Chapter - 4
Structure and Function of Selected Children’s Homes in Delhi
In the context of juvenile correctional services, institutional care occupies a prominent place. An institution for children in difficult circumstances theoretically is considered, more or less, a substitute for family and community, which systematically endeavours to alter and modify their thinking and behaviour. To be effective, the institution needs to accept children in difficult circumstances as they are. Were they not facing adverse circumstances, they would not have landed in the institution. This calls for an understanding of these children and a helping disposition and empathy of institutional authorities. Apart from such facilities such as shelter, food, clothing and medicare for them, the children have to be exposed to a range of personality development programmes that would equip them to successfully return to societal fold. Given this, institutions are called upon to move all the time towards the goal of social reintegration of children.

Somehow, the process of institutionalisation has not received globally, much favour from policy makers and programme planners. There is a point of view that institutionalisation of children in difficult circumstances should be the ‘last resort’ when probation, community services or foster care are not feasible. Perhaps, these negative assertions flow from the lackadaisical practice of institutional care. Nonetheless, realization is also there that that there are such situations in which institutionalisation is perhaps the only option. There are large number of children engulfed by adverse circumstances who have nowhere to go. These include lost, run away and destitute children. Besides there are children who are, in varying degrees are involved in the violation of criminal laws. There is an attempt in the legislation to avoid dubbing them as children in conflict with law if the violations are minor in nature. For their own sake, as also for the sake of security of the society, they have to be put into institutional care. For both children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law, efficient and effective functioning of institutions would go a long way in retrieving the situation. Towards this, much has been done in the country but a lot more remains to be done.

Keeping in view these considerations, the present chapter critically examines the institutional services in the Delhi region. The institutional infrastructure, basic facilities, welfare programmes, recreational arrangements, educational and vocational training, subculture and disposal of cases have been critically evaluated.

From the fifteen institutions in Delhi under the juvenile justice system, four government run institutions have been selected for the study, of which two are meant for boys and two for girls. All four of these institutions are Children’s Homes, housing the children in need of care and protection. These are
In this chapter we look at the scope and structure of the Homes which would cover accommodation and spaces available, structure of organization, manpower and functioning. Institutions for boys and girls are presented separately to be able to see the differences and wherever these are sharp. Where there is not much difference we deal with them together simply highlighting the occasional differences.

4.1 Children’s Homes

The Homes under the Juvenile Justice System are under the jurisdiction of the Directorate of Social Welfare, Delhi Government. The intention of these Homes is to provide the inmates with free boarding, lodging, medical care, school education and vocational training facilities. The total number of beneficiaries for the year 2003-2004 in CHG – I was 118, and in CHG-II it was 36 and of these we studied 85 and 20 children respectively. These annual numbers vary from year to year for e.g., in the previous year i.e., 2002-2003 in CHG – I it was 140.

Children’s Home for Girls - I (12-18 years)
Address Jail Road, Nirmal Chaya Complex, New Delhi - 110 054
Type Statutory Institute
District West
Phone 25552699
Sanctioned Inmate Strength - 100
Average Number of Beneficiaries for the year 2003-2004 - 118

Information during the period of data collection – May, 2004 to August, 2004
Children’s Home for Girls - I
Total No. of inmates 168
Restored to parents/fit person 0
No. of inmates transferred
a) To other institutions 5 b) To special schools 0
No. of inmates released
a) On completion of remand 0 b) On bail 0
c) Underage 0 d) Acquitted 0
e) Discharged 0
Escape 1 Death 0
Foster Care 1 Transferred to others 0
No. of inmates on the last day of the month 161 Average 0

Educational/Vocational Programmes
Name of trade
Physical Training
Tailoring
No of inmates
5
25
Classification - State-wise distribution of total no. of inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>No. of inmates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JK</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orrisa</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age-wise distribution of total no. of inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Yr.)</th>
<th>0-6</th>
<th>7-12</th>
<th>13-18</th>
<th>19-21</th>
<th>21 &amp; Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of inmates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religion-wise distribution of total no. of inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Sikh</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of inmates</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children’s Home for Girls - II (6-12 years)

Address: Jail Road, Nirmal Chhaya Complex, New Delhi - 110 064
Type: Statutory Institute
District: West
Phone: 5552699
Sanctioned Inmate Strength - 100
Average Number of Beneficiaries for the year 2003-2004 - 36

Information during the period of data collection – May, 2004 to August, 2004

Children’s Home for Girls - II
No of inmates on 1st day of the month: 32
No of inmates admitted during the month: 2
Total No of inmates: 32
Restored to parents/fit person: 0
No. of inmates transferred:
- a) To other institutions: 1
- b) To special schools: 0
No. of inmates released:
- a) On completion of remand: 0
- b) On bail: 0
- c) Underage: 0
- d) Acquitted: 0
- e) Discharged: 0
- Escape: 0
- Foster Care: 0
No. of inmates on the last day of the month: 35
No. of inmates transferred to others: 0
Average: 0

Other remarks: 0

Classification

Age-wise distribution of total no. of inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Yr.)</th>
<th>0-6</th>
<th>7-12</th>
<th>13-18</th>
<th>19-21</th>
<th>21 &amp; Above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of inmates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religion-wise distribution of total no. of inmates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Hindu</th>
<th>Sikh</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of inmates</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We could not get the same details from the office of Children’s Home for Boys – I & II. These Homes admit children in need of care and protection under the state protection under the orders of Child Welfare Committee till they cease to be juveniles. The CWC can extend the period of their stay but in no case beyond 20 years of age. All institutes have Advisory...
Committees to oversee their functioning. In the following Chapter we deal with the four Government run Children’s Homes and examine their structure and functioning.

Not only boys and girls are segregated but also children between 12 and 18 years of age and those between 6-12 years of age are kept separately. If boys younger than 6 years of age are picked up, they are kept with the younger girls. In the following section we present the structural dimensions of these Homes.

4.1.1 Children’s Homes for Girls – I & II
Accommodation is a key factor in institutional infrastructure. Not only is it a basic need of children, but also it profoundly influences the range and intensity of institutional activities. In the present case, it was seen that all the government run Homes were housed in their own buildings.

CHG - I & II are located in the spacious complex of Nirmal Chaya, Jail Road, New Delhi. This was a green patch which had trees, birds and spacious lawns. There were about ten buildings on this campus including the Home for mentally challenged girls, dispensary, staff quarters and a single building that accommodates both Anupama and Anukriti (CHG-I & II). The Nirmal Chaya complex was surrounded by high walls (around ten feet) and had a massive iron gate which was well guarded by two security guards. No one could enter without an official permission letter which was checked here and then again at a second gate two hundred meters further by a second set of security guards. After this, one had to locate the building that accommodated both the Homes. Once again the security guard checked one’s entry into the fence that surrounded the building and took one to the building gate which was opened for the visitor and then closed. It was a square and commodious building that could accommodate a variety of activities. This square building had an open courtyard surrounded by a verandah into which the rooms open. It was a four storey building owned by the Directorate of Social Welfare. The ground floor had rooms for the Home staff and the recreational hall, kitchen and vocational class rooms. There are dormitories for the children in need of care and protection on the first, second and third floors. The verandahs of these floors had iron fences. The stairs for going to the dormitories also had iron gates which were always locked and children and visitors could go up and down only according to the rules. The inmates were allowed to go outside the dormitories only for attending their classes, recreation or food. Each floor had toilets and bathrooms. It was a cemented building adequately maintained with no need of repairs. Children of CHG-I occupied the second and the third floors’ dormitories - three on each floor. CHG - I had six and CHG – II had three dormitories each having 20-25 beds. On the ground floor there was tenth dormitory meant for
keeping abandoned infants though it had ten cradles, there were no babies at any point of
time. The dormitories were big halls with no windows opening on the outer walls, only the
inner walls had windows opening into the verandah thus there was no ventilation. Beds were
lined on two sides with one almirah attached to the wall next to each bed. These were iron
beds with mattresses and clean sheets. The walls were bare and all almirahs were locked.

