

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Considering the social importance and sensitivity towards wellbeing of children, the present Performance Audit was taken up with the objective of assessing whether Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) has taken adequate measures to secure the rights and entitlements of children in need of special protection as per Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015; Model Rules, 2016 and revised Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), 2014. The performance audit covers a period of three years from 2018-19 to 2020-2021. Audit test checked the records of Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Delhi State Child Protection Society (DSCPS), State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA), Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), District Child Protection units (DCPUs) and Child Care Institutions (CCIs).

### Main Audit Conclusions

- GNCTD's efforts towards providing care and protection to children in need through Integrated Child Protection Scheme were deficient and slow in most areas. No survey was conducted by GNCTD to assess and identify the number of children in need of care such as those without homes, found begging, street children, mentally or physically challenged, orphans, trafficked or sexually exploited, etc. In the absence of data relating to Children in need of care and protection in Delhi, no concrete plan could be formulated nor adequate resources allocated, by GNCTD and their efforts were limited to providing care to only those vulnerable children brought to it by concerned citizens, police, NGOs etc. DSCPS, which is the apex body for implementation of Integrated Child Protection Scheme, failed to provide the necessary impetus and leadership as its Governing Body and Executive Committee were dysfunctional. There were delays in creation of institutions viz. State Adoption Resource Agency, Child Welfare Committees and District Child Protection Units by Department of Women and Child Development, GNCTD for implementation of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme.
- During 2018-19 to 2020-21, unspent balances in budget were noticed due to not executing children care activities such as conducting surveys, improving habitable condition of GNCTD run child care institutions, etc. GNCTD failed to provide timely financial support to NGO run Child Care Institutions with delays in release of funds. GNCTD also failed to avail increased Central share in grants for implementation of Integrated Child Protection Scheme.
- Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), responsible for ensuring care, protection, appropriate rehabilitation or restoration of children in need, did not ensure follow up of progress of children produced before them after issuing orders with regard to their care and protection. Child

Welfare Committees were not uploading its orders on the designated portal for promoting transparency and accountability. They also did not upload photographs of recovered children on Facial Recognition System so as to match against the details of missing children indicating lack of concern towards reducing the trauma of separation for parents and children.

- Child Care Institutions (CCIs) were functioning without registration, there were undue delays in registration and renewal of CCIs by Delhi State Child Protection Society and in taking action against unregistered CCIs, as such allowing them to function without requisite facilities and exposing children to unfit conditions. There was huge shortage of staff (up to 76 per cent) especially in the important posts of Probation Officer/Child Welfare Officer, Counsellor and Educators in Government run Child Care Institutions which severely compromised their ability in providing quality care to the children. Child care institutions also suffered from inadequate infrastructure facilities, insufficient nutrition, clothing, bedding and toiletries provided to children, inadequate medical facilities and significant absence of formal education to children, with only 54 per cent receiving formal education. Similar deficiencies were also observed in After Care Homes, where care is provided to children who must leave CCIs on attaining 18 years of age for two more years to facilitate their re-integration into the society.
- Monitoring of implementation of the scheme for child protection was deficient in many respects. District Child Protection Units were to organize quarterly meetings at district level with stakeholders such as Superintendents of Homes, NGOs, etc. and representatives from Health, and Labour Departments and Police to review the progress of child protection activities but such meetings were either not conducted or conducted with time lag. They also did not conduct inspections of Child Care Institutions as required and where inspections were conducted, there was no follow up to ensure that deficiencies pointed out were addressed. Delhi State Child Protection Society (DSCPS) was required to furnish Quarterly Progress Reports to Ministry of Women and Child Development, GoI. Audit noted that no such Quarterly Progress Reports were submitted by the society. In the absence of regular meeting and inspections, effective implementation of ICPS was compromised.
- Apart from institutional care through CCIs, rehabilitation of children was to be carried out through non-institutional care by putting these children under adoption, foster care and sponsorship. There were delays at various stages of adoption such as uploading Child Study Reports, Medical Examination Reports, and Certificates declaring children free

for adoption by Specialised Adoption Agencies (SAAs). Besides, there were months of delay in filing of adoption petitions before the courts as also in uploading Home Study Reports of Prospective Adoptive Parents. Delays in declaring children free for adoption reduced their chances of getting adopted. Post-adoption follow up was not done in most cases by SAAs due to which there was lack of assurance that adopted children were being taken care of. GNCTD did not implement 'Sponsorship' and 'Foster Care' Schemes due to which the growth and development of children in family environment could not be achieved, especially in cases where the families/relatives and other individuals were desirous of helping the children but were unable to do so due to financial constraints.

Thus Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) did not take adequate measures to secure the rights and entitlements of children in need of special protection as per Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015; Model Rules, 2016 and revised Integrated Child Protection Scheme, 2014.

**What do we recommend?**

1. Conduct regular meetings to review, improve and monitor the institutions implementing child protection schemes and ensure their follow-up. Responsibility of defaulters should be fixed.
2. Adequate staff with requisite training in District Child Protection Units should be ensured to improve their services towards vulnerable children.
3. Conduct Surveys to identify the Children in Need of Care and Protection within a fixed timeline and maintain district wise database of such children.
4. Release funds to CCIs and other institutions at the beginning of the financial year so as to enable them to function properly.
5. Child Welfare Committees may ensure uploading photographs of children brought before them in Facial Recognition Software so as to match with the details of missing children.
6. Complete the process of registration/renewal of CCIs within the prescribed period as per JJ Act, 2015.
7. Provide adequate staff at CCIs and impart them training so that they may can effectively discharge their responsibilities towards childcare.
8. Ensure availability of minimum standards of care in terms of physical infrastructure, clothing and bedding, nutrition and diet and education in all child care institutions and also ensure adequate security arrangement in them.

9. For centralized coordination, complete data may be uploaded in Track Child Portal in a time bound manner.
10. District Child Protection Units should conduct regular monitoring and inspection of Child Care Institutions.
11. Specialized Adoption Agencies may timely upload necessary information including Study Reports of prospective parents and details of children for adoption in the relevant Web Portal and file adoption petitions before the Court without delay. Responsibilities for delays should be fixed.
12. Effective, efficient and timely implementation of Sponsorship Scheme and the scheme of Foster Care needs to be ensured. Follow-up of adopted children as per fixed time lines needs to be scrupulously done.