

The Maldives National University  
Maldives Police Service

# Contents

FINAL REPORT (MALDIVES POLICE SERVICE PUBLIC PERCEPTION SURVEY)4

Background ..... 4

Objectives of the study..... 5

Methodology ..... 6

Desk Review and stakeholder consultation ..... 6

Public perception survey and focus group discussion ..... 6

Sampling, Instrument Design and Enumerator training ..... 8

Data collection, Report writing and Validation ..... 13

Results ..... 14

Perceptions, satisfaction level and public confidence towards Maldives Police Service in different areas of the Maldives ..... 14

Figure 9: Reasons why police are unable to fulfill their responsibilities ..... 23

The qualitative interviews conducted among the staff of Maldives Police Service also shows that public perception towards the police is not appealing in some of the cases. For example, the discussion about the issue in one of the focus groups is as follows;.. 23

The performance of Maldives Police Service in terms of willingness, efficiency and effectiveness of justice delivery ..... 24

How the public access Maldives Police Service and capture the experiences of public including most vulnerable and marginalized groups ..... 31

Crime Prevention ..... 35

Conclusions and Recommendations ..... 39

# List of Tables

Table 1: Level of concern regarding various offenses..... 19

Table 2: Perception regarding Police and their services ..... 22

Table 3: Areas in need of improvement..... 26

# List of Figures

Figure 1: No of participants who interacted with police.....	14
Figure 2: Reasons for contacting police.....	14
Figure 3: How the participants felt when they went to police station .....	15
Figure 4: Public trust in police.....	16
Figure 5: Most worrying issues in the community .....	18
Figure 6: Feel safe in the community.....	20
Figure 7: Feel safe in Male’ .....	20
Figure 8: Relationship between police and community .....	21
Figure 9: Reasons why police are unable to fulfill their responsibilities .....	23
Figure 10: Family or respondent a victim of a crime.....	24
Figure 11: Percentage of respondents who reported a case to police .....	25
Figure 12: Satisfaction towards police assistance .....	25
Figure 13: Report a minor crime to police.....	31
Figure 14: Reasons for not reporting crimes/cases to police .....	32
Figure 15: Reasons for not reporting crimes/cases to police disaggregated by Male’ and atolls .....	32
Figure 16: Percentage of respondents who would seek help in cases of abuse of women . 33	
Figure 17: Reasons for reporting crimes/cases to police.....	34
Figure 18: Reasons for not wanting police assistance.....	35
Figure 19: Knowledge of crime prevention activities in the community.....	35
Figure 20: Types of crime prevention activities.....	36
Figure 21: Effectiveness of crime prevention activities .....	37
Figure 22 Type of mass-media public uses to get information.....	38
Figure 23: Most commonly used social media .....	38

## Executive Summary

The purpose of the study was to identify public perception towards the police and the challenges faced by the public in accessing Maldives Police Service. In this regard, the study specifically will focus on the following objectives:

As part of the desk review the research team carried out a preliminary assessment to understand the context and determine the key indicators used in the questionnaire design and identify areas for the focus groups. In addition, the stakeholder consultations of this phase included the methodology finalisation. This phase included studying relevant documents and obtaining information from stakeholders through small focus group meetings.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methodology were employed to collect data for the study. During this phase, the research team conducted a perception survey using pre-tested questionnaire in the selected regions and analysed data disaggregated by age group, geographical location, vulnerability and other relevant variables. Qualitative in-depth interviewing i.e. individual as well as focus group were used to collect data from the relevant departments of the Maldives Police Service and from people who has been involved in justice issues.

In general, the public perception about the police is positive although there are some areas which needs to be improved. These are discussed in detail in the report.

# FINAL REPORT (MALDIVES POLICE SERVICE PUBLIC PERCEPTION SURVEY)

## Background

Police was formed about 70 years ago, during the kingdom of A-Sultan Mohamed Shamsudhdheen III and was established by a Law which was announced on 29th March 1933.

At the time of establishment there were 120 officers in the police. Their main duty then was to patrol the market area and the island, the purpose of which is to establish peace amongst the citizens and protect the people and their belongings. Even at that time, Police had their duty shifts and wore uniforms while on duty, a Maldivian Traditional dress- Mundu & Libaas, Black Cap and Belts. They used batons while on duty and also had whistles with them. If Police needed help while on duty, the protection and help of military was available as the Law stated.

Over time, Maldives has undergone rapid development with an increase in population which has brought an increase in societal problems. Hence, the function of Maldives Police Service has been expanded and improved.

According to the strategic plan of Maldives Police Service, police reform programme seeks to work towards deepening understanding of, and catalysing support for, democratic policing across the Commonwealth. In addition, work on the Maldives policymaking system began in 2007 as part of research on police accountability across Commonwealth South Asian coun-

tries (Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and the Maldives) published in the report titled Feudal Forces: Democratic Nations-Police accountability in Commonwealth South Asia (2007).

Subsequently political developments in the country and the transition into a multi-party democratic system in 2008 provided an inroad for deeper engagement on democratic policing in the country. Since then, police have worked closely with independent institutions like the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, the Police Integrity Commission and civil society organizations like Maldivian Democracy Network in holding workshops, conducting research and publishing public literacy material on police powers and citizens' rights. To strengthen police functioning core values are developed which includes integrity, courage, education, compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence.



### INTEGRITY

Uphold the Code of Conduct and preserve highest standards of character to maintain public trust and confidence.



### COURAGE

Willing to make tough decisions valiantly to protect the people and their property



### EDUCATION

Participate in a culture of continuous learning and impart knowledge



### COMPASSION

Deliver our services with care and tolerance



### ACCOUNTABILITY

Make ethical decisions and accept responsibility for our actions



### RESPECT

Respectful in all actions, rendering equitable services in a courteous and dignified manner



### EXCELLENCE

Seek service excellence through organizational efficiency and in partnership with the community

Nevertheless, the public perception towards the police is not clear. There is also a need to know how people access Maldives police service and the barriers involved including public awareness regarding the 2008 legal constitution.

## Objectives of the study

The purpose of the study was to identify public perception towards the police and the challenges faced by the public in accessing Maldives Police Service. In this regard, the study specifically will focus on the following objectives:

1. Assess the perceptions, satisfaction level and public confidence towards Maldives Police Service in different areas of the Maldives
2. Examine the performance of Maldives Police Service in terms of willingness, efficiency and effectiveness of justice delivery.
3. Identify job satisfaction of police at different areas.
4. Assess how the public access Maldives Police Service and capture the experiences of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups.
5. Identify public awareness regarding the legal constitution.
6. Identify the public awareness on how to access justice.



## Methodology

### Desk Review and stakeholder consultation

As part of the desk review the research team carried out a preliminary assessment to understand the context and determine the key indicators used in the questionnaire design and identify areas for the focus groups. In addition, the stakeholder consultations of this phase included the

methodology finalisation. This phase included studying relevant documents and obtaining information from stakeholders through small focus group meetings.

### Public perception survey and focus group discussion

Both qualitative and quantitative research methodology were employed to collect data for the study.

During this phase, the research team conducted a perception survey using pre-tested questionnaire in the selected regions and analysed data disaggregated by age group, geographical location, vulnerability and other relevant variables. The questionnaire design for this data collection is explained in the latter section.

Qualitative in-depth interviewing i.e. individual as well as focus group were used to collect data from the relevant departments of the Maldives Police Service and from people who has been involved in justice issues. Data from these groups were used to seek potential solutions for the issues identified during the previous steps and to help identify the linkages between different institutions and overlapping mandates with regard access to justice.

A smaller sample size of 10 to 20 was used for the individual qualitative component. Purposive sampling was used for this group as the research team believed that the selected participants would be a more representative sample that can bring more accurate and informed inputs into the study. The sampling unit for the qualitative focus groups included police from various departments. The research team purposely handpicked individuals from these groups based on the research team's knowledge and judgment.

