

Chapter-VI

***ROLE OF OBSERVATION
HOME***



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ROLE OF OBSERVATION HOME

The focus of this chapter will be on the role of Observation Home. Observation Home is an institution, where neglected and delinquent juveniles are kept for a few weeks or pending decision of the cases. Children are brought by the police or probation officers or parents voluntarily admit them. During their stay in the institutions, all services are provided including food, clothing and shelter. In the institution, children may be disposed off either by committing them to a Juvenile Home for long term treatment or may be handed over to their parents based on the nature of the case. In Observation Home, Juvenile Justice Board decides juveniles cases and handover to the parents on conditions of attending to Juvenile Justice Board sittings.

In this connection it is relevant to probe into the institutional treatment of inmates. The Observation Home has to be place for changing attitudes and behaviour of the inmates. It has a major role to play in rehabilitating the delinquent children, by turning their mind set up to become a worthy citizen of the country. Children living in Observation Homes shall be provided a better social environment for their growth in the absence of parental care and affection. The present study seeks to understand how far these institutions are providing the needed care to the respondent inmates and know how far they are successful in rehabilitating the delinquent children. The major aspects covered here are:

- ❖ Treatment in Observation Home.
- ❖ Living conditions.
- ❖ Quality of food and cleanliness.
- ❖ Water supply, bathroom and toilet facilities.
- ❖ Lighting, radio and Television facilities.
- ❖ Reading room and games facilities.
- ❖ Medical facilities in the Observation Home.
- ❖ Supervising Probation Officer, Other staff, House Mother, etc.

All the information obtained on these aspects has a bearing on the attitude and perceptions of the inmates of Observation Home covered by the study.

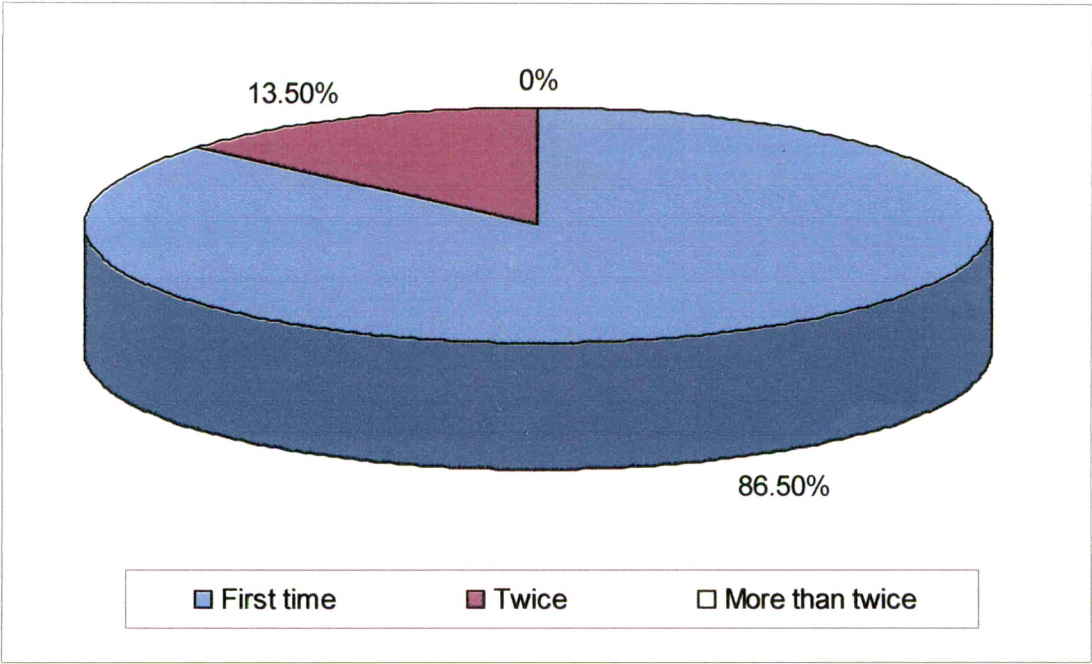
Number of times brought to Observation Home

The study has revealed that a large numbers of respondents 86.5 per cent were brought to Observation Home for the first time, while only 13.5 per cent respondents were brought twice. Details are given in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1

Number of times brought to Observation Home

Response	Number	Percentage
First time	173	86.5
Twice	27	13.5
More than twice	-	-
Total	200	100.0



It is evident from the responses that large majority of respondent inmates were not habitual offenders who committed crimes frequently.

Treatment in the Observation Home

There is a sharp division of opinion among the inmates about the treatment received in the Observation Home. Table 6.2 provides the details.

Table 6.2

Treatment in the Observation Home

Response	Number	Percentage
Good	63	31.5
Not bad	82	41.0
Bad	55	27.5
Total	200	100.0

