 500. Accordingly, 500 questionnaires duly filled up were collected as data. This data was disproportionately distributed between the top, middle and lower levels of policemen. The top level comprised 10%, the middle level comprised 30% and the lower level comprised 60% of the data.

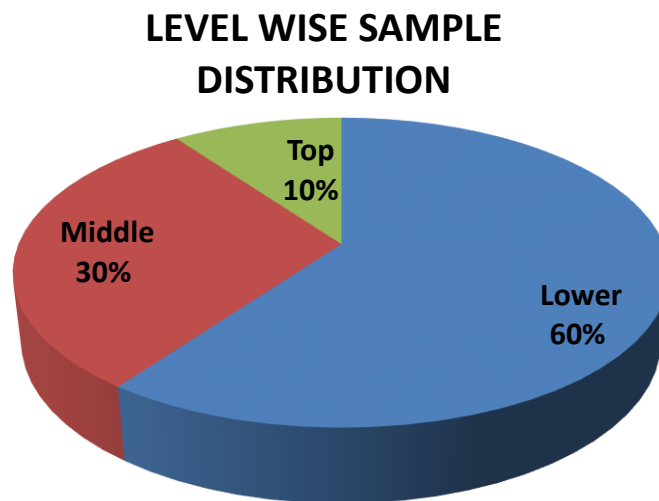


Chart 1

The questionnaire required the respondents to furnish certain personal details pertaining to their educational qualifications, age, marital status, employed/unemployed spouse, type of family, number of children, earning members, type of accommodation, duration of service, designation and caste. The pie charts given below depict an overview of some of the personal details of the sample size.