### Sampling Sample size

The sample sizes for the respondents were determined using statistical approach with a 95% confidence interval and 5% error. As per the research team's calculation the sample size is around 1095 taking into consideration the geographic disparity (eg: Male' population is much larger compared to the rest of the islands). Thus, statistically significant sample sizes were derived prior to data collection as shown below:

Four main clusters were selected based on high access, medium access and low access (based on accessibility of transport and police presence).

A multistage cluster sampling was used to select the required sample. Cluster sampling was used since a complete list of the members of a population cannot be attained easily and a simple random sample may produce a list of participants so widely scattered across the islands that surveying them would be far too expensive. Hence, for logistical purposes a cluster sampling was used for this target group of respondents.

In terms of determining the clusters the different demographics such as population size, transportation to the capital, availability of police services, etc were used. Hence FOUR clusters were anticipated for the sampling i.e.

1. Male' was selected as ONE cluster
2. Large islands in terms of population with access to police services
3. Mid-sized islands
4. Small islands

Once the islands were selected the sample size from each island was determined using statistical means and the number of households from each of the selected islands were identified using systematic sampling. The individuals from the households were selected randomly. The following table shows the number of participants selected from each atoll and island for the survey.

Male' Atoll		153379	200
	Male'	150368	100
	Hulhumale'	15769	50
	Villimale'	7790	50
Haa Dhaal Atoll		18531	168
	Hanimaadhoo	1951	84
	Nolhivaranfaru	1892	84
Shaviyani Atoll		12696	65
	Funadhoo	2104	33
	Milandhoo	1884	33
Baa Atoll		9601	45
	Eydhafushi	2658	45
Kaafu Atoll		14092	90
	Thulusdhoo	1408	45
	Dhifahushi	1053	45
Alif Dhaal Atoll		9086	40
	Mahibadhoo	2074	40
Meemu Atoll		5022	24
	Mulah	1275	24
Dhaal Atoll		5786	107
	Kudahuvadhoo	2447	80
	Hulhudheli	719	27
Laamu Atoll		12676	58
	Fonadhoo	2266	58
Gaaf Alif Atoll		9221	56
	Villingili	2837	56
Gnaviyani Atoll		8510	73
	Fuavahmulah	8510	73
Seenu Atoll		21275	169
	Hithadhoo	11129	103
	Feydhoo	3431	33
	Meedhoo	1871	33

## Sample size for police officers as qualitative part

Purposive sampling was used to select 12 police officers from different departments with different ranks. They were interviewed on their roles and challenges in dealing with the public and ways to strengthen the services given to the public. This was transcribed and triangulated with the public perception survey.

### **Instrument design**

#### **Questionnaire Design**

A questionnaire was used as the key instrument for primary data collection in this study. A questionnaire enabled quantitative data to be collected in a standardized way so that the data were internally consistent and coherent for analysis. Hence, a comprehensive design process was followed in getting a proper questionnaire designed. The questionnaire was shared with the MPS and adjustments were made. The key components to be collected such as key indicators was finalised after the preliminary assessment.

In addition, the questionnaire was designed with the target respondents in mind, taking into account their educational level and experiences. The language used and the context of the questions were framed in such a way that they are all familiar to the respondents. It was noted that the pilot questionnaires from previous studies were used as a base for designing the final questionnaire.

Some points considered in questionnaire design :

1. Questionnaire were designed in English and then translated to Dhivehi
2. Questionnaire was around 20 minutes long

### **Identifiers**

Identifiers for this study included the locality information such as atoll, island, and/or ward. In addition, it also included other identifiers that helped in the reporting of the study.

### **Background Characteristics**

Background demographics of participants were also collected such as employment, income level, education level, livelihoods etc.

## Indicators for disaggregating data/vulnerable groups

Since the study seeks to explore perceptions and challenges faced in accessing police services that need to be prioritized at policy level, it was important to identify the weakest subgroups of the population in terms of specific attributes, these indicators were collected. Other additional indicators for disaggregating, [such as age, educational level, income status, marital status, disability, family support etc.] and analysis were collected based on the focus groups discussions and preliminary assessment. For the internal police survey, variables such as job satisfaction, promotions and evaluations were measured.

### **Input, Output, Outcome and Impact indicators**

The questionnaire was designed to measure input, output, outcome and access to justice sector services. The questions were formulated to measure indicators of access to police services; especially the most vulnerable groups including (i) areas in which individuals experience barriers in accessing police and (ii) areas in which there are systemic barriers to providing justice within the police services. For the police officer interviews, job satisfaction level, promotion evaluation and relationship with service delivery was measured.

### **Enumerators**

#### **Enumerators Selection**

A total of 20 enumerators were selected to conduct the survey with the assistance of coordination of MPS. However, MPS did not have any contact with the participants and they did not have any access to the data. In selecting the enumerators, a balance of gender was maintained. Enumerators were over 18 years of age who have completed their secondary education. In Male', enumerators worked in pairs for safety and security as well as quality assurance purposes.

#### **Enumerator Training**

Training of supervisors and enumerators was carried out in Male' as well as in the islands. The research team carried out all the training face to face and some on skype. The training included:

- How to select individuals for the survey
- How to address call backs
- How to address refusals
- Use of fixed wording at the beginning of data collection
- Strict adherence to NO NAME [of participant] policy
- Consent and Confidentiality of the participants

During the training a practice run of the data collection was carried out. In addition, the personal security issues were highlighted and how to deal with these were addressed during the training. The training also included directions on how to fill the enumerators' parts at the end of the questionnaire. During the training, emphasis was made on the importance of maintaining privacy during data collection and of the participants as well as the enumerator. Since it was an investigator led data collection exercise, the enumerators were instructed to fill the questionnaires on the tablet instead of the participants.

## **Enumerator Resources**

Each enumerator was be provided with the following resources

1. Maps
2. Tablet with questionnaire downloaded [additional]
3. Travel Costs
4. Identity Cards [Maldives National University]
5. Stationery

## **Piloting of the Questionnaire**

Questionnaires developed for both survey and interviews were first piloted among a small sample of respondents by the research team. Pilot testing was carried out in Male' and Laamu. The data collected during pilot testing was analyzed at item level to fine tune the final questionnaire by the research team. The pilot testing enabled:

1. To identify if the enumerators understood the questionnaire properly
2. To identify if the public understood the questions properly
3. To identify if the sampling method designed capture the required data

## Data collection, Report writing and Validation

### Data Collection and Instrument Administration

The research team developed soft copies of the questionnaires which were downloaded onto tablets with the aid of special survey software tools which is used for such data collection. The research team prepared the data coding of the questionnaires. Upon completion of the questionnaire design, the research team administered the tests among the selected sample. The evaluators/enumerators trained by research team coded the answer responses for each participant.

### Data Collection: Procedure for Call-backs and Refusals

1. Individuals were selected using a random sampling technique.
2. If the individual chosen based on the above sampling method was not available at the time, then the enumerator was instructed to call back [timeframe of call back was decided in consultation with the client]
3. If the individual chosen based on the above sampling method was not available at all or refused to participate then the enumerator was informed to choose another individual as a replacement.

### Recall of Data from Inconsistent Practices

Even though a variety of measures to ensure the reliability of data were established, some issues arose during data collection. These included the questionnaires being half completed. Such responses were deleted and were replaced with missing values.

### Data Entry and Data Cleaning

The data from the completed questionnaires were uploaded and captured through an automated process. The data was then checked for inconsistencies and outliers to ensure that invalid data was eliminated. The research team generated the data error reports and closely interacted with the participants for any data cleaning required.

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## Results

Perceptions, satisfaction level and public confidence towards Maldives Police Service in different areas of the Maldives

Figure 1 shows that 34% of the surveyed population interacted with the police. The reasons for interaction are shown in Figure 2. Most of the people interacted with

police to report a case and for traffic check. It is important to note that only 8.6% of the people interacted with the police in community meetings. This shows the little engagement of police in the community which is a crucial element in preventing crime and providing a safer environment.