There were 2 bathrooms for each dormitory and 12 toilets. The toilets were on the same floor
but are located at a considerable distance from the dormitory. This was found to be good
since on entering the toilets of the Children’s Home for Boys–1 the stench of urine was
unbearable. This was not the situation in the Children’s Home for Girls. On visiting the
bathrooms of the second floor, the researcher observed a big hole near the pipe. On
enquiring, the caretaker said that a girl inmate had tried to escape through this hole. It would
be soon repaired. Washing was done in open space in the bathrooms. Bathroom to the
inmates’ ratio was found to be highly disproportionate. As per the caretaker, this was a major
problem, especially in the morning, when most of the girls had to leave for the breakfast and
classes, often without taking bath. Though girls had a different opinion on this, some inmates
mainly the older girls found the system disproportionate. However the younger girls had no
complaints since some of them remarked that now atleast they were having this facility.

There were 6 rooms for children activities on the ground floor. These included one spacious
dining hall, a recreation hall, vocational training rooms such as crafts, tailoring, embroidery
and one for non formal education. Children could play in the cemented courtyard. The Home
had a spacious kitchen with an attached store room. It was adequately kept and had gas
burners for cooking in steel utensils. In addition to all these the two Homes had dispensary
located outside the building. This is described in detail in the facility section.

Nine rooms on the ground floor were for official purpose, four for welfare officers, two room
for divisional clerks and two for filing purposes. The Superintendent of the two Children’s
Homes for Girls had her own separate office. She also had a house to herself located in the
huge complex of Nirmal Chaya. She felt that the institution has enough accommodation for
its optimum functioning. However when it comes to housing the court cases, the Child
Welfare Officers (CWOs) had a different view to share. In addition to the children in need of
care and protection whose cases had been decided and they had been allocated to the Homes,
even those whose court cases in the Child Welfare Committees were still going on, were
also housed in the same dormitories. This according to the CWOs creates problems. The
dormitories had space only for the assigned number, the children having court cases were
then required to sleep on the floor on a mat even during winters and were badly treated both
by the other regular inmates as well as the class four staff. This was noted by the researcher
as well. Nirmal Chaya had an Observation Home (in a separate building) where children in conflict with law under JJ Act are housed. During my study the girls in conflict with law were also in CHG-I as the Observation Home was under repairs. This only added to the crisis and complicated it as the children in conflict with law are much more difficult with the other children and require much more attention.

4.1.2. Children’s Homes for Boys, Alipur

The Children’s Home for Boys – I & II are located in separate buildings adjacent to each other. These Homes are located at the outskirts of the city in Alipur, about ten kilometers from Bye Pass. Like the girls here too boys in need of care and protection aged 12-18 years and those aged 6-12 are segregated. The older boys are housed in CHB-I which was established in 1986 in Alipur. The Home has its own building which is supposed to meet most of its requirements. Children’s Home for Boys – II was established in 1952 and is in a separate though adjacent building, it accommodates the younger children.

Children’s Home for Boys – I

CHB – I has a capacity for keeping 200 children. However during our study 267 children were staying in the Home. It was also revealed during discussion with the office staff including the Superintendent that this number goes above 400 at times. This overcrowding has negative effects on all services of the Home. One of the reasons for this according to the staff was that the court cases were also housed in the same building till the time of decision. This often exceeds the sanctioned capacity of the building and compelling even the boys in need of care and protection to stay with the boys in conflict with law. As reported by the Welfare Officer in the Children’s Home for Girls and the Superintendent in the Children’s Home for Boys, this was often the reason for high level of infections like cold, tuberculosis, viral fevers, etc. Since the court cases were not provided with the complete medical check up and treatment they remained unattended. This was the same situation noted in all the four Homes under study.

On sharing the concern with the Superintendent of these Homes, they stated that housing children with on-going court cases was mandatory but not medical care. There was no clear provision for medical care under the Act. This could also be interpreted the other way to provide children facilities for medical care during their stay but the Superintendents chose the other option.

The Children’s Home for Boys – I wa having a proper security system in terms of a guard at the main gate. The boundary wall was six to seven feet high fixed with electric fencing. The
Superintendent informed that the fencing arrangements were done recently in light of attempt to escape by four inmates. The electric fencing with the strict security on the gate was enough to give a prison resemblance to a Children's Home and less of a Home for children in need of care and protection. The security guard used to lock up the gate and was always seen sitting there and opening the small gate for visitors after verification. During night hours both security guard and House father were suppose to keep a vigil.

On entering the premises of the Home for older boys (entry was permitted only to those who were having formal permission), there was an open space surrounding the building. In front of the building alongside the boundary there were two rooms for the House father (the caretaker who stayed there twenty four hours). This was a three storey building. One could enter the main building through an iron gate in the centre. The right wing of the building accommodated the office rooms for the staff on the ground floor. On the left side was the staircase and the left wing was occupied by the kitchen, dinning cum recreation room. The wing opposite the main entrance has the vocational training rooms which were separated from the main gate by a small covered courtyard. Eight large rooms on the first and second floors were used as dormitories. Each dormitory was having 25-30 beds. Only two dormitories had windows opening inside onto the verandah, others were completely closed without any ventilation. This was for reasons of security.

The first and second floors were found to be in a very dingy condition as there was no proper electricity arrangement and very minimal day light and ventilation. Also the dormitories unlike the Girls Home were not properly clean. First floor was also in need of white wash as the walls of the floor were soiled. Each dormitory had two bathrooms and four toilets unlike Girls' Homes. The toilets were on the same floor but were not located at considerable distance from the dormitory unlike the Home for Girls due to space limitations. All of them were in a working condition however the stench in all of them was unbearable. The Boys Home presented a dismal picture on this front as besides the stench the walls of the toilets were also dirty. There was no ventilation/exhaust in the toilets for security reasons. Despite all provisions on papers, in reality these institutions where the child spends his days and nights were not even able to provide them with the basic hygienic living. The toilets in the Boys' Home were breeding grounds for diseases. Even the stairs to the first/second floors were dark and not having proper illumination. For sleeping purpose and to keep their belongings each child had been allocated a cot and an almirah fixed to the wall behind the cot. However it goes without saying that with more children then the capacity of the Home most of the new inmates were made to sleep on the floor in the dormitories.
The kitchen was having a store room and was clean and was comparable to the Girls’ Home. There were 9 rooms for vocational classes on the ground floor of CHB-I. The Boys’ Home for 12-18 years old focused more on skill building amongst the children to rehabilitate them. There was a close roofed courtyard much smaller in size compared to the Girls’ Home which was the only place that the children could use as the playground. The Home has a huge space outside which is enough for the children to freely move around and play during the day time as the main iron gate was always kept closed and nobody could escape. However, since it was entirely up to the discretion of the staff to permit the inmates to play there, the children were never allowed to play anywhere but the courtyard.

In CHB – I all the rooms used for vocational classes as well as the dormitories were in a state of despair. In many rooms one could see patches on the ceilings created by the falling of plaster. There was a hand pump installed within the building. In the front of the building there was a tap with fresh water supply. During most of the visits four to five children were seen washing their clothes in the blazing sun when the water supply was there. Without getting perturbed by the heat the boys were always seen washing and bathing in the running water.

Children’s Home for Boys – II, Alipur
CHB – II is housed in a separate adjacent building. The Home had a ten feet high boundary wall but with no electric fencing since this Home was meant for younger boys in the 6-12 years age group. There was an open space around the building inside the boundary wall. The building had only two floors. The main entrance was on the left side of the building and the entire front row of the rooms was for office purposes. These rooms were having windows opening outside and were connected through an inner corridor which also provided entry to the recreation, kitchen and vocational training rooms. There was no dinning hall. The meals were served to the children in the corridor.

This building was having 3 dormitories and each dormitory was having 28-30 beds. There were 3 rooms for vocational training in CHB-I since this Home was for younger children and even the capacity of Home was for 90 children. There were two bathrooms and four toilets attached to each dormitory.

This Home was found to be in a comparatively better condition. Its dormitories and classrooms were comparatively cleaner but had no windows. This Home did not have any courtyard or a verandah for inmates to move on the ground floor. However, the space outside was sufficient for children to play but after 6 p.m., the gates of the building were closed and children were thus forced to stay inside. Hence they had no access to the open space at
playtime. The inmates of CHB-I & II said that though the Home was providing them food and space to sleep, they wanted to run away from a 'closed prison'. It was more like a jail to them with an uninteresting, routine lifestyle and unsympathetic staff members. Boys in the 12-18 years age group who had been picked by the police from the streets still had fond memories of their life on the streets, with friends of their choice and better food based on their day's earning.