## Age wise Distribution

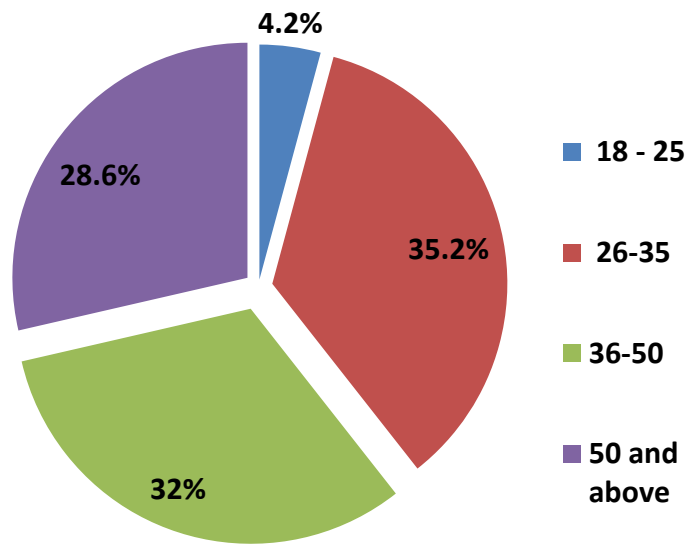


Chart 2

## MARITAL STATUS

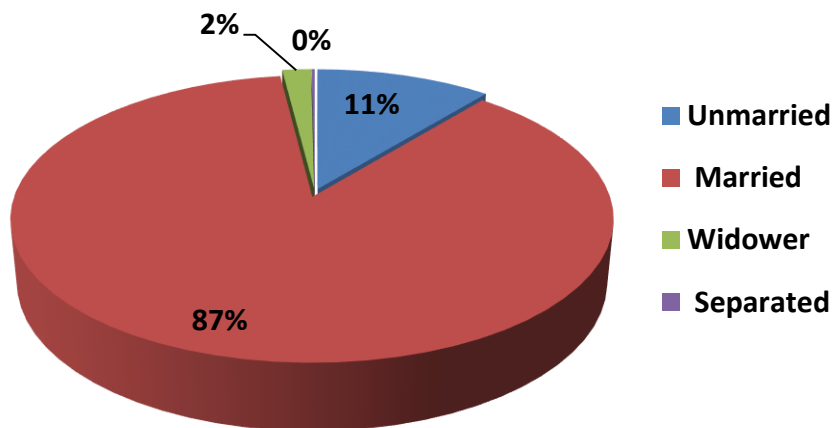


Chart 3

## SPOUSE WORKING STATUS

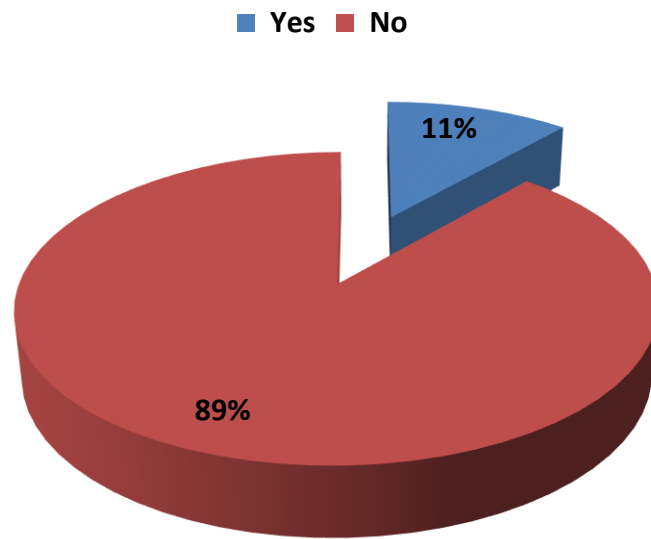


Chart 4

## TYPE OF FAMILY

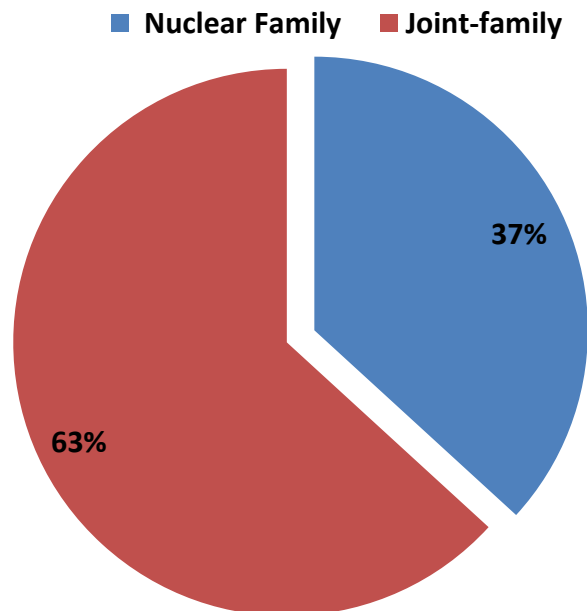


Chart 5

### Type of House

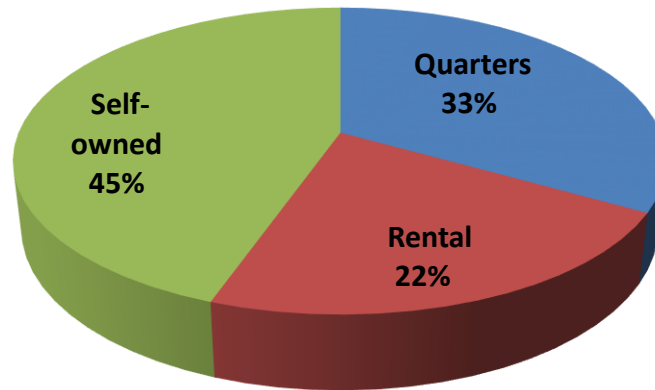


Chart 6

### DURATION OF SERVICE IN YEARS

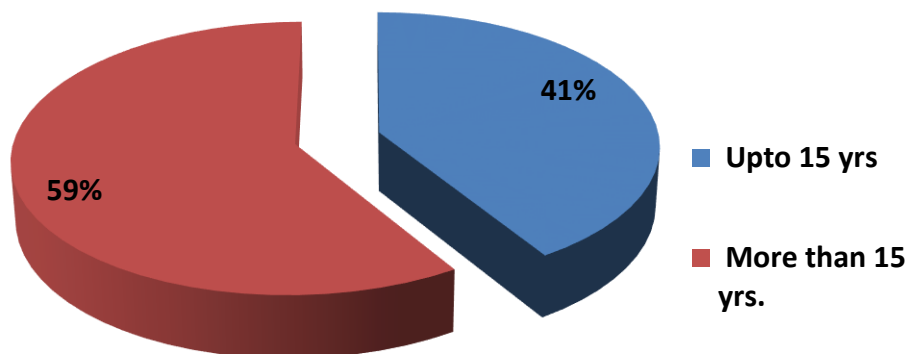


Chart 7

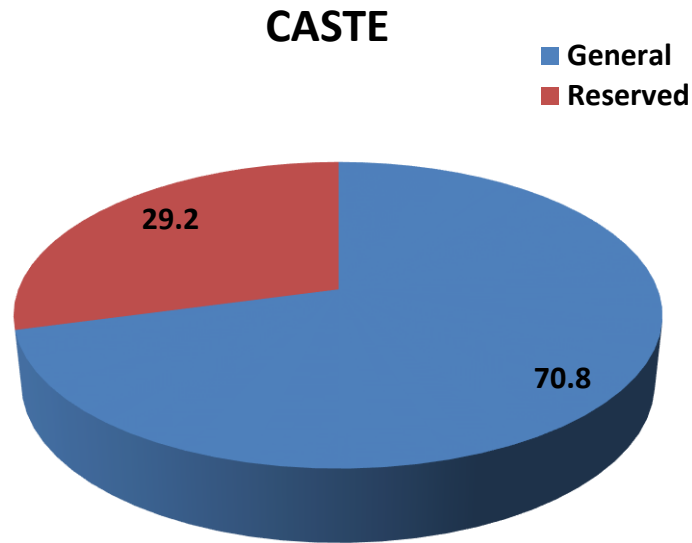


Chart 8

Section A of the questionnaire focused on the probable factors and situations that cause stress. 30 items were included in this section. In order to facilitate statistical analysis, the items were classified into 5 broad categories. Category 1 was titled as 'Job Profile'. It included 8 items namely Q1, Q2, Q5, Q11, Q19, Q20, Q21 & Q30. Category 2 was titled as 'Career Growth'. It included 3 items namely Q8, Q9 & Q10. Category 3 was titled as 'Organisational'. It included 7 items namely Q3, Q7, Q12, Q13, Q15, Q16 & Q17. Category 4 was titled as 'Personal'. It included 7 items namely Q4, Q6, Q14, Q18, Q22, Q23 & Q24. Category 5 was titled as 'Societal'. It included 5 items namely Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28 & Q29.

Each of the 30 items had 4 options out of which the respondents had to choose any 1 option. The range of scoring was between minimum of 1 and maximum of 4. The scoring pattern was as follows: Option 1 - Score 4, Option 2 - Score 3, Option 3 – Score 2, Option 4 – Score 1.

Section B of the questionnaire was pertaining to the effects of occupational stress. There were 30 items which, at the outset of the study, were classified into 4 broad categories. Category 1 was related to the 'Physiological Effects'. It included 7 items. Category 2 was related to the 'Psychological Effects'. It included 10 items. Category 3 was related to the 'Behavioural

Effects'. It included 8 items. Category 4 was related to the 'Organisational Effects'. It included 5 items.

The response method was similar whereby the respondents had to choose any 1 option out of the 4 available options. The range and the scoring pattern too were similar to that of section A.

The data collected was classified, coded and tabulated. In addition, descriptive statistics were used for analysis purpose. Statistical tools such as Frequency Table, Mean Table, One-way Anova and Group T-Test were used. The analysis was done using SPSS version 12.0.

As per the statistical analysis carried out, following are the significant findings and their subsequent interpretations:

#### **I. Overall Stress:**

The overall stress experienced by the respondents was on the higher side. On the scale of 1 to 4, the mean stress level was 2.9093 which is as high as 73%.

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Average Stress	500	1.00	4.00	<b>2.9093</b>

Table 1

An overall high mean stress level depicted in the analysis of the sample implies that policing is one of the most stressful occupations.

Apart from the overall stress, the main objective of this research study was to understand the following:

1. The level of stress pertaining to the hierarchy within the police station namely the top, middle and lower levels.
2. The level of stress pertaining to the duration of service namely upto 15 years and more than 15 years.

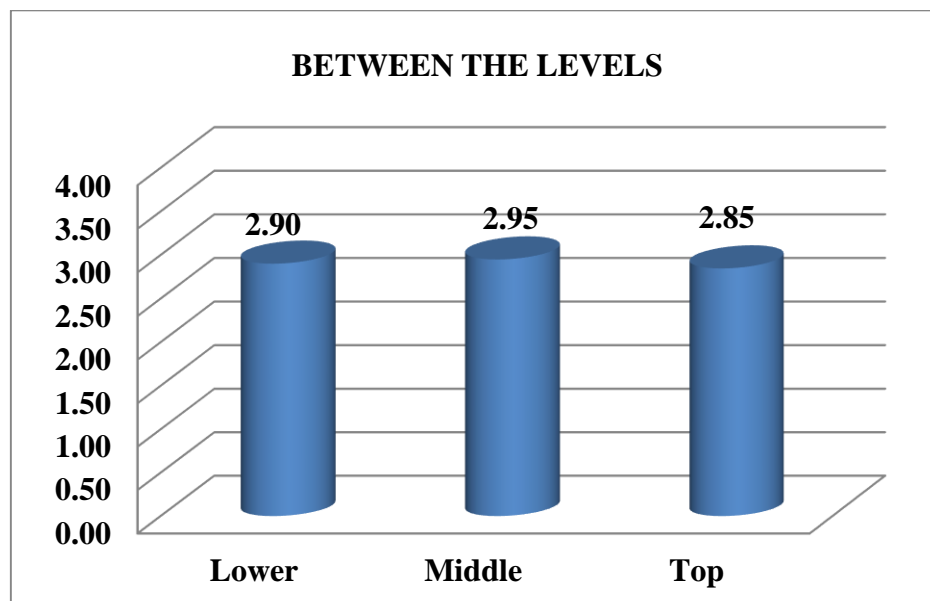
The stress level pertaining to these 2 factors was to be understood through the causes and effects of stress. Hence various permutation – combination have been used to analyse the data statistically.

## II. Between the Levels:

The sample was divided into 3 broad categories depending upon the hierarchy in the police station. These 3 categories were the top level, middle level and lower level. The mean stress level of each of these 3 levels was calculated. It was noted to be on the higher side. However the stress level of the middle level was higher as compared to the top and lower levels.

Levels	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lower	300	2.9003	.60664
Middle	150	<b>2.9484</b>	.54901
Top	50	2.8460	.37282
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2.9093</b>	<b>.57015</b>

Table 2



Graph 1

The mean difference between the middle and top levels is significantly higher as compared to the mean difference between the lower and middle levels.

#### A. Between the Levels – Causes:

The comparative means of between the levels pertaining to the 5 broad categories of causes of stress were also calculated statistically. These 5 categories were Job Profile, Career Growth, Organisational, Personal and Societal.

<b>Causes</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Job Profile</b>	Lower	300	3.0392
	Middle	150	<b>3.1442</b>
	Top	50	2.8925
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>3.0560</b>
<b>Career Growth</b>	Lower	300	2.8967
	Middle	150	2.9089
	Top	50	<b>3.1533</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2.9260</b>
<b>Organizational</b>	Lower	300	2.7433
	Middle	150	<b>2.8667</b>
	Top	50	2.7457
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2.7806</b>
<b>Personal</b>	Lower	300	<b>2.7738</b>
	Middle	150	2.7314
	Top	50	2.6743
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2.7511</b>
<b>Societal</b>	Lower	300	<b>3.0773</b>
	Middle	150	<b>3.0773</b>
	Top	50	2.9680
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>3.0664</b>

Table 3

The category of ‘Job Profile’ indicates that the middle level has more amount of stress. (Refer to Q1, Q2, Q5, Q11, Q19, Q20, Q21 & Q30 – Section A)

<b>Causes</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Job Profile</b>	Lower	300	3.0392	<b>.023*</b>
	Middle	150	<b>3.1442</b>	
	Top	50	2.8925	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>3.0560</b>	

Table 4

\*Significance at 0.05 level

There is significant difference within the 3 levels at .02 level.