No of participants who had any interaction with police in the past year

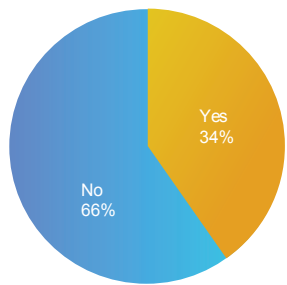


Figure 1: No of participants who interacted with police

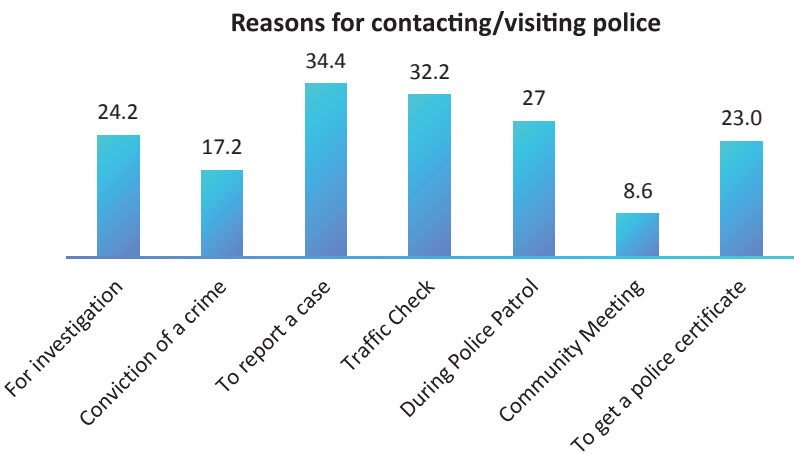


Figure 2: Reasons for contacting police

### How the participants feel when they go to police station to lodge a complaint

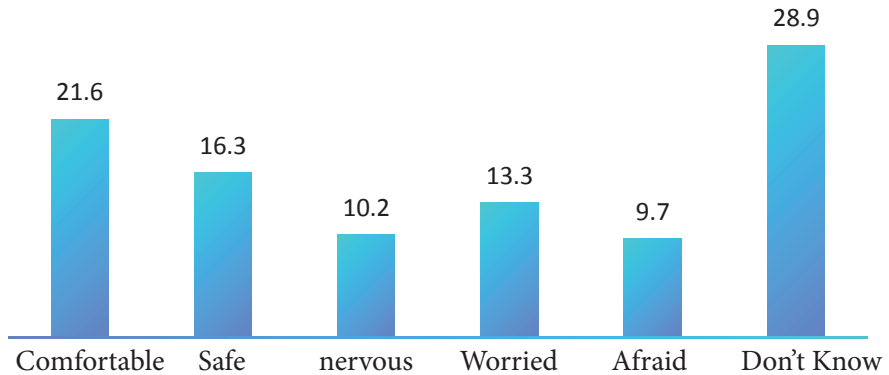


Figure 3: How the participants felt when they went to police station

Figure 4 shows that 17.8% of the people said that they trust the police completely, 16.8% said that they trust the police a lot and more than 40% of the respondents said that they trust the police to some extent. This shows that in general the public trusts the police regarding providing safety from offenders. However, 23.1% of the people said that they do not trust the police. Hence, some strategies need to be planned, targeted at people who do not trust the police in order to improve their public trust and positive perception about the police.

### Trust in police regarding safety from offenders

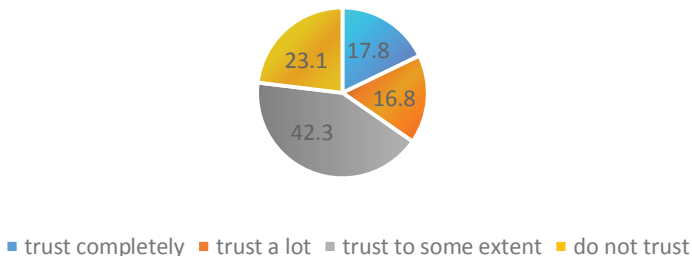
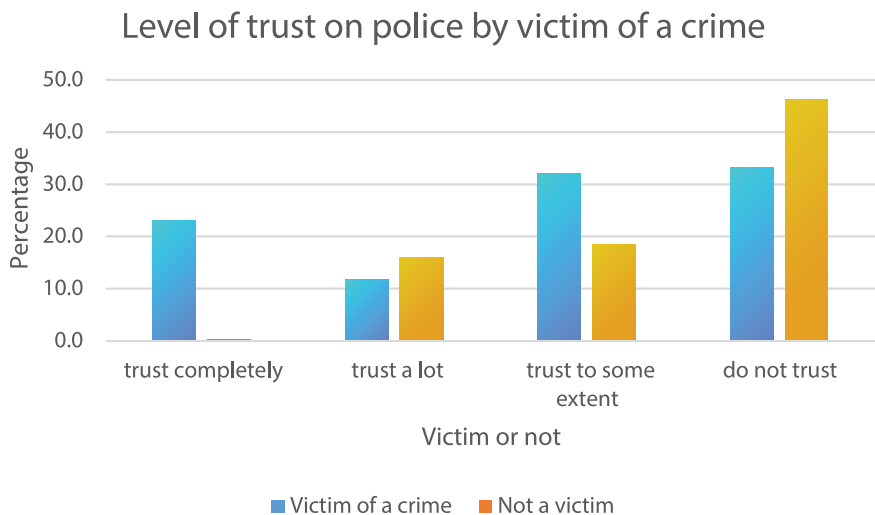


Figure 4: Public trust in police



When the data on Figure 4 is divided into victims and non-victims, the results show the victims trust (who have been in contact with the police) police more compared to the ones who have never contacted the police. This means that if people know the police they trust them more. Hence, there is need to make people more aware of what the police do.

As shown in figure 5, the most worrying three crimes include drugs, theft and assault. In addition, people indicated that drugs, bullying in schools and road accidents as very worrying offenses in the community (Table 1).

