

## Police training schools in the Madras presidency

Dr. B Roja

Department of History and Archaeology, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

### Abstract

The British government had appointed a number of police commissions to increase the efficiency of the police force in the erstwhile Madras Presidency. According to their recommendations there were a number of Acts enacted to organize proficient police force to deal with natives to maintain law and order especially during the freedom struggle. Well equipped police training schools were established to train the police for the prevention and detection of the crime and to maintain public order. The police were trained both physically and mentally with the scientific and modern methods. This research paper is analyzed in historical perspective with the help of archival sources both primary and secondary source material such as crime reports, administrative reports and other published books.

**Keywords:** police commissions, recruit schools, probation, sports

### Introduction

The Madras Presidency was an important administrative unit of the British India, consisted of the present Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Odisha. The Torture Commission of 1855 had brought to light great disapproval in the working of the police in the Madras presidency. With the Revolt of 1857, the British crown took over the initiation of organizing police administration <sup>[1]</sup>. The Police Commission under William Robinson, the first Chief Commissioner of Police recommended for the separation of revenue and police functions and the placing of the police establishments under independent European officers for efficient performance. Thus, the Madras Police Act XXIV of 1859 was passed, under Section 3(a) of this Act, the police force was established in the Madras Presidency. The British Government appointed Superintendent of Police for each district and eventually two Superintendents in larger districts under the Commissioner of Police as the chief head of the presidency. In the month of August 1860, a Central Police Commission was organized to inquire into the whole question of police administration in India and to submit proposals for increasing the efficiency and reducing the excessive expenditure. The Commission submitted the report, based on the Madras Police Act, and recommended for the abolition of the military police as a separate organization, and for the constitution of a single homogeneous force of civil constabulary for the better performance. For a unified police system, the Indian Police Act of 1861 was passed on the model of the British constabulary with European District Superintendents for each district and with European Assistant in large districts assisted by Assistant District Superintendent. The subordinate force consisted of Inspectors, head constables, sergeants and constables, the head constable being in charge of a police station and the Inspector of a group of stations. Under the Section 4 of this Act, the Inspector General of Police was the chief of the police administration in the Madras Presidency.

Prevention and detection of the crime and maintenance of public order were the main functions of the police according to this Act <sup>[2]</sup>.

### Police Training School

The selected candidates with no police experience underwent a course of training at the provincial training school in the Madras Presidency <sup>[3]</sup>. For the lower and non-managerial positions the police force were trained at Police Recruit Schools. The first police training school for the constables was started at Vellore, later Central Recruitment Schools at Vellore, Anantapur, Coimbatore and Vizianagaram were established for the training of the police officers. In 1896, on the recommendations of the Inspector General of Police M Hammick, I.C.S., a temporary training school at Vellore for the training of Inspectors and also for the Assistant Superintendents of Police, who were recruited in England. By 1897, the training schools at Vellore expanded, and they trained the Head Constables also. In 1900, on the recommendations of H.A. Stuart, I.C.S., this Police Training School was made a permanent and called as Police Training College. The first National Police Commission of 1902, recommended for the well equipped provincial training school headed by a Superintendent of Police for Sub Inspectors and above. The Sub Inspectors were to replace the Head Constables as station house officers. To train the constables, Central Schools, headed by Deputy Superintendent of police, were established in important towns. By 1905, a library and a reading room were established in the training college at Vellore, library was named after D.G Cowie, then Inspector General of Police.

### Central police recruit school of Vellore

A Central Police Recruit School for training police constables was also established in Vellore in April 1908, and in the next year, a police museum which was located at the Chief Office,

Madras, was shifted to Vellore. The school catered to training requirements of the districts of North Arcot, South Arcot, Chengleput, Salem, Thirichirappalli, Tanjore, Madurai and the Railway Police, Madras. For the remaining districts of the erstwhile Madras Presidency, Police Recruit Schools were established in Coimbatore, Vizianagaram and Ananthpur. The school at Coimbatore was started in 1912. These schools for training of constables were established for group of districts and each school was under a Deputy or Assistant Superintendent assisted by a staff of Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors. The recruits spend some time in the reserve for the purpose of learning their duties and they were trained in shooting and drilled but not up to the standards of military efficiency [4]. The police officers after their probation period were posted in their respective districts for their practical training. The course was for a period of six months and it was opened throughout the year. They were given instructions in drill, discipline, elementary law and police procedure, etc [5]. One head constable from each district was sent to Intelligence Bureau for specialist training in finger prints, foot prints and photography for investigating offences relating to coinage,

forged currency notes, postal fraud, forgery and other intricate cases. In handling difficult cases like forgery slips and identification of unknown persons they were assisted by the Finger-Print Bureau.

#### Central recruitment school at Vizianagaram

The Central Recruitment School at Vizianagaram which was closed in 1921 was reopened in 1929 due to more number of recruits, out of 419 candidates, 229 were successfully trained [6]. During World War conditions it became necessary for the government to increase the maximum strength of recruits. For this purpose the Central Recruits School of Vizianagaram was reopened in 1939 [7]. The numbers of admissions during this year were 265 and after successful completion of the training, they were sent to their respective districts for practical training. In 1940 the school was again closed and was opened on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1947 [8].