Compared to the living conditions of the inmates the accommodation to the staff members and for office activities was much better. The Superintendent of the Home reported that he was having a well equipped and separate office for himself. The Children's Home for Boys - I had 6 rooms and CHB - II had 4 rooms for the staff. In all the four government run Homes the staff at various levels reported that they had enough space for optimum functioning. Each CWO in the Homes had a separate room and other facilities like heater, kettle, jug and almirah.

The staff of the Boys' Homes was provided with the housing allowances. Children's Home for Girls situated in the Nirmal Chaya complex has provided living quarters within the complex to the superintendent, caretakers and sweepers. The Superintendent's residence resembled a cottage surrounded by the green pastures of the complex. It was a three bedroom house with a small lawn in the front of the house. She was the Superintendent of three Homes, CHG - I & II and Observation Home for Girls situated in the same complex. Her stay in the same complex made her approachable for the staff even at the odd hours. She was having a very comfortable house and had been in position since three years. The caretakers' homes were two room apartments in the campus. Despite greenery and spaces around them, the inmates of CHG-I & II were deprived of this advantage. They were imprisoned behind the walls of the Home and were denied even a slight glimpse of the greenery in the complex.

The Children's Home for Boys - I & II were not having enough space to provide for staff quarters. Thereby the staff members including the Superintendent and the caretakers had to leave for their homes after the duty hours.

4.2 Civic and Administrative Facilities

Both Nirmal Chaya and Alipur based Homes were having electric power connection from civic agencies. However, power supply was not always regular. There was no generator facility available in the Homes under the study. Likewise, institutions did not have water-supply connection from civic agencies, yet in most instances water supply was there for specified and limited duration - necessitating water-storage facility. In all the Homes managed by the Directorate of Social Welfare, there was water storage facility sufficient for
In CHB-I, the Superintendent talked of his initiative to build water storage facility within the Home premises and staff efforts at making available cold water facility for all inmates in CHB-I.

In each of the four government run Homes, there was only one landline facility available, in the Superintendent’s office for all the staff members. As suggested by the support staff as well as the Child Welfare Officers (CWOs) in the Homes, there need to be at least one more landline as that would only improve efficiency in terms of locating the family of children. This is a basic need of administration and it affects the functioning of other officers. There was no fax facility in the Homes.

These Homes were having typewriters for the daily administrative work. There was one computer in the CHG – I & II and in the CHB-I one computer had been donated by a voluntary organization, used primarily to impart computer training to the boys staying in the Home. These government run Homes were having all their records in the files, there was no record in the computer which however has a better retrievable feature. This implies that a lot of time of the administrative staff and the Child Welfare Officer goes in this task. The records of the Homes under study were quite regularly maintained and each inmate has his/her file separately compiled. The main records directly related to inmates were the admission, court orders, school progress, health, general progress, onset and causes of the problem, family, social, and economic background, follow-up (in cases that had already left), the case worker’s notes, and any correspondence concerning the inmates.

The other records maintained were the office work records – budget files, stock registers, office correspondence, and administrative records. For the restoration and transfer of children or other administrative purposes, all Homes need their own vehicle. There was one van and one ambulance available in Nirmal Chaya complex for the varied purposes of the three Homes situated in the complex. Similarly in the two Children’s Home for Boys there was one van and one ambulance, though the ambulance as reported by the CWO was in need of repairs. This was despite several reminders to the Superintendent who showed scant concern. In the Boys’ Home ambulance service was of higher importance as there was no dispensary within the Home premises.

4.3. Manpower Situation

Official data showed that the Superintendent of the institution is decided by the sex of the children. It would be pertinent to examine whether institutions headed by females/males are able to extend the kind of understanding and empathy children need for rehabilitation and reintegration.
In all the four government-run institutions, chronological age of the heads of institutions is 45 years in case of the Superintendent of the Girls’ Home and 51 years that of the Boys’ Home. They were also well off in terms of their educational background. Both of them were having postgraduate degree in such disciplines as Psychology, Sociology and had also undergone specialized training. The Superintendents had on an average more than fifteen years experience in the same field. In the following section we have discussed the overall staffing of the Homes under study. The management of the Home is looked after by the Superintendent with sufficient help from a team of supporting staff.

To manage the overall administrative and other functional responsibilities in the four Children’s Homes under study the staffing pattern was as follows (see Table-9):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table -9 Staffing Patterns of Four Children’s Homes under Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Welfare Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training Instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care Takers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Division Clerks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Division Clerks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matrons/House Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardeners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweepers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Guards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Attendant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweepers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Guard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above-mentioned class III staff members, comprising of CWOs, Vocational Instructors, Medical Officer, are appointed by the Board set up by the Directorate of Social Welfare. The Class IV employees are appointed by the Superintendent of the institution with the help of a member from the Directorate and a Superintendent of one more institution under the Directorate. This procedure was followed in order to maintain transparency in the appointment of the staff. Once in every month it was mentioned that there was a ‘surprise
visit' by the staff of Directorate of Social Welfare. However in neither of the Homes there was any visit in three months.

In the Children's Home for Girls, the Child Welfare Officers (CWOs) were all females but in the Children's Home for Boys, the CWOs were both male and female and possessed postgraduate degree in social work. Most of them were fresh pass outs from college and thus had no professional experience of working with children in need of care and protection. The Vocational Training Instructors were all graduates and professionally well qualified. They were having a diploma course in the concerned vocation. Unlike the CWOs the vocational training instructors were found to have some prior work experience and were more stable in the job.

The class IV employees in the Children's Home for Girls – I & II were predominantly females. It comprised of nine female caretakers; two female matrons; two female cooks; one male gardener; two peons (one male and one female); two low division clerks and one upper division clerk. Caretakers were having 24 hours duty in the Home in three shifts – 8.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.; 2.00 p.m. – 8.00 p.m.; 8.00 p.m. – 8.00 a.m. Main duties of the care takers were looking after the girls, their cleanliness, discipline, seeing that the food was properly cooked and distributed, and tending to the sick girls. The main job of other class IV employees was to look after the premises, filing, posting letters and buying provisions for the school.

For an overall supervision of the Children's Home – I & II for Boys in Alipur, there was one Superintendent and the Children's Home for Boys – I was having four Child Welfare Officers (2 females and 2 males). There were seven Craft Instructors who were all graduates and professionally well qualified. There were three cooks (2 full time cooks & i – part time cook), one house father and four male security guards, three sweepers (2 – female and one male sweeper part time). The Home was having two peons, one head clerk and stenographer, two upper division clerks, one lower division clerk and eighteen caretakers. There were six care takers for each of the three shifts in the Home; the timings of the shifts were – 6.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. – 1st shift; 2.00 p.m. to 10 p.m. – 2nd shift; 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. – 3rd shift

The Children's Home for Boys – II was having three female Child Welfare Officers and four craft instructors. There were two full time cooks, one house father, one washerman, four male security guards, one sweeper, one peon, one head clerk, one upper division clerk, one lower division clerk and eleven caretakers for each of the three shifts in the Home. The timings of the shifts were – 6 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. – 1st shift; 2.00 p.m. to 10 p.m. – 2nd shift and; 10.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m. – 3rd shift. There was one gardener for both Children’s Homes for Boys – I & II. There was a common medical unit for CHB - I & II. The unit comprised of
one part time doctor and one full time para medical staff. There were two male attendants and two sweepers.

Since all these four Homes were under the jurisdiction of the new Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, they were having certain common rules and procedures in place. In all these government run Homes, there was a regular system of monitoring the children, who were staying in the Home every year and then according to the Assessment Report, stay was extended or discontinued by the Child Welfare Committee. In accordance with the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, children belonging to different states were restored back to the law machinery of their state / to their traced home address.

About the overall position of staff availability in institutions, as mentioned by the Superintendents and other staff members the institutions were not having sufficient staff to manage and run them efficiently. Observation during data-collection also converges on this: the number of Child Welfare Officers was invariably low. The fact that officially prescribed posts of Child Welfare Officers in both Alipur and Nirmal Chaya Children’s Homes for children was (see Table-10):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Sanctioned Vacancies of CWOs</th>
<th>Actual Filled Vacancies of CWOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alipur Children’s Homes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Home For Boys - I</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Home For Boys – II</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nirmal Chaya Children’s Homes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Home For Girls - I</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Home For Girls – II</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was found that though there were six posts of Child Welfare Officers, in the Children’s Home for Girls–II, three posts were lying vacant. Thus putting extra work pressure on the existing staff with one Child Welfare Officer now responsible for 75-100 juveniles as against the official ratio of 1 Child Welfare Officer: 25-30 Juveniles. Similar was the situation in the Home for Boys. The Superintendents of the respective Homes agreed of the inadequacy of staff in these Homes. The fact that officially prescribed posts of Child Welfare Officers in Children’s Home for Boys–I was ten against four filled and 6 in CHB – II where only three were filled. In the Children’s Home for Girls the situation was no different as against the eleven prescribed posts only four were found to be filled. One of the main reasons for this situation as per two of the Welfare Officers in the Girls’ Home was the short stay of the CWOs in these Homes due to an excess
work pressure in the Homes and often they were required to deal with the police personnel. They did not find the salary as well too lucrative.

