CHAPTER-V

CRIME DETECTION AND PUNISHMENT

The police force played a dominant role in maintaining law and order in the state. They were posted in different strategic areas to avert crime and to restore peace. Even then, some parts of the empire witnessed violence. Therefore detection of crime was one among the primary functions of the police organization. Naturally, it found a significant place in the social set-up of medieval Kerala. A study of the records revealed the above facts. Various methods were adopted to detect crime, based mainly on the customary laws and principles of the land. But there was no written code of law and the laws varied from person to person, caste to caste and place to place.\(^1\) As the King was the head of the State and embodiment of authority, all the powers were vested in his hands. According to his conviction, new rules were framed for the guidance of revenue, criminal and civil officers, based partly on the Dharmsastras in the earlier days and partly on the regulations then in force under the East India Company’s Government in the later period.\(^2\)

Crimes

People of all ages by nature were prone to commit mistakes for certain reasons. Crime was not something peculiar to Travancore. There was no organized crime, nor were there professional criminals. The commonest offences were those against the person, against property and those involving disputes regarding the possession of land.


with cases of smuggling and forgery. Varieties of crime, both criminal and civil, were committed. But the people of the early days were not aware of any distinction between the criminal and civil offences. Crime was referred to an action or series of actions punishable under the provisions of the Penal Code.

Murder was a serious crime. The ordinary causes for murder were sexual jealousy, sudden provocation, drunkenness, rowdism, property dispute, poverty and unemployment. The implements used for perpetration of the crime were knife, chopper, dagger, axe, pestle, stick, poison, and strangulation. In Kazha Kuttam Station limits, a girl of 18 was burnt to death by her husband by pouring petrol over her and setting fire in 1937. The motive was that he suspected the fidelity of his young wife. Sometimes death was caused by accidents or by mistake. In a labour trouble at Alleppey, labourers were organizing and agitating for increase in their wages. Later on, they indulged in lawless acts such as pelting of stones at the police station and setting fire to a coir factory. The military and the police tried to disperse the mob but failed. So they opened fire and as a result two died of gun shots. Similarly poverty was one of the major causes of the crimewave. Driven to despair by extreme poverty, one Raman of Nedumangad in Trivandrum district, who had lost all hopes of supporting his family consisting of five

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5 T.A.R., 1939-1940, p.5.
8 Ibid., p.17.
members, killed all of them while sleeping at night and committed suicide by stabbing himself.\(^9\) Murder committed by educated men were rare in Travancore.

In the eyes of the law, crime against the King, the village assemblies and the temples were treated as treason and so they were considered heinous offences. Murdering the members of the royal family, default in the payment of fines imposed by the King, violation of grants made by the rulers and failure to pay contribution to meet the expenses of worship as demanded by them were some of the crimes against the King. The wrong doers of the above crimes were labelled as traitors.\(^10\)

Conversion to other religions was also a crime. In South Travancore, in a place called Nattalam, one Nair officer Neelakandapillai was converted into Christianity by De llenoy. Due to the instigation of the Nairs and Brahmins, Neelakandapillai was shot dead near Aralvoimozhi.\(^11\) Giving false address was another important crime. In Devicolam station, a criminal named Karuppan gave his address as Chennapuram of Tinnelveli. The Tinnelveli Police enquired into the matter and reported there was no such village. The matter was reported to the Devicolam station. As the criminal was in the Central Jail, his address was then ascertained.\(^12\)

Theft was another crime. Theft was of different types. They were dacoity and robbery, house-breaking and theft by night, house breaking and theft by day, house theft,

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\(^9\) Judicial File No : 1742, Administration Report of the Police Department for 1116 M.E, 1940-1941 A.D.


\(^12\) G.O No : 7/1937, dated 6-1-1937.
ordinary theft and cattle thefts. The menace of thieves not only affected the general peace and public welfare but also increased the administrative burden of the government. In the early Chera kingdom, the highways and trunk roads were infested with robbers. Silappadhiharam speaks of the arrest of a thief with the stolen property.

In 1863, robbery was committed in Cothachapally Agaram of Agasteeswaram taluk. It was found out that a certain Maravar of Puttapuram in Tinnelveli district was involved in it. With the help of police officers, and the Sub Magistrate of Nanganacherry, the offenders were caught.

Adultery was considered grave crime from the early period and offenders were mercilessly treated. Though men and women were equally guilty in matters of adultery, man was given greater punishment because in ancient time capital punishment was not given to women. Manu’s law states that the women who commit adultery should be publicly set upon by dogs to be bitten. A man guilty of committing adultery with another man’s wife was to be burnt to death by laying him on a red hot iron platform.

Communal clash, land dispute, boundary dispute and irrigation or water dispute were some other grievous offences. Communal clashes occurred either between different communities or among the people of a particular community. The Travancore Administration Report mentioned that a series of communal riots took place at Keerikad in Quilon district between the Ezhavas and the Mussalmans. The riot broke out because

14 Kuruntogai, 122; 16.
15 Silapadhiharam, XX, 64; 65.
17 Ramesan Nair, K., op.cit., p.50.
of a rumour that a few Mussalmans were assaulted by the Ezhavas. Because of the timely intervention of the police, serious breaches were averted and the situation was brought under control. 18 In 1938 also, a communal clash took place at Vaikam between the Ezhavas and the Christians. 19

Kidnapping was another serious crime. A Christian girl of Kottarakarai aged about twelve years was kidnapped in 1937. The local police conducted enquiries and found it difficult to nab the accused. The Criminal Investigation Department conducted investigation and the accused was arrested. 20 Committing rape was another serious crime. The guilty were given severe punishment. Kochuraman Gopalan of Palavila Puttenveedu in Karyathu committed a rape on a young girl on 24-10-1937 M.E/1937 A.D. A case was registered as Crime Number 68 of 1937 at the Kottarakara Police Station. 21 Counterfeiting coins and currency notes was another criminal act. In 1929 at Thiruvellah Station limit, forged currency notes of E96 and F56 series of ten rupees was found out. Five persons were involved in the matter and one was arrested immediately and the other four persons were arrested later on. In 1929 also at Kottarakara Station limit forged currency notes of TE 6, BE 36 and BE 37 series of one hundred rupee denomination were circulated. This series of rupees was found out in circulation in Trivandurum, Nagercoil, Alwaye and Parur. Investigation regarding them showed that those who handled the notes were innocent. 22

Publishing objectionable literature against the government was another serious crime. One Austin of Marubakad of the Cochin State was arrested and objectionable pamphlets and cartoons were seized. In another incident, one Parameswaran Pillai of Padmanabhapuram was arrested and some cartoons and some articles in Malayalam were seized. Tampering with the sircar records, forgery and corruption were also considered severe crimes. Smuggling was also considered a severe crime in the early Travancore. Cutting of the nose and the ears were the punishment given to those who indulged in them. Black marketing was another grave crime in Travancore. In 1945-46 due to the inflation in the prices of foodstuff and scarcity of essential commodities, black marketing of food materials started. The Government took drastic measures to check black marketing.