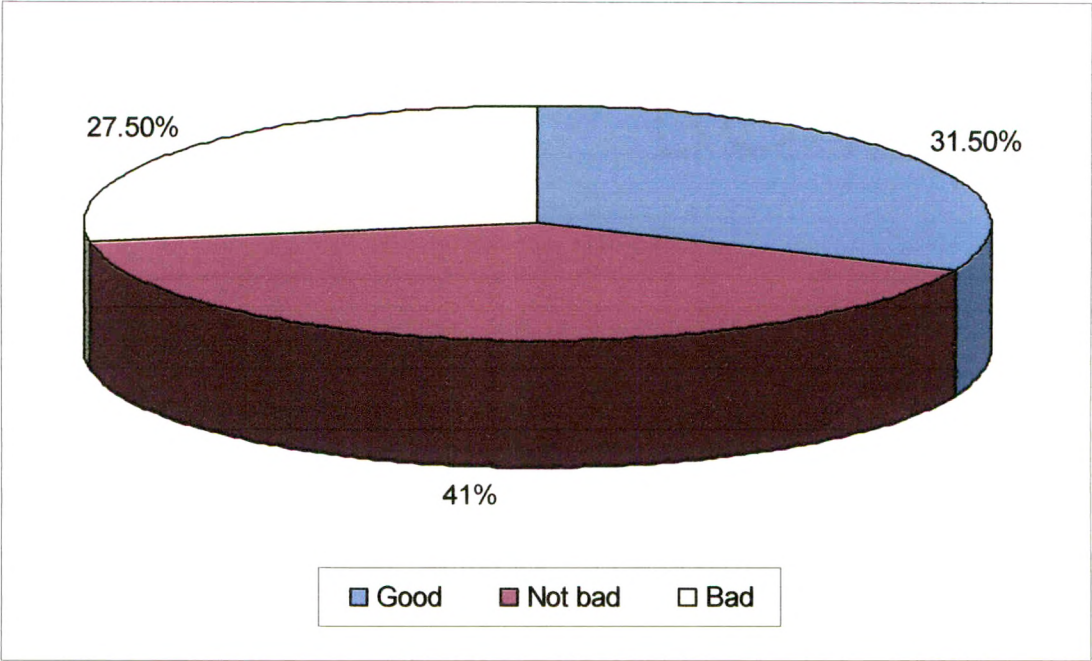


Table 6.2 indicate that 41 per cent respondents consider the treatment in the Observation Home as ‘not bad’ while 31.5 per cent respondents considered it as ‘good’. While 27.5 per cent respondents considered the treatment in the Observation Home as ‘bad’. Thus indicating that slightly more than one-fourth of respondents were not happy with the treatment given to them in the Observation Home.

Food facility in Observation Home

Here discussion will centre on several issues such as meals per day, quality of food, adequacy of food, Tiffin-adequacy and timing-mess hall and the like.

a. Meals per Day

Frequency of serving food in the Observation Home to the inmates was prescribed by the authorities. Hence there was hardly any scope for discrimination between the inmates about food served to them. This information is given in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3
Meals per Day

Response	Number	Percentage
Once	-	-
Twice	200	100.0
Total	200	100.0

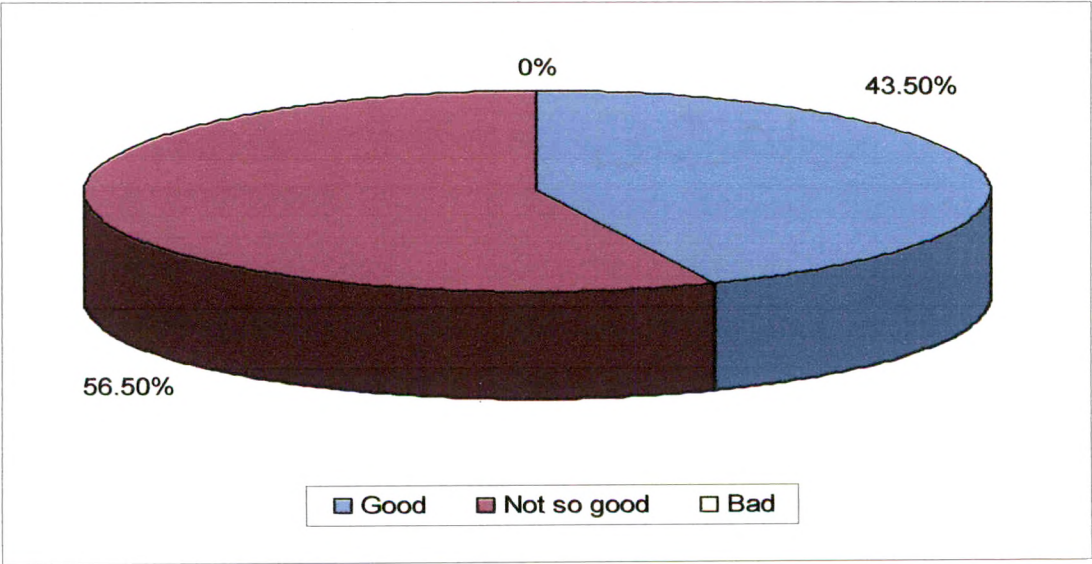
All the 200 respondent inmates mentioned that food was served twice a day.

b. Quality of food

Quality of food served was considered differently by the different groups of inmates of Observation Home. There is no unanimity or uniformity of opinion about the quality of food served in the Observation Home. The responses are given in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4
Quality of food

Response	Number	Percentage
Good	87	43.5
Not so good	113	56.5
Bad	-	-
Total	200	100.0