4.4 Finance System
Expenditure of these Homes varied with their size and perhaps the availability of funds. The Homes under study are directly financed by the State through the Directorate of Social Welfare, which is affiliated to the Ministry of Social Welfare. None of them raises funds through donations or through foreign agencies.

Children's Home for Girls – I & II
The expenditure of the four Homes i.e., CHG-I & II under the Juvenile Justice System in Nirmal Chaya complex per annum was approximately Rs. 65-70 lacs per annum and the major items covered were -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; clothing per inmate</td>
<td>Rs. 1200/- p.m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff salaries</td>
<td>Rs. 35 - 40 lacs per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>Sponsored by Nari Niketan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone/fax</td>
<td>Rs. 49,000 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff travel</td>
<td>Rs. 5,000 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational services to inmates</td>
<td>Rs. 1 lac per annum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity</td>
<td>Rs. 1 lac per annum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building rent</td>
<td>own</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children's Home for Boys – I & II, Alipur, New Delhi
The expenditure of the two Homes under Juvenile Justice System reads as follows:
The total expenditure per annum was approximately Rs. 65-70 lacs per annum and the major items covered were -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; clothing per inmate</td>
<td>Rs. 1200/- p.m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff salaries</td>
<td>Rs. 35 lacs per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone/fax</td>
<td>Rs. 60,000 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff travel</td>
<td>Rs. 5,000 per month.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational services to inmates</td>
<td>Rs. 1 lac per annum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply &amp; Electricity for the whole campus</td>
<td>Rs. 1 lac per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building rent</td>
<td>own</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their annual expenditure ranged from Rs. 65-70 lacs. As would be expected, better part of the funds of these Homes goes to meet the expenditure on staff salaries. Needless to add, the institutions that are spending more on staff salaries are likely to find it hard to put funds for
programmatic activities. Other institutional expenses included electricity / water, telephone, stationery, staff travel, etc. As revealed by one of the Child Welfare Officers in the Children’s Home for Girls – I, around one lac was allocated every year for recreational activities for the inmates. However no staff member could suggest any activity which could perhaps involve any expenditure on the recreational activities of the children. Even the annual picnic was not a regular affair.

4.5 Functioning of Children’s Home for Girls

The government lays down certain norms and conditions, before recognizing a remand home or a certified school under the Juvenile Justice Act. These include provision of adequate facilities and qualified professional guidance and wholesome and sufficient food, proper clothing, bedding, proper sleeping and dining accommodation, etc. Children entrusted to the institutional care and protection, have to be provided basic facilities as well as psychological and social services. For goal oriented and coordinated working the staff has to function as a team. This requires regular meetings, sharing information, coordination with each other and a system of supervision and two-way communication. Our findings point out that many of these were lacking.

On paper there was a system of having staff meetings on a monthly basis in the government Homes to discuss the future action plan. In reality it was noted that in all the Homes, meetings were scheduled as per the availability of the staff, making the staff meetings taking place on an ad-hoc basis. Like in the preceding year in the Children’s Home for Girls, only five staff meetings could actually take place. There was no regular system of meetings in the Boys’ Home either.

Intake Procedure

The intake procedure and policy in the government run Children’s Homes were as per the Juvenile Justice System. Based on the information gathered from the various staff members including the Superintendent, the inmates were all Court committed in accordance with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 and subsequently 2000. As mentioned elsewhere the Homes were having non-committed cases as well.

In the Children’s Home for Girls, during the time of study there were 38 non-committed children staying along with the regular inmates of the Home. As per one of the Child Welfare Officers these pending cases in the Child Welfare Committees were often time consuming and till the time of case settlement those children were to stay with the regular inmates of the Home.
Similarly in the Children's Home for Boys – I, Alipur, one of the Child Welfare Officers stated that, "with the implementation of the new Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, now all the children picked by the Police / found / reported by the Child Line as children in distress are directly brought to the Children's Home. Till the case proceedings all such children are made to stay with other committed children who happen to be 'children in need of care and protection' and are clearly 'not in conflict with law'. However this period of stay of non-committed children falling into both categories of children as per the Act has created several problems in maintaining a proper administration in the Home." As per records, in the past few months since the Act's implementation, there had been a rise in the number of attempts to escape from the Home and also in the cases of T.B and other health problems. This was more the situation faced in the Boys' Home – I.

**Allocation of Dormitories**
The Child Welfare Officers shared the criteria while assigning dormitory to the children. This was done as per the availability in the dormitories. The Child Welfare Officers mentioned that the age of the child was the prime consideration while assigning the child a dormitory. An effort was made to assign him/her a dormitory with children of the same age group. Otherwise the chances of the older inmates bullying over the younger children arose.

The age limit fixed by the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000 is 6 years minimum and 18 years maximum for girls and 8-year minimum and 18 years maximum for boys at the time of admission to the Home. The final authority for decision for admission is with the Chairperson of the Child Welfare Committee. The children who are below eight years of age are not supposed to incur criminal liability. The child at the time of admission to the Home and also before that, during the legal proceedings, is being asked of his age and family details and home address and location. He also undergoes a thorough medical check up to confirm his age.

Training teachers, Child Welfare Officers revealed that there still remained confusion in determining the age of the child like some of the children interviewed by the investigator were also looking much younger than their stipulated age and at the same time some girls who were found shouldering some of the institutional responsibilities were looking above the age of 18 years.

**Shortage of accommodation**
The Superintendents of the four Homes under study felt that the respective Homes were having enough accommodation for their optimum functioning. However when it came to housing the court cases, the CWOs had a different view to share. In addition to the children
in need of care and protection whose cases had been decided and had been allocated to the Homes, even those whose court cases in the Child Welfare Committees were still going on, were also housed in the same dormitories. This according to the CWOs created problems. The dormitories were having space only for the assigned number; the children having court cases were then required to sleep on the floor on a mat even during winters and were badly treated both by the regular inmates as well as the class four staff. This was noted by the researcher as well. Nirmal Chaya has an Observation Home (in a separate building) where children in conflict with law were housed. During my study the girls in conflict with law were also in CHG-I as the Observation Home was under repairs. This only added to the present crisis and complicated it as the children in conflict with law are much more difficult with the other children and require much more attention.

The situation was further worse in the Children’s Home for Boys – I housing 250 boys. In the Children’s Home for Boys – II, the CWO further informed that during the summer months sometimes the number of children brought to the Home exceeded 400 when the capacity of the Home was for 200 children. In the recent summers it exceeded 700. In such situations children were made to sleep on mat in the dormitories on floor as well as in the recreation and dining hall on the floor. Even the food supplies became less. This directs attention to the need for creation of more such Homes and fast processing of cases in the Child Welfare Committees and the Juvenile Justice Boards.

**Discharging Children**

We further probed about the term of stay of the age-range in accordance with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000, ranges from 6 to 18 years for girls. The maximum age of discharge is 18 years but in exceptional cases where there is no chance of proper rehabilitation there is provision for them to be kept on until the age of 21 or else the child is being shifted to the After Care Home meant for girls, functional within the premises of Nirmal Chaya complex.