A primary factor in the youth criminality was the involvement of youth in drug offences. Young people were involved in the supply of drugs on the streets and also were the primary users of drugs. These youth were involved in a large number of crimes in Travancore.

Crime was also due to drunkenness and gambling. The latter was very dangerous as it led to graver crimes. The police could do little in this branch of their duties without the assistance of the local public. In most of the cases of gambling, the police failed in their attempts to catch gamblers, as news of their arrival was always carried in advance to the offenders. Assaulting Government officials was another serious crime. In 1935, a Huzur gardener named S. Madhavan Pillai was assaulted in the Huzur office premises.

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23 Secret, Travancore police Abstract of Intelligence, Vol VIII, 27th January 1940, p.27.
by a Head Constable. The Assistant Superintendent of Police conducted an enquiry and the Head Constable was transferred from the Traffic to the Reserve Force. The above crimes reveal that various kinds of offences prevailed in Travancore.

**Detection of Crime**

Crime increased day by day. So it was necessary to find out the actual culprits and wrongdoers to give proper punishment. To detect the criminals and real offenders, various methods were adopted. In ancient days, the help of the divine power was also invoked for the detection of crimes, to ascertain the truth and to settle disputes.

**Early Detection of Crime**

With the evolution and development of man and society, crime also grew in diverse forms and degrees. Hence, to check crime and to regulate social order, there emerged the need for correctional institutions. Among the correctional institutions, the police, prison and its allied institutions occupied a predominant position. No man is a criminal by birth, but the criminal instinct is inherent in all human beings, and most of them are not expressed outwardly. To prevent crime, strict enforcement of law and order was made by the Government through strong police force. In the early period a popular method employed in detecting crime was trial by ordeal. The ordeal had been in practice in nine different ways. They were by balance, by water, by fire, by poison, by Cosha, by chewing rice, by hot oil, by red hot iron, and by drawing two images out of a jar into

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27 Confidential Section File No: D. Dis 1773, 1935, Transfer of Head Constable for having assaulted a Huzur gardener.


30 Cosha-drinking water in which images of sun and other deities had been washed.
which they had been thrown.\textsuperscript{31} It was an established rule that the accused was not to be punished unless his guilt was proved by ordeal or till he himself confessed the crime.\textsuperscript{32}

During the Sangam Age, petty cases of the villages were heard in common place generally under the foot of a tree in the centre of the village called \textit{manram}.\textsuperscript{33} Later on, in the medieval period, temples served as the venue of the Court of Justice. The importance attached to \textit{manram} in the early days slowly shifted to temples. The temple was considered the sanctified preserve and conscience keeper of the people. They never dared enough to speak untruth or do an evil deed in the temple precincts for fear of heavenly punishment. Further, the hearing of various cases in the presence of the deity invested the proceedings with an atmosphere of solemnity. So investigations and trials were conducted in the \textit{tirumandapam} of the temple.\textsuperscript{34}

There were rules regulating the seasons during which the several kinds of ordeals were applied. They were designed to prevent the consequences of the ordeal from being prejudiced one way or the other by abnormal atmospheric conditions. The months of April, May and December were normal months for all ordeals. Fire ordeal was to be applied in December and March and also during the rainy season but never in the hot weather. Ordeal by water was to be applied in the hot weather and also in October and November but never in cold weather. Poison was administered in December and March


\textsuperscript{32} Pillai, K.K., \textit{op.cit}, p.300.

\textsuperscript{33} Purananuru, 39, 71.

but not in the rainy season. The rulers never allowed the guilty to be freed and the innocent to be punished. So they used various methods to detect the crime. In the early days people believed in the intercession of divine powers in detecting crimes, to find out the truth and to settle disputes. One peculiar method of trial by ordeal in those days was to ask the plaintiff to put his hand into a pot containing a living cobra. If the cobra had bitten him, he was guilty and so sentenced, if he escaped its bite he was found innocent and was acquitted. Though this method was in vogue, it did not yield the desired effect. However it induced a sense of fear among the culprits.

Another form of ordeal was ordeal by water. In that, the suspect was required to swim through the river full of reptiles. This had to be done in the presence of the Brahmin Chiefs. If he swam safely, he was innocent; otherwise he was guilty. For certain kinds of offences, the offenders were imprisoned in tiger cages. Blasphemy was considered a very serious offence by the old time Malayalee. An old book called Vyavaharamala states that the punishment for this offence was branding—the tongue of the offender with red hot iron, ten fingers in length. Great criminals were at times wrapped in green palm leaves and thrown before elephants to be trampled.


36 Desayar, M., Temples and Social Integration, Nattalam, 2000, p.58.


40 Iron and Lead Ordeals is in the Paliyat Acchans Temple at Azhikal. It was abolished about the year 1814 (Achyutha Menon, C., The Cochin State Manual, Trivandrum, 1995, p.439)

41 Innes, C.A., Madras District Gazetters Malabar and Anjengo, Madras, 1908, p.363.
Another form of ordeal was picking out a bag from two or three bags of coin placed in front of a Shrine. If the bag of coins picked was the bag full of good coins and not the bags of copper coins or silver coins placed along side, then the accused was at once declared innocent. Ordeal by balance was a kind of punishment. In this, the accused was to fast for twenty four hours and weigh himself in a balance, then to take his bath and weigh himself once more, with a recorded accusation fastened on to his forehead, if he weighed less he was innocent. If not, he was more guilty.