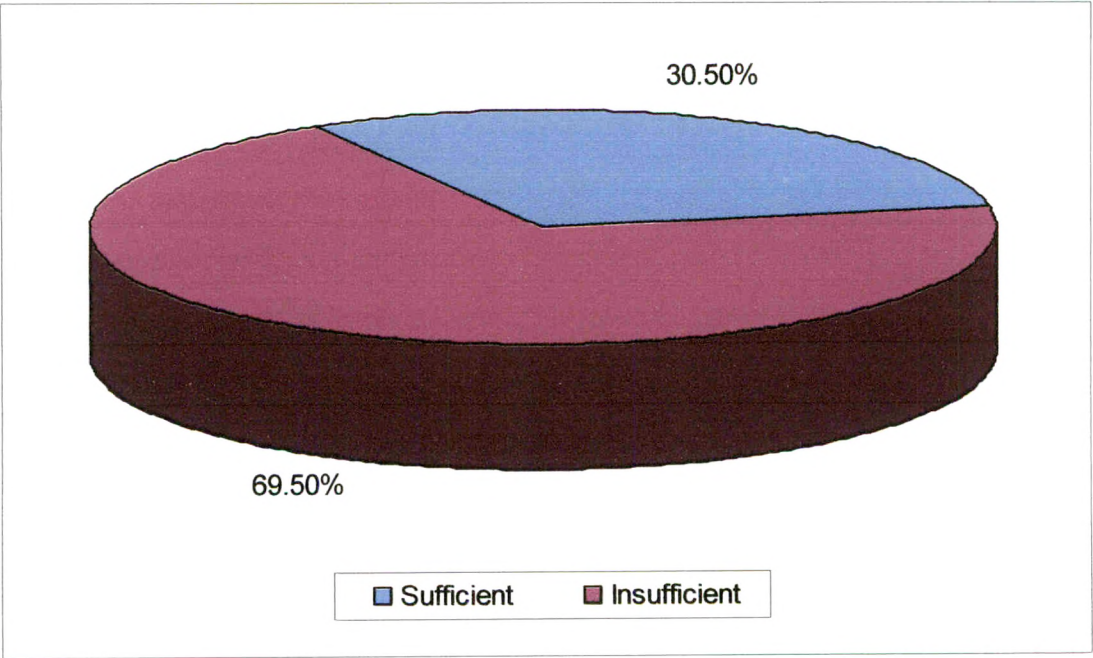
Quality of food given to them was considered as ‘good’ by 43.5 per cent respondents while majority of respondents (56.5 per cent) considered the quality of food as ‘not so good’, thereby indicating that food provided in the Observation Home was ‘not so good’.

c. Adequate food

There were considerable differences in the opinion of respondents about the adequacy and quantity of food served. This calls for some monitoring by the organizers, since it reflects on the living condition of inmates. Different types of opinions expressed by inmates are given in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5
Getting Adequate food

Response	Number	Percentage
Sufficient	61	30.5
Insufficient	139	69.5
Total	200	100.0



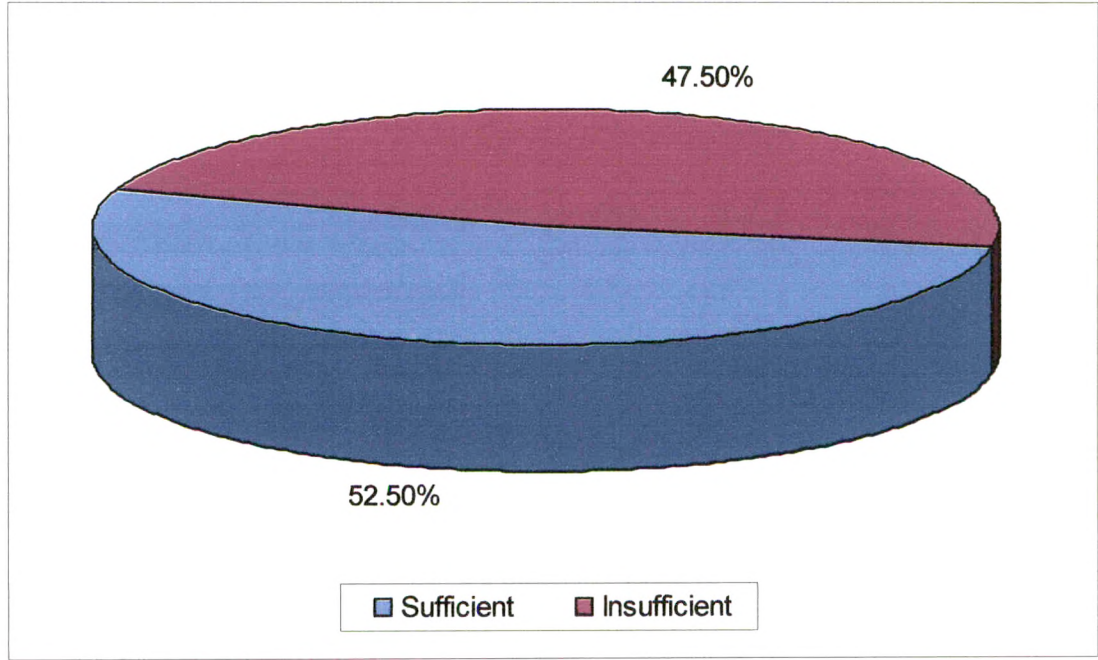
30.5 per cent of respondents of the Observation Home mentioned that they got adequate food while majority of respondents (69.5 per cent) were of the view that the food served in the Observation Home was insufficient.

d. About tiffin

Table 6.6

About tiffin

Response	Number	Percentage
Sufficient	105	52.5
Insufficient	95	47.5
Total	200	100.0



Inmates’ opinion about Tiffin provided by the Observation Home is almost similar. There was divergence of opinion about the adequacy of Tiffin served to the inmates. Hence it indicates certain amount of dissatisfaction about the quantity of Tiffin among the inmates.