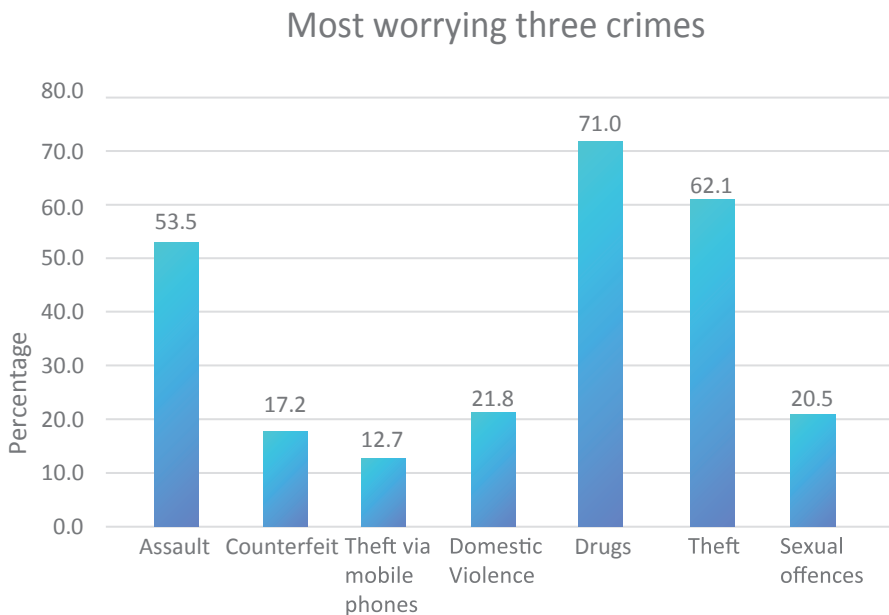


Figure 5: Most worrying issues in the community

Table 1: Level of concern regarding various offenses

Level of concern regarding various offenses					
	very wor- rying	worrying	neutral	not worry- ing	not worry- ing at all
Sea Accident	29.2	33.1	14.6	16.6	6.5
Road Accident	55.7	25.3	10.0	6.9	2.0
Assault	49.2	25.4	10.9	11.6	2.8
Offences via mo- bile phone	34.3	31.3	16.1	14.4	4.0
Cyber crime	35.0	29.4	16.1	14.7	4.9
Domestic Violence	43.0	29.2	12.0	12.6	3.2
Drug use	66.8	21.8	4.2	5.1	2.1
Selling drugs	67.1	21.7	3.7	5.6	1.9
Theft	51.7	30.9	8.3	7.7	1.4
Disobedience	33.3	26.9	17.2	17.5	5.1
Robbery	37.7	24.8	11.4	20.9	5.2
Harassment	36.0	26.4	14.6	17.5	5.5
Sexual abuse/ family	41.3	20.2	9.0	21.4	8.0
Burglary	42.7	30.9	11.8	11.7	2.9
Motor cycle theft	34.8	22.3	13.3	21.0	8.6
Property damage	39.0	26.8	14.2	15.3	4.6
Human trafficking	45.2	27.1	11.6	13.6	2.5
Offences by expa- triates	48.8	25.7	11.2	12.0	2.4
Damaging envi- ronment	42.7	32.5	12.2	10.0	2.6
Bullying in school	59.1	23.7	6.4	8.6	2.1
Religious Issues	41.8	30.0	12.1	12.5	3.7

As shown in figure 6, the majority of the people said they feel safe in the community implying public feel safe in most of the islands that were surveyed. However, when the data is disaggregated by location the respondents living in Male’ reported that they do not feel safe (Figure 7). Most

of the people said that they feel very unsafe in the community. Measures need to be undertaken to make Male’ a safe place to live, especially when one third of the population of the whole country lives in Male’.

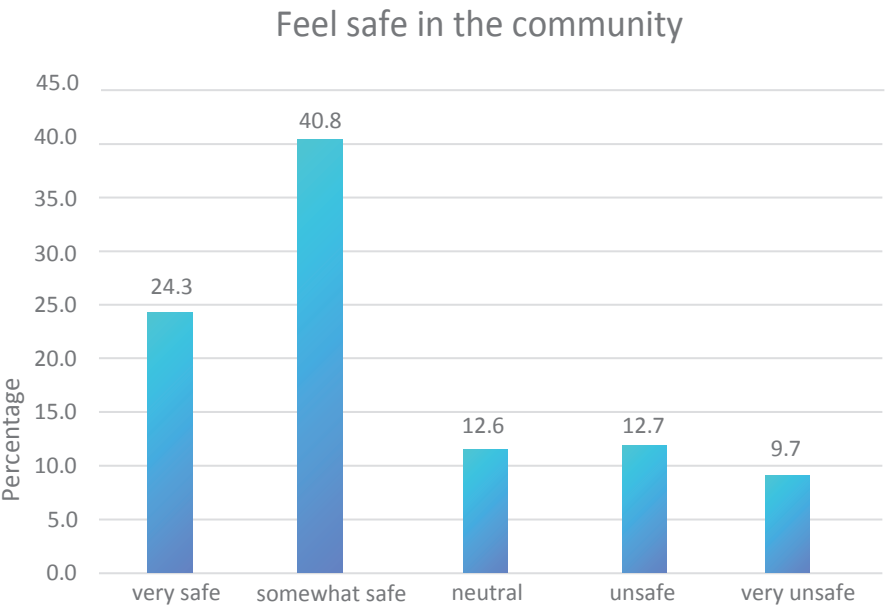


Figure 6: Feel safe in the community

## Feel safe in Male'

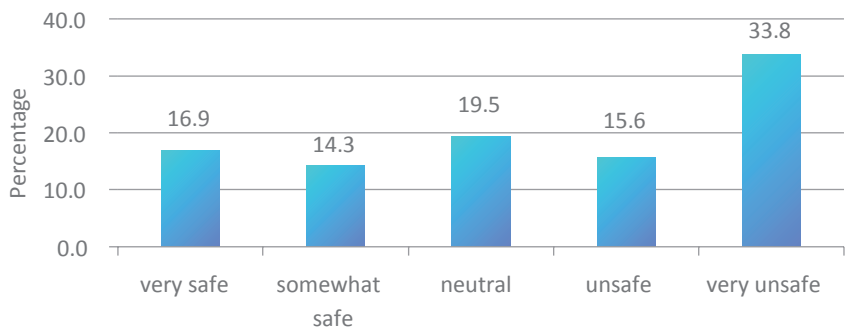


Figure 7: Feel safe in Male'

When asked about the relationship between the police and the community, most (33.7%) of the people said it is good. However, a very low percentage of people strongly agreed to positive statements regarding the police (Table 2). The respondents believe that the speed of the work

of the police is slow in the investigation period. They also believe that there isn't an adequate number of female police officers which indicates that more women are needed in the police force.

## Relationship between police and community

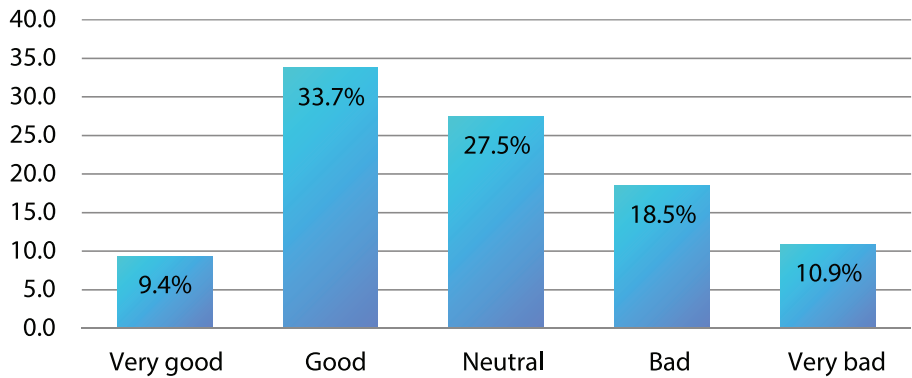


Figure 8: Relationship between police and community

Table 2: Perception regarding Police and their services

Perception regarding Police and their services					
	Strongly agree	Some-what agree	Neu-tral	Some-what dis-agree	Strongly disa-gree
The police force have good equipment and facilities that help them fulfill their duty	17.9	25.4	26.9	21.5	8.2
The police are well trained	15.2	39.3	21.1	17	7.4
The police are respectful to others	11.2	32.1	20	21.7	15
Police serves to protect the community	16.9	43.3	15.3	14.6	9.9
The speed of work of the police is good in the investigation period	11.2	23.6	19.8	30.4	15.1
The police had expanded their presence to an adequate area	12.9	35.9	16.5	25.7	8.9
The police serve themselves rather than the community	10.7	22.5	21.4	34.3	11.2
There is an adequate number of women in the Police Services	10.2	24.3	20.4	26.7	18.5
Normally the reasons and how the power is used by police is good	10.4	33.2	24.8	21.9	9.6
The police performance improved over the past 2 years	20.3	29.6	22.6	19.7	7.8
Police give priority to their own good rather than the community wellbeing	12.4	23.4	16.9	26.4	20.9



An analysis into the reasons why the public think that the police cannot perform their responsibilities shows that there are many factors that hinder their performance. These include political influence (594 people), taking advantage, limited number of police officers, and lack of modern resources in some of the places.

