

**Times of India**      **23.07.2009** [Social welfare dept has failed to use Rs 42.93 lakh](#) CHENNAI: The social welfare department has still not used funds raised for [rehabilitation](#)

of 45,000 street children in September 2002, the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has said.

The report says the government raised Rs 42.93 lakh through a raffle for rehabilitation of street children in six corporations, but Rs 38.19 lakh remained unutilised until April 2008. Only Rs 4.74 lakh was paid to Madras University's criminology department to conduct a survey on street children. The study was conducted but none of the recommendations were carried out.

This is one of the instances cited in report covering the period 2003-04 to 2007-08 on the functioning of the social welfare and nutritious meal programme department. From pointing out infrastructure and budgetary issues to shortcomings of juvenile justice boards (JJBs) and child welfare committees (CWCs), the report details deficiencies in child protection in the state.

The report says there are only eight JJBs and 18 CWCs in the state, despite the Juvenile Justice Act's requirement of a JJB and a CWC in each of the 30 districts in Tamil Nadu. Children in conflict with law are produced before JJBs, and based on its enquiry, sent back home or to a special home for rehabilitation. Children in need of care and protection appear before CWCs, which conduct enquiries and either reunite the children with their [families](#) or send them to government homes. Social defence commissioner Jayashree Raghunandan says the government has to take the decision to form more JJBs and that proposals in this regard have been forwarded to the authorities.

Vidya Reddy of Tulir Centre for Prevention and [Healing](#) of Child Sexual Abuse, however, says there is dearth of people trained in child protection and child rights. "There is a backlog in CWCs and JJBs because there are not enough people to handle cases. There are simply no qualified people to take up this work. It is also a reflection on our education system that does not pay attention to child rights," she says.

CAG also says orphanages under the social welfare directorate have not been registered under the act. "The main problem is that the state government has not framed the rules for the implementation of the amended Juvenile Justice Act, 2006," says Reddy. The report also makes this point.

The report indicts the government for not separating children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection, saying that mixing them up exposes innocent children to criminal elements. However, Raghunandan says the children have been separated. "In no district are children in conflict with law kept in the same place as children in need of care and protection. They have all been shifted and separated," she says. "Work on all issues raised in the report has been initiated or completed," she added.

Another problem the report points out is the shortage of probation officers, teachers and other staff at observation homes, special homes, orphanages and other centres. An official of the social welfare directorate said they were concerned about the issues raised by the report and

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Written by Administrator

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proposals to resolve them were in the pipeline. "The integrated child protection scheme that is to be launched soon will also solve many of the problems," she said.