The following tables show the detailed statistics of the probationer police officers trained in various Central Recruit's Schools of Madras Presidency during 1928 [9].

**Table 1**

Name of school	No of recruits	No. received training	No of recruits sent out after training	No of casualties
Central Recruit's School, Vellore.	177	477	235	156
Central Recruit's School, Ananthapur.	218	526	369	96
Central Recruit's School, Coimbatore.	141	508	337	56

The following table shows the Central Recruit's Schools of Madras Presidency during 1929 and the detailed statistics of

the probationary police officers [10].

**Table 2**

Name of school	No of recruits	No received training	No of recruits sent out after training	No of casualties
Central Recruit's School, Vellore.	262	579	437	137
Central Recruit's School, Ananthapur.	256	586	498	85
Central Recruit's School, Coimbatore.	278	447	447	53
Central Recruit's School, Vizianagaram.	-	419	229	42

The above statement gives details about the number of admissions and trained officers in the training schools and there were four probationary Assistants District Superintendents of police and one Deputy Superintendent of police under training in the Provincial Police Training School, Vellore. Ninety probationary sub-inspectors and two probationary inspectors joined the school and six probationary sub-inspectors and seventy four probationary sub-inspectors passed out after the final examination. The standard of education was higher than the previous years and many of the probationers were graduates. During 1930, four probationary Assistants District Superintendents of police and one Deputy Superintendent of police were trained in the Provincial Police Training School. One probationary Assistants District Superintendents of Police and two probationary Deputy

Superintendent of police were recruited and underwent training at the beginning of the year and they were posted to the respective districts. Two probationary Inspectors and ninety probationary Sub-Inspectors were in the school at the beginning and three more probationary Inspectors and ninety three probationary Sub Inspectors later joined. During the same year, 177 police officers were recruited and trained in the Central Recruits School, Vizianagaram, and there were 23 casualties. In training of the subordinate officers there was high percentage of failures during 1936 and special steps were taken to train them in drills, riding and other outdoor works [11]. The following table shows the number of recruits enlisted during 1939 in various Central Recruits Schools who were trained and sent out for the duties connected with the war [12].

**Table 3**

Name of school	No of recruits	No received training	No of recruits sent out after training	No of casualties
Central Recruits School, Vellore.	287	512	481	29
Central Recruits School, Ananthapur.	302	550	417	24
Central Recruits School, Coimbatore.	189	472	349	11
Central Recruits School, Vizianagaram.	-	265	265	-

In the Central Recruits School of Ananthapur, 31 recruits were from Banganapalle princely state. In 1945, the selected police recruits of the Nellore district were sent to the Central Recruit School, Vizianagaram for the training. Many of the Sub Inspectors recruited were graduates and the number of men in the force classified as illiterates shown a further decrease. In the beginning years the percentage of officers trained was less compared towards the Independence. In 1912, only three officers were trained, in 1913, three officers were trained, in 1914, two officers were trained and in 1915, nine officers were trained from various training schools in the Madras Presidency. Towards the Independence, more number of police men were recruited and were well trained to maintain law and order.

### Training Schemes

The course of instruction in these schools included Criminal Law and Law of Evidence, police procedure and practice, the habits and customs of the criminal gangs <sup>[13]</sup>. A revised curriculum of training was designed for Sub-Inspectors on practical and scientific investigation of crime on modern lines. Instruction in précis writing was started in 1928 <sup>[14]</sup>. Instruction in horse riding was also given and a police band was maintained. The Inspector General of Police, Sayers F, in 1938, had recommended for a new curriculum of training on modern lines for efficient functioning <sup>[15]</sup>. The illiteracy among the head constables and constables were gradually eliminated <sup>[16]</sup>. The recruited members of the police forces were regularly drilled in manual and platoon exercises with the addition of baton exercises and lining streets to clear crowds during the emergencies. The physical fitness of the police recruits was certified by the Zillah Surgeon and their health was maintained well. The government quarters were provided to Sergeants, Sub-Inspectors, head constables and constables. These schools worked efficiently and produced good results throughout the British rule <sup>[17]</sup>. The recruits spend some time in the reserve for the purpose of learning their duties and they were trained in shooting and drilled but not up to the standards of military efficiency <sup>[18]</sup>. The police officers after their probation period were posted in their respective districts for their practical training. In 1928, ex-military men were employed as instructors in schools as an experiment and it proved a success <sup>[19]</sup>. In 1930, the chemical examiner from Madras delivered a series of lectures to certain Inspectors and Sub-inspectors on the technical aspects of the investigation of crime, on the preservation and dispatch of exhibits for chemical examination. These officers were instructed to teach other officers in their districts. From the year 1930, probationary Sub-Inspectors and superior officers were given instructions in these subjects in the police training school <sup>[20]</sup>, which had improved the training in these schools. A new system was introduced in 1930 and two sessions were held for the training of sergeants <sup>[21]</sup>. During 1932, the usual training in the Provincial Police Training School was supplemented by the some useful innovations. The Sub-Inspectors were taught practically how to take foot prints, and learned to apply the Facial Index System, special lessons in observation, and finger prints expert gave lectures on the recording and classification of finger prints. The Deputy Inspector General of Police to the Criminal Investigation Department and the Railways lectured

