CHAPTER – V

AS MINISTER FOR HOME, POLICE, COURT AND PRISON- 1957 – 1962

Mahatma Gandhiji once said “The police of my concept will be a different pattern from the present day force... its members will be servants, not masters; in fact policemen will be reformers”\(^1\). The dream of Mahatma Gandhiji came true during the period of Bhaktavatsalal when he was in charge of the police department during 1957-62.\(^2\)

In the preamble to the Madras Police Act XXIV of 1859 it is stated that “Police force as a more efficient instrument for the prevention and detection of crime” should be created.\(^3\) Though the positive purpose of the police is protection of life and property of community and maintenance of law and order, it has some other functions also- to bring the evil doers to justice and help in their rehabilitation so that they will become useful members of the society. Functions of the police in the olden days were limited in scope. But as civilisation advanced, hand of police is felt on all walks of public life – from rationing to nationalism, from prohibition to public speaking, from town nuisance to temple entry.

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1 Madras Information, April 1960, p.18
2 Madras Administration Report, 1957 – 1958, p.1
Hence Police are not enforcers of law alone. Under foreign rule they had to function as a limb of repression. They were utilised to strengthen the rulers' control over India. The British treated both the criminals and political opponents alike. So the police were feared but not respected. They were never answerable to the Indian public. The colonial police was created to be the "eyes and ears" of the Government.⁴

Under the Diarchy, police was a reserved subject under Executive Councilors. But, the members of the Legislative Council were denied control over Police Department though they were able to vote on police budget. So, even under Diarchy police were not answerable to the elected politicians.

The Government of India in 1905 conceded that "of all the branches of public services in India, the police by its history and traditions is the most backward in Character".⁵ Such was the assessment of police of lower ranks at that time.

The repressive qualities of police were revealed during the struggle for freedom, especially in 1930 – 1931, when picketing of liquor shops and boycott of foreign goods were undertaken by the Congress party in Madras Presidency during Civil Disobedience times. When a procession

Ibid., p.191
was passing through Broadway shouting slogans, police lathicharged the crowd very severely. Bhaktavatsalam and his uncle Muthuranga Mudaliar were beaten up and arrested. The Government noted this episode as “besides checking the movement in its more violent form it proved the efficacy of the recently introduced short lathi”\(^6\). This remark of the government proves how severe the lathicharge would have been. With the death of Tiruppur Kumaran, public criticized the police excesses. Bhaktavatsalam was the secretary of the Madras Mahajana Sabha at that time. He formed an enquiry committee for this incident and published the report.\(^7\)

After independence the concept of Police in India changed, the process of reorientation started and the outlook underwent a gradual change. The diversion of police activities in other fields started. Some of the advanced countries call their police as “Law Enforcement Agency”.

Soon after the victory in the second general election held in 1957, Kamaraj formed his second ministry. Bhaktavatsalam was in charge of the Department of Police during the years 1957 – 1962.

In this chapter welfare measures undertaken for Police and their families as well as the welfare activities undertaken by the police for the

\(^6\) Ibid., p.194
\(^7\) M.Bhaktavatslam, Enathu Ninaivugal, Jananayakaseva Sangam, Madras, 1971, p.20.
public will be discussed. Welfare schemes probably unknown for two decades were started giving opportunities to police families to supplement family income. Instituting scholarship for children of non gazetted police personnel, engaging police in village development programmes, assisting public at times of natural calamity were all new concepts.\(^8\) The general maintenance of law and order in the State during these years will also be discussed.

**Welfare measures for Police and their Families**

If the policeman is to give his best to the community, he should in turn be cared for. Provision of quarters for all police officers and other staff is an indispensable necessity. During British time despite the Government’s commitment to provide quarters for all police subordinates funds were not made available to them. But after independence the approach changed and the government paid attention to the welfare of the police. Hence construction of quarters for Police Sub Inspectors, Head Constables and Constables at a cost of Rs. 9.61 lakh was taken up in the year 1959.\(^9\) In the year 1963, construction of quarters at Pennadam was sanctioned and completed. In the year 1961, government sanctioned construction of quarters in Madras City and Avadi Police Housing scheme was formulated at Rs 4.5 crore as an important non plan scheme

\(^8\) Madras Information, January 1964

\(^9\) Madras Administration Report 1959, Chapter IV, p.40
in 1963. The provision of quarters for police during the years 1956 – 1969 is given in the Appendix VIII.