The Superintendent of the Girls’ Home shared that in 2003 four girls were transferred to the After Care Home and there had been some success stories as well, to be optimistic about. She informed and showed the researcher photographs of the two girls married off by them and that the staff was still following up with them as to ensure their well being. Also in the After Care Home there was a system of Self Help Groups, which mainly provided the sweepers – Class IV staff for the 11 Homes operational in the Nirmal Chaya complex. This was a good option but had its own limitations. Many girls were sent back to their families even if the families were not willing to take them back. Thus the future of such girls remains questionable and there is no provision under the Act for above 18 children.
Sanitation and Supervision of Toilets
The caretakers were responsible for a regular supervision of the toilets and bathrooms and reporting the same to the CWOs and the Superintendent. The toilets in the CHG-I & II were found to be comparatively better than the Boys' Home - I. The walls were not dirty and also the water supply was there for fixed timings or through tanks. However on entering the bathrooms and toilets in CHG one could find piles of wrapped soiled napkins/clothes behind the doors. Though there was a provision of sanitary napkins to the inmates, some of the girls told in a low voice that they had never been provided napkins therefore they had to always request the caretakers to give them waste cloth, for which they were required to please them as well. This could involve sweeping the floor/bathroom, preparing tea or carrying around their message. The sweeper blamed some girls for the situation, since she has been doing her duty regularly. In all the four Homes the toilets were having proper water supply from water tanks. The staff mentioned that the inmates often left the taps on and thus causing water shortage in the Home.

The toilets in CHB- I & II were through the entire duration of the study found to be in an unpleasant condition. The caretakers held the children responsible for the situation, stating that the 'children staying in the institutions need to consider this as their home. These rogues not only disobey them but create filth around and making it difficult for us as well since we are also spending our most of the time in the institution.' The sweeper works in two shifts in these Homes which was considerably inadequate as the ratio of toilets to the number of children using them was already a mismatch. The CWOs were supposed to take up such issues to the Superintendent which was virtually not happening. As the dormitories in the Boys' Home were at a small distance from the toilets on the same floor, they also shared the unpleasant smell. Most of the boys felt that the street life was far better then being institutionalized. With the open sky and no adult figure around to constantly humiliate on a slight pretext.

The Superintendent and CWOs were expected to supervise the maintenance of toilets but they were rarely seen visiting even the dormitories during our study. The caretakers were regular visitors but with their limited education and understanding we cannot expect them to comprehend the overall implications of an unhygienic living.

Children’s Kit
After the admission by the Child Welfare Committee is finalized the inmate is brought to the Home and his/her case history is noted by the Child Welfare Officer. The child was then provided with a kit which includes all the clothing, bedding, utensils and other personal requirements. By way of clothing, in all the four Homes under study the children were
provided with four sets of inners, four sets of clothes, salwar suits in case of girls and shirt-pant in case of boys. These clothes were uniform in colour and texture for all inmates. These items are issued yearly and woolens were provided once in three years. They were also provided one pair of chappals. For the routine life each inmate was provided with a kit comprising of one set of towel, one oil bottle, one plate, one steel glass, one packet of surf, one mat/dari, two lifebuoy and 2 bath soaps and one pair of socks. For school going inmates, two sets of school uniforms and one pair of shoes were provided. For winters the inmates were provided in three years, two full sleeves and one half sleeves pullover. The inmates kept their belongings in the small almirah on their bed side with a lock and key given to them. Children were allowed to retain all that they bring with themselves at the time of admission or what they were given by their visitors time and again. They were free to make use of these things within the institution. These small extra belongings however made the children feel happy as that perhaps gives them a feeling of belongingness with family/relatives. To recall the words of one of the 14 years old inmates

"Didi, look at my dress and bangles, they have been gifted to me by my maternal aunt because she loves me."

However as we have discussed under institutional culture this was one of the reasons for conflicts and jealousy amongst the inmates. In case the dress or any other item like toothpaste got finished or stolen, the staff despite the availability of enough storage does not provide the inmates substitute as a disciplinarian action. Thus we found many children in torn dress or not having socks during the months of winter. Needless to mention that the CWOs and the Superintendent of the Home are suppose to take a note of such situations.

4.6 Kitchen

All the institutions under study were having a kitchen and a kitchen store. Children’s Home for Girls - I & II in the Nirmal Chaya complex jointly had a common kitchen and two cooks in shifts – 8.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. & 6.00 p.m. – 8.00 a.m., and two helpers in two above mentioned shifts. Likewise both Children’s Homes for Boys - I & II, Alipur, had a kitchen and a storeroom. However as the buildings were separate kitchens were also two. The kitchen of CHB - I was having one full time cook and one helper and the same system was in the CHB - II. It was both observed and reported by the staff members in all the four Homes that the resident children had to lend a helping hand in the preparation and distribution of food. During visits to the kitchen in these Homes, kitchen was found clean and also some of the older inmates were noted helping the cook in washing / cutting vegetables / kneading the flour. On being asked it was reported that duties were often divided amongst the children in the age group of 15-18 and those who wanted to lend a helping hand on a voluntary basis in
the Home activities. This position is also reinforced by the interview data gathered from institutional functionaries. However these children should be better engaged in some educational or vocational training. The kitchen in the Girls’ Home was found to be clean though this was done entirely by the inmates. In the Boys’ Home as well the children were seen helping the cook in the preparation of food and in cleaning the kitchen.

**Working of the Kitchen - Prescribed Diets**

Two regular meals seem to be a normal pattern of food availability, there was a fixed system of diet with regular services of a full time cook and as discussed earlier the resident children were also providing help in the preparation and serving of food. Children in these Homes were claimed to be provided daily diet usually as per the specified schedule (see tables - 11 & 12). It included balanced proportions of wheat flour, rice, pulses, vegetables, milk and occasionally egg. As per the Superintendent the menus were made according to the minimum standards for children as laid down by the Directorate. Availability of regular meal with a balanced diet chart prepared in advance seems to be an advantage which the institutionalised children are having over the street children. Though our data revealed further insight into the situation as in all the Homes whether girls’ or boys’ there was a common notion carried by the inmates that the Home authorities never considered children’s opinion while preparing the diet chart and thus the children complained of being tired of the monotonous food pattern. Most of them were of the opinion that the diet pattern should not be drastically reformed but atleast on weekends, they could be served with a different menu like bread/toast in the breakfast. Most of the children also mentioned that they often felt hungry during the evenings since after the lunch, they were provided with a cup of tea and then dinner. We also found that in CHB – I, one of the ways to discipline children was by not providing them food. This was however not the case in the Girls’ Home. There have been reports of deaths in the juvenile homes of the capital due to hunger (NCPCR, 2008).

The meals served were strictly vegetarian, except for the eggs given at the doctor’s order. During the visits, the dietary pattern followed was closely observed in the Homes. It was observed that kitchen and the attached storeroom were both hygienically maintained. For each meal children were supposed to bring their plates allocated to them, however spoon has not been provided to the inmates. For which no rationale could be offered by the staff members. As many times children were seen struggling to eat the watery dal from their plates and then ending up either spilling it all over or leaving it as it is. After each meal children would wash their plate and secure it back in their almirah. Another fact noted by the researcher was that though the diet chart was having milk as a compulsory part of the breakfast in all the Homes, the inmates were hardly getting milk regularly. Only sick children were given milk as an additional supplement. On enquiring the same from the Home staff
(cook, caretakers), the researcher received quite a hostile feedback. The CWO though had a rationale for not being able to serve the inmates regularly with milk. Since the allocation was quite less, 200 ml per child per day. This much milk was getting consumed in the preparation of tea for them thus leaving the staff with no choice. During the visits to these Homes it was observed that the staff members were served milk tea more than three times in a day. Even the researcher was offered the same on many occasions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal</th>
<th>Children’s Home for Girls – I &amp; II, Nirmal Chaya</th>
<th>Children’s Home for Boys – I &amp; II, Alipur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>2 – poori + tea</td>
<td>3 – poori + tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>Dal + rice + 2 – roti + vegetable (fixed quantity)</td>
<td>Dal + rice + 3 – roti + vegetable (fixed quantity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening breakfast</td>
<td>Tea (rarely roasted channa / nuts)</td>
<td>Tea (rarely roasted channa / nuts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>Dal + rice + 2 – roti + vegetable (fixed quantity)</td>
<td>Dal + rice + 3 – roti + vegetable (fixed quantity)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sweets distributed during festivals. Generally as a policy, eatables from outside were not distributed amongst the Home inmates.*

It was observed that in all the four Homes under study there was a fixed meal pattern without any variation and that was one of the main reasons of inmates’ discontentment. As the Homes were all having a routinised way of life.

The children were also not found to be happy with the quality of food served to them. As commented by one of the boys in Children’s Home for Boys – I, street food used to be much better than this. Despite the provision and availability of enough pulses and vegetables, interviews with the children and as observed during visits to the Homes, the dal served in all the Homes was watery and the seasonal vegetables were found to be grossly missing. Since the staff and the children were living in the same campus especially in the Nirmal Chaya complex, with not much checks and balances, it was felt that the kitchen groceries were used in the kitchen of the caretakers as well.