The category of ‘Career Growth’ indicates that the top level has more amount of stress.  
(Refer to Q8, Q9 & Q10 – Section A)

<b>Causes</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Career Growth</b>	Lower	300	2.8967	.128
	Middle	150	2.9089	
	Top	50	<b>3.1533</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2.9260</b>	

Table 5

The category of ‘Organisational’ indicates that the middle level has more amount of stress. (Refer to Q3, Q7, Q12, Q13, Q15, Q16 & Q17 – Section A)

<b>Causes</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Organizational</b>	Lower	300	2.7433	.180
	Middle	150	<b>2.8667</b>	
	Top	50	2.7457	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2.7806</b>	

Table 6

The category of ‘Personal’ indicates that the lower level has more amount of stress.  
(Refer to Q4, Q6, Q14, Q18, Q22, Q23 & Q24 – Section A)

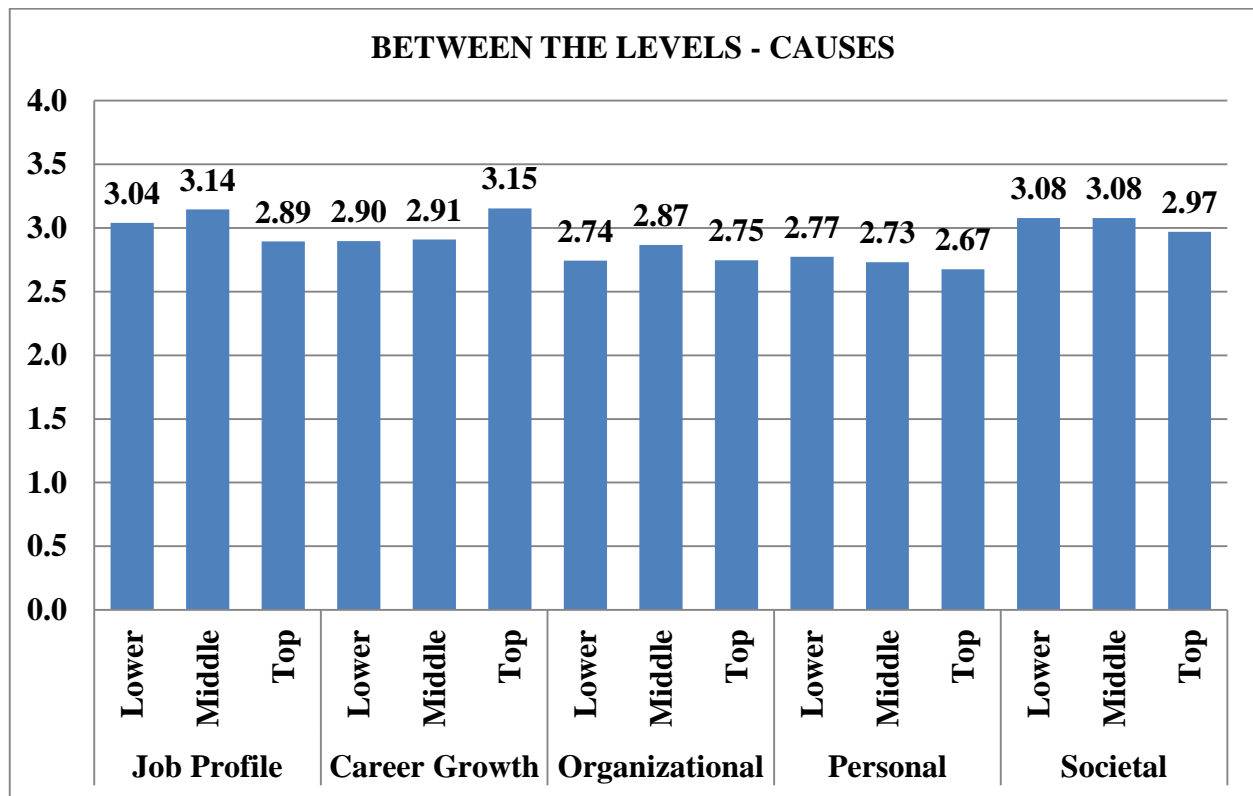
<b>Causes</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Personal</b>	Lower	300	<b>2.7738</b>	.513
	Middle	150	2.7314	
	Top	50	2.6743	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>2.7511</b>	

Table 7

The category of ‘Societal’ indicates that both the middle and lower levels have same and more amount of stress. (Refer to Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28 & Q29 – Section A)

Causes	Levels	N	Mean	Sig.
<b>Societal</b>	Lower	300	<b>3.0773</b>	.566
	Middle	150	<b>3.0773</b>	
	Top	50	2.9680	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>3.0664</b>	

Table 8



Graph 2

### **B. Between the Levels – Effects:**

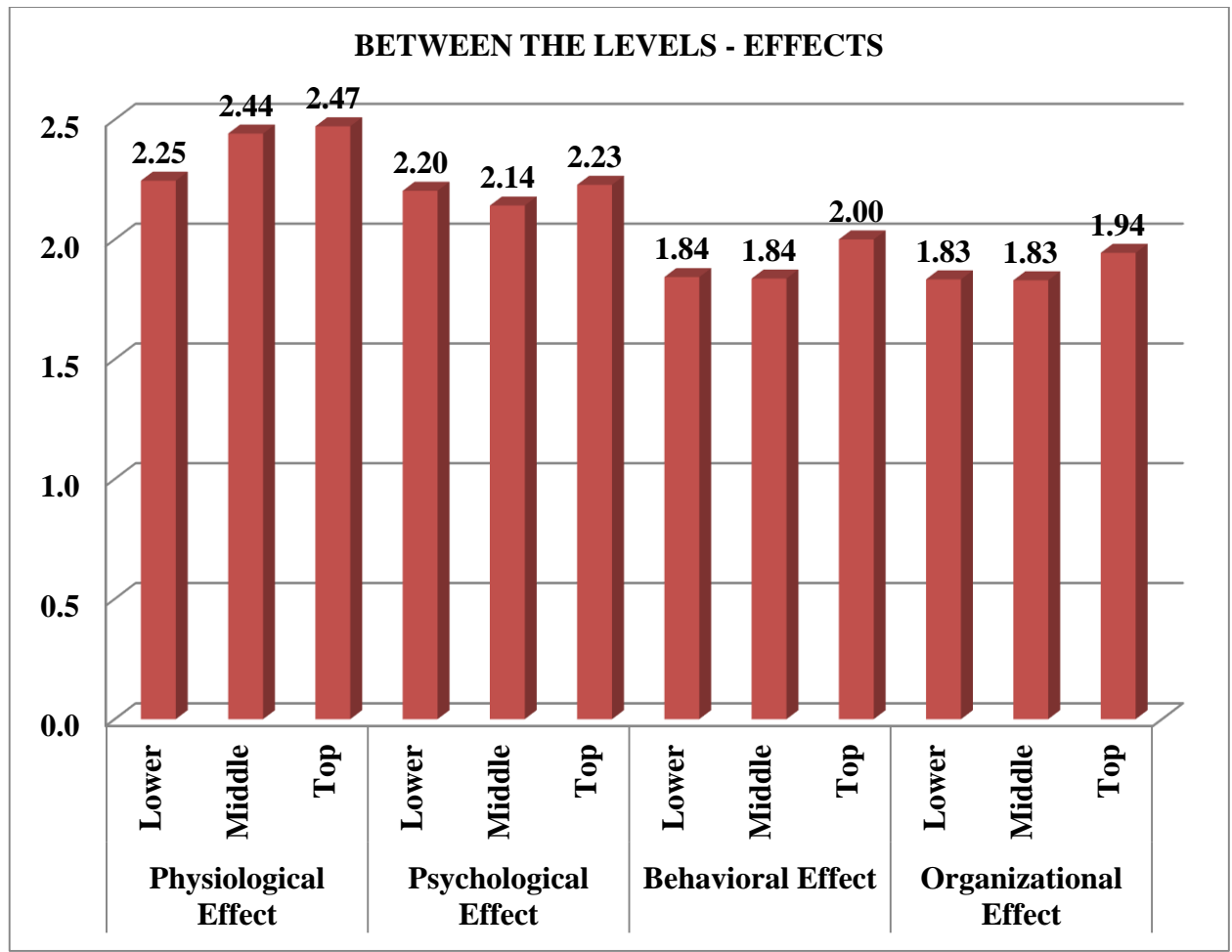
Similarly, the comparative means of between the levels pertaining to the 4 broad categories of effects of stress were also calculated statistically. These 4 categories were Physiological Effects, Psychological Effects, Behavioural Effects and Organisational Effects.