The famous ordeal at Suchindrum known as Kaimukku or Suchindurm Pratyayam assigned to the 13th century was introduced by the Namboodiri Brahmans who migrated to Malabar and Travancore in the wake of the establishment of Venad supremacy. Accordingly the accused was compelled to take a ring from boiling ghee. After that his hands were tied with the bandage. On the third day their hands were untied and exposed to the public. If the fingers were burnt they were to suffer death and if there was a sign of burn on the hand the culprit was put into prison. It was seen in the Memorandum of the Dewan of Travancore that a Namboodiri named Trivikraman who

46 In 1832 during the time of SriSwati Tirunal one Namboodiri offender suspected of the offence of adultery was sent to Suchindrum. He refused to dip his hands in the boiled ghee and he contended that the plunging of the hand into the boiling ghee would undoubetedly result in the blistering of hand every body whether guilty or innocent. Then the yogam permitted him to dip his hands in cold ghee. The ordeal was conducted as usual without the boiling ghee. On the third day when the bandage was removed the hand was hurt and on acute burning sensation was felt by him. Unable to bear the excruciating pain, he dashed through the northern doorway which led straight to the Teppakulam and plunged himself into water and died. The matter was reported to the king and the king considered it as an illomen and asked to close the door and put another door. Now we can see the above door just 15 feet from the new door. (Thankam, S.T., Akilathil Arputhakoil, (Tamil) Suchindrum, 1999, pp.127-128.)
committed a crime in the house of another Namboodiri was directed by certain Samratans of Cochin to take his oath by ordeal in the Pagoda at Suchindrum. And also a writ dated 4th Karkadakam 802 M.E/1627 mentioned a Namboothiri Brahmin Kesavan Tuppan alleged to have committed adultery to undergo the hand-dipping ordeal at the Suchindrum temple before 5th Maharam 803M.E/1627A.D. Besides, a Nair suspected of stealing gold was to undergo hand-dipping ordeal. There had been some cases in which the accused was acquitted from the capital punishment after the ordeal. Tellicherry factory records explain one such case. In this case, a Mappila victim was to take the ghee ordeal for giving false evidence. After the trial having no sign of burns on the hand of the culprit, the accused was released by the authorities. Records also mentioned ordeals which were conducted at Suchindrum temple on 3rd-6-931M.E/1756, 7-7-991M.E/1816A.D and 25-12-998 M.E/1823 A.D the hands were not burned and the culprit was freed. Like that, another ordeal was conducted on 3-2-991/1816A.D and 23-12-979M.E/1804 A.D. The hands of the accused were burnt and the culprits were exiled. In 1823 W. Cullen, the Resident of Travancore, reported to the Dewan of Travancore recommending the abolition of the ghee ordeal. He informed the Dewan that “trial by ordeal cannot be permitted to take place in any part of Travancore and you were quite right in putting a stop to such proceedings”.

48 Cover File No: 15887, Memorandam from the Dewan of Travancore, dated 12-6-1827.
52 Thankam,S.T., Akilathil Arputhakoil (Tamil), Suchindrum, 1999, p. 128.
53 Cover File No:15887, 1826, Ghee Ordeal.
was put to an end by Swathi Thirual Maharaja in 1834 A-D. But other types of ordeals were continued in Travancore.

Another type of ordeal to detect crime was that the suspected was given some raw rice. He was asked to chew and spit. If the grain came out dry he was declared guilty. On the other hand if the spot was a white milky fluid, he was considered innocent. Another form of trial by ordeal was known as Smarthavicharam which was prevalent among the Namboodiri women. It was a type of enquiry into charges of immorality brought against Namboodiri women. The suspected woman was driven out of the house. A Namboodiri woman, a widow belonging to Talappilli Tahsil in the former Cochin state was accused of having committed adultery with a Namboodiri of the same village in 1900. The matter was brought to the notice of the Agakoyma. He informed the matter to the Raja for the royal sanction for holding Smarthavicharam. The trial lasted for about a week. At the end of the trial the woman confessed the names of her fifteen paramours. The Raja of Cochin ordered the excommunication of her and her fifteen paramours from the caste. But her sons were readmitted into the caste after

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56 Smarthavicharam-It was an enquiry into charges of immorality brought against Namboodiri women. The suspected woman who was referred as Sadhanam or thing is relegated to an out-house (anjampura) and her family was temporarily excommunicated. The Husband of the lady has to apply to the Raja to conduct Vicharam and issue summons (titu) to them. The panchayat consisted of the Smartha or president two or more Mimansakars or Namboodiries versed in caste law, the Agakoyma or local head of the community and purakoyma or representative of the Raja. The proceedings opened with Iswara Puja at the temple. Trial began with an examination of the accused's dasi or maid servant. The Smartha, Agakoyma and Purakoyma then went to the Anjampura and questioned the accused through the dasi. When she admitted her guilt, the Sadhanam was brought out and subjected to as minute cross examination before all the members of the court with the purpose of eliciting the names of all the persons who had share in her offence. Then she was driven out of the house. The out caste woman some times was maintained by her husband by performing Sudha Bhojanam, but more often becomes a prostitute. All persons implicated by the woman at the trial were also outcasted. (Innes, C.A., *Malabar Gazetteer*, Vol. I and II, Trivandrum, 1997, p.383.)

performing the rites of Suddhabhojanam. Likewise, a Namboodiri woman aged twenty from the Ponnani Tahsil in Malabar was alleged to have lived with a Muslim in 1903. The matter was first reported to the Agakoyma. Then the matter was reported to the Smartan, who reported the matter to the local Raja, the Zamorin of Calicut for royal sanction to hold the Smarthavicaram. The Raja sent his agent to the place of trial. At the end of the trial the accused woman confessed and she was excommunicated from the caste. Afterwards she lived with her muslim paramour in Kottpadi village near Guruvayur. Her other family members were readmitted into the caste after performing the rites of Suddhabhojanam. This system of trial by ordeal prevailed in several temples in Kerala.

Swearing before the deity in a shrine was also regarded as an ordeal. The belief was that the perjurer would be struck blind or would die immediately. If anyone failed to pay a debt or government tax, the offender had to take an oath or a Palli Ambu or the bow of the divine Rama. The bow would be planted on the ground and the person who had for instance failed to pay tax would have to swear by the holy bow that he would pay off the dues within a certain date. The faith of the people in the evil effects of an oath made them pay the tax. Another type of ordeal was taking a solemn oath. The parties went to the nearby temple and after taking bath in the temple tank, kindled an oil lamp in front of the idol. The accused then swore in the name of the deity that he was innocent.