Unlike the girl inmates, institutionalised boys seemed to be more unhappy with the food system as Ramu, a 14 year old boy pointed out, ‘Its like being served to animals, I was much better on streets. I could eat and drink of my choice. Let me find a chance, I will run away from this jail.’
Table – 12: Dietary Allocation (per child/per day)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food item</th>
<th>Children’ Home for Girls – I &amp; II, Nirmal Chaya</th>
<th>Children’s Home for Boys – I &amp; II, Alipur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat flour (gms per day)</td>
<td>300 gms</td>
<td>300-400 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice (gms per day)</td>
<td>150 gms</td>
<td>200 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dal (gms per day)</td>
<td>100 gms</td>
<td>100 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable (gms per day)</td>
<td>50 gms</td>
<td>50 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk (ml per day)</td>
<td>200 ml - rare</td>
<td>200 ml - rare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg (no. per day)</td>
<td>Rare – only in case of special diet of sick children</td>
<td>Rare – only in case of special diet of sick children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea leaves (per meal for 50 children)</td>
<td>3 gms</td>
<td>3 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar (per meal)</td>
<td>40 gms</td>
<td>40 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>10 gms</td>
<td>10 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghee/oil (for 100 children)</td>
<td>60 gms</td>
<td>60 gms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spices</td>
<td>5 gms</td>
<td>5 gms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.7 Welfare Services

In translating the juvenile justice objectives of social rehabilitation and reintegration, welfare services in institutions have a pivotal role. Not only these are expected to mould attitudes and behavioural pattern of the institutionalised children, but also motivate and deeply influence the nature and extent of their participation in other institutional programmes. In this, the availability of a professional and trained social worker is critically important. All the four Homes under study were having Child Welfare Officers. The foremost responsibility of CWOs with a post graduation in Social Work is of doing counseling to children. This was claimed to be done in all the institutions but the researcher did not find the same happening during any of her visits to the Homes. Only in the Children’s Home for Girls, one of the CWOs who had spent ten years in the Home was found to be more indulgent with the children.

For a speedier and effective reunification of children, the CWO is expected to pay a visit to their family. This was not done in any of the Homes under study. With a view to maintaining links with the family and community, children are made available the facility of meeting. This is also presumed to add to their mental health and to their motivation to participate in institutional programmes. This facility was made available in all the Homes. All the
institutions were having the provision for meeting, once in fifteen days. This system was prevalent in the Girls’ Home and there were proper arrangements in terms of a room for the meeting with the family members. Undeniably these meetings bring back life in the inmates who have been otherwise institutionalized and are away from the mainstream social life. We found that the Boys’ Homes were having fewer visitors.

Rules also provide for ‘temporary leave’ or absence of the inmates from the Homes. Official data showed that in the Children’s Home for Girls, this provision existed and children were allowed to visit their family from 2 to 10 days. The Children’s Home for Boys was found to be more restrictive for reasons of security. This discouraging trend is also supported by the interview data with the Superintendent of the institution.

Yet another domain of welfare is aftercare services. Having spent an amount of time, in a near-insular environment, children do require support on their release from the institution. Such transitional outreach services are essential for their effective and enduring rehabilitation. However in none of the four Homes under study these services were made available to children when they return to their families and community. They did not have even a list of sister NGOs offering after-care services.

4.8 Games, Sports and Recreation

The institutional services deal with those who are passing through childhood or adolescence and the natural tendency in the youngsters, among others, is of having a lot of play. Within the institution, these make for an important means for their psychological rejuvenation. This relegates their pent-up hostilities, and improves their adjustive efficiency. Furthermore, these instill in the youngsters a spirit of teamwork which is likely to help them substantially in the years to come. Given these considerations, a critical look at games, sports and recreation in the institutions was considered important.

In all the four Homes, room or space had been earmarked for indoor games. The recreation hall in the Boys’ Home – I was often used as a dining hall due to space crunch. This notwithstanding as per the CWOs the children were having opportunity to participate in indoor games. However the recreation cum dining hall was noted to be used only for dining purpose. Rarely the children were seen playing any indoor game in the hall. The Children’s Homes for Girls – I & II had a common room for recreation activities and Children’s Home for Boys – II was having a separate room for recreation activities. The inmates were often seen playing themselves or in groups with the various indoor games in the three homes. In the four Homes following equipments were provided for indoor games: carom, ludo and
puzzle games. Outdoor games were made available in the Girls’ Home within the building premises. This included badminton, volleyball and ringball. Nearly 70 percent of the girls reported participation in outdoor games though within the building premises. In the Children’s Home for Boys – I for the 12-18 year old boys due to the space problem within the institutional premises the children were not having a separate room for indoor games and for security reasons the Home staff did not permit the children to play outside. They were however provided with a football sometimes. About the involvement in recreational games, most of the boys in CHB – I thus replied negative. Some of them mentioned that there was nobody to guide them or supervise them. Since the caretakers were most of the time busy gossiping or ordering them. In all the four Homes, the available games were observed to be old. This puts a question mark on the utilization of the funds earmarked every year for recreational activities.

We looked at the availability of other recreational facilities like television, radio, dholak, harmonium, etc., in the Homes under study. The Children’s Home for Girls – I & II and the Children’s Home for Boys – I were having certain musical instruments like dholak and harmonium and all the four Homes were having a television set in the recreational hall. There were fixed timings for television, half an hour every evening and a movie on Sunday.

In the Children’s Homes all festivals were celebrated and some cultural programmes were organized within the Home where the inmates performed. Based on the observations made during data-collection it was found that institutionalised children had extensive talent for song and dance. Children also sounded excited about all festivals since they got sweets and were also allowed to visit their families (if there). Some of the children remarked that at least on these days they were not beaten by the staff members.

4.9 Education and Vocational Training
Youthsters admitted to institutions have differing backgrounds; some of them would be higher in education and skills than others. Further, their duration of stay in the institution may vary, sometimes widely. In an institutional setting, thus education and skill development pose a few logistic problems. Nonetheless, institutional services have to offer educational and vocational training programmes because of their critical importance.

All the four Homes under study were having provision for children to attend a school in the neighbourhood. However the enrollment ratio was abysmally low in the institutions. The Children’s Home for Girls – I & II had earmarked four rooms for the in-house vocational training programme. In the Children’s Home for Boys – I there were nine rooms for vocational training in various skills (iron fitter, welding, wiring, banding, weaving, cane
work, barber skills, domestic arrangement and tailoring). To organize vocational training programme on a systematic and regular basis, all the Homes were having whole-time teachers on their staff. The children attending school / vocational programmes were provided only once the stationary items and books. However in case of any misplace/loss of these items, the children not only got scolding from the staff but were also not provided another article. This undoubtedly acts as an impediment in their interest in studies/learning skills. However the teachers complained about the irresponsible behaviour of the grown up children as most of the books and copies were in torn condition. The children mostly blamed it on other inmates who sometimes did not permit them read/write in the dormitories by spoiling their stuff.

The schools attached with the Homes were affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education. It was observed that in the CHG – I approximately 60% children were attending school, within the Nirmal Chaya complex. Remaining girls (40%) were attending various vocational courses like stitching / embroidery / painting / tie & dye in the institution. This was decided by the inmates’ interest. There were 15 girls enrolled in crafts classes run by Bal Bhawan within the institute and two were enrolled in the computer classes through Nari Raksha Samiti within the Nirmal Chaya complex. There was however no fixed enrollment ratio in the various vocational training courses as it mainly depended on girls’ aptitude and liking, they were allowed to switch over to other course if they were not able to follow or do not like the first course. According to the vocational instructors, these girls were mostly in groups or some were mentally unstable or having some learning disability thus found difficult to teach them any skill. However during our visits and as confirmed by some girl inmates, the teachers used to tell them once/twice the techniques. If not followed they would be treated badly with an abusive language in front of other girls. We found the teachers mainly involved in interacting with each other and not seen sharing the concerns of inmates. In the Girls’ Homes, rooms and teachers were available, yet, for one or more reasons, regular instructional programme was not there. Some of the reasons for the irregularity in vocational training classes in the Girls’ Home as per the teachers were absence of inmates in the classes on pretext of attending other classes or school or having fever or other health problems. The boys were however seen more regular in attending the vocational classes.