Table 6.6 portrays that 52.5 per cent respondents were of the view that Tiffin provided to them was sufficient while 47.5 per cent respondents considered it was insufficient.

e. Time they provide tiffin

The frequency of providing Tiffin to the inmates is restricted. Tiffin is provided once a day. This was confirmed by the inmates of the Observation Home, Responses are given in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7

Time they provide tiffin

Response	Number	Percentage
Once	200	100.0
Twice	-	-
Total	200	100.0

All the respondents' cent per cent of Observation Home mentioned that they were offered Tiffin only once a day.

f. About mess hall

Table 6.8

About mess hall

Response	Number	Percentage
Separate room	-	-
Common room	-	-
In the living room only	200	100.0
Total	200	100.0

The responses given in Table 6.8 show that the facilities in the Observation Home appear to be poor and inadequate. The study revealed that the Observation Home did not have a separate Mess

Hall. The living hall was used for this purpose. There is therefore, a need for providing proper amenities in this Home.

All the respondent inmates mentioned during the course of the interviews that there was no special ‘mess hall’ but food was served in the living room only.

Water Facility in Observation Home

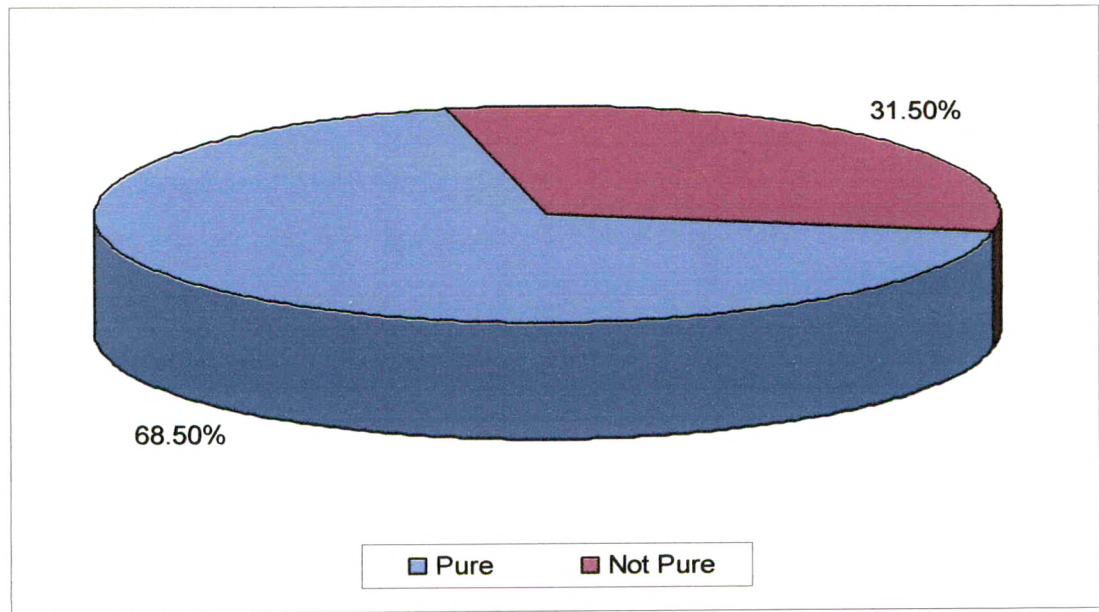
Drinking Water Facility

An essential facility in Observation Home is pure drinking water. Every individual requires pure water for good health. Providing good quality of water is also the duty of the staff members of the Observation Home. Details are given in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9