Useful handicrafts like sewing and embroidery were taught to the women of police families. Women welfare centres were opened at Cuddalore. Such welfare works for the police families gave strength and encouragement to the police force. Recreation clubs with radios, magazines and indoor games afforded physical relief to police families. Besides, North Vellore Women’s Co-operative Cottage Industry Society was inaugurated on November 17, 1956 at Vellore. Thirty members were trained in tailoring, embroidery and mat weaving. The society produced tables, clothes, pillow covers, napkins, mats, kerchief, etc. Sewing machines were donated to them by district welfare fund.

Indira Gandhi, while she was the Minister for Information and Broadcasting at the centre, inaugurated envelopes making scheme at Policemen’s Families Welfare Center at Kilpauk on December 9, 1958 and opened the Welfare Centre at Kilpauk Police Quarters. Total envelopes made up to the year 1960 stood as 32,74,73 and the wages

11 Police Administration Report of Madras State 1957, p.1
12 Madras Information, September 1959, p.6
13 Madras Information, January 1959, p.44
earned by police family members amounted to Rs.14783.\textsuperscript{14} Poultry Centres for the benefit of police families in Madras city was sanctioned by the Government in 1959. The unit is to be run by the Animal Husbandry Department.

In order to satisfy the needs of the police for medical facilities and recreational activities, a “Madras Police Benevolent Fund” was created in the year 1957 and the Government approved the same in 1957. Every year government sanctioned Rs.50,000/- to this fund and the amount was spent towards relief, welfare, education and amenities for police families.\textsuperscript{15} A Government order to this effect was passed on 23\textsuperscript{rd} April 1957 to draw annual grant equal to the amount, realised from the members by way of subscription, maximum amount of Government grant being Rs.50,000.\textsuperscript{16} Membership to this fund is voluntary and restricted to non gazetted personnel only. The following table shows the grant received from the Government and the amount spent.

\textsuperscript{14} Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State, 1960, p.95
\textsuperscript{15} Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State 1957, p.13
\textsuperscript{16} Government Order No.1097 (Home) dated 23.4.1957
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grant From Government. Rs.</th>
<th>Amount Spent Rs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 1959</td>
<td>37724</td>
<td>55436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1960</td>
<td>45026</td>
<td>66237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1961</td>
<td>48695</td>
<td>67251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1962</td>
<td>50000</td>
<td>97401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1963</td>
<td>50000</td>
<td>113868</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central Government employees strike in 1960 was handled efficiently by Madras Police. In appreciation of this the Central government sanctioned Rs.1,60,000/- to Madras Police. This amount was credited to the Benevolent Fund.

The year 1959 was a memorable one for the Madras Police because they had completed a 100 years of public service and celebrated the centenary during August – September 1959. To mark this occasion, Centenary Scholarship funds were created and were given to children of non gazetted Police Officials. The Government approved the scheme in 1962.\(^{17}\) Table below shows the amounts disbursed as scholarships in the years 1959-66

\(^{17}\) Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State 1962, p.1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Scholarship Given in Rupees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>16900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>24200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>26300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>22200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>19700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>18400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Police Families Welfare Organisation was registered as a Society in December 7, 1959.\(^{18}\) The object was to initiate, develop and coordinate welfare work among the police families such as schemes for supplementing the income of police families providing amenities, medical, education and recreational facilities, to teach useful handicrafts like sewing, poultry farming, envelope making, beedi leaf rolling and garment making.

Police families welfare meet and cultural exhibition was conducted for the first time in November 1960.\(^{19}\)

It was during Bhaktavatsalam’s tenure that Southern Zonal Common Police Force was created – It was “Common Police Reserve Force” shortly called CPRF. In case of emergencies in any of the

\(^{18}\) Madras Information, December 1959.