Majority of the children in the CHB – I & II were attending school along with vocational training (46%). Among the vocational training programmes, cane work and welding were referred by the boys as even during the training classes they got remuneration and also felt that after discharge with this skill they will be easily getting a job. Next to these vocations, barber skills and wire skills were preferred as even these trainings were considered more job oriented. The Children’s Home for Boys – I was associated with the Industrial Training
Institutes (ITIs) for the promotion of skill-development among youngsters and providing them small scaled jobs.

Vocational training programmes are important even for those who have a short stay in the institution. As discussed earlier there was more stress on vocational training in the Children’s Home for Boys if compared with the Girls’ institution. These differences become further noticeable when attention is paid to the main trades taken up by the institutions for vocational training and work programmes. In Boys’ Home, these included welding, wiring, banding, weaving, cane work, barber skills, domestic arrangement and tailoring. As against this, it was only stitching, painting and tie & dye which were pursued in the Girls’ Home. Apparently, the latter have paid but scant attention to market-relevance of the trades.

Information gathered from children brings out that only a third of girl inmates were receiving vocational training. As would be expected the proportion of children participating in vocational training was far larger in Boys’ Homes than their counterparts in the Girls’ Homes. Boys were found to be happy about these training programmes realizing their market value. However this was not enough to secure their acceptance for institutionalization as manifested through the words of a 15 years old boy Salamuddin

“Though I am getting the scooter repairing training in this Home, once I get a chance I would run away. Who would like to be treated like animals by the staff members?”

Some of the reasons for a comparatively poor enrollment ratio in the schools for boy inmates as per the CWOs were lack of interest, no basic knowledge and motivation. In the words of caretakers ‘the inmates are all used to an easy comfortable life getting free food, clothing. In any case this short term of studies will not fetch them any benefit.’ Though their reasoning was entirely their perception but the last point could make us think that after the institutionalization when these children are sent back to their families, if the children wanted to study or pursue any vocational training, there should be some provision or else they will be back on the streets/homes in a distressful condition.

4.10 Medical facilities

The Medical Services in the Nirmal Chaya complex for the inmates of Children’s Home for Girls – I and II and the Observation Home were comparatively more streamlined. There was one in-house dispensary within the complex. It was having two rooms for consultation having three beds for short term institutionalization and a lobby for the waiting purpose. There was one full time medical doctor, two nurses, one support staff, two sweepers and one security guard. The medical officer was in service since September, 2002. The working hours
for the Medical Officer were - 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. for six days a week. In case of emergency she used to come on holidays as well. She also looked after the staff and their families' medical problems.

Girls staying in the Homes could come with their caretaker to the Medical Officer any time in the day. In normal situation it was one time in a day for each Home. Regular annual check-up was provided to all inmates. If children were suffering from any contagious disease like tuberculosis/measles/chicken pox, they were separated from other children and kept under special care. From office records it was found that there had been some cases of dehydration/diarrhoea owing to general unhygienic toilets in the Home. Sick children were provided a special/therapeutic/more nutritious diet comprising of - 250 grams milk or 1-egg; 1-fruit; supplements of iron folic acid if required. This was provided in addition to the regular meal. In case of rape victims or sexually abused victims, proper check up of genital tract was done to rule out the possibility of any infection.

In case of any serious ailment or external injuries referral was made to the nearby hospital, Deen Dayal Upadhyay hospital. The hospital was having a separate department for Nirmal Chaya. They were also having a professionally qualified Social Worker and a senior Medical Officer to look into the cases. One medical van was available to escort children to the hospital. In view of the Medical Officer the services provided by the Home were more than enough for the children.

The Children’s Home for Boys – I and II were not having any in-house dispensary. There was one room earmarked for medical purpose in both the Homes. There was one part time doctor, one full time para-medical staff to look through the cases in the two Homes. There were two male attendants and two sweepers. Since there was no full time doctor, the paramedical staff looked through the cases and refers them to the doctor or the nearby government hospital. Unlike the Home for Girls in CHB-I & II the children suffering from any contagious disease like tuberculosis were often left undiagnosed and thus not separated from other children. The sick inmates were not provided with a special/therapeutic/more nutritious diet. There was one medical van available to escort the sick children, though as expressed by the support staff, one medical van was not sufficient for providing services to such a large number of juveniles staying in the CHB - I & II. Understanding the need of an in-house dispensary the Superintendent informed that he has taken up the matter with the Directorate and was hopeful of the required action.
4.11 Reunification of Children

The reunification of children with their family and community remains an overriding consideration with institutional services. As per the Act when children are admitted to the Home they should be involved in various personality development programmes and equipped to occupy their rightful place in society. This is how the measures for their reunification or restoration are supposed to set in motion from the day they are admitted to the institution. Law and rules provide to inform the parents and other family members at the earliest possible so that the children can be restored back to them. We tried to understand the ground reality through our visits to the four Children’s Homes and interaction with the staff members including the Superintendent of the Home. Information gathered from the Superintendents of all the four government-run shows that it has not been possible to do so in all the cases. Since all the children are not able to give out their proper residential address, a fact which may hamper communication with their parents or family. It was understandable with the younger children in the age group of 6-12 years. However with the older children not able to even give some basic information about their home address or family is indicative of their unwillingness to get back to them and reasons could be various like abusive parents or alcoholic father or financial constraints in the household.

In all the cases where the address of the child is known, Child Welfare Officer of the Home is supposed to pay a visit to the family, if needed. All the Homes under study reported this. However there was no report of any such visit in the past one year in any of the Homes. Such a visit was undertaken by the Child Welfare Officer. The CWO in the Children’s Home for Boys mentioned that though they wanted to make as many visits as possible but the travel reimbursement was so petty as to dampen their best efforts. It often became difficult to locate the address in this manner.

Despite such gaps in the system, some children are restored to their parents and family members due to the efforts by the institution coupled with keenness on the part of the parents and family-members in search for their child. Official records indicated that every year many children are restored back to parents or guardians in all the Homes under study. This apart, transfer of cases also takes place. Children are transferred to other districts or Homes. This was reported in all the four Homes by the Superintendent of the Home. While moving the children to other districts, the issue of escort becomes important. In some cases police personnel or home guards shouldered this responsibility, but in most cases it was the institutional staff members who serve as escorts.

The JJ Act provides for adoption and sponsorship as methods of restoration or reunification. There was no such case in the Homes under study. Yet another negative mode of disposal of
institutionalised cases is death. There have been some reports about the death of inmates in CHB – I and CHG – I and the main reason for the death of institutionalised children as per the Superintendent were ‘health problems’. However the newspaper reports in the recent past share different reasons like physical torture or starvation in the Home.

4.12 Institutional Culture

Every institution has its culture which is an outcome of its organizational structure, the quality of its manpower and their commitment to the objectives of the institution. The subjectivities of the personnel and organizational norms and values are critical in creating this culture. Culture in children’s institutions bonds them into peer relationship, and influences their perception of life in the institution. Further, it determines the direction and intensity of their receptivity towards institutional programmes.

Our data shows that the bureaucratic indifference towards the children (more so in the Boys’ Homes) inadequate attention to their well being, learning and health creates a rather negative image of Homes in the children’s minds. 270 resident children of Homes under study gave us some idea of this institutional culture through the expression of their dreams, likes and dislikes and their views on institutional functioning.

Behaviour of the Staff

The staff members have an important role in ensuring a comfortable stay of the children in these institutions. These staff members comprise of the Superintendent, CWOs, caretakers and other class four staff members. Since the caretakers stay for twenty four hours with the children they have a key role in ensuring a cordial stay of the inmates. The Superintendent and the CWOs are expected to supervise the functioning of caretakers and regularly interact with children.

The CWOs are supposed to regularly interact with the children however due to the inadequacy of staff the CWOs expressed their being overburdened with the court cases and the file work. They were busy with their institutional work which mainly involved the court case enquiries and visits to the courts frequently. This left them with very less time for interaction with the inmates. Most of the CWOs in all the four Homes were found to be young pass outs from the college and thus inexperienced of handling such homes. The attrition rate was also high among the CWOs thus not providing them enough time of involving with the children. Thus the Welfare Officers in all the Government Homes were not close to the inmates. It was the caretakers who were better aware of the needs of the children. They however have their own ways of handling children. They were biased towards
some children and were often seen making some children serve them - prepare tea or serving tea and snacks to the staff.