59 Ibid., pp. 361-362.
60 In the temples at Valayanad, Chenganur, Ettumanur and Suchindrum trial by ordeal was performed. Ordeal was determined by caste. Ordeal by balance was reserved for Brahmins, fire for kshatriyas, water for Vaisyas and poison for Sudras (Sreedhara Menon, A., op.cit., p.264.)
of the crime. It was their firm conviction that, if the guilty took a false oath before the idol, he would be visited by all sorts of afflictions within three months and his life would be miserable and not worth living thereafter.\textsuperscript{63} Velu Thampi's criminal code was barbarously severe. Torture, mutilation of limbs, public flogging, imprisonment and death were meted out to criminals without any distinction between the high and the low.\textsuperscript{64}

The Temples of the Medieval Travancore served as law courts with civil, criminal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Based mainly on local traditions and customs and the Dharmasastras, the temple authorities dispensed justice free of charges. They believed that courts could render justice only within the framework of the law but dharma transcended all laws and helped the people to settle their disputes and differences amicably.\textsuperscript{65} When Swathi Thirunal became the King of Travancore, he reformed the entire system by opening Munsiff courts for the disposal of police cases.\textsuperscript{66}

The detection of crime trial by ordeal was very common in Travancore. It was applied both to civil and criminal cases. To establish the innocence of the accused, this system was practised. These forms helped them to detect the crimes of different nature. But this system of administration created a sort of terror in the minds of the criminals.\textsuperscript{67} Therefore, all these methods of trial by ordeal were abolished.

\textsuperscript{64} Sankaran Kutty Nair, T.P., \textit{A Tragic Decade in Kerala History}, Trivandrum, 1977, p.64.
\textsuperscript{65} Desayar, M., \textit{Temples and Social Integration}, Nattalam, 2000, p.66.
\textsuperscript{67} \textit{The International Police Service Magazine}, Vol:VIII, March 1915, No:3, pp.136 - 137.
Methods of detecting crime from 19th century onwards

In the 19th century, the police played a vital role in the detection of crime, because trial by ordeal was abolished. During the detection of crime, the police faced several problems. Clever criminals left very little trace of their crimes. So, when a serious crime took place in a certain locality and the police officer on the spot was unable to trace the criminals, the cry against him was loud. Persons who knew something about the crime did not come forward with what they knew. It was absolutely impossible for the policemen to go on the track of the criminals. So with much pain they detected the crime and found out the culprit.

Taking fingerprint was a method of detecting crime. In Travancore, this system was started in 1900.68 The experts from the Finger Print Bureau visited the scenes of crime and took the fingerprints and footprints found in the scene of crime and subsequently compared them with the fingerprints and footprints of the suspected person. Several cases had been detected and successfully prosecuted by this evidence.69 In the month of Meenam 1113 M.E/1937 A.D a gang of Tottia Naicks consisting of twenty one adults and twenty four infants headed by one Gopalan alias Kuppuswami frequented the State from Chalakudi under surveillance. Their fingerprints were taken and sent for verification. Nine members were found to have previous convictions. As the members of this gang were criminal tribes registered in British India they were soon sent out of the State back to Cochin under surveillance.70 When the criminals were put into prison their


fingerprints and footprints were taken. In the year 1943 one thousand three hundred and fifty four fingerprints were recorded. When theft, robbery or murder took place, the police compared the fingerprints already recorded to find out the culprit. In the year 1942 expert evidence was given by the Fingerprint Bureau for one hundred and twenty nine cases. When the fingerprints of a dead body were received from the South Indian Railway Government, police traced that one. Velayudhan Pillai of Kythamukku, Trivandrum, who was convicted to two week rigorous imprisonment in connection with a crime in 1928 at Vilavancode station was the culprit.

Another method of detecting crime was by interchanging of Constables for acquisition of knowledge of criminals from one province to another province. In 1937 the police from British India informed the Travancore police that some criminal tribes like the Koravas, Tottia Naicks, Kepmarries and Dessaries who came to Travancore and stayed, were responsible for some undetected crimes in British India. The Travancore Government took census of such tribes from 15th to 17th May 1937 and with the cooperation of the people the criminals among them were found out.

Exchanging of the list of criminals and other political suspects also helped to detect crime. By watching the frontier areas secretly, their movements and activities were found out. When a case was unable to be detected by the police in a proper time, they even announced rewards to the public, who would give information regarding

71 T.A.R., 1943-1944, p.77.
counterfeiting of coins or the dishonest possession of such coins leading to the discovery and conviction of offenders.\textsuperscript{76}

Another method of detecting cases was with the help of the Criminal Investigation Department. Men belonging to this department appeared only in plain clothes and visited all sathrams, railway stations, markets, bazaars, traveller's bungalows, campsheds, public office premises, printing press, festival crowds, public meetings, bus stands and landing places and mingled with the common people to find out the culprits.\textsuperscript{77} In Puthenchantai police station, a place in South Travancore a case of house-breaking and theft of property was not detected by the local police: Therefore it was handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department. Govinda Pillai a first grade Head Constable, Narayana Pillai a third grade Head Constable and Veloopillai a Constable were directed to arrest the criminals. They, in disguise, visited the place many times and found out the accused and finally nabbed him. He was sentenced to 3 \( \frac{1}{2} \) years of rigorous imprisonment.\textsuperscript{78} In another instance, a political crime was detected. Vasudevan Pillai of Neyattinkara taluk was a State Congress President. He was searched as per a warrant by the local magistrate for publishing objectionable literature against the government and for conducting secret meetings against the government. The Criminal Investigation Department conducted secret investigation and found out the secret meeting organized by him and was arrested.\textsuperscript{79} At the time of World War, a number of soldiers came out from the Indian Army, Navy and Air force. The Criminal Intelligence

\textsuperscript{76} T.G.G., Supplement, 28 August 1906, p. 617.

\textsuperscript{77} Confidential Section File No:474, Committees and Conferences of C.I.D. Inspector of the State and Sub Inspector of Police, Special Branch Proceedings.

\textsuperscript{78} T.G.G., Vol:XLVI, Feb 25, No.8, 1908, p.27.