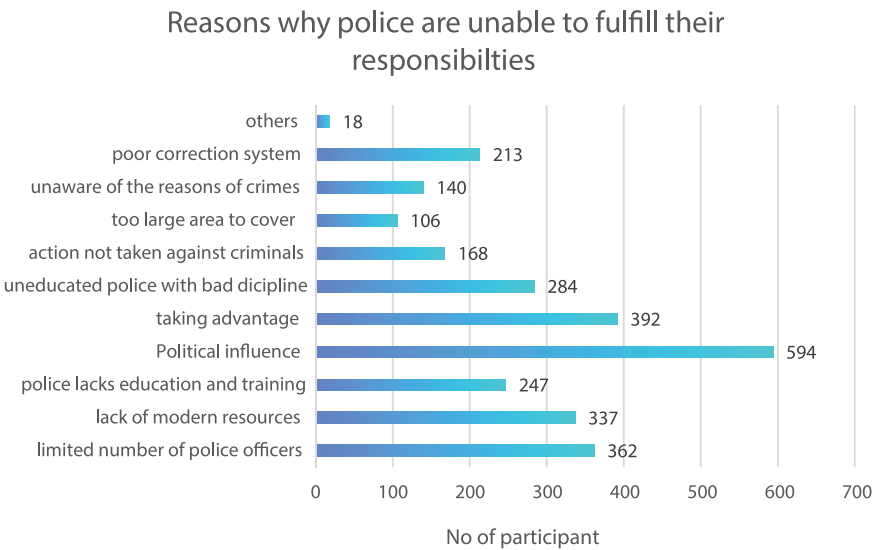


Figure 9: Reasons why police are unable to fulfil their responsibilities

The qualitative interviews conducted among the staff of Maldives Police Service also shows that public perception towards the police is not appealing in some of the cases. For example, the discussion about the issue in one of the focus groups is as follows;

*....there are attempted murder cases towards police...some politicians provides supports to hit policemen...some of the community members make us targets.... we do not feel safe in the community. We live in the same community, we have to work like slaves and they (public) says that we use money illegally...we also earn our salary by working hard.  
...some (from public) says inappropriate things at us near the schools, in front of our children.*

# The performance of Maldives Police Service in terms of willingness, efficiency and effectiveness of justice delivery

Figure 10 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated if they themselves or family members are victims of crimes. Out of the 20.3% of victims, 65.7% cases were reported (figure 11). Most of the people (42.3%) indicated they are either very satisfied or satisfied with the assistance they received from the police when the case was reported (figure 12). About a similar percentage of people (39.7%) said they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 18% indicated that they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied about the help they received from police. Since the data shows that most people are satisfied with the assistance, it can be assumed that generally the level of assistance provide by the

police is good. Different approaches need to be planned for the victims who are not satisfied with the services they received. The respondents have ranked ‘protection for the victim’, ‘stopping intoxicated people from wandering around’, ‘quick solutions to reported problems’ and ‘progress of the cases’ as the first three highest priority areas for improvement of police services (Table 3).

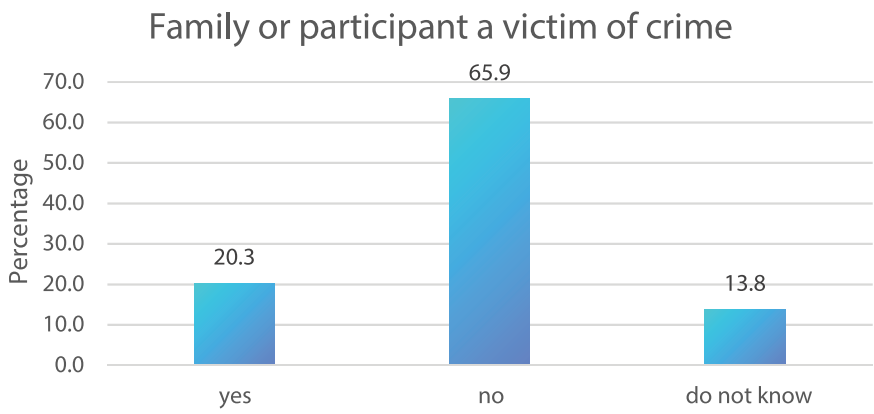


Figure 10: Family or respondent a victim of a crime

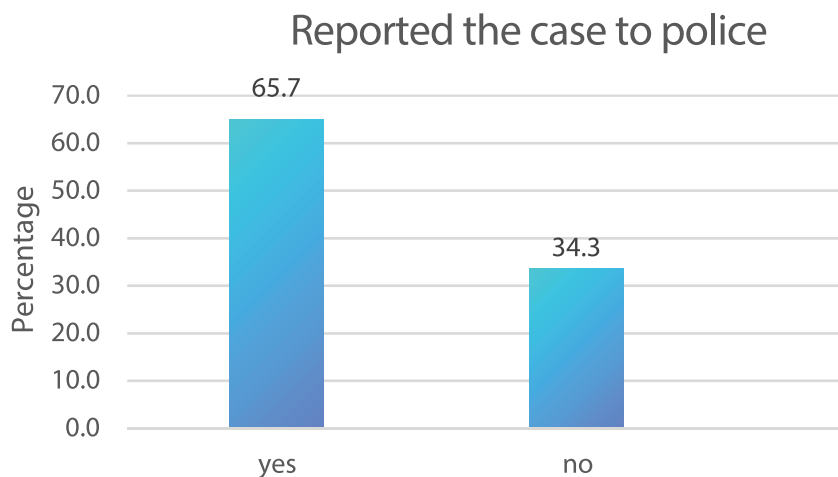


Figure 11: Percentage of respondents who reported a case to police

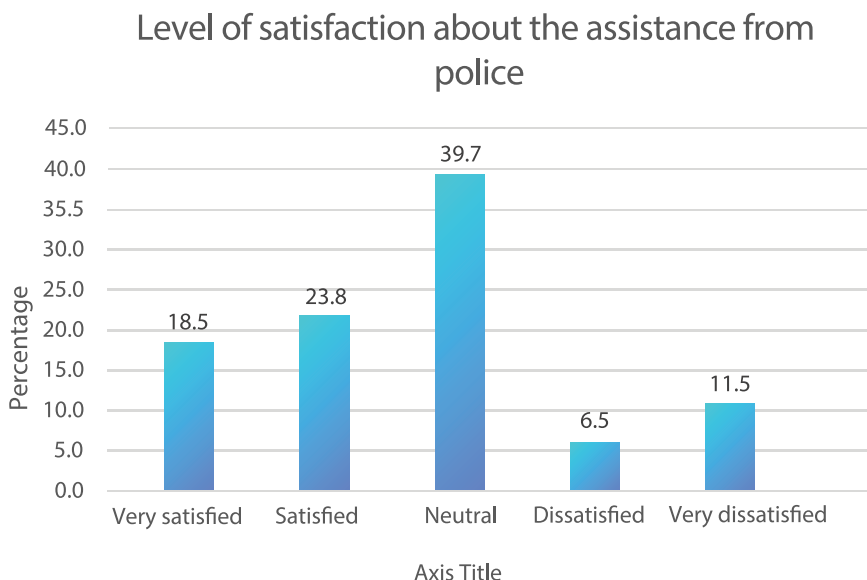


Figure 12: Satisfaction towards police assistance

Table 3: Areas in need of improvement

Areas in need of improvement

	Very im- port- ant %	Import- ant%	Neu- tral%	Not im- por- tant%	Not im- por- tant at all %
Protection for the victim	79.1	13.3	4.6	1.7	1.2
Progress of reported cases	75.1	16.8	4.4	3.1	0.6
Waiting time at the police station	67.1	15.3	8.8	6.9	1.9
Not having to attend the police sta- tion frequently	67.3	16.9	6.8	6.9	2.2
Easy procedures to get police help	69.7	17.4	6.6	4.1	2.3
Quick solutions to reported problems	75.1	14.6	5.5	3	1.7
To provide service in a kind and friendly manner	73.5	16.3	5.1	3.9	1.2
To monitor travellers and sea transport activities	68.9	19.1	7.2	3.7	1.2
Cleanliness and good manners	71.1	16.9	6.1	4.7	1.2
Controlling the speed limit	75	14.6	6.4	2.8	1.3
See police frequently in public	62.3	18.3	6.5	8.8	4.2
To take initiative in community activi- ties	71.5	18.1	5.4	3.9	1.1
Stop intoxicated people from wan- dering	77.9	11.3	5.5	3.6	1.6
Planning activities for island safety	72	17.4	5.7	3.6	1.3
share the plans of island safety with public	70.5	18.8	5.2	3.8	1.7
Conducting meetings to discuss community issues	64.1	21.6	7.7	5	1.6