In the opinion of most of the girl inmates the CWOs were mostly not available, they were all big madams. For any reason they could approach only the caretakers. There was nobody in the Home who shared their feelings or was concerned for them. As observed some of the girls were quiet for almost the entire day but no staff member bothered to counsel them. In case of any fault it was noted that in the Girls’ Home the disciplinarian action used by the staff members was yelling at them or beating them with hands and in extreme cases when the girls replied back the caretakers even abused them with a stick or legs. However in the Boys’ Home beating them with bucket or stick was a routine. One of the caretakers in the CHB – I stated that some boys were stubborn who were not only difficult to handle but also disturbed other inmates. To discipline such children there was no other option but to beat them. In the words of the caretakers in CHG, these inmates were mostly from poor families where they were used to physical abuse and rough language. Sometimes they were so difficult that one had to be tough with them.

Even the boys shared that the Home was more like a prison with neither good food nor anybody to care for them. As one of the boys in CHB-I mentioned that ‘Life on the railway station was great, watching the trains and serving as a helper to the hawkers. These bloody policemen picked me up one night and brought me in this prison. There I had well wishers also.’

The caretakers or the other staff members of the Homes under study were not seen interacting with the children on any occasion. The senior staff comprising of Child Welfare Officers and Vocational Trainers was mostly seen sitting in their rooms and fulfilling the assigned duties. The caretakers and other members like the cook, sweeper were also mostly noted busy chatting with each other while keeping an eye on the inmates. The children in the Children’s Homes under study though are those in need of care and protection but they were also kept through out the day in the locked premises of the Home and were not allowed to go outside without a guard system.

Conflict Management

Though the CWOs are expected to resolve conflicts between children and supervise caretakers, this hardly happens. The result is that there are several conflicts amongst children. The key ones that we could observe and explore were safety of children’s belongings and use of dormitory facilities. As mentioned each child is allocated a bed and an almirah to keep the belongings. The almirahs were having a lock and key system, to ensure the safety of their
belongings. Despite of this arrangement the girl inmates mentioned that the other girls housed in the same dormitory often stole their belongings. Some of them had suspicion on the caretakers as well. Unlike the regular inmates, court cases which were a reality with all the four Homes under study were also required to be accommodated in the same dormitories. These children simply took to the floor and slept on *durri* or *taat patti*. They were, of course, provided with bed-sheet, pillow, blanket, etc., quantity and maintenance notwithstanding. These children were not only maltreated by the Home staff but also by the regular inmates for taking their space. These children with the cases pending in the court were not provided any place to keep their belongings and the worst was the daytime when they were not having any place to sit or lie on. According to the caretakers such children were more difficult to manage since being aware of the temporary nature of their stay in the Home they were most disobedient. The children though had a different say. They mentioned that the staff members treated them badly, did not provide even the basic items like soap, toothpaste and on demanding the Home staff not only verbally but physically abused them, even with the iron buckets. This kind of physical abuse was found to be a common feature of Children’s Home for Boys – I and the staff considered this a disciplinarian action.

Some children were totally deprived or total destitute, leading to conflicts between them and those with families. As these inmates did not have any visitors and thus no gifts from outside leading to a feeling of jealousy amongst the inmates and leading to groups. The CWOs were not helping them to resolve conflicts and have a better understanding. As per the Act the children entrusted to the institutional care must be provided basic facilities as well as psychological and social services. This comprises of food, clothing and shelter along with adequate medical services and counseling facilities. The words of a 9 years old girl could worry the researcher as well when she mentioned out of innocence and despair, "I have been staying here from more than two years and have till date never been visited by anybody. Unlike other girls staying in the Home that’s why I am not having nice clothes to wear. I am all alone.”

In case of boys it was found that they were having comparatively less visits by the family members.

**Group Culture**

The children in both Girls’ and Boys’ Homes were found having group culture and also of total apathy to some inmates. On sharing with the children, it was realized that the children especially in the 12-18 years age group were not having friendly relations with each other or the inmates with a longer stay in the Home were having groups. Also we noted a culture of older children bullying over the younger ones or new entrants to the Home.
Children’s Perception for the Staff

For many children, life in the institution makes demand on their adjustive capacity. Most of them are able to bring about adjustment with those around them. But a few are not able to do so. This is what gives rise to personal preferences, likes and dislikes.

Children’s perception about staff-members has been ascertained. This is based on the assumption that some staff members are liked by children more than others — for a variety of reasons. Nearly three-fourths of them had a staff-member in mind they liked most. But when it comes to identifying attributes of the most liked staff-member, quite a few children (26 percent) were unable to specify. The rest specified some of the personal qualities (e.g., well-behaved, jovial, smiling, etc.); non-punitive (e.g., ‘does not threaten or beat’); mindful of the basics (e.g., ‘provides us meals on time’); caring / loving (responsive to needs, attentive to problems, talks to children, etc.); helpful to children (e.g., helps in study, sends children to school, helps on playground, occasional financial help, helps in training); and counseling / guidance (e.g., leads children to the right path, persuasive and decent, counsels to help, etc.). It was noted that most mentioned attributes of the staff member was caring / loving (44 percent) followed by counseling / guidance (18 percent), personal qualities (11 percent), and helpful to children (11 percent).

Figures in the Table-13 show that the two Homes do differ but only narrowly. Counseling and guidance featured prominently in girls’ case and helpful in boys’ case. Barring these, the qualities of staff-members that attracted children were about the same in the two Homes. However the general perceptions about the overall behaviour of the caretakers under whose supervision the children were suppose to spend their days in the institutions was negative since in all the Homes these caretakers were both physically and verbally abusive as a disciplining action.

Table – 13: Qualities of the staff member liked most by the children (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Girls (N = 105)</th>
<th>Boys (N = 165)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal qualities</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-penalising</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mindful of basics</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring / loving</td>
<td>39.</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful to children</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling and guidance</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To have a more insightful view, the reverse position has also been ascertained. For obvious reasons, many children were not forthcoming on this issue, and 1 percent children gave no response. However, more than 36 percent reported that there was a staff-member they did not
like. Among these, 35 percent also specified reasons for this kind of dislike. These included, rude to children (38 percent), penalising to children (36 percent), personal qualities (18 percent) and lazy (6 percent). It would be insight-giving to look into variations, if any. Table-14 presents relevant information. It is observed that Children's Homes for Boys and Girls do differ but only marginally. In the Boys' Homes, the most disliked attributes of the staff-members were rude to children and disciplinary to children. This was also the case in the Girls' Home.

Table – 14: Attributes of the staff member liked least by the children (in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Girls (N = 105)</th>
<th>Boys (N = 165)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal qualities</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rude to children</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalising to children</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children and Psychological Problems

At the same time, institutionalised children are not altogether free from personality or psychological problems. To a great extent, these determine and define institutional culture. Both the Superintendents of the four Homes under study (both boys and girls) report that children have psychosocial problems. According to them, this was reflected by such problems as quarreling, stealing, indulging in homo-sexual behaviour, etc. Perhaps, because of these reasons institutions have reportedly initiated the practice of appointing monitors. The Children's Home for Girls – I had done so. The number of monitors varied from 1 to 3. Officially speaking, main considerations which governed such appointments were age, seniority, leadership ability, etc. Superintendent of the Homes reported that the system of monitors helped in managing the Home. Indeed, involving children in the management of the Home and its affairs is a good practice (provided it is not a deceptive form of oppression).

On the other hand, children have their own set of real or imagined grievances. Both the Superintendents of the four Homes reported this and mentioned that direct contact and reporting were the main methods for resolving these grievances. According to the Superintendent of the CHG, children were free to ventilate their grievances directly to her or to the CWO, caretaker, teacher or vocational training instructor. However during the period of data collection this was not noted in any of the Homes. According to the Child Welfare Officers and caretakers the complaints of children were mainly related to theft of personal belongings, absences of outing or picnic, quality or quantity of food, etc.
Yet another reality in institutional life is ‘escape’. Official data shows that, during the year 2003, there were four escape cases in CHB – I for 12-18 years old boys. The Superintendent of this Home reported that these escapes mainly occurred because of quarrels among children, home-sickness, non-availability of drugs, etc., though on interaction with the inmates, the reasons for such escapes were found to be entirely different. Some of them were non-caring abusive attitude of the staff members, routinised life with no freedom, ill treatment, no friends and in some cases non-availability of drugs or traumatization by some older boys. It may be remarked that cultural aspects of the institutional life may well be kept in view for effectively managing the Homes and for fulfilling their pronounced objectives.