\textsuperscript{79} Secret: The Travancore Police Abstract of Intelligence, Vol VII, Feb 17, No:7, 1939, Central Archives, Trivandrum.
Bureau found out these deserters and arrested the culprits. Moreover Travancore witnessed a series of crimes such as kidnapping women for immoral traffic. In 1935 a case of kidnapping women and children for immoral purposes was brought out in Trivandrum. But the police were unable to arrest the culprit. Therefore the case was entrusted into the hands of the Criminal Investigation Department, who registered the case under Criminal No: 289. The Criminal Investigation Department detected the case and found out that Gurumurthi Swamiar alias Sritasri Srima Kasiyasina Madam Srimath Sarva Kolarinath Jagadeswara Gurumurthi Swamiar of Veera Raghavapuram, Tinnelveli bridge posed himself as a ‘Sanyasi’ with supernatural healing powers. His manners and conduct were such as to deceive the public easily. He generally moved with lamps, swords and shields and went about performing poojas in houses and begging alms. He wore a sacred thread and strings of beads like a Sanyasi. Finally they found out that he had four convictions, three in the British India and one in Travancore. In 1936 the Criminal Investigation Department detected an important case of cycle theft which had occurred in the Town of Trivandrum. The local police were unable to find out the culprit. So the task was given to the Criminal Investigation staff. They, in disguise, found out that an Assistant Fitter of the Public Works Department workshop was the culprit. He changed the parts of stolen cycles so as to make it impossible even for the owners to identify them. In 1945, the Criminal Investigation Department detected seventy four cases.

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83 T.A.R., 1945-1946, p.73.
Another method of detection of crime in Travancore was with the help of the Village Vigilance Committees. These committees were formed in most of the villages in Travancore to detect crime. It was only a voluntary organisation formed after 1937. The members of the committee informed the occurrence of crime to the police. They informed the police about suspicious strangers, night prowlers and gangs of criminal tribes. As they belonged to the native village, they could easily identify the culprits and informed the police.\textsuperscript{84} A notorious Vellayani Paramu was caught by one Vasupillai, a member of the Village Vigilance Committee red handed in burglary in a shop.\textsuperscript{85} So with their help the police were able to find out the culprits.

Verification of documents was another method of detecting crime. By this method the history sheets of the criminals were prepared.\textsuperscript{86} The police closely watched the movements of foreigners and their movements were also duly reported. A gang of Iranians with one Hyder Ali Beg Sherazi came to Travancore and continued to move about the State in several detachments carrying on their ostensible trade in precious stones. They were kept under police surveillance during their stay in Travancore.\textsuperscript{87} Their descriptions were also entered in history sheets for future references. Confidential enquiries regarding their character and antecedents were also entered. In 1937 two hundred and fifty such entries were made.\textsuperscript{88}

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\item \textsuperscript{84} D.A.R., 1112 M.E, 1937-1938, p.28.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Proceedings of the Travancore Sri Mulam Assembly, Vol : XII, Trivandrum, 1939, p.1261.
\item \textsuperscript{86} T.A.R., 1933-1934, p.101.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Report on the Administration of Police Department 1114 M.E/1938, p.21.
\item \textsuperscript{88} T.A.R., 1937-1938, p.97.
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\end{footnotesize}
Another method of detecting crime was with the help of beat Constables. When the beat Constable visited the villages, he made inquiries regarding current affairs and the behaviour of convicted and suspected criminals. For this purpose he made contact with the village headman with whose help he was able to detect crimes. Thus effective watch and ward would also help to find out the culprits. Sometimes even the soldiers helped in the detection of crime. The 1929 Administration Report mentioned that a sepoy of 2nd battalion rendered valuable assistance to the police, which led to the detection of a crime and was given a reward by the Commissioner of Police.

Sometimes the cases which were undetected by the police officers were detected by the high officials. The police found it difficult to detect a murder case at Kizhatheru near Nagercoil. Govinda Pillai, the Padmanabhapuram Peishkar came to the house at night in the disguise of a cattle businessman and stayed in that house and pretended to be sleeping. At midnight, from the talk of the washerman's parents he understood that the lady was killed and buried near the Ozhiginacheri river bank. So in disguise, the Peishkar detected the crime and the criminal, i.e., the husband was arrested. By following several methods, the police detected crimes and arrested the culprits and removed fear from the minds of the people.

**Punishment**

Punishments were given to the culprits in order to prevent crimes. With this end in view, in ancient times, severe punishments were awarded even for small crimes. Later, in medieval Travancore also, severe punishments were awarded to the culprits.

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After the establishment of Courts, according to the nature of the crimes detected, punishments were given. Even then, crime increased day by day in one way or other. Dr. Gundert refers to an ancient Malabar practice called Pachaolakettikal which he defines as an old ignominious method of executing criminals: Murders of the worst type were punished by cutting a man into halves or quarters and then the dismembered parts of the body were hung and exposed to public view. The Vadakkanpattu of the Malayalees mentioned the practice of consigning criminals to the ash house.

The crime of tampering with the Sircar records was punishable. The punishment was amputation of the palms or fingers of the right hand of the criminals. A Shanar who lived near the Dalawa’s house had mortgaged his coconut garden to a relative of the Dalawa. After a few years, the said relative managed to transfer the property in his own name with the connivance of the accountant, who was influenced by the Dalawa’s mother. Subsequently, on receipt of a complaint from the Shanar, the Dalawa made investigation into the matter and the complicity of the accountant in this illegality was established. Thereupon, the Dalawa ordered the fingers of the accountant to be chopped off with a carpenter’s chisel in the presence of the Dalawa’s mother.

Branding and transportation was also a form of punishment. During the time of King Marthandavarma, branding was in existence in Travancore. This was the punishment given to fourteen Brahmins who ate non-vegetarian food. So, the mark of a

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92 Pachaolakettikal-dressed in the leaves of cadjan tree.

93 Vadakkanpattu-songs of the North

94 Achyutha Menon, K., Ancient Kerala Studies in its History and Culture, Trichur, 1961, p.280

95 ash house – It was a small room where the ashes in the kitchen were stored.