The qualitative component of this study gave more insight into the current situation from the service perspective as well. An exploration into the situation inside the Maldives Police Service was carried out. Police officers believe that the services, access and the rights of the convicts would improve as the constitution and criminal procedure code get fully implemented. Participants indicated that the criminal procedure code has good aspects which would help the police to provide efficient services. For example, one participant stated that

*“There are good things (pause) in this (criminal procedure code)...There are many good things in the new criminal procedure code...not being able to do body check without a court order.”*

*Another participant added that “But there are good things too...like not being able to keep in custody beyond a certain time during investigation.”*

The first participant described that custody duration was not so clear before the new constitution and referred to a case of a convict who was kept in custody for 5 years during an investigation but was later acquitted. This case was described to explain the new time period that police could keep a convict under investigation. Most focus group participants felt that the new time period would better serve the public.

However, it was also highlighted that the new constitution is not helpful when it comes to certain cases in some situations. For example, a participant described that

the new constitution was not helpful in cases such as when they needed to do body checks in known crime cases just because they did not have a court order. In referring to that, the participant stated

*“...not being able to do body check without a court order even if we know that they have drugs with them...so there are some not so good things (in the criminal procedure code )”.*

However, this is a misinformation because according to criminal procedure code number 38 (Raa), body checks can be done if a police officer suspects that a person possesses

- 1) A weapon that can harm a person,
- 2) Drugs or alcohol,
- 3) Stolen goods,
- 4) Goods attained through committing a crime or
- 5) Evidence which can be used to solve a crime.

Hence, the above information shows there is knowledge gap within police officers regarding the criminal procedure code. Workshops need to be conducted to increase knowledge of police officers regarding the criminal procedure code and responsibilities of a police officer.

## Internal Factors that Impact Police Service Provision

The focus group interviews that were conducted indicated that generally police officers are satisfied with the services they provide with the resources available. For example, the participants in one focus group referred to themselves and stated that

*“We are happy with the system. It’s very good. Internally everything is very good... there is a good linkage. Now when we arrest a person too we can easily identify (them) through the ID card unit.”*

However, although most of police officers are satisfied with their services and resources, they still described that there are some areas that need improvements. One such area is public awareness about Maldives Police Service. They felt that ‘misunderstanding’ about the police services and comparing police services with

very developed countries such as America and Canada was not so helpful for their services. Participants of one focus group described that media such as certain TV channels are the main source that build that ‘misconception’ towards the Police. Another participant in a different focus group stated that,

*“We feel that media spreads hatred towards police...our institution gets labelled because of politics”*

Another major factor that disrupts the Police services according to some participants is politics. Some participants stated that they were not happy with how politics get in their way of service provision. Many participants described their experience of politics in MPS and some examples are as follows;

*“Yeah it happens. Like if we stop an MP...they would call a police officer and we have to let go. And police commissioner is politically appointed. Police is under home ministry. We have faced this (many times)...earlier too and even now.*

*...The main hurdle in our service is political influences. Our superiors are politically appointed,...direct influence comes from those appointees. They change us based on political decisions...with politics it's very restricted though someone works very hard."*

Another participant stated his dissatisfaction about politics in police service provision and described his experience as follows;

*"When government ministers and MPs change so much (we do not remember them by face)...I started checking an MP without knowing...it was a routine check [to see] if the motor cycles had all in order. He talked very rudely to me and then called a senior officer. But we have to check all...and rules are for everyone. But we were asked to let the person off."*

Many of the focus group participants were not happy with some of the aspects of staff promotion within the service and other related aspects. Many described that early promotions were not fair and justifiable in some cases. For example, following are some of the cases that they talked about.

*Promotion and all are not fair. There are rules and regulations, but like the earlier practices of giving favors... it's like that (even now). Appraisal forms are more like a course (course work exercise)...for promotion it's the close relationship with the boss that matters.*

*I notice that someone who makes a small mistake can get a huge reprimand while someone who do huge mistakes over and over again have been kept in the system and when change to other departments it's in the same rank too*

*Some staff are very de-motivated by this and leave. If someone get labeled by the boss negatively that is the end of the person... there are procedures on changing to other departments. Usually one would want to change if they don't like their department...but then that person would be changed to the department that they do not want to change...and would be black listed too in the new department.*

*One of our difficulties is when heads changes and when someone who is not from this area becomes our head. The head now has to learn all from us and get inducted into the work we do. So, when heads are changed...when people who do not have knowledge of the work we do becomes our head that makes our work very stressful*

Another important issue that was raised by some participants was unavailability of occupational therapy services such as counselling and proper grievances procedures. Some participants stated that their job in dealing with certain types of cases was stressful and they require proper care

for themselves to be fit for the job. For example, one participant described her thoughts as follows;

*Another issue is that we all have to deal with a lot of family of other peoples...and we have our own personal issues...and are also impacted by the stories we hear...asking ourselves if this could happen in our family too. So we need some avenues to talk about our feelings...we need some counseling for ourselves.*

Improvements in the service provision was one of the areas that was highlighted by the participants. Most participants believe that there has been an improvement in the police services in the last five years. As such, one participant described the improvements as, “Yeah a lot of improve-

*ment, medical, courses, refreshers course etc. Awareness programs...resources too in some departments.”*

*However, Police does not attend issues in Kudakudhinge Hiya. That was a decision made by our seniors...in 2015. Even if a child runs away we are not allowed to even look for the child...the employees...some women staff would go and find them. Police would not really have involved in that. I think this was because there was some issue/rumor about a police touching a child. Only gender ministry could attend it. So there is another procedure for that. Sometimes the staff of that place complains that we do work on finding children.*



# How the public access Maldives Police Service and capture the experiences of public including most vulnerable and marginalized groups

The general Maldivian public tend to ignore minor offenses and crimes. When asked whether they would report minor crimes to police, most participants (59.1%) stated that they would not report minor crimes to police and less than half (40.9%) stated that they would report minor crimes to police. Figure 14 shows the reasons for not reporting minor crimes. An alarming number of respondents (107) stated that they would not report the minor crimes because the investigation takes too long. Other common reasons for not reporting included too time consuming, preference given to solving the issue by

themselves, belief that police will not help or police is not capable of helping, not trusting police and the belief that police is not fair and just. All these reasons are worrying and strategies need to be implemented to enhance and improve the reporting and actions that follows it. A disaggregation by Male' and atolls shows that time taken for investigation is the main reason for not reporting the crimes.