\(^{19}\) Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State 1960, p.1
Southern Zone States – Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka, entire personnel of CPRF will supplement the armed forces of the State and ease the burden. Expenses of the CPRF will be borne by the inviting State. In Madras, Special Armed Police at Avadi was earmarked for CPRF.20

**Maintenance of Law and Order**

Maintenance of law and order is a prerequisite for a good administration and this is accomplished by the police department. Law and order problems assume importance at times of foreign dignitaries visit, election time, strike / agitation times and communal tension periods.

**Visit of Foreign Dignitaries**

Apart from the Prime Minister, President and other Ministers of Central Government, foreign dignitaries also visited the State. During 1957 the King of Nepal visited India.21 During 1959 Duke of Edinburgh visited India and Madras. In 1960 Prime Minister of Finland and Poland and visited Madras21. In 1960 – 1961, the Queen of England, Duke of Edinburgh and the President of USSR, visited Madras.22

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20 Madras Legislative Assembly Debates 1963, Volume XI, p.431
21 Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State, 1960, p.2
22 Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State, 1961, p.2
Election Period and Political Agitations

Second General Election to State Assembly and the Indian Parliament, i.e House of People (Lok Sabha) was held in March 1957. Preparatory work by politicians changed the atmosphere with uncertainty and police arrangements had to be elaborate in order to maintain law and order. Police had a tough time in this year. It was creditable that the election went off peacefully. Police performed their arduous duties in a commendable manner despite stress and strain on account of elections, and visit of high personages. They displayed a keen sense of devotion in the maintenance of law and order and in keeping crime under control.

In the general election of 1957 Muthuramalinga Thevar contested in Srivilliputtur Lok Sabha constituency and Mudukulathur Assembly constituency. He was elected from both the places but he retained the Lok Sabha seat and vacated the Mudukulathur Assembly seat. Hence bye election to Mudukulathur Assembly seat was held in July 57. It was alleged by the Maravars that Harijans, supported by Congress and helped by the Nadars and police, were attacking them with rifles and revolvers. The relation between Maravars and Harijans was strained and there was an out break of lawlessness, violence, arson and murder. Hundreds of

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23 Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State, 1957, p.4
villages were set fire. Many were killed.\textsuperscript{24} The situation called for stern action by the police. Additional Malabar Special Police and Andhra Special Police Companies were stationed in Mudukulathur. Thevar was arrested in September 1957 under Preventive Detention Act and a conference of all concerned was arranged on September 10, 1957 by the Collector.\textsuperscript{25} The situation became normal soon. The then collector of Ramnad C.V.R. Panicker remarked "I must place on record my appreciation of the way in which the police force dealt with the situation. The difficult situation was handled with restraint and orderly fashion by all concerned. It is difficult challenge successfully countered.\textsuperscript{26}

In February 1962, the third General election was held. The task of ensuring peace prior to, during and after election was not an easy job, but for the well planned and elaborate police arrangements. All political parties commended the job of police. In this year national emergency was declared on account of the Chinese aggression. Riots and disturbances increased in 1962 due to DMK’s agitation on control of prices.

Report of the Language Commission on introduction of Hindi as official language was published in 1957 and evoked criticism from

\textsuperscript{24} Dr.K.Bose, \textbf{Forward Block}, Tamilnadu Academy of Political Science, Madras, 1988, p.90
\textsuperscript{25} Dr.K.Bose, \textit{Ibid.}, p.93
\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State}, 1957, Collector's Remark dt. 23.3.1955, p.98
political parties and eminent men. They organised agitation and portrait burning campaign and action had to be taken for maintaining law and order effectively. In May 1957, E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker of Dravida Kazhagam held out threats to burn copies of the Indian Constitution, portraits of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and the National flag. To meet that threat the State Government enacted "Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act".27 Probibitory orders under section 41 of the Madras Police Act was also promulgated.28 E.V.R. Ramaswamy Naicker was arrested under this Act and put on trial, convicted and sentenced to six months imprisonment.29 E.V.Ramaswamy Naicker launched another campaign in May 1957 for erasure of the word "Brahmin" from the name boards of hotels in Madras City.