Drinking Water Facility

Response	Number	Percentage
Pure	137	68.5
Not pure	63	31.5
Total	200	100.0

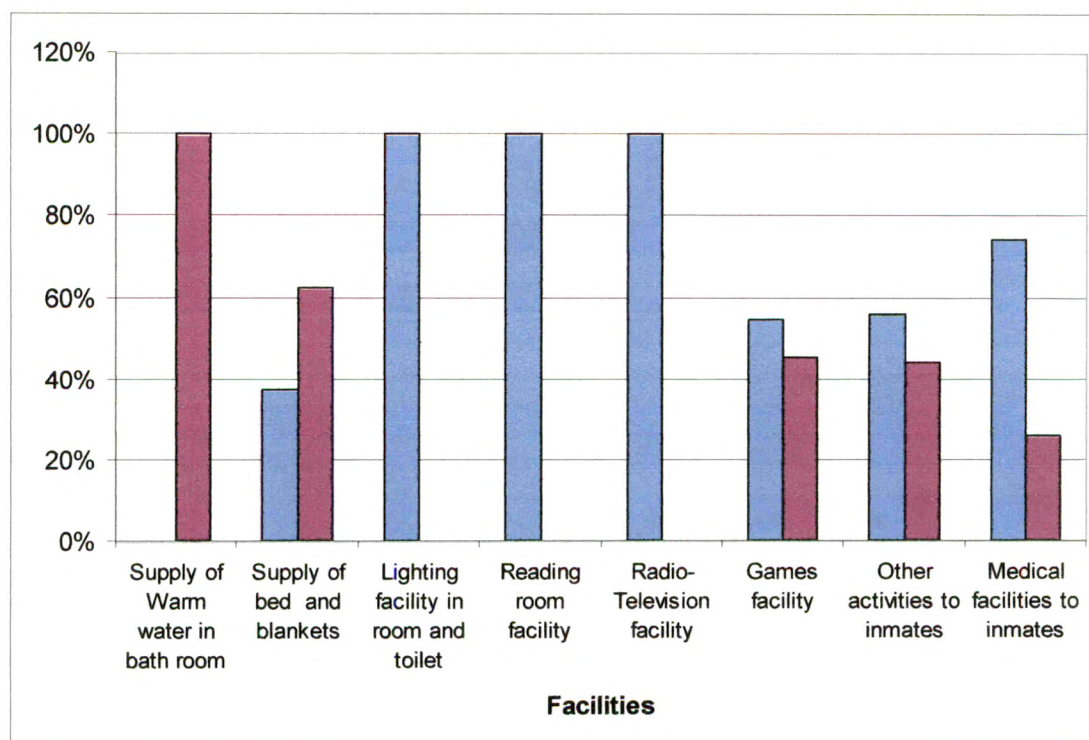


Majority of respondents (68.5 per cent) stated that they got pure drinking water while the remaining inmates 31.5 per cent mentioned that they were not given pure drinking water in the Observation Home.

Table 6.10

Facilities Provided to the Inmates

Sl. No.	Facilities	Yes	No	Total
1	Supply of Warm water in bath room	--	200 (100.0)	200
2	Supply of bed and blankets	75 (37.5)	125 (62.5)	200
3	Lighting facility in room and toilet	200 (100.0)	--	200
4	Reading room facility	200 (100.0)	--	200
5	Radio-Television facility	200 (100.0)	--	200
6	Games facility	109 (54.5)	91 (45.5)	200
7	Other activities to inmates	112 (56.0)	88 (44.0)	200
8	Medical facilities to inmates	148 (74.0)	52 (26.0)	200



Supply of Warm Water in Bathroom

The responses are indicated in Table 6.10. Warm water was not supplied to inmates for bathing according to all the respondents of the Observation Home. Inmates had to use cold water in the Home.

It is necessary to provide to the inmates as they are too young and need Warm water to be protected from cold. Observation Home should not be treated as jails meant for adult criminals.

Supply of Bed and Blankets to Inmates

Clothing is one of the basic needs of an individual, provision of beds and blankets are bare basic needs for inmates. The information is given in Table 6.10.

Separate beds and blankets were supplied according to 37.5 per cent respondents while 62.5 per cent respondents mentioned that they were not given separate beds and blankets. Majority of inmates did not get separate beds and blankets.

Lighting and Other Facilities in Observation Home

It is heartening to find that the Observation Home was provided with proper lighting facility. There is a consensus of opinion among the inmates in this context that is mentioned in Table 6.10.

All the respondent inmates of the Observation Home mentioned that proper lighting was provided in reading rooms and toilets.

Reading Room Facility

The inmates confirmed that they were provided with reading room facility. Such facilities help in creating interest in knowledge and

education. The information regarding reading room facility is given in Table 6.10.

All the respondent inmates of the Observation Home have mentioned that they were provided with reading room facility.

Radio and Television Facility

Modern communication facilities like Radio and Television are provided in the Observation Home, such facilities have educational and entertainment values. Table 6.10 provides the details.

Radio and Television facility provided in the Observation Home was affirmed by all the inmates.

Games Facility

Provision of facilities for games for the benefit of inmates provides team game to develop skills in sports and also help in keeping the inmates physically fit and healthy. Details are given in Table 6.10.

Facilities for games have been provided in the Observation Home according to majority of respondents (54.5 per cent) while 45.5 per cent respondents stated that games facility not provided.

Other Activities to Inmates

The Observation Homes conduct other activities for the benefit of the inmates. They include cultural and other activities. Such activities are useful in developing the personalities of the inmates. The information is given in Table 6.10.

According to Table 6.10 cultural and social activities were been conducted regularly, as reported by respondents 56 per cent while the remaining 44 per cent did not agree. They felt that no such activities

were conducted in the Observation Home as to be useful to develop their personality.

Medical Facilities in Observation Home

An important facility needed for the inmates of the Observation Home related to medical facility. Such facilities are essential to keep the inmates free from health problems. The information is given in Table 6.10.

Majority of respondents (74 per cent) confirmed that medical facilities for inmates were provided while 26 per cent respondents denied this.

Washing of Clothes

The Observation Home largely meant for the temporary reception of any juvenile in conflict with law during the pendency of any inquiry regarding them rather than places for punishment. Hence facilities like workers for washing the clothes need to be attached to the Home. The information is given in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11
Washing of Clothes

Response	Number	Percentage
Self	200	100.0
Others	-	-
Total	200	100.0

All the respondent inmates of the Observation Home reported that they washed their own clothes. There were no separate workers for washing clothes of inmates.

Bathroom and Toilet Facilities

a. Bathroom Facility

For good health children maintaining hygienic and good sanitation was also necessary in the Observation Home. The information regarding types of facilities provided to inmates is given in Table 6.12.

Table 6.12

Bathroom Facility

Bathroom	Number	Percentage
Separate	-	-
Common	200	100.0
Total	200	100.0

All the respondents stated that common bath room was provided for all the inmates, as there were no separate bathrooms.

b. Toilet Facility

The Observation Home should be hygienic with separate toilets instead of a common toilet. Such inadequacies led to problems of health and sanitation. Hence the organizers should look into such problems and redress them. The information regarding this is given in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13

Toilet Facility

Toilet	Number	Percentage
Separate	-	-
Common	200	100.0
Total	200	100.0

Common toilet facility was provided to all inmates.

