

POLICE CIRCULAR ORDER No. 199

Temple
thefts in the
State

Thefts and burglaries from various temples of the State have caused growing concern and were subject matter of debates in the State Assembly and Loksabha. A study of this crime reveals that it is on the increase from year to year as would be evident from the following figures of Puri District. Most of the other districts also show a similar trend.

1965	..	3 cases
1966	..	7 cases
1967	..	5 cases
1968	..	12 cases
1969	..	18 cases
1970	..	35 cases

Previously this crime was limited to the metal idols but now while collar criminals have started operating in various temples of the State and removed sculptures for the purpose of smuggling. Unless proper watch is arranged in the temples and thorough investigation of these cases are taken up under supervision of Gazetted Police Officers, the entire stock of sculptures in the state may come to an end.

The following instructions should therefore be strictly followed in future while investigating into such cases:

1. Intimation about temple/idol thefts should be communicated to C.B. as soon as possible.
2. As soon as criminal concerned in such thefts is arrested, C.B. should be intimated by Radio message to depute as officer of C.B. for interrogation.
3. All such cases should be supervised by inspectors and Gazetted Officers according to gravity of the crime.
4. The receivers and bailors in all crimes should be thoroughly interrogated to ascertain their affinity with the criminals.
5. It may be examined if release of any criminal leads to increase of crime in a particular area.
6. Periodical enquiries should be taken up to verify movement of such criminals, because of these criminals should be intimated to the neighbouring P.-Ss.
7. Movement of known white-collar criminals should be verified.
8. History-sheet of temple thieves having P.-Ss. may be opened and sent to C.B. for record.
9. A paragraph in the monthly/quarterly crime review may be included for this crime.
10. List of temples and places of archaeological interest be maintained in each P.S./O.P. During the course of village-visiting efforts should be made to visit these places and sources will be engaged for collection of criminal intelligence regarding thefts/attempted thefts at these places.
11. The Gram Rakhis should be instructed to give timely information about such incidents of their area and keep a look out for such criminals or their receivers into their villages.

Sd/ B. B. Mishra, I.P.
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