General Law and Order Maintenance

Madras State stood first in the crime detection among the Indian States in 1957.30 The crime rate fell down from 15.9% in 1957 to 13% in 1958 in Madras City. Grave crimes fell down throughout the State. The following details confirmed the same.

28 Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State 1957, p.4
29 Ibid.,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Crimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>6192&lt;sup&gt;31&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>5112&lt;sup&gt;31&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>4205&lt;sup&gt;32&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>4080&lt;sup&gt;32&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The year 1958 was generally peaceful. Communal situation was satisfactory and there were no major clashes during that year. Labour was restive. The downward trend of crime may be attributed to the increased and vigilant policing.

The strike in Harvey Mill at Madurai in the year 1959 to protest against the introduction of revised work load was called off after two months and there was no untoward incident reported.

In 1962, despite the unfavourable economic conditions, the grave crimes registered a fall of 9% which was due to the hard and sustained work put in by the police.

<sup>31</sup> Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State, 1957, p.2  
<sup>32</sup> Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State, 1959, p.3.
Service rendered by the police to the community

Traditionally the police force is considered to be the protectors of people and enforcers of law. But they should be alive to the cultural aspects of life also. It was in Bhaktavatsalam's period that police evinced keen interest in Social Service. Participation of police force in community service such as Village Development Schemes was helpful in bringing the force in friendly contact with public and fostering a good police-public relation. While participating in the Police Superintendent's Conference at Ooty in May 1959, Bhaktavatsalam said that as the public look to the police for protection, police in turn should serve the people and earn their good will. 33

Usually police enter village with lathis and rifles but in the changed atmosphere, they enter village with crowbars, pick axes and spades for developmental works. They seek the villagers' co-operation and give a new look to the villages by undertaking village development activities. It was thus the Chengalput District Police force laid good approach road of two miles length, built a brick and mortar colony for Harijans at Chembarambakkam. 34

34 Madras Information, September 1959.
In order to prevent the problem of begging, the Madras Prevention of Begging Act-The Madras Act III of 1945 was passed and the Act provided for sending persons begging in public places to a special home or work place. Government Care Home for Beggars at little Kancheepuram was a product of police efforts and it was opened by Bhaktavatsalam.35

In South Arcot a six furlong road was laid in Salai Agaram Village by the Police force. They also dug wells and built parks. In North Arcot armed reserve men were engaged in building a work shed for North Vellore Women’s Industrial Co-operative Society. In all districts except Madras and the Nilgris, armed reserve men were employed for development work. Villages in Community Development Block or National Extension service area were been chosen for development work.

In Madurai District, Karisalpatti and Thayaneri were two villages selected for development work by the police. The two villages were divided by a channel, there was no approach road, the elementary school was functioning in a dilapidated thatched shed, sanitation of the village was deplorable, the village temple was in a dilapidated condition, the drinking water well was covered with shrubs, and pits all around. The

police set to their task of changing this sorry plight.\textsuperscript{36} Internal roads were laid and levelled. The channel dividing the two villages was dressed and defined. The village temple was renovated. The well was repaired, a parapet wall and a cement platform was built. Surroundings were cleaned. School building was constructed with the help from Government and public. A Harijan colony with 14 houses was built with the co-operation of police and villagers. Bhaktavatsalam opened the new school building in July 1958 and in fact inaugurated a new life in the village of Karisalpatti.\textsuperscript{37}

Karisalpatti is just one of the village where the police had undertaken the projects for the betterment of the community. In each district, they selected one village and completed works like laying roads, construction of schools, community halls and Harijan colonies. Thus the police of Madras State took up one more role in their activities and proved they were not only enforcers of law, but also servants of people. Their efforts were appreciated by people. Kattupakkam Village near Poonamallee was given a new look with good approach road and playground.

