

Number of Juveniles Down in Kerala: Data

By Saritha S Balan | Published: 08th January 2016 04:12 AM

KOCHI: Even as a heated debate on Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2014 that replaces the 2000 Act goes on, data reveals that Kerala is doing a fair job in this count.

The number of inmates in observation homes and special homes has come down considerably over the years. Children facing trial in criminal cases are housed in observation homes and those found involved in crimes by the Juvenile Justice Board are sent to special homes.

The Department of Social Justice that runs the homes to rehabilitate children does not have a comprehensive data on it, but the present number of inmates in these home indicate a change for better. The number of inmates in the special home for male children in Thiruvananthapuram is three when the total strength is 100. At the special home for female children in Kozhikode no inmate has been housed for the past seven months and same is the case with observation home for female children in the district over the past eight months.

With the number of inmates dipping, reduction of observation homes has been mooted - one for two districts. On an average the number of inmates in observation homes stands at five or less. "Over the past 10 years the number of inmates in observation and special homes has not gone beyond five while it was 25 children earlier," said N Rajendran Nair superintendent, Special Home Thiruvananthapuram. Only two Special Homes, one each for males and females function while observation homes function in all districts except Idukki.

A study conducted by Human Rights Law Network that provides legal assistance to human rights issues using the fund given by Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) on the ex-inmates of such homes also points to the fact that the number of children in conflict with law has reduced. "The final report of the study is yet to be out. The study points out that the number of inmates in government-run rehabilitation homes has been decreasing over the years," said Visakh V S, programme officer ICPS.

The continuous awareness and education programmes of the government on juvenile crimes and the Act, at the school level, counselling for students, anti-drug campaign and slew of other initiatives are showing results, said sources.