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Physiological Effects</b>	Lower	297	2.2453	<b>.003**</b>
	Middle	150	2.4419	
	Top	49	<b>2.4723</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>2.3272</b>	
<b>Psychological Effects</b>	Lower	299	2.2030	.515
	Middle	145	2.1414	
	Top	50	<b>2.2280</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>2.1874</b>	
<b>Behavioral Effects</b>	Lower	299	1.8428	.098
	Middle	147	1.8367	
	Top	50	<b>2.0000</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>496</b>	<b>1.8569</b>	
<b>Organizational Effects</b>	Lower	299	1.8334	.402
	Middle	150	1.8293	
	Top	50	<b>1.9440</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>1.8433</b>	

Table 9

\*\*There is significant difference within the 3 levels at 0.00 level

All the 4 categories of effects indicate that the top level has marginally more amount of stress.



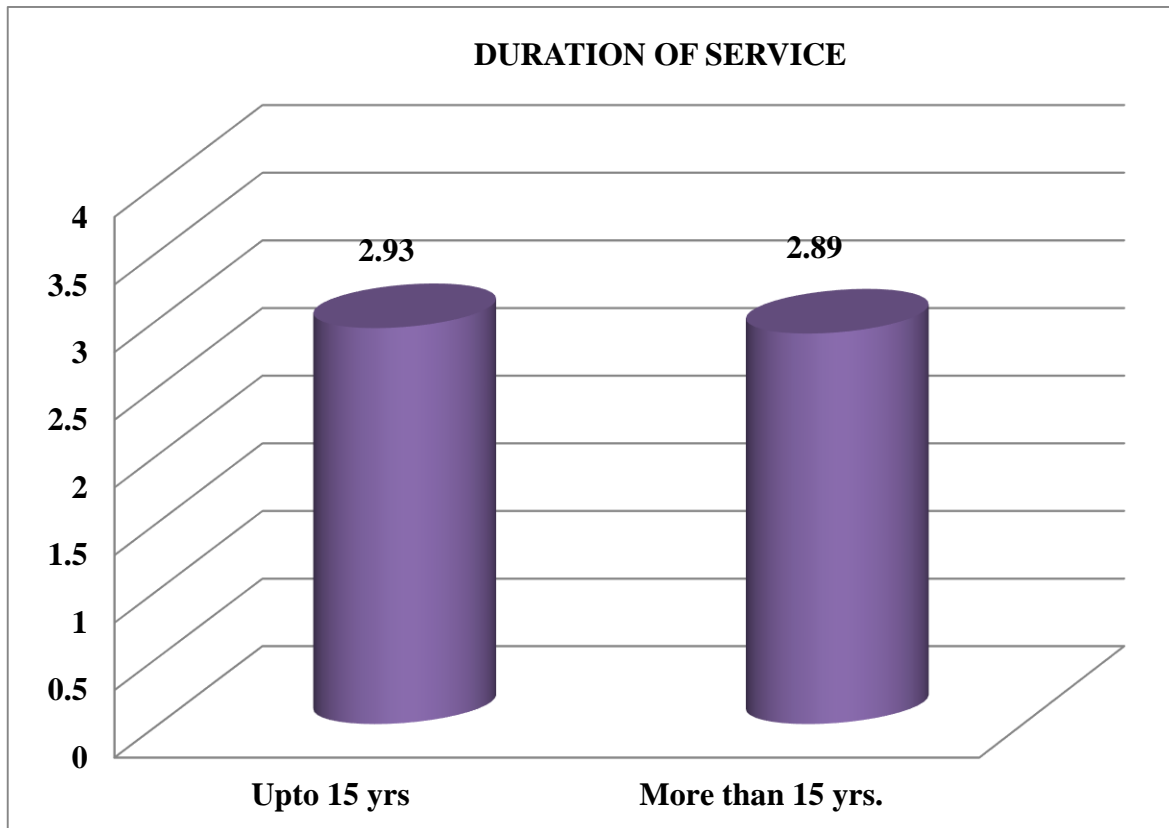
Graph 3

### **III. Duration of Service:**

The sample was also divided on the basis of duration of service. Subsequently 2 broad categories of the police personnel were created namely upto 15 years of service and more than 15 years of service. The mean stress level of each of these 2 categories was calculated which was again noted to be on the higher side. However the stress level of police personnel having service upto 15 years was slightly more than those having service of more than 15 years.

<b>Duration of Service in Years</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Up to 15 Yrs</b>	205	<b>2.93</b>	0.46
<b>More than 15 Yrs.</b>	295	2.89	0.64

Table 10



Graph 4

#### **A. Duration of Service – Causes:**

The comparative means of duration of service upto 15 years and more than 15 years pertaining to the 5 broad categories of causes were also calculated. The following table indicates the mean of each of the 5 categories of causes for duration of service.

<b>Causes</b>	<b>Duration of Service</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Job Profile</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>3.1335</b>
	More than 15 yrs.	295	3.0021
<b>Career Growth</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	2.8585
	More than 15 yrs.	295	<b>2.9729</b>
<b>Organisational</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>2.7833</b>
	More than 15 yrs.	295	2.7787
<b>Personal</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>2.7861</b>
	More than 15 yrs.	295	2.7269
<b>Societal</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>3.0820</b>
	More than 15 yrs.	295	3.0556

Table 11

The category of ‘Job Profile’ indicates that police personnel having duration of service upto 15 years have more stress. (Refer to Q1, Q2, Q5, Q11, Q19, Q20, Q21 & Q30 – Section A)

<b>Causes</b>	<b>Duration of Service</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
<b>Job Profile</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>3.1335</b>	<b>.014*</b>
	More than 15 yrs.	295	3.0021	

Table 12

\*Significance at 0.01 level

There is significance difference within the 2 categories at 0.01 level.

The category of ‘Career Growth’ indicates that police personnel having duration of service more than 15 years have more amount of stress. (Refer to Q8, Q9 & Q10 – Section A)

Causes	Duration of Service	N	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Career Growth	Upto 15 yrs	205	2.8585	.134
	More than 15 yrs.	295	<b>2.9729</b>	

Table 13

The category of 'Organisational' indicates that police personnel having duration of service upto 15 years have more amount of stress. (Refer to Q3, Q7, Q12, Q13, Q15, Q16 & Q17 – Section A)

Causes	Duration of Service	N	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Organisational	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>2.7833</b>	.941
	More than 15 yrs.	295	2.7787	

Table 14

The category of 'Personal' indicates that police personnel having duration of service upto 15 years have marginally more amount of stress. (Refer to Q4, Q6, Q14, Q18, Q22, Q23 & Q24 – Section A)