Report minor crimes to police

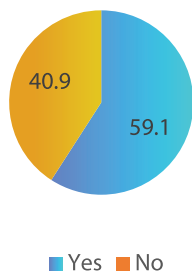


Figure 13: Report a minor crime to police

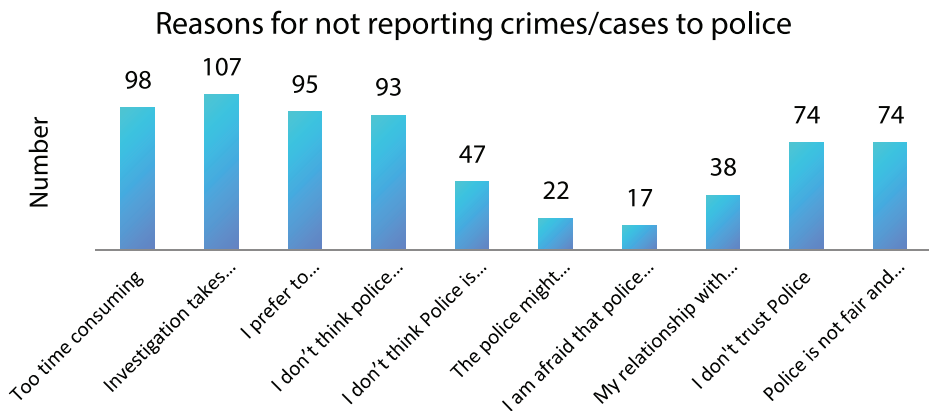


Figure 14: Reasons for not reporting crimes/cases to police

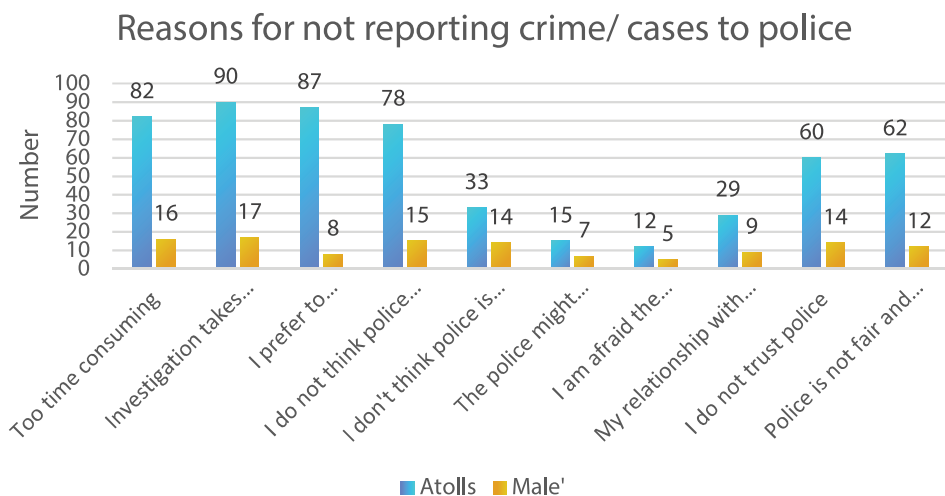


Figure 15: Reasons for not reporting crimes/cases to police disaggregated by Male' and atolls

Capturing the experiences of vulnerable and marginalized groups was one of the objectives of this study. As shown in Figure 16, a large percentage, 77.2% of the participants stated that they would seek assistance from police in cases of abuse against women. However, though it is not

a huge percentage, 14.4% of the respondents said they would not seek assistance from police. This can be the portion of public who has never contacted police.

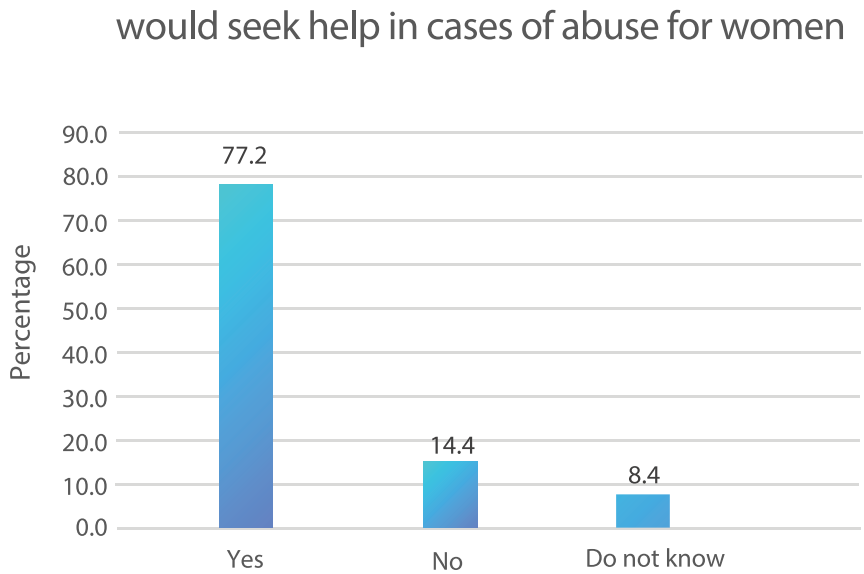


Figure 16: Percentage of respondents who would seek help in cases of abuse of women

Some of the main reasons for reporting the cases of violence against women include trust in police (265 respondents), belief that family cannot solve the issue (217 respondents) and to create awareness (209 respondents). All details of the related reasons are provided in Figure 17. This

shows that participants of this study trust that police would be able to help women in cases of abuse. This is a positive finding and measures should be taken to ensure that public trust does not diminish in this area.

## Reasons for reporting to police

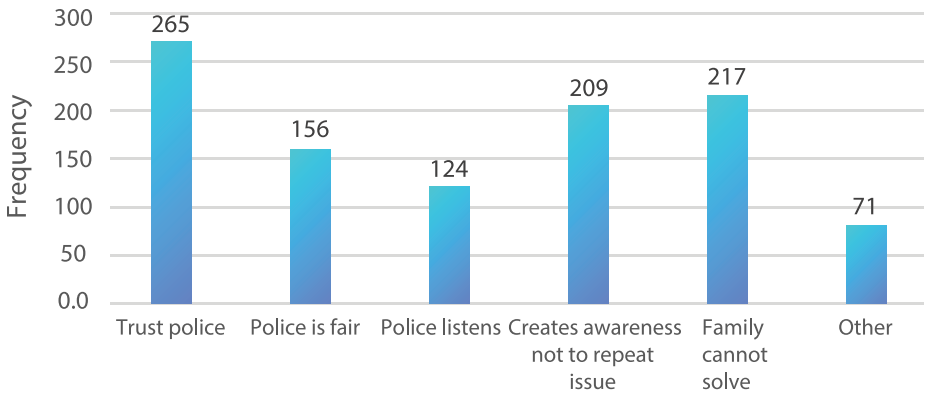


Figure 17: Reasons for reporting crimes/cases to police

Figure 18 shows the main reasons why the participants said that they would not seek assistance from police in cases regarding women. The three most common reasons for not seeking police assistance were injustice, length of procedure and belief that police cannot help.

## Reasons for not wanting police assistance

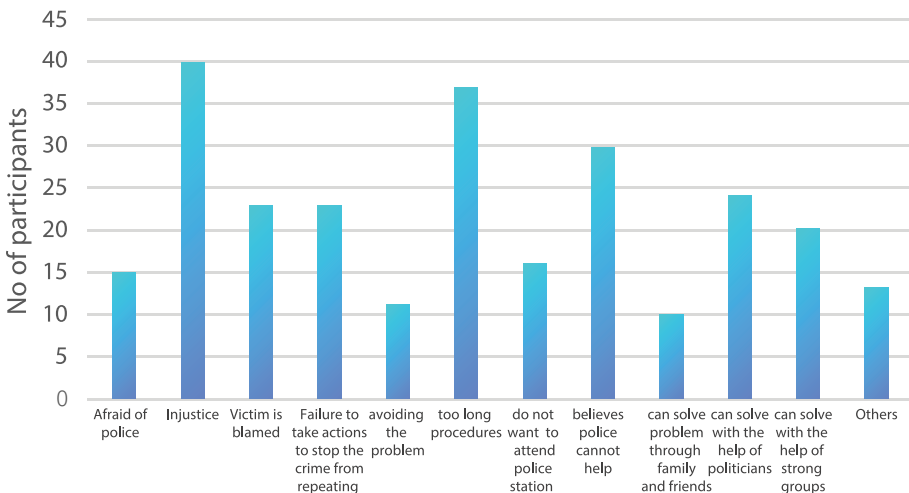


Figure 18: Reasons for not wanting police assistance

# Knowledge of crime prevention activities in the community

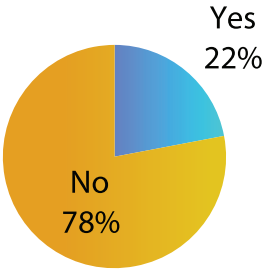


Figure 19: Knowledge of crime prevention activities in the community

Those who stated that they are aware of the crime prevention activities that were taking place highlighted some of the activities that they were aware of. The activities are shown in Figure 20. Most participants (40.3%) were aware of police patrol activities. The awareness of other activities such as TV/Radio programs, awareness for women and youth programs was quite low. Therefore, the approach used for those programs needs to be improved in order to reach a larger population in communities.