Living Room Facility in Observation Home

Number of Inmates in Room

The Observation Home should provide separate rooms for inmates. Separate rooms would avoid quarreling between inmates. Table 6.14 gives details.

Table 6.14

Number of Inmates in the Room

Response	Number	Percentage
One	-	-
Two	-	-
Three	-	-
More than three	-	-
Common hall	200	100.0
Total	200	100.0

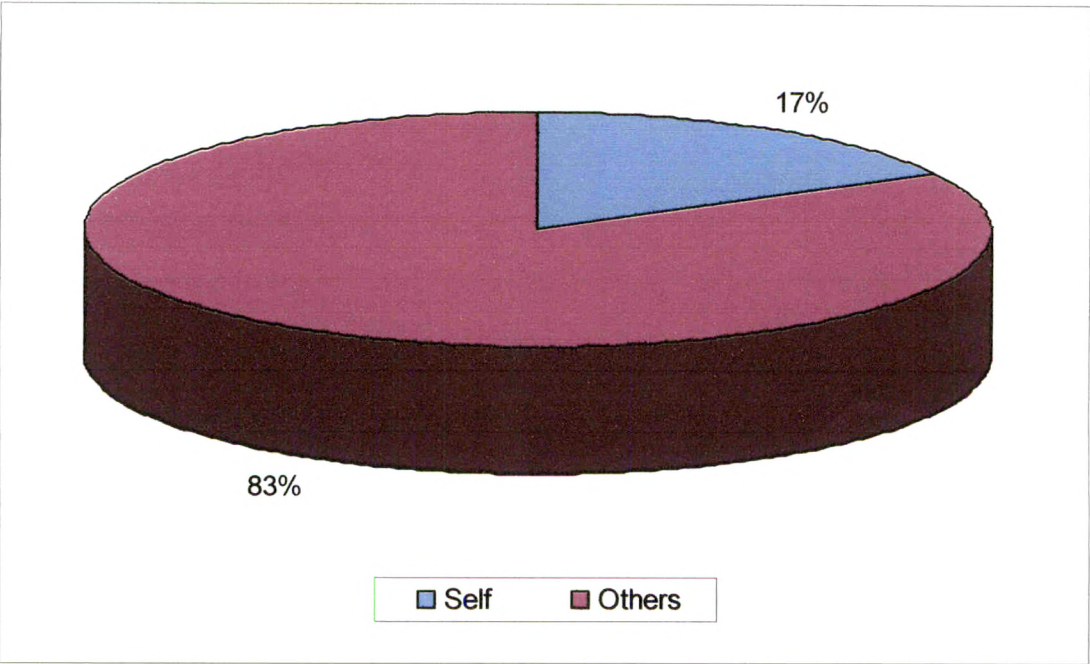
All the respondent inmates of Observation Home mentioned that they all live in one common hall. This went against the needs of cleanliness and hygiene. Such basic requirements seemed to be absent.

Cleaning of Rooms in Observation Home

Table 6.15

Cleaning of Rooms in Observation Home

Response	Number	Percentage
Self	34	17.0
Others	166	83.0
Total	200	100.0



A large majority of respondents (83 per cent) mentioned that the rooms were cleaned by other workers. However, a small number of respondents 17 per cent indicated that they themselves cleaned the room.

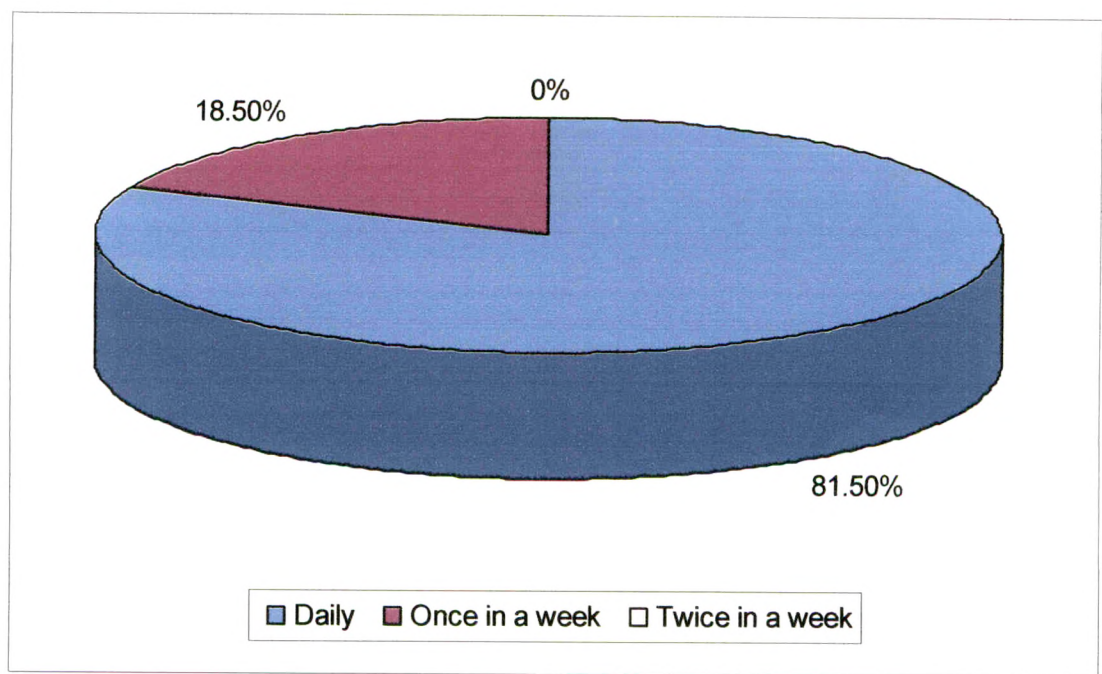
Visits of Probation Officer

The visits by Probation Officer for enquiring about the well being of the inmates would instill confidence and hopes in their minds. Such healthy practices are an essential part of the proper administration of the Observation Home. In this connection Table 6.16 provides the details.