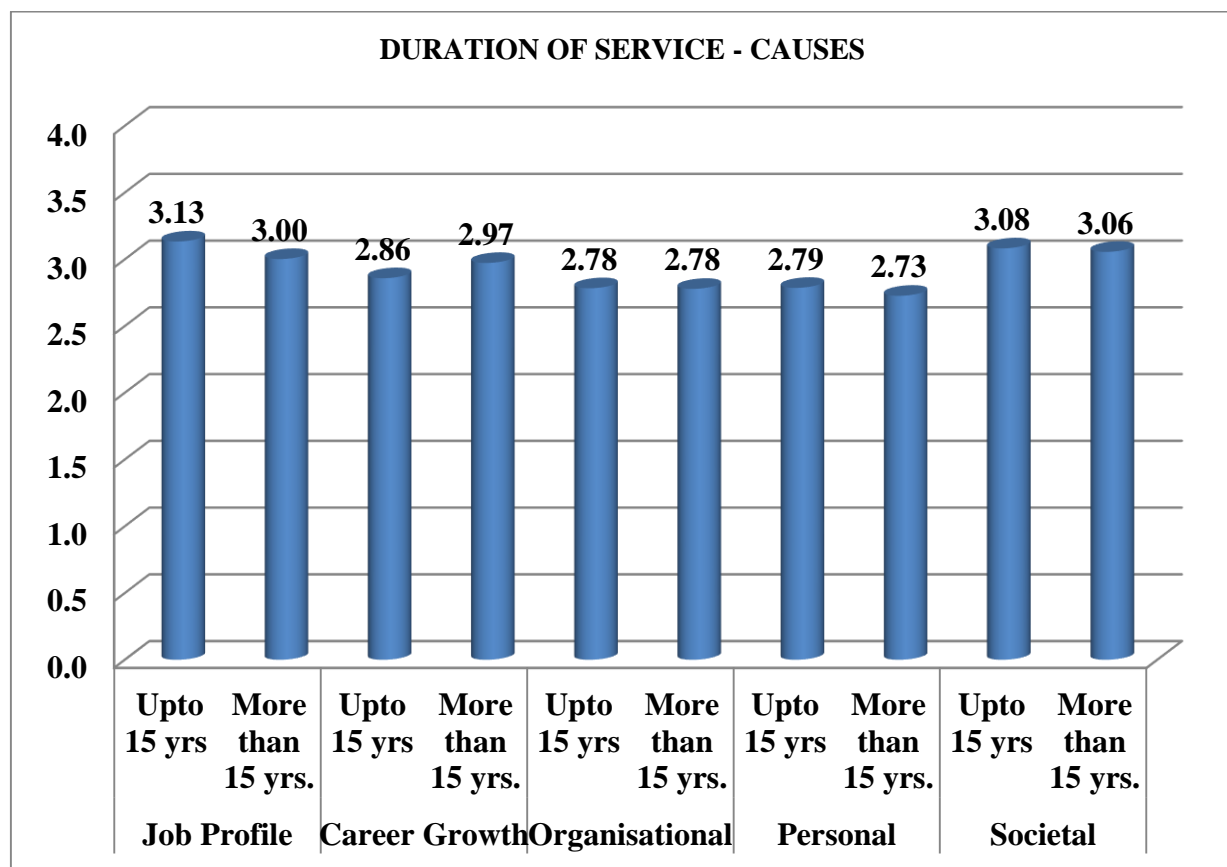
Causes	Duration of Service	N	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Personal	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>2.7861</b>	.291
	More than 15 yrs.	295	2.7269	

Table 15

The category of 'Societal' indicates that police personnel having duration of service upto 15 years have marginally more amount of stress. (Refer to Q25, Q26, Q27, Q28 & Q29 – Section A)

Causes	Duration of Service	N	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Societal	Upto 15 yrs	205	3.0820	.673
	More than 15 yrs.	295	3.0556	

Table 16



Graph 5

#### **B. Duration of Service – Effects:**

Similarly, the comparative means of duration of service upto 15 years and more than 15 years pertaining to the 4 broad categories of effects were also calculated. The following table indicates the mean of each of the 4 categories of effects for duration of service.



<b>Effects</b>	<b>Duration of Service</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
<b>Physiological Effects</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	2.1821
	More than 15 yrs.	295	<b>2.4286</b>
<b>Psychological Effects</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	2.1678
	More than 15 yrs.	295	<b>2.2007</b>
<b>Behavioral Effects</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>1.8608</b>
	More than 15 yrs.	295	1.8542
<b>Organizational Effects</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>1.8693</b>
	More than 15 yrs.	295	1.8252

Table 17

The category of physiological effects indicates significantly more amount of stress for police personnel having duration of service more than 15 years.

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Duration of Service</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
<b>Physiological Effects</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	2.1821	<b>.000**</b>
	More than 15 yrs.	295	<b>2.4286</b>	

Table 18

\*\*Significance at 0.00 level

There is significance difference within the 2 categories at 0.00 level.

The category of psychological effects indicates more amount of stress for police personnel having duration of service more than 15 years.

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Duration of Service</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
<b>Psychological Effects</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	2.1678	.544
	More than 15 yrs.	295	<b>2.2007</b>	

Table 19

The category of behavioural effects indicates more amount of stress for police personnel having duration of service upto 15 years.

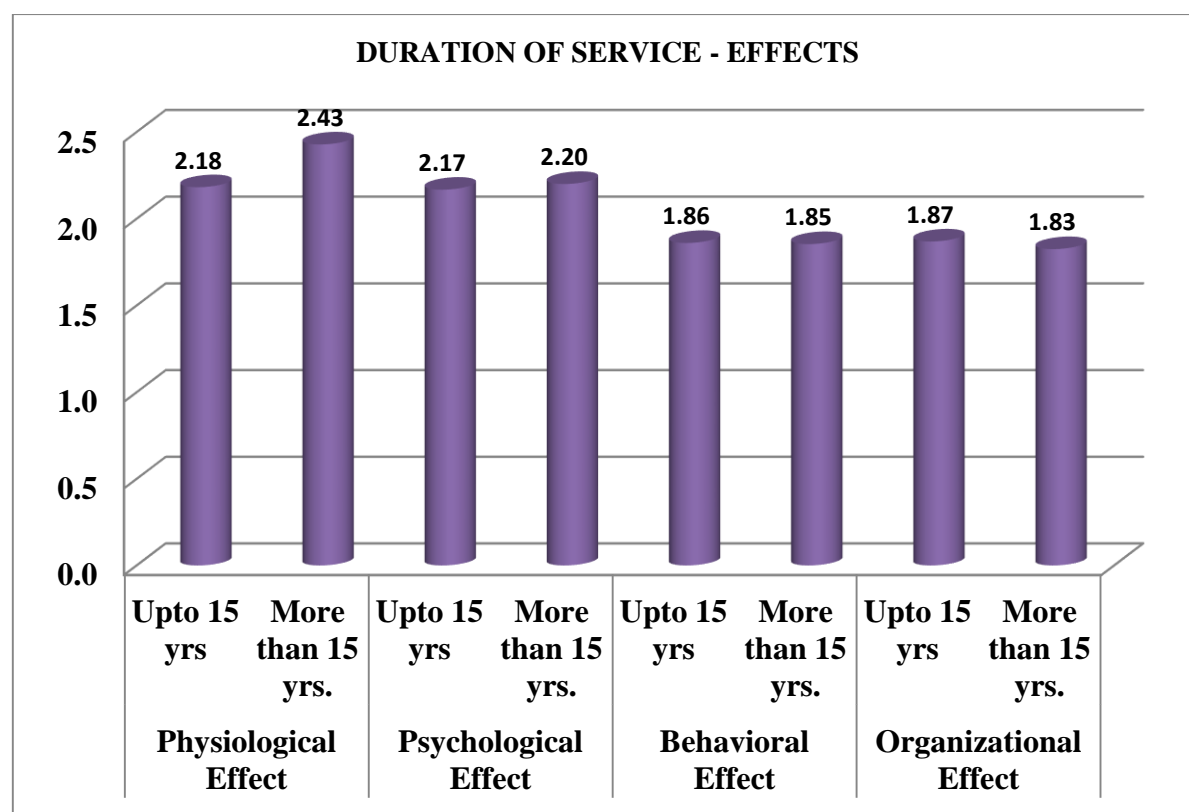
Effects	Duration of Service	N	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Behavioral Effects</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>1.8608</b>	.885
	More than 15 yrs.	295	1.8542	

Table 20

The category of organisational effects indicates more amount of stress for police personnel having duration of service upto 15 years.

