

TAMIL NADU

Five from children's home go missing

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Incident came to light when a CWC team went to rescue the children

Officials from the Kancheepuram Child Welfare Committee (CWC) who had gone to rescue five orphan children from an unregistered home in St. Thomas Mount on Wednesday, found that they had gone missing.

A case has been registered with the Nandambakkam police station.

R.N. Manikandan, chairperson, Child Welfare Committee, Kancheepuram, said that the rescue was planned after the director of the home had failed to surrender these children before the Committee as promised.

However when the team and police arrived, none of the five children or the director were present.

When questioned, the warden and cook of the home said that they had gone with the director to a nearby office for some work.

The police, on the other hand, received information from eyewitnesses who claimed that they had seen the children inside the home only minutes before the officials had arrived.

Wall scaled

When the team searched the building, they found a stool near the compound wall behind. "They could have scaled the wall and escaped, since there is no way they could have walked out of the main gate without being noticed by anyone," said an officer.

"Running a home without registration, is illegal. They cannot take children anywhere but should produce them in front of the Committee," said Mr. Manikandan.

The home, Assisi Illam, was run by S. Rosemari and four other nuns belonging to the St. Joseph Congregation, St. Thomas Mount, since 2005.

Registraton not renewed

According to officials, they had been looking after these abandoned children, between the age group of 9 and 12 since they were infants.

The home obtained temporary registration in April last year, for a period of six months, but failed to renew it.

“When we found out about the home, we asked them for more details on these children, but they had no records,” said Zaheeruddin Mohamad, member, CWC, Kancheepuram district pointing to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015 which mandates that no child below the age of five must be kept in child care homes.

The CWC officials would also be filing a Habeas Corpus in the Madras High Court to get the custody of these children.

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