96 Record No:545, The records related to Veluthampi Dalawa.
dog was branded on their foreheads and they were transported to Tovala.\textsuperscript{97} One Varkala Lakshmi Amma and Annamma Ayiama, who had committed theft, were transported and left beyond Tovala.\textsuperscript{98}

In another instance, the manager of the temple was charged with the crime of Sivadroha for felling the trees of the temples for his own use, depriving the temple of its revenue and misappropriating its donation. The lands of the offender were confiscated to the temple, his house was demolished and on its site a temple was constructed. In addition, he was punished with exile.\textsuperscript{99}

Perjury was punished by cutting off the lips and nose of the criminals and oppression of ryots was visited with corporal punishments and forfeiture of property. The violation of females was often punished by beheading the offender.\textsuperscript{100}

In the 14\textsuperscript{th} century, death penalty was inflicted in cases of serious crime such as murder, dacoity, robbery and treason. Whipping, flogging and mutilation were common punishments even for the most ordinary crime.\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Silapadhiharam} mentions that a thief arrested with the stolen property in his possession was beheaded.\textsuperscript{102} Naladiyar mentions that a man caught in the act of adultery was killed.\textsuperscript{103} Various methods of execution were adopted by administrators from time to time for carrying out death penalty. The

\textsuperscript{97} Mathilakam Records, vol:30, Ola No : 184, 930 M.E/1755 A.D.
\textsuperscript{98} Mathilakam Records, vol:61, Ola No:508, 941 M.E/1766 A.D.
\textsuperscript{101} Sreedhara menon, A., \textit{A Survey of Kerala History}, Madras, 1994, p.156.
\textsuperscript{102} Silapadhiharam, XX,11, 64 and 65.
\textsuperscript{103} Kanakasabhai, V., \textit{The Tamils of Eighteen Hundred Years Ago}, New Delhi and Madras, 1997, p.111.
peculiar method was that the offenders were hanged on the spot where the crime was committed. For that the gallows consisted only of beams and could, with great ease, be transported from one place to another. A hook was fixed to one end of the rope and the executioner forced the hook with all his strength into the flesh below the criminal's chin, and he was then hoisted up and the other end of the rope was made fast to the gallows.\textsuperscript{104}

A Shanar was hanged on a gallows for having stolen three coconuts in the house of a Nair.\textsuperscript{105} Execution was carried out publicly at Kazhukanthitta, Makhamandapam, Tholayavatta, Ottapanamoodu in South Travancore and at Kannammoola in Trivandrum.\textsuperscript{106} The practice of public hanging came to an end from Kollam in 1038 M.E/1863 A.D from Malabar as early as 1894\textsuperscript{107} and from Cochin from 1897 onwards.\textsuperscript{108}

A man from the Nair community who was detected in fornication with a Shanar woman was put to death, and the woman was sold to the Mophalas. If a man had connection with a slave girl, both were put to death, a most shocking injustice to the female, who in case of refusal to her lord, would be subject to all the violence of an enraged and despised master.\textsuperscript{109} Thus the punishment given to the criminals of the age were very drastic. After the establishment of courts, the trial of cases and the punishment of offenders fell to the magistracy.

Imposition of fine was another method of punishment. In the Aykingdom imposition of fine was the common punishment for any crime. The fines were collected

\textsuperscript{104} Ramesan Nair,K., \textit{op.cit}, p.52.
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid}
\textsuperscript{108} Report on the Administration of Cochin, 1897, p.33.
\textsuperscript{109} Francis Buchanan, \textit{A Journey From Madras Through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar}, Vol.II, New Delhi, 1988, p.412.
in the form of gold of prescribed quantity and were paid either to the temple or to the state treasury. The Sabha of the temple received payments on behalf of the temple. A verse in the Kuruntokai informs that Nannan even inflicted capital punishment on a girl who had eaten the mango of his garden tree, which came floating along the river as she was taking her bath. Punishment was given to her relatives to offer a gold image equivalent to her weight along with nine elephants. In the case of default of payment of fines, the defaulter was usually taken by the chief of the district and left within a circle drawn around him. A sharp stone was placed on his head and if the culprits still persisted in non-payment, the chief placed over the sharp stone another stone and tied the two stones firmly. Additional weights were placed one over the other for further non-payment. The weight made the sharp stone penetrate into the head of the culprit, who had either to make the payment or suffer a very painful death. This was done for the prompt payment of fine.

An inscription from the Bhagavathi temple at Kumaranallur says that, if a sudra talked contemptuously of a Brahmin he was liable to pay a fine of 12 kanam of gold and if he hit him with an arrow, he was liable of paying a fine of double the amount ie, 24 Kanam of gold and that if a Sudra abused another Sudra he was to pay a fine of 6 Kalanju of gold and that if he caused his death he was fined double the amount ie, 12 Kalanju of gold. The amount realised by these fines went to the temple of the goddess. The Travancore Special Offences Regulation, which came into force on 22nd November 1925 says “whosoever assaults, restrains, confines or causes hurt to the

111 Kuruntokai, Song No.292.
persons of any member of the ruling family in Travancore shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven year and shall also be liable to fine.\textsuperscript{114}

Ramavarma introduced far reaching changes in the punishment in civil cases. Every dispute between riots concerning landed property was settled by the decision of four men of the village through a proverticar. He settled the disputes by imposing fines. If he was unable to settle the case, it was enquired by the Thadasthers.\textsuperscript{115} At that time the parties had to pay one fanam\textsuperscript{116} as a vow to Padmanabha Swamy. The parties who gained the case were required to pay a fee at the rate of ten percent of the amount of their suit, and the contra-party who lost the case was asked to pay a fee of five percent.\textsuperscript{117} Petitions that were written without names and addresses, if found out were punished according to Dharma Sastra.\textsuperscript{118}

During the time of Munro, he made a surprise visit to Kuzhithurai and found that the Kariyakar was absent by giving false reason for his leave stating his mother's death. When he found out the same he was suspended and imposed a fine of Rs.500.\textsuperscript{119} Persons charged with technical offences and those found guilty of trivial offences were given punishment in the form of fine.\textsuperscript{120} Section 179 of Travancore Penal Code says that a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} C.S.File No: 830, 1925, The Travancore (Special) Offences Regulation.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Thadasthers-They were assessors, they conduct jury.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Fanam-a small silver coin of the value of four chakrams. 16 cash=1chakram, 28 chakrams=1 rupee, 16 anna-one rupee, 100 panam=14 rupees (Velupillai, T.K., \textit{Travancore statemanual}, Vol III, Trivandrum, 1940, p.224.)
\item \textsuperscript{117} Sobhanan, B., \textit{Ramavarma of Travancore}, Calicut, 1978, p.70.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Letter written in 1817, \textit{Selected proclamations by the sovereign from 1811 to 1936 A.D.}, p.29.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Ramesan Nair, K., \textit{op.cit}, p.72.
\item \textsuperscript{120} \textit{Report of the Jail Reform Committee}, Vol I and II, Trivandrum, 1955, p.17.
\end{itemize}
person who obstructs any public servant from discharging his public function shall be fined or imprisoned for a term of three months.\textsuperscript{121}