Effects	Duration of Service	N	Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
<b>Organizational Effects</b>	Upto 15 yrs	205	<b>1.8693</b>	.384
	More than 15 yrs.	295	1.8252	

Table 21



Graph 6

#### IV. Significant aspects related to causes of stress:

##### Overview:

A comparison of the means of the 5 categories of causes indicates that the societal causes are slightly more stressful as compared to the other categories. It implies that Q25 to Q29 in Section A of the questionnaire create more stress.

Causes	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Job Profile	500	1.00	4.00	3.0560
Career Growth	500	1.00	4.00	2.9260
Organisational	500	1.00	4.00	2.7806
Personal	500	1.00	4.00	2.7511
Societal	500	1.00	4.00	<b>3.0664</b>

Table 22

#### V. Significant aspects related to effects of stress:

##### Overview:

A comparison of the means of the 4 categories of effects indicates that the physiological effects are more pronounced as compared to the other categories.

Effects	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Physiological Effects	500	1.00	4.00	<b>2.3272</b>
Psychological Effects	500	1.00	4.00	2.1874
Behavioural Effects	500	1.00	4.00	1.8569
Organisational Effects	500	1.00	4.00	1.8433

Table 23

#### VI. Interpretation of Frequency Table:

Out of the 30 causes listed in Section A, 17 were found to be rated as 'Very Stressful' by the respondents. It implies that more than 50% of the listed causes created a very significant amount of stress for them.

The cumulative percentage of 'Very Stressful' and 'Moderately Stressful' responses to some of the causes of stress depict very high levels of stress. 19 causes created significant amount of stress.

As the 30 causes have been classified into 5 broad categories, the category-wise and question-wise analysis is as follows:

### Category 1 – Job Profile

#### Q1, Q2, Q20, Q21 & Q30

#### AQ1 Shift work

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	310	62.0	62.0
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	133	26.6	<b>88.6</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	44	8.8	97.4
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	13	2.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 24a

88.6% signifies very high amount of stress.

#### AQ2 Long working hours

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	348	69.6	69.6
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	102	20.4	<b>90.0</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	32	6.4	96.4
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	18	3.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 24b

90% signifies very high amount of stress.

**AQ20 Having your colleague killed in the line of duty**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	256	51.2	51.2
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	165	33.0	<b>84.2</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	37	7.4	91.6
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	42	8.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 24c

84.2% signifies very high amount of stress.

**AQ21 Responsibility of protecting the lives of others**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	241	48.2	48.2
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	165	33.0	<b>81.2</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	51	10.2	91.4
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	43	8.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 24d

81.2% signifies very high amount of stress.

**AQ30 Informing relatives of sudden deaths/fatal accidents**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	217	43.4	43.4
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	168	33.6	<b>77.0</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	79	15.8	92.8
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	36	7.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 24e

77% signifies very high amount of stress.

## Category 2 – Career Growth

### Q8, Q9 & Q10

#### AQ8 Delayed promotions

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	212	42.4	42.4
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	118	23.6	<b>66.0</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	93	18.6	84.6
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	77	15.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 25a

66% signifies high amount of stress.

#### AQ9 Inadequate salary

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	238	47.6	47.6
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	142	28.4	<b>76.0</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	74	14.8	90.8
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	46	9.2	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 25b

76% signifies very high amount of stress.

#### AQ10 Restricted career advancement

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	112	22.4	22.4
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	188	37.6	<b>60.0</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	140	28.0	88.0
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	60	12.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 25c

60% signifies moderately high amount of stress.

### Category 3 – Organisational

#### Q3, Q7, Q13 & Q16

##### AQ3 Working conditions

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	116	23.2	23.2
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	193	38.6	<b>61.8</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	142	28.4	90.2
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	49	9.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 26a

61.8% signifies moderately high amount of stress.

##### AQ7 Non-grant of leave on time

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	311	62.2	62.2
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	113	22.6	<b>84.8</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	44	8.8	93.6
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	32	6.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 26b

84.8% signifies very high amount of stress.

##### AQ13 Lack of support by department/superiors

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	153	30.6	30.6
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	159	31.8	<b>62.4</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	118	23.6	86.0
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	70	14.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 26c

62.4% signifies moderately high amount of stress.

### AQ16 Organizational and management pressures

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	177	35.4	35.4
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	147	29.4	<b>64.8</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	108	21.6	86.4
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	68	13.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 26d

64.8% signifies moderately high amount of stress.

### Category 4 – Personal

#### Q6, Q23 & Q24

### AQ6 Job pressures

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	240	48.0	48.0
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	163	32.6	<b>80.6</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	58	11.6	92.2
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	39	7.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 27a

80.6% signifies very high amount of stress.

### AQ23 Physical danger to family

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	272	54.4	54.4
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	132	26.4	<b>80.8</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	44	8.8	89.6
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	52	10.4	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 27b

80.8% signifies very high amount of stress.



#### AQ24 Disruption of family time

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	315	63.0	63.0
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	110	22.0	<b>85.0</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	40	8.0	93.0
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	35	7.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 27c

85% signifies very high amount of stress.

#### Category 5 – Societal

#### Q25, Q27, Q28 & Q29

#### Q25 Lack of support and negative attitudes by the society

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	291	58.2	58.2
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	116	23.2	<b>81.4</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	58	11.6	93.0
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	35	7.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 28a

81.4% signifies very high amount of stress.

#### AQ27 Unfavourable news accounts involving policemen

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	200	40.0	40.0
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	164	32.8	<b>72.8</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	106	21.2	94.0
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	30	6.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 28b

72.8% signifies high amount of stress.

### AQ28 Suicides by policemen

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	321	64.2	64.2
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	119	23.8	<b>88.0</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	26	5.2	93.2
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	34	6.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 28c

88% signifies very amount of stress.

### AQ29 Criminal/sexual violence against children

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Very stressful</b>	302	60.4	60.4
<b>Moderately stressful</b>	132	26.4	<b>86.8</b>
<b>Least stressful</b>	38	7.6	94.4
<b>Not at all stressful</b>	28	5.6	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 28d

86.8% signifies very high amount of stress.

A mention must be made of Q12 belonging to Category 3 which was almost on the fringe of high percent stress – (59.6%).

Only Q26 belonging to Category 5 was rated as not at all stressful. This can be attributed to the fact that a majority of the sample size belonged to the open caste.

## **DISCUSSION**

On the basis of the statistical analysis and interpretation carried out, I would like to draw attention to certain aspects.

- 1) The statistical analysis and interpretation have reinforced the hypotheses and proved them without doubt. A variety of permutations-combinations were used to understand the intricacies of the data. A clear picture has emerged pertaining to the causes and effects of stress.
- 2) The police personnel have been working under severe and chronic stressful situations. A high mean level of stress can have very serious repercussions. The most manifest ones are the physiological and psychological health of the police personnel being at stake, the brunt of which is borne by the family. However the latent repercussions are equally grave. Under stress, they may be at a greater risk of committing errors, overreacting and being brutal. This can compromise the public safety and bring them under scrutiny for all the wrong reasons. The point in reference is the incidences of third degree torture and custodial deaths in police stations as reported in the media. These instances seem to be a fall-out of the high level of stress.
- 3) All the 3 levels experience high amount of stress with the middle level experiencing it more than the top and lower levels. Comparative high level of stress experienced by the middle level brings to fore another important dimension of policing. The middle level gets sandwiched between the top and the lower levels. Moreover, majority of the police personnel in the sample belonging to the middle levels were younger in age and having less duration of service in comparison to top and lower levels. As a result, adapting to the demanding nature of the job must have been stressful.
- 4) The category of 'Job Profile' forms the crux of the policing job. It entails the typical tasks that the police personnel are required to perform. The middle level experiences more amount of stress in this category. This again substantiates the fact that the respondents of the middle order have comparatively less exposure to policing in terms of age and experience.

