

## CHAPTER—XII

### LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE

#### I. Incidence of crime

Although the Territory is free from grave crimes like dacoity, border raids and sex crimes, it has a special attraction for criminals addicted to drink and debauchery. The trend and incidence of crime in the Territory will be evident from the following statement :

Year	Murder	Dacoity	Robbery	House breaking	Thefts*	Cheating	Receiving stolen properties	Rioting and other disturbances	Total No. of cognizable cases reported to the police
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1956	4	—	2	159	600	2	3	5	1,384
1957	9	1	3	147	462	1	1	3	1,264
1958	4	—	1	134	415	13	1	3	1,087
1959	3	—	—	145	389	2	4	9	1,133
1960	5	—	1	167	432	8	3	5	1,014
1961	7	—	2	132	348	14	2	2	1,046
1962	3	—	—	137	362	6	4	3	1,048
1963	5	—	—	156	348	6	3	3	1,097
1964	3	0	2	195	498	13	—	63	1,177

\* Includes minor, major as well as cattle thefts.

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Year (1)	Murder (2)	Dacoity (3)	Robbery (4)	House breaking (5)	Thefts* (6)	Cheating (7)	Receiving stolen properties (8)	Rioting and other disturbances (9)	Total No. of cognizable cases reported to the police (10)
1956	4	—	2	159	600	2	3	5	1,384
1957	9	1	3	147	462	1	1	3	1,264
1958	4	—	1	134	415	13	1	3	1,087
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\* Includes minor, major as well as cattle thefts.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
1965	3	0	0	165	365	9	2	31	1,103
1966	4	0	1	139	499	18	16	13	1,170
1967	5	0	3	124	485	25	12	24	954
1968	9	1	—	133	440	40	8	46	1,143
1969	4	—	4	132	513	32	8	39	1,455
1970	4	5	2	137	636	15	12	105	1,853
1971	8	1	2	145	550	18	4	109	1,717
1972	7	—	—	171	427	29	1	142	1,908
1973	6	1	6	173	635	15	17	145	2,569
1974	8	1	8	264	935	28	5	106	3,460

Non-locals, especially Koravas of South Arcot, Thanjavur and Madurai Districts, as well as members of a non-local ex-criminal tribe are reported to indulge in house-breakings which however are not so many.

Thefts account for the largest incidence of crime in the Territory. In this category of crime, instances of cycle thefts and *thali* snatchings seem to be common. While bicycle thefts are mostly the work of those coming from outside the Territory, *thali* snatchings are attributed to members of a particular community (*Kalladars*) who have come and settled down in Pondicherry and Karaikal regions from the adjoining districts. Pocket picking among crowds is another common crime noticed during festivals. The festivals at Karaikal Tirunallar, Pondicherry and Virampattinam attract a large number of 'bad characters' who indulge in such activities. Cycles taken on hire are often brought to this Territory and sold here after erasing the original number on the frame and altering cycle parts.

Next to thefts, house-breakings account for the largest incidence. It will be evident from the statement that the number of riotings and other serious disturbances had not been many upto 1970. However since 1971, there has been almost a three-fold increase in the number of rioting cases in the Territory.

There was scope for contraband trade between Karaikal and Sri Lanka as Velvettithurai in Sri Lanka lies only about 120 kms away from Karaikal. Highly durable articles such as wrist watches, fountain pens, blades, silk fabrics foreign liquors, etc., used to be brought to Karaikal by smugglers who took back opium on their return journey. This kind of barter system was adopted because of the difficulty and risks involved in the exchange of currencies. It may be recalled that the Dangerous Drugs Act, 1930 was extended to this Territory only with effect from 1 October 1963. Prior to the extension of this Act, possession of opium was a non-cognizable offence and the offenders could not be arrested or remanded. Such offenders were sentenced to pay nominal fines and the opium was confiscated. There are now evidences of large scale smuggling of liquor from the four regions into the adjoining states. There have been very few instances of piracy, gang dacoity and border raids in the Territory. The number of cognizable cases reported to the police has shown a perceptible increase in recent years which is attributed to increase in population, urbanisation and industrialisation of the Union Territory.

*The law and order situation :* The law and order situation in the Territory has been on the whole well under control since 1954. Nevertheless, the police force had its share of challenges. The elections being held for Parliament, Assembly and local bodies from time to time, the agitations by various sections of employees in public as well as private institutions throw up occasional problems.

Agitations launched by political parties also threaten law and order whenever they turn violent. The Anti-Hindi Agitation launched by the D.M.K. in 1965 in Tamil Nadu had its repercussions in Pondicherry as well leading to looting and arson. In several places crowds attacked the police with a barrage of stones. The Armed Police had to resort to firing to bring the situation under control. Seven persons were killed. Damages were caused to Police and Fire Service vehicles ; traffic umbrellas were set on fire ; public property was damaged. The Government had to call for the assistance of the military. But even before the military could arrive the situation was brought under control.

The agitation launched by the A.I.T.U.C. sponsored workers union of Bharathi Mill in January 1967 posed some problem to the police. In March 1968 some men belonging to the Pondicherry Armed Police resorted to firing without the order of the Magistrate, reportedly at a mob of students and others in front of the Karaikal Town police station. In all seven persons were injured in the firing.