Table 6.16

Probation Officer Visit to Inmates Room

Response	Number	Percentage
Daily	163	81.5
Once in a week	37	18.5
Twice in a week	-	-
Total	200	100.0



Probation Officers entrusted with the work of looking after the interests of inmates were found daily visiting the rooms in the Observation Home according to 81.5 per cent of respondents. However 18.5 per cent respondents mentioned that Probation Officers visited once a week. Hence it can be inferred from the data that there is proper supervision by Probation Officer.

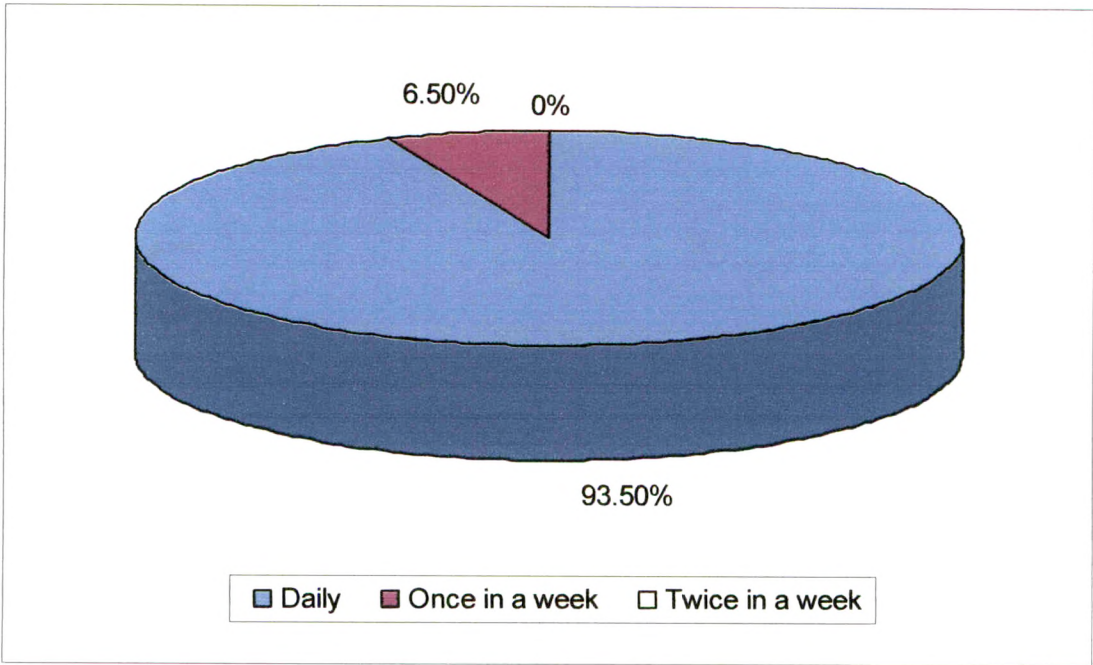
Visits by Supervisors to the Inmates Rooms

Daily visits by other supervisory staff were useful in looking into the problems of the inmates and keeping them happy. Observation Homes have to be a place for changing the outlook and attitudes of inmates. Hence supervisory staff has a role in this direction. The information is given in Table 6.17.

Table 6.17

Supervisor’s Visit to Inmates’ Room

Response	Number	Percentage
Daily	187	93.5
Once in a week	13	06.5
Twice in a week	-	-
Total	200	100.0



The Supervisors visit the rooms of inmates in the Observation Home daily according to majority of respondents (93.5 per cent). While a small number of respondents (6.5 per cent) mentioned that the supervisors visited their rooms once a week.