- 5) An interesting outcome has been noted through the statistical analysis pertaining to the effects of stress experienced by the 3 levels. The physiological and the psychological effects are more pronounced as compared to the behavioural and organizational effects. Moreover, all the 4 categories of effects indicate that the top level has marginally more amount of stress. The present research study was restricted to understanding the stress levels of police personnel within the police stations. The top level within the police station comprised of Senior Police Inspectors (Sr. P.I) and Police Inspectors (P.I). However in the larger picture of hierarchy within the police force, they form the middle level. As a result, they get caught between the top order police officers on one hand and their subordinates at the police station who form the lower order on the other hand. These middle level officers receive orders from their superiors which are to be enforced on the lower levels. The lower level police personnel may have grievances which have to be looked into by the Sr. P.I and the P.I within the police station as the top officers such as the DCPs and the ACPs are not into picture. Thus the daily interactions within the police stations can become a major source of stress.
- 6) The police personnel having duration of service upto 15 years experience slightly more amount of stress. Similarly the amount of stress pertaining to the category of job profile is more significant. This implies a slightly lesser coping ability on their part to adjust with the demands of the job.
- 7) The physiological effects of stress are found to be more significant for the police personnel having duration of service more than 15 years. Similarly, the impact of the psychological effects is also slightly more than those having duration of service upto 15 years. This implies that the age factor does play an important role. As the age increases, the impact of stress becomes more apparent through nagging physical and mental health issues.
- 8) An overview pertaining to causes indicates that the category of societal factors is more stressful as compared to the other categories. This indicates that the complacent and negative attitudes of the society towards the police force play a very strong role in determining the amount of stress. The police personnel put in long working hours to directly serve the society. They have to compromise on their family life, important

events and even special occasions or festivals to give their 100% and more to the job. Hence a complacent or indifferent attitude of the society can prove to be extremely stressful.

- 9) An overview pertaining to effects indicates that the physiological effects are more pronounced as compared to the other categories of effects. Factors such long working hours, shift work, working conditions, etc. are bound to affect the health of the police personnel. They experience unrealistic expectations and demands from the society which contributes strongly to stress and subsequently to health problems.
- 10) The statistical analysis of the data through a frequency table has brought to fore very grave aspects related to the causes of stress. 8 items were listed in the category of 'Job Profile'. Out of these, 5 items created very high amount of stress. 3 items were listed in the category of 'Career Growth'. All of them created significant stress ranging from moderately high to high and very high amount of stress. 7 items were listed in the category of 'Organisational'. Out of these, 4 items created significant stress ranging from moderately high and very high amount of stress. 7 items were listed in the category of 'Personal'. Out of these, 3 items created very high amount of stress. 5 items were listed in the category of 'Societal'. Out of these, 4 items created significant stress ranging from high to very high amount of stress. This analysis goes on to indicate that 19 out of the 30 causes were rated to be significantly stressful by the respondents.
- 11) A huge majority (89%) of the respondents had spouses who were not employed. 33% of the respondents lived in police quarters and 22% lived in rental houses. It means 55% did not own a house. These factors are significant as they portray the financial constraints the police personnel face. Hence they also play an important role in intensifying the already existent stress. This goes on to show that just as occupational stress spills over in the personal domain, personal stress also adds up to the occupational stress.

Apart from responding to the structured questionnaire, some of the respondents also interacted in an informal manner to share certain significant opinions and viewpoints.

- 1) Majority of the respondents agreed unconditionally that stress was an integral part of their lives. This stress was generated by their occupation and it automatically spilled

over in their personal lives. Unfortunately, they had no control to change the scenario. As a result, professionally as well as personally they were in a no-win situation.

- 2) Though most of them appreciated the attempt made by me to tap the nature and sources of occupational stress and co-operated by filling up the questionnaire as well as unwinding about their personal experiences in the police force, they also mentioned very categorically that no constructive or positive change was possible. Few police personnel, though acknowledged my attempt, refused to respond. They were of the opinion that this was a futile exercise on my part.
- 3) A common reason cited by the respondents as well as the non-respondents was the unwillingness on the part of the Government to understand their plight and to introduce remedial measures. The authorities were well aware of the problems but they chose to turn a blind eye. The system was very rigid and they had to adjust with it. This lacuna in the system was projected very emphatically by the respondents. They felt that the situation will not change as long as the system continues.
- 4) Since the police are looked upon as protectors of law and order, the instance of continual and chronic occupational stress reflects a gravely disturbing situation. In order to shoulder the vast responsibility, it goes without saying that the police need to be in a state of physical and mental well-being. However the present job profile provided them with little or no opportunity to be so.
- 5) A single-most widely stated stressor was long working hours which denied them any quality time for themselves as well as for their families. Many voiced the opinion that relatively lesser salary was not always a major stressor. Increasing salaries would not really help as they may have more money at their disposal to spend but ironically still not have the time to enjoy the money.
- 6) Another very significant point of view expressed was regarding indefinitely delayed promotions. Some of the police personnel were serving the force for close to 20 years without a single promotion. Few others had 30-35 years of service to their credit with just a singular promotion. This scenario was very de-motivating not just for the

concerned policemen but equally for their colleagues who visualized the same future for themselves. As a result, the general morale was very less.

- 7) The present study brought to the fore the lacuna in the stress-management techniques adopted by the police force for its personnel. Many of the respondents were wary of these techniques as they really did not minimize the stress. In fact, during the informal interview with the respondents and the non-respondents, it was revealed how the stress management sessions forced them to stay back after long duty hours when all they wanted was to return home. Thus such experiences contributed in increasing stress.
- 8) The police personnel spoke about the lack of any platform to voice their grievances. Their dissatisfaction had to be invariably curtailed due to issues of protocol and disciplinary actions. This created a sense of helplessness and hopelessness.
- 9) A senior police officer spoke about the concept of 'police caste'. According to him, the police force was like a caste group, bound by rigid rules and regulations and fenced by typical attitudes and behavior patterns. Hence the outside world is unable to understand their problems. Only police personnel who have been through the nitty-gritty of this job can fathom the real situation.
- 10) However a contrasting viewpoint was also presented by some respondents. The topmost police officers are IPS cadre and are recruited directly. Hence they fail to understand the problems of the police personnel at the grass root level as have never been a part of that level. It implied that not all police personnel were sensitive to the problems of their counterparts. Some respondents hoped to have a system where a policeman climbs the hierarchy to go from the lower level to the top post and only then would he understand the real problems.
- 11) The police personnel at the middle level expressed the opinion that they faced a lot of stress. They have to follow the orders of the superiors and extract good work from the subordinates who may not have the necessary expertise to perform certain tasks. However they were not only sandwiched between the superiors and the subordinates. An important source of stress was being caught between the departmental orders and the demands of the public. The respondents emphasized the difficulties of being in this situation almost on a regular basis.

I shall now bring into discussion some vital issues concerning the core of Indian police force. These issues are pertinent to the understanding of the imperative relation of stress with policing.

- 1) The present police system of India is based on the Police Act, 1861. High order police officers come from Union Public Service Commission and State Public Service Commission provided in the Article 315 of the Indian Constitution, whereas non-gazetted police officers (Constables to Inspectors) are recruited by various Recruitment Boards at State and Central levels. Despite the fact that the colonial rulers gave us the present police system, its inadequacies and shortcomings had been the subject matter of intensive debates even during the British rule. The debates had shown dissatisfaction with the police functioning. Thus the beginnings of stress date back to the colonial period whereby policing was scrutinized in a very reproachful way.
- 2) Even today, not much has really changed. Policing has become stressful due to the system that is rigidly enforced and maintained. This system does not give much scope of career advancement to the middle and lower levels. Climbing up the hierarchy becomes a long-drawn process. Delayed promotions bring in stagnation.
- 3) Long working hours imply the acute shortage of police personnel. They are subjected to duty hours extending well beyond the normal working capacity. Occasions such as festivals, elections, morchas are extremely taxing pushing them to inhuman extent of work. An interesting observation can be made at this juncture. Considering the fact that we are the 2<sup>nd</sup> most populous country in the world coupled with the problem of unemployment, finding manpower in the form of young aspirants should not be a difficult task. Having said this, the fact that policing may not exactly be the 1<sup>st</sup> choice of the young generation speaks volumes of the fact that it is perceived as a stressful and thankless job. Long working hours, shift work, relatively low salaries, no time for family, delayed promotions, negative attitude of the society are some of the factors which keep the youth away from this job. An unfortunate outcome is that they prefer to remain unemployed rather than trying hard for a job in police force. This has created a paucity of manpower in the police



force. As a result, the existing police personnel face long working hours. Thus a vicious circle has emerged. Since the manpower is less, the working hours are more. And since the working hours are more, the manpower is less.