## Type of crime prevention activities

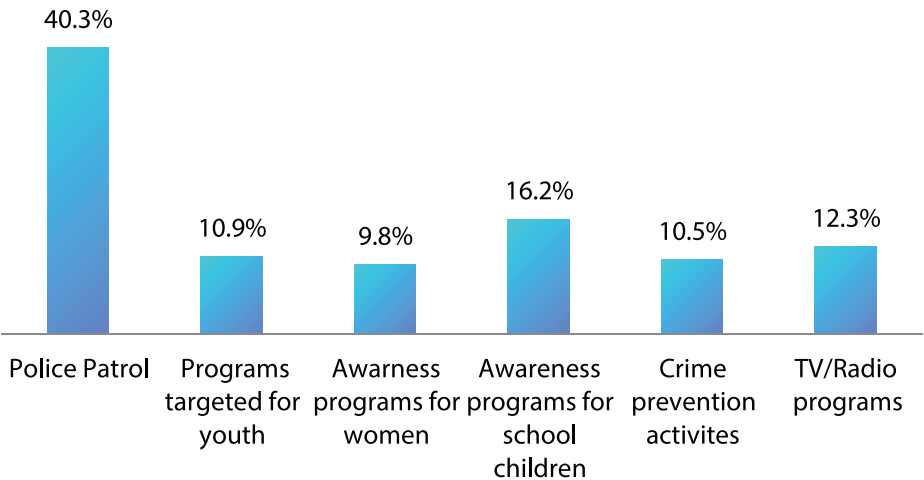


Figure 20: Types of crime prevention activities

Figure 21 shows the perception regarding the effectiveness of the crime prevention activities according to participants who are aware of the crime prevention activities (22% of the participants, figure 18). Only few (12%) stated that crime prevention activities of the police were effective.

A larger percentage of 41.9% said that the activities are effective to some extent. About one quarter (27%) of the respondents had a neutral attitude and 14.5% stated that crime prevention activities were very unsuccessful.

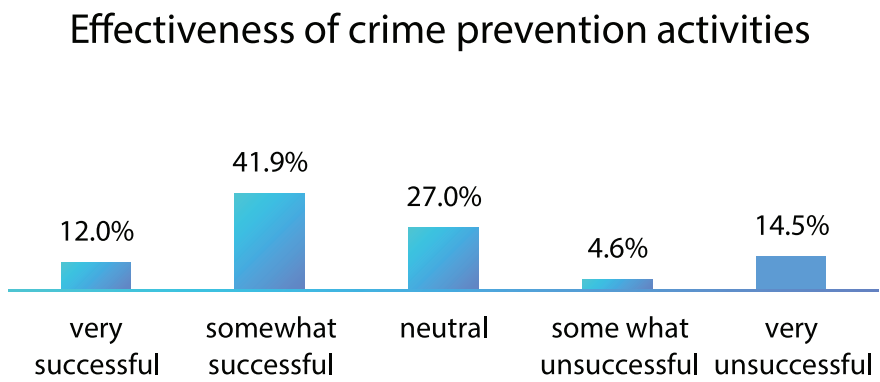


Figure 21: Effectiveness of crime prevention activities

The participants identified some difficulties they face in enforcing the law in crime prevention. According to the focus group participants, the two major factors that hinder the crime prevention activities are

time restriction and politics. For example, when describing about time restrictions in enforcing the crime prevention laws, one participant stated as follows;

*...especially the drug dealing suspects...we have to let them go because we can keep them in the cell for a certain period by law. According to law, we have to let them go within 24 hours. So that is a gap in our service provision.....that is the case even in planned operations. We have to take him to a 'qazi' if we want to keep the convict in the custody for more than 24 hours...They (courts and qazis) attend to so many issues like all civil cases. We don't have to attend all civil cases, but we have to attend all the criminal cases... We try to attend all the cases and sometimes we do not get that '24' hours for each case.*

Mass media is one of the most important channels of information gathering and improving awareness. Figure 22 shows that social media was the most common (28.3%) mass media among the participants followed by National TV (21.8%) and newspapers (20.5%). This shows that these medias can be used in police

awareness programs. Especially innovative use of Facebook and Viber could be mediums of strengths as they were the two most common types of social medias used among the participants (Figure 23).

## Most commonly used social media

Facebook Twitter Instagram Viber Snapchat Whatsapp

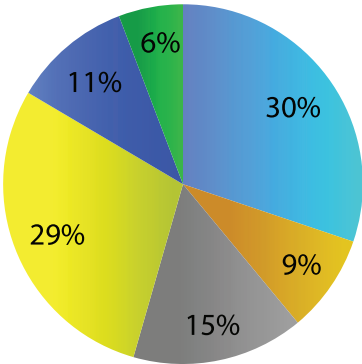


Figure 23: Most commonly used social media

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- In general, the public perception about the police is positive although there are some areas which needs to be improved.
- Community engagement is a crucial element in preventing crime and providing a safer environment. Hence, community engagement needs to be looked into further since the findings showed it is weak and it is an area that needs improvement.
- There is a number of participants who said that they do not trust the police. Hence, some strategies need to be planned, targeted at people who do not trust the police in order to improve their public trust and to create a positive perception towards the police.
- Measures need to be undertaken to make Male' a safe place to live, especially when one third of the population of the whole country lives in Male'.
- Since there is only 9% of female police officers, there is a need to increase females in the police force, increase modern resources in some areas and improve work integrity at Maldives Police Service.
- Different approaches need to be planned for the victims who are not satisfied with the services they received.
- Police officers believe that the services, access and the rights of the convicts would improve as the constitution and criminal procedure code get fully implemented.
- There is a knowledge gap within police officers regarding the criminal procedure code since police officers expressed their concern regarding the issue of not being able to do body checks in known crime cases just because they did not have a court order. Workshops need to be conducted to increase knowledge of police officers regarding the criminal procedure code and responsibilities of a police officer.
- Public awareness regarding the responsibilities and services provided by the Maldives Police Service needs to be improved through media such as TV, radio and social media.
- Strategies need to be planned in order to minimise the influence of politics, since police stated that they were not happy with how politics get in their way of service provision.
- Many of the focus group participants described that promotions were not fair and justifiable in some cases. A more concrete and fair promotion structure is needed at Maldives Police Service to improve the services and job satisfaction.
- There is a need to provide therapy services such as counselling and proper grievances procedures since Police expressed their concerns about the stress they need to cope with in dealing with certain types of cases.



- A clear guideline of when, where and how to intervene in some cases are required since some of the staff expressed such concerns.
- Strategies need to be implemented to enhance and improve the reporting and actions that follows it in minor cases because the main reason for not reporting the crimes was stated as, 'the time taken is too long'.
- Participants of this study trust that police would be able to help women in cases of abuse. This is a positive finding and measures should be taken to ensure that public trust does not diminish in this area.
- The majority of the public is not aware of the crime prevention activities. This shows that either the target audience was not reached or none of the crime prevention activities were conducted in some communities or people are not made aware of these activities. There is a need to create awareness in this area through a wider range of mass media and social media in order to reach a larger population.