\textsuperscript{36} \textbf{Madras Information}, November 1958, p.22
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid.}, p.25
Maternity hospital at Nazrethpettai was built with the entire labour provided by Madras City Police Force and the project was opened by the then Union Home Minister Govind Vallaba Pant in 1958.\textsuperscript{38}

Thus the period witnessed that the policeman is a friend of people at all times but more so at times of storms, cyclones, floods and famines etc. The floods at Madras in November 1960 caused damages to properties in Madras city and sufferings to people. Many tanks breached, many families were rendered homeless and communication was paralysed. The entire rank and file of Madras police as well as mofussil police put aside their normal work and rose to the occasion and provided relief to the victims. Police rescued people, prepared food and distributed to the people.\textsuperscript{39} Public and press highly commended the work of police. This also paved the way for a better police – public relationship.

"May I Help You" squads were formed in the year 1957 to promote good relation between the public and police and to create a feeling that police are at the service of the public. The Squad made door to door enquiries in one or two streets daily to enquire their needs. The Squad also helped the public at Railway Stations, Bus Stops, Hospitals and Temples by guiding and directing them. The good work turned out by

\textsuperscript{38} History of the Madras Police, \textit{Op.cit.}, p.539

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State}, 1959, p.22
them was appreciated by the public and created a better cordiality
between the police and the public. Boys Club was started in the year 1959
to wean away juveniles from resorting to crime.40

The Home Guards organisation was raised in 1963 under Madras
Home Guards Act 1963. In October and November 1964, Home Guards
did excellent work for enumeration of four lakh house holders for family
ration system and distribution of the same.

At the close of Bhaktavatsalam’s period, 62% of the police were
provided with quarters in districts and 75% in city. F.V. Arul, Inspector
General of Police remarked at a meeting on March 9, 1967, “we used to
receive 75 lakh of rupees every year for the police housing system. The
housing programme drawn 10 years ago was pushed through with
considerable drive and adequate funds”.41

While the evil deeds against the police are remembered the benefits
they confer, the property they restore, the safety they have secured are
forgotten or disregarded. The specific purpose of changing the image of
police from “men with lathis and rifles” to “men with social awareness
and sympathy for the less fortunate and under developed communities”

40 Report on the Administration of the Police of the Madras State,1959, p.22
41 F.V. Arul, Inspector General of Police, “Problem of Police Force” at a meeting
held at Mylapore, Madras on March 9,1967 and as reported in Madras
Information April 1967, p.23
was successfully achieved. They have proved effectively that they are not masters but servants of people as visualised by Gandhiji.

As in charge of Courts and Prisons, Bhaktavatsalam brought about many reforms in the affairs of the Courts and Prisons to benefit both the public and prisoners. The Madras Civil Courts Act 1959 (Madras Act 17 of 1959) amended the Madras Civil Court Act 1873 so as to provide for appointment of vacation civil judges who may entertain appeals and suits pending in any civil court adjourned for summer vacation. This enabled the litigant public to institute suits during summer vacation and removed their hardships and inconveniences caused to them during court vacation time.

The Madras Children (Amendment) Act 1958, amended the Madras Children Act of 1920. The amendment provided for maintenance, welfare, education, character and training of youth offenders and children who are uncontrollable or destitute. The Correctional Institutions where such juvenile criminals were given training were called Certified Schools. They were renamed as Approved Schools. Whipping as a punishment was abolished by this amendment. The Act came in to force from May 6, 1959.

The Madras Act XI of 1958 amended the Prisoners Act 1900. It abolished transportation as a punishment.
Bhaktavatsalam exhibited his sense of humanitarian concern even for the prisoners and criminals. Literary education was imparted to prisoners and young criminals. They were called by names. The system of calling the prisoners by number was abolished. Young criminals and juvenile delinquents were received at Reception Homes and rehabilitated for future life at Approved Schools. Weaving, tailoring, spinning and carpentry were taught to them in the approved school. In the year 1960, there were 4018 approved schools, 472 reception homes and 37 after care schools.

Thus as in charge of Home, Police, Court and Prisons Bhaktavatsalam changed the concept of police from a mere watch dog of law and order to a force interested in the welfare of the community. The improvements brought about by him in the affairs of the courts and prisons lime lights his benevolent nature.