- 4) The police are assigned as the protectors of law and order. Hence any inadequacy brings in much criticism. The high visibility of the police force is responsible for the focus on it. A sky-high expectation of the many from the few is the crux of stress.

## **CONCLUSION**

The police force forms a significant component of the Executive wing of the Government. Hence it is expected to be well-disciplined, efficient and idealistic. As the enforcing machinery of law and order, the society places tremendous onus on the police force to deliver. Coupled with inadequate manpower, public expectations and mounting focus on efficiency, is the state of the present society marred by increasing crime rate. This results in the police personnel having hectic, demanding and challenging work schedules. Stress is the natural outcome in this situation and becomes an integral element of policing. The occupation of policing has the dubious distinction of being one of the most stressful occupations.

Policing necessitates the police personnel to imbibe certain essential attributes like accurate judgments, rapid decisions, and coordination among others. Occupational stress can gravely impair these abilities. It can lead to anxiety, depression eventually resulting in burnout. This can put their performance as well as public safety at stake.

If stress is an integral element of policing, then management of stress must be done on a priority basis. However in reality, the police force has come across as neglected, misused and badly politicized. There is a sense of sheer indifference towards police reforms. It would be inappropriate to say that no efforts were carried out for their betterment. Nevertheless, these efforts are sporadic and far-flung. Moreover, the present scenario at their work-place is not conducive for the implementation of any consistent measures.

The urgent need of the hour is to put sound police reforms in place. The inadequacies in the police personnel are due to the inadequacies in the police system. Hence if anything warrants change, it has to be the system. It needs to be altered with a proactive backing from the Government. An indifferent attitude on the part of the authorities has to be circumvented.

The focus should shift from management of stress to curtailing it. The earlier time-tested measures such as Yoga and Meditation can be implemented but with discretion. There is no doubt that these measures are excellent stress-busters. The police department has inculcated these practices as a part of stress-management programmes. But it is necessary to rethink about the exact utility of such programmes for the policemen. Giving full credit to the advantages of Yoga and Meditation, it is a paradox that their benefits cannot always be truly extended to the police personnel. They can act as a stop-gap arrangement but not as a permanent solution.

Finding real solutions to the real problems is absolutely essential. Some of the solutions would entail increasing the manpower, changing the societal attitude, no political interference in work and better rapport between the superiors and subordinates among others.

More manpower would contribute in bringing down the long working hours. Normal duty hours would allow them to give more time towards their personal life. This can reduce their frustration and stress to a very large extent.

It is imperative to integrate the police with the public. This will create a conducive atmosphere of mutual trust. Acknowledgement and appreciation by the society in general for the police personnel would go a long way in enhancing the relation between the police and the public. The common perception among the police personnel about their job being a 'thankless job' can be scrapped. This will provide a huge boost to their morale.

Lack of political interference would ensure that the police personnel can enforce the rules and laws without any pressures. They can perform the basic functions of prevention and investigation of crime in a fair manner. This can contribute not only to improved performance but also to improved relation with the common people.

Discipline is an integral element of police hierarchy. It lends respectability and integrity to the occupation of policing. It is something which cannot be compromised. But discipline need not mar the humane aspect of policing. A better rapport between the superiors and the subordinates can go a long way in uplifting the spirit of the policemen at the lower rungs of hierarchy. An impartial and efficient system of grievance redressal can improve the vertical interaction within the police force.

This research study has brought to fore a grave facet of policing. Majority of the respondents had given up the hope of improvement in their situation. This has created a defeatist attitude and a sense of futility. Constructive intervention is needed to shake off the negative stance. Appropriate policies should be framed and implemented taking into consideration the lacuna which has eroded the very spirit of policing.

The policemen are blamed for being insensitive and brutal. But behind the veil of insensitivity and brutality lies an abused and misunderstood category whose actions are conditioned by the perpetual neglect at the hands of the State and other authorities. Physical and mental burnout which are a fall-out of an exacting occupation create stress. Hence a makeover is necessary which can keep the essence of policing intact.

The policemen have not shied away from serving the society. Whatever be the situation, whatever be their state of mind they have stood firmly whenever their duty has beckoned them. Occupational stress has seldom stood in the way in carrying out their responsibilities. To conclude, it's time that the society takes cognizance of their problems and extends a helping hand. A multitude of social, psychological and organizational interventions can definitely play a huge role in finding suitable solutions. Favourable societal attitudes, coping mechanisms and supportive system will go a long way in restoring the faith of the police force.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **PERSONAL DETAILS:**

NAME: (OPTIONAL) \_\_\_\_\_

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: (1) 18 – 25 (2) 26-35 (3) 36-50 (4) 50 and above

MARITAL STATUS: (1) Unmarried (2) Married (3) Widower (4) Divorced

SPOUSE WORKING STATUS: Yes / No If Yes, Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF FAMILY: (1) Nuclear Family (2) Joint-family

NO. OF CHILDREN: \_\_\_\_\_

NO. OF EARNING MEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

HOUSE: (1) Quarters (2) Rental (3) Self-owned

DURATION OF SERVICE IN YEARS: \_\_\_\_\_

DESIGNATION: \_\_\_\_\_

CASTE: (1) General (2) Reserved

### SECTION A

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE RELATED TO PROBABLE FACTORS AND SITUATIONS THAT CAUSE STRESS. READ THEM CAREFULLY AND TICK MARK THE CORRECT ALTERNATIVE.

SR. NO	STATEMENTS FACTORS AND SITUATIONS THAT CAUSE STRESS	Very stressful	Moderately stressful	Least stressful	Not at all stressful
1	Shift work				
2	Long working hours				
3	Working conditions				
4	Monotony and boredom				
5	Excessive paperwork				
6	Job pressures				
7	Non-grant of leave on time				
8	Delayed promotions				
9	Inadequate salary				
10	Restricted career advancement				
11	Frequent transfers				
12	Departmental enquiries				
13	Lack of support by department/superiors				
14	Relationships with colleagues				
15	Less personal control over work environment				
16	Organizational and management pressures				
17	Need to control emotions even when provoked				
18	Presence of gun, even during off-duty hours				
19	Killing someone in the line of duty				
20	Having your colleague killed in the line of duty				
21	Responsibility of protecting the lives of others				
22	Physical danger to self				
23	Physical danger to family				
24	Disruption of family time				
25	Lack of support and negative attitudes by the society				
26	Caste prejudices				
27	Unfavourable news accounts involving policemen				
28	Suicides by policemen				
29	Criminal/sexual violence against children				
30	Informing relatives of sudden deaths/fatal accidents				



## SECTION B

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE RELATED TO THE EFFECTS CAUSED BY STRESS. READ THEM CAREFULLY AND TICK MARK THE CORRECT ALTERNATIVE.

HAVE YOU SUFFERED/EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR POLICING CAREER?

	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
CATEGORY I				
1) Headaches				
2) Indigestion				
3) High / Low blood pressure				
4) Blood Sugar Fluctuations				
5) Palpitation				
6) Excessive fatigue				
7) Fluctuating physical fitness				
CATEGORY II				
1) Anxiety				
2) Boredom during duty hours				
3) Not valued				
4) Forgetfulness				
5) Depression				
6) Frequent loss of temper				
7) Unaffected by trauma				
8) Irritation				
9) Lack of concentration				
10) Job dissatisfaction				
CATEGORY III				
1) Overeating under tension				
2) Loss of appetite under tension				
3) Excessive use of tobacco				
4) Excessive use of alcohol				
5) Lack of sleep / interrupted sleep				
6) Undue anger on family members				
7) Verbally aggressive				
8) Physically aggressive				
CATEGORY IV				
1) Lack of other employment opportunities				
2) Absenteeism				
3) Isolation from colleagues				
4) Decreased work performance				
5) Mismatch between your capacities and job Requirements				



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