Another method of punishment was flogging and whipping. From early times in Travancore for lesser offences, the accused were given beatings and for grave offences, beatings till their knees were broken. There were different types of flogging inflicted on the offenders during the time of Sakthan Tampuran. The officers who were found guilty of accepting bribes were flogged in addition to the punishment of imprisonment.\textsuperscript{122} Col. John Munro also followed the punishment of flogging for the Sircar servants for immoral conduct and corruption.\textsuperscript{123} During the time of Marthandavarma, the smugglers were given the punishment of whipping.\textsuperscript{124} In the year 1871, forty four persons were given the punishment of whipping and seventy four persons were whipped and imprisoned.\textsuperscript{125} But whipping required the confirmation of Dewan before execution.\textsuperscript{126}

Imprisonment was another method of punishment. The aim of imprisonment was to look upon it as rigorous discipline for the convicted offender to achieve social revenge for the wrongs done to the society and to make him penitent and repentant. There was even the feeling that such a treatment alone would deter him as well as the society from committing further crimes.\textsuperscript{127} There were various forms of confinement viz, solitary, cellular and separate confinement. Solitary confinement was a kind of imprisonment

\textsuperscript{121} Section 179 of Travancore Penal Code Bill, Regulation 1077 M.E/1898-1899 A.D


\textsuperscript{124} Siva Sankaran Nair, \textit{Marthanda Varma Muthal Munrovara}, (Mal) Trivandrum, 1996, p.203.

\textsuperscript{125} T.A.R., 1871-1872, p.18.

\textsuperscript{126} Cover Files No: 12042, 1867. Powers of Dewan Peishkars and Tahsildars regarding enhancement.

which secluded the prisoner from any sight and communication with other prisoners which might be accompanied with or without labour. Cellular confinement meant confinement, with or without labour, entirely excluding a person from communication with anyone else, but not from sight of other prisoners. Separate confinement meant such confinement, with or without labour, as excluding a prisoner from communication with, but not from the sight of other prisoners and allowing him not less than one hour exercise per day and to have his meals in association with one or more prisoners. Persons sentenced to imprisonment were confined in railed cages, where they could neither stand upright nor move about. These cages were generally kept in the courtyards of the palaces.

At Mavelikara in Quilon district a girl of fourteen while returning home from school in the evening was waylaid and stabbed to death by a man out of extreme enmity towards her father. The accused was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment by the Sessions Court. Section 393 of Travancore Penal Code says that anyone who commits robbery shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may be extended to ten years and shall also be liable to fine. Section 396 says that whoever commits dacoity shall be punished with imprisonment for life or rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to ten years and shall also be liable to fine. Any person who takes or attempts to take any woman with a view to carry on the

130 Judicial File No:1742, 1942, Administration Report of the Police Department for 1116 M.E, 1940-1941 A.D.
131 Dacoity – is defined in the Indian penal code as robbery committed by five or more person.
business of prostitution or induces any woman to carry on the business of prostitution shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to one year and shall also be liable to a fine of one thousand rupees or with both.\textsuperscript{133}

In 1907 in the Sessions Court of Alleppey there was a case of double homicide in which a Pulaya named Poovan Thevan killed both his wife and her paramour. He was arrested and was given a punishment of ten years rigorous imprisonment.\textsuperscript{134} Counterfeiting of currency was given severe punishment. In 1921 the sessions court of Muvattupuzha gave a judgement on the counterfeiting of hundred and ten rupee currency. In that case ten persons were involved. Of the ten persons accused, five were sentenced to five years rigorous imprisonment each, one to three years rigorous imprisonment, while the four were acquitted.\textsuperscript{135} In the case of rigorous imprisonment the jail authorities could compel the prisoners to do some kind of labour, whereas in the case of simple imprisonment no compulsion was possible.\textsuperscript{136} Abraham Chacko of Poozhithara house, Kottayam Taluk and Chacko Dominic of Changanacherry had been doing intensive communist propaganda with a view to overthrow the then system of government. So in order to maintain public order, they were put into simple imprisonment for a period of six months.\textsuperscript{137} It was a warning to others. The same thing happened at Kozhencherry. There, one Kesavan was arrested and he was given two years


\textsuperscript{134} The important unreported Travancore decisions, part I, Trivandrum, 1909, p.31.

\textsuperscript{135} T.A.R., 1921-1922, p.38.


\textsuperscript{137} Confidential section File No:231/47 political agitations retaining of Messors-Abraham Chacko and Chacko Dominic.
of simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs.500 was imposed upon him.\textsuperscript{138} Under the Rubber Theft Regulation IX of 1911, a person who is convicted of an offence against this Regulation is given the punishment of simple imprisonment which may extend to six months or a fine not exceeding two hundred rupees or both.\textsuperscript{139}

For political offenders, forfeiture of property was also made. This punishment was given to only those guilty of high political offences. It was said that this punishment was absolutely necessary for the maintenance of peace and order.\textsuperscript{140} People involved in riots were given the punishment that made them stand for a given time in a stooping posture or putting a stone on their backs or keeping them in water or in the burning sun or confining them under starvation.\textsuperscript{141}

Government officials were also punished when they failed in their duties. A theft happened in a house at Karamana. The Town Police did not properly investigate the case. They simply sent the Police Gumastha to the place and proper action was not taken. So the house owner reported the matter to the Huzur police. The Huzur police investigated the matter and suspended the Town Police for six months.\textsuperscript{142} If the Police officers were absent without leave or conduct of the culprits was not reported satisfactorily they were given the punishment of black marks.\textsuperscript{143} Misappropriation of Temple fund was also given severe punishment. In the temple of Suchindram there is an

\begin{footnotes}
\item[141] Sobhanan, B., op.cit, p.71.
\item[142] Neetu record, Vol.63, 1031 M.E/1855 A.D.
\end{footnotes}
image of a man sitting with his palms pegged onto the ground. This was done as a warning to other people. Negotiation was used as a method of solving problems. A disturbance happened at the Cape on 2-9-1113/1937 A.D about the procession on Good Friday between the Catholic Church at the Cape and Kampa party (village party). The police got involved and the matter was solved by negotiation.

In the early Travancore, concessions were given to the culprits according to the hierarchy of caste, status and the position the person held. If a Brahmin killed another Brahmin he was directed to burn a lamp in the temple and to pay a fine. But if a Brahmin was killed by another person of another community, the accused was tied to the leg of a buffalo and dragged on till his death. Namboodiri Brahmins in ancient Kerala enjoyed many privileges and immunities. A Namboodiri Brahmin was seldom sent to prison, a punishment which would have entailed loss of caste for him.

