

# Functioning of SPCA ineffective, say activists

‘Most of the time, Society does not respond to calls for help’

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**COIMBATORE:** The ineffective functioning of Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), Coimbatore, has been an issue raised by animal rights activists in the district for a long time, but has failed to draw the attention of the authorities.

The SPCAs were formed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. Section S.O.271 (E) of the Act defines the responsibilities of the Society as to aid the Government, Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) and local authorities in enforcing the provisions of the Act and make by-laws and guidelines for efficient discharge of its duties. It could seize animals subjected to cruelty and hand over offenders to police.

According to the Act, it is the State Government's duty to provide adequate land and other facilities to construct infirmaries and animal shelters with a fulltime veterinary doctor and other staff for running the facilities.

Animal rights activists complained that most of the time, the Society did not respond to calls for help, while,



**For the sake of animals**

**SPCA should aid the Government, AWBI and local authorities in enforcing the provision in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1960), and make by-laws and guidelines as it may deem necessary for the efficient discharge of its duties.**

**The Society, in case of violation of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, is authorised to seize the animals and hand over the offender to the Police.**

the SPCA officials cited inadequate funding as the reason for their inability to carry out their duties. The Society barely had the facilities mentioned in the Act. The members revealed that they had not met for a board meeting for a long time.

“An amount of Rs. 8-9 crores is allotted by the Central Government and this has to be distributed among around 1,200 organisations. Funds were allocated based on the number of animals rescued or sheltered by SPCAs,” said Vinod Kumar, Assistant

Secretary, AWBI.

According to him, the maintenance of 500-1,000 animals required around 20-25 lakh a year. If the Government allotted more funds, AWBI could raise the monetary assistance provided to SPCAs. He added that the SPCA officers could seek the assistance of local authorities and NGOs to carry out their activities.

The Government allotted funds for schemes including maintenance of animals, constructing shelter, purchase of ambulance and providing re-

lief to animals affected by natural calamities, he added.

Animal rights activists pointed to the lack of interest and mismanagement on part of SPCA members for inaction. “If project proposals and reports were submitted on time, AWBI provided the money needed to carry them out,” said Mini Vasudevan, managing trustee, Humane Animal Society.

According to Kalpana Vasudevan, AWBI member and managing trustee of People for Animals Unit II, AWBI provided enough funds for organising ABC programme, SPCA had not taken any interest in this. There was just one ABC centre at Seeranaickenpalayam. SPCA was not properly assisting or monitoring Animal Birth Control (ABC) programmes in the district.

“The Coimbatore SPCA exists only on paper. Several requests over the past years to revive it had fallen on deaf ears. Over an acre of land owned by SPCA lying adjacent to the ABC centre at Seeranaickenpalayam is left idle for years and no effort has been made to utilise it to shelter animals,” said Ms. Mini.

According to Poorva Josephipura, Chief Functionary, PETA India, the inspector should be present throughout the day to ensure smooth functioning of the society. It should conduct awareness programmes to encourage people to adopt animals, organise sterilisation programme for community dogs and cats and provide temporary shelter for abandoned animals.

Many activists complained that the Society had declined their offer to provide assistance in its activities. Reconstituting the Society though a transparent process would help revive it, they suggested.

The Society headed by District Collector M. Karunakaran has members including Joint Director of Animal Husbandry Department S. Shanmugham, T. Kandasamy, Conservator of Forests (Coimbatore Circle), Advocate N. Sundaravadivelu and Chief Education Officer T. Rajendhiran. J. Fredric Vimalan is the SPCA inspector. Two representatives each from NGOs and business houses, Superintendent of Police (Rural) are also members of the Society.