on crime and the maintenance of history sheets. Few selected habitual local criminals of different class addressed the students on their methods and experiences in their criminal careers. The Inspector General of police and Deputy Inspector General of police periodically inspected these training Schools. In 1938, Indian Sergeants were recruited for the first time and were trained at the Police Training College. The first batch of probationary Sub-Inspectors were trained under the revised curriculum at the police training schools from 1939. The Central Recruits School at Vizianagaram, was reopened with effect from 15<sup>th</sup> November 1939 and the maximum number of recruits in each of the recruits schools was raised temporarily to impart training to the men due to the outbreak of World War <sup>[22]</sup>. Vincent H.L, Sub-Inspector of Police, Vizagapatam district completed his probationary training and was posted back in the year 1938 <sup>[23]</sup>. Educated natives competed for Inspectors post as their salaries were increased from time to time but the pay for the lower ranks was insufficient and did not attract them. Assistant Superintendents and Inspectors were appointed on probation and they were required to attend the Police training School for a certain period.

### Training of Sub-Inspectors

The Sub-Inspectors were trained in Finger-Print course and they also visited jails and gave instructions in taking and dealing with finger-prints to the Sub-Inspectors and other selected officers of the headquarters. These police officers after attending these courses in turn instructed others in the districts. This was an innovation and these courses tend to minimize the number of fingerprint slips. In the provincial police training school at Vellore, officers of the cadre Deputy Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Inspectors and Sub-inspectors were trained for a year and posted to districts for practical training where as the head constables and the constables were trained for a period of six months.

### Training of constables

The constables were not promoted to head constables unless they passed certain tests <sup>[24]</sup>. For the constabulary the elementary practical education was given to them besides drill, physical training, musketry and the use of arms. They were trained to take action during riots such as warning the crowd before firing, fire control, causality and others things <sup>[25]</sup>. At the head quarters of each district there was a school supervised by a specially selected Inspector or head constable and through this all recruits have to pass before being sent to police sub divisions of the districts.

### Training of station house officers

The Station House Officers went through the examination prescribed for their rank. Every member of the constabulary was enlisted on condition of serving and residing where ever he was posted and they were retained within their own districts. The policemen enlisted were between the ages 18 to 25 except under special circumstances with the sanction of the Inspector General of Police. The village police did not undergo any police training <sup>[26]</sup>. The training of the auxiliary police forces was from the educated classes, learned professions and urban units <sup>[27]</sup>.

### Periodic Inspections

There were periodic inspections by the Inspector General of police. F. Armitage had inspected the provincial police training schools twice and Central recruits School at Vellore and Anantapur once and appreciated the Assistant Superintendent, Keatinge for his control and training of the East Coast Special police during 1925<sup>[28]</sup>. The East Coast Special Police force was taken for demonstration purposes to Kalyana Singapore in the Parvatipur Agency in the month of March for a period of nineteen days and this occasion was useful for instructional purposes. The training of this force has received attention and its periodical inspection by a military officer had begun from this year<sup>[29]</sup>. The health of the probationers was maintained with the regular medical checkups.

### Presidency police sports

The Presidency Police Sports and the annual conference of police officers were held in the presidency as part of training program. The annual sports were held for general fitness and the District sports were also held mostly in the district headquarters. The selected Station House officers organized games in each district which created an opportunity to the police officers to meet among themselves and discuss on important matters and to maintain good physical fitness<sup>[30]</sup>. The Presidency Police Week was celebrated every year and the main item was inter-district sports and musketry competitions. The Armed Reserves had showed much enthusiasm for field sports<sup>[31]</sup>. The scheme under which games were conducted in the selected rural centers by non-official committees under the guidance of the police was extended to each district. The government approved a proposal for the police to instruct elementary and secondary school teachers on 'safety first' measures<sup>[32]</sup>. The Officers Conferences were held and these gatherings were helpful as the discussions held on important subjects and problems which brought efficiency of the police force.

### Conclusion

During the British rule there were four police training schools in the whole of erstwhile Madras presidency located at Vellore, Coimbatore, Vizianagaram and Ananthpur. The Central Recruitment Schools at Vellore was the first training school to train the imperial police force. The police forces were given probationary training and were posted back to their respective districts for practical training. The standard of the recruits was generally good, the schools were efficiently run and the discipline and the conduct of the recruits was well maintained. The management of the hostels was also attached to these schools for better convenience. To perform the police duties, the police force was constantly drilled to improve work efficiency to prevent and detect crimes and criminals. With the revised curriculum from time to time by adopting scientific and modern methods, the police force was well trained to maintain law and order.

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