Commenting on the law and order situation in Travancore, Bartholomeo wrote “public security was restored throughout the whole country; robbery and murder are no longer heard of; no one has occasion to be afraid on the highways, religious worship was never interrupted and people may rest assured that on every occasion justice will be speedily administered.”

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145 Confidential File No:45/19338, Circular regarding riot at Cape.
147 Brahmins and nobles were never punished with imprisonment or whipping nor Brahmins and women sentenced to capital punishment (Achyutha Menon, C., Cochin State manual, Trivandrum, 1995, p.439).
149 Sobhanan, B., op.cit, p.71.
Keeping one under suspension was another kind of punishment. Even police officers were given such punishment when they failed in their duty. On 7-3-1114 M.E/1938 a riot occurred at the Thalayolaparambu market at noon time. Some of the local Muhammadians were obstructing a Thirunal procession carrying two portraits of His Highness the Maharaja led by some Ezhavas and Christians of Manakunnam. As it passed along the road in front of the Thalayolaparambu mosque with music, a riot broke out in which an Ezhava was hurt. People were awaiting the arrival of Inspector of Police for taking necessary action. He neglected his duty. So the Inspector of Police was suspended by the orders of District Superintendent of Police. Similarly a Constable who undertook to despatch a money order for a lame beggar who wished to send his surplus profits to his family was charged with misappropriating the money. The beggar informed the matter to a Constable of the cantonment. Action was taken immediately and the alleged culprit belonging to the Reserve was suspended and put under trial.

There was limit to the punishment awarded by the Criminal Court and the Appeal Court. The Criminal Court could award a fine of Rs.100 and an imprisonment for one year, the Circuit Court could award a fine of Rs.200 and an imprisonment for three years, the Appeal Court could award a fine at their discretion and an imprisonment for fourteen years. When in any case the punishment was severer than the Appeal Court was empowered to award, it was submitted through the Fowzdar Commissioner for the consideration of His Highness the Raja and the British Resident.

150 Judicial File No : 60/40 dated 28.3.1940, Punishments-Police-Suspension of Mr.K.Sankara Pillai, Inspector of Police in connection with the Thalayola Parambu riot.


153 Ibid.
23 of the criminal procedure code the Magistrate of the court of the first class was given the power to grant imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, fine not exceeding Rs.1000 and whipping. The Magistrate of the second class was given the power to grant imprisonment for a larger period than fourteen years.\(^{154}\)

When a female petitioner came before the District Cutcherry her complaint was to be heard and settled at once and on no account was the female to be detained for a night.\(^{155}\) In the year 1871-72, the number of the punished was 13898 sentenced to fine, 892 to imprisonment, 44 to whipping, 74 to whipping and imprisonment, 532 to imprisonment and fine, one to imprisonment, whipping and fine. Of those who were imprisoned, 287 were sentenced to hard labour.\(^{156}\)

**Certain Remedies for Crime**

The report of the police department showed increase in crime. So it suggested certain remedial measures to prevent such crimes. Remedy for murders under sexual jealousy lay in raising the standard of mass education. Murder committed under the influence of drinks and rowdism could be combated by means of temperance movements and the free use of security. Sections of the Criminal Procedure Code which covered murders for property dispute could be solved by speedy disposal of property dispute cases in civil courts, free instruction of action under section 143 of the Criminal Procedure Code and by following a consistent policy in the middle of fixing of boundaries of properties by the revenue authorities. Cases arising out of poverty and unemployment could be reduced by starting adequate relief measures, finding out market

\(^{154}\) Section 17 and 23 of the code of criminal procedure, *Proceedings of Travancore Sri Mulam Assembly*, Vol : XVII, 1941, pp.CXLI.XXV and CdLXXVI.


\(^{156}\) *T.A.R.*, 1871-1872, p.18.
for stable products by a vigorous drive towards rural construction and industrialization of the State.\textsuperscript{157} In the year 1942, 14 cases of murder with the loss of life of twenty one persons resulting in nine suicides and five attempts at suicide due to poverty alone were reported.\textsuperscript{158} For example, because of extreme poverty, one Raman of Nedumangad in Trivandrum district who had lost all hopes of supporting his family consisting of five members killed them while asleep at night and committed suicide by stabbing himself.\textsuperscript{159}

\textbf{Abolition of Capital Punishment}

In the early Travancore, severe measures were adopted to detect crimes and locate the real culprits. The criminals and culprits were punished severely. But after the creation of the court, the ordeal system was abolished but death punishment was given for higher crimes. But on 11\textsuperscript{th} November 1944 Sri Chitra Thirunal, the Maharaja of Travancore made revolutionary changes in the administration of criminal justice by abolishing capital punishment. Travancore was the first country in the whole of Asia to abolish capital punishment. This humanitarian reform of the criminal law, based on the reformatory theory of punishment was a monumental testimony of the vision and farsightedness of the Maharaja. At a time when the advanced Western countries were hesitant and halting in introducing new concepts in the traditional criminal law, the retributive theory of punishment which justifies the primitive doctrine of "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth" was rightly rejected by the Maharaja.\textsuperscript{160} Deterrent theory stood condemned even in medieval times when pockets were picked while the crowd

\textsuperscript{157} Judicial File No:1742, 1942 Proceedings of His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore.

\textsuperscript{158} T.A.R., 1942-1943, p.77.

\textsuperscript{159} Judicial File No:1742, 1942, Administration Report of the Police Department for 1116M.E, 1940-1941 A.D.

\textsuperscript{160} Shastiabda Puthi Souvenir of Sri Chitra Thirunal Maharaja of Travancore, Trivandrum, 1972, p.17.
was witnessing the public hanging of a pickpocket. Most of the countries have now abolished death punishment but Travancore stood proudly in the vanguard of reform movement as a pioneer among abolitionists.\textsuperscript{161}

Detecting crime and to find out the culprit was an important task of the police department. In order to give effective security to the people and the property, the police took some severe measures to prevent crime. To find out the culprit in the early Travancore, trial by ordeal was used. In the later period after the formation of the police department the entire task was given to them. To help them, special branches like Criminal Investigation Department and Fingerprint Bureau were established. By giving punishment to the culprits they attempted to prevent crimes in the future through their diverse branches.

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.