Help by House Mother for the Inmates

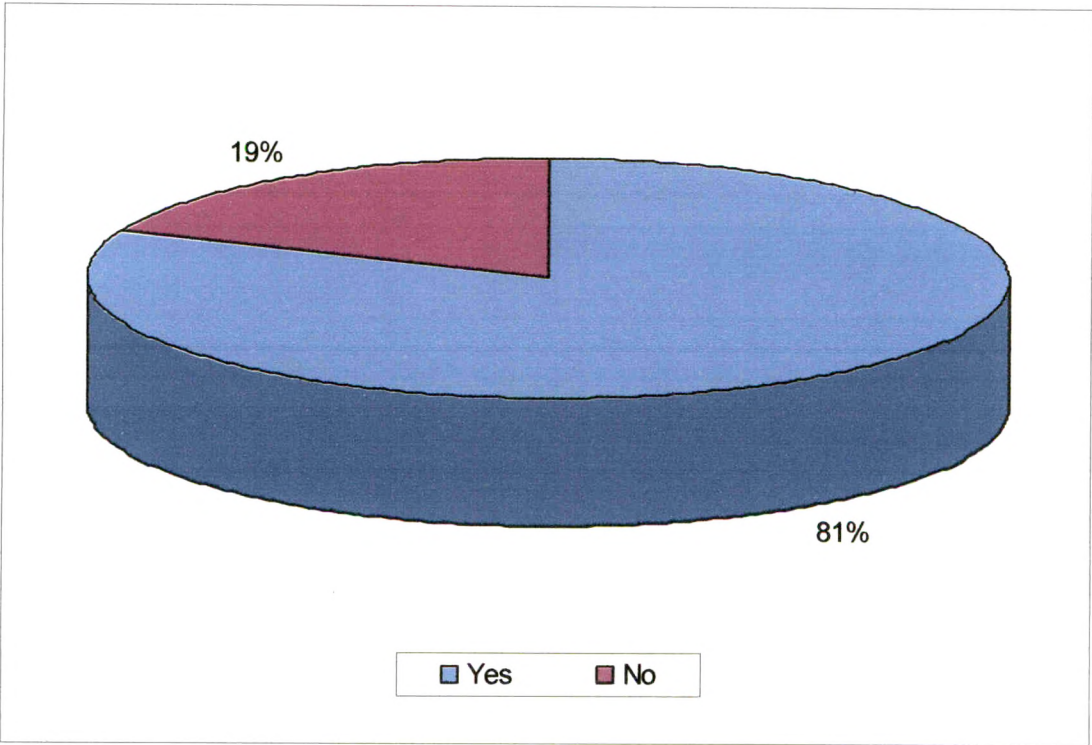
a. Enquiry about Food Quality

House mother has a very important role in ensuring the welfare of the inmates. Her role was to enquire about the food quality served

to inmates as it is the basic requirement for keeping the inmates in good health. Details are given in Table 6.18.

Table 6.18
Role of House Mother

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	162	81.0
No	38	19.0
Total	200	100.0



House Mother enquired about the food quality was reported by majority of respondents' (81 per cent) while 19 per cent did not concur with this.

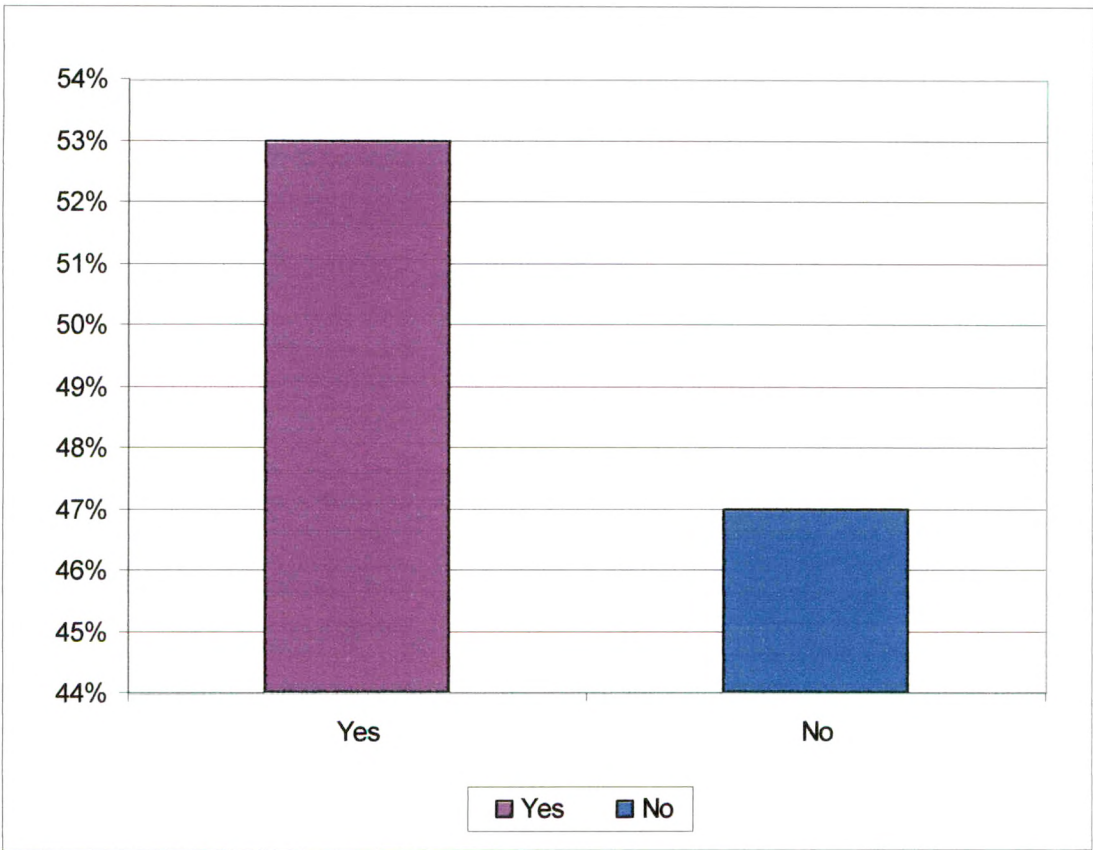
b. House Mother Enquiring about Health

House mother was entrusted with not only enquire about the quality of food served to inmates but also about their health. Hence

her frequent visit to the Home is quite essential. The information is given in Table 6.19.

Table 6.19
House Mother Enquiring about Health

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	106	53.0
No	94	47.0
Total	200	100.0



The responses given in Table 6.19 indicate differences in the opinion of inmates in this context. Majority of respondents (53 per cent) mentioned that House mother enquired about their health. However 47 per cent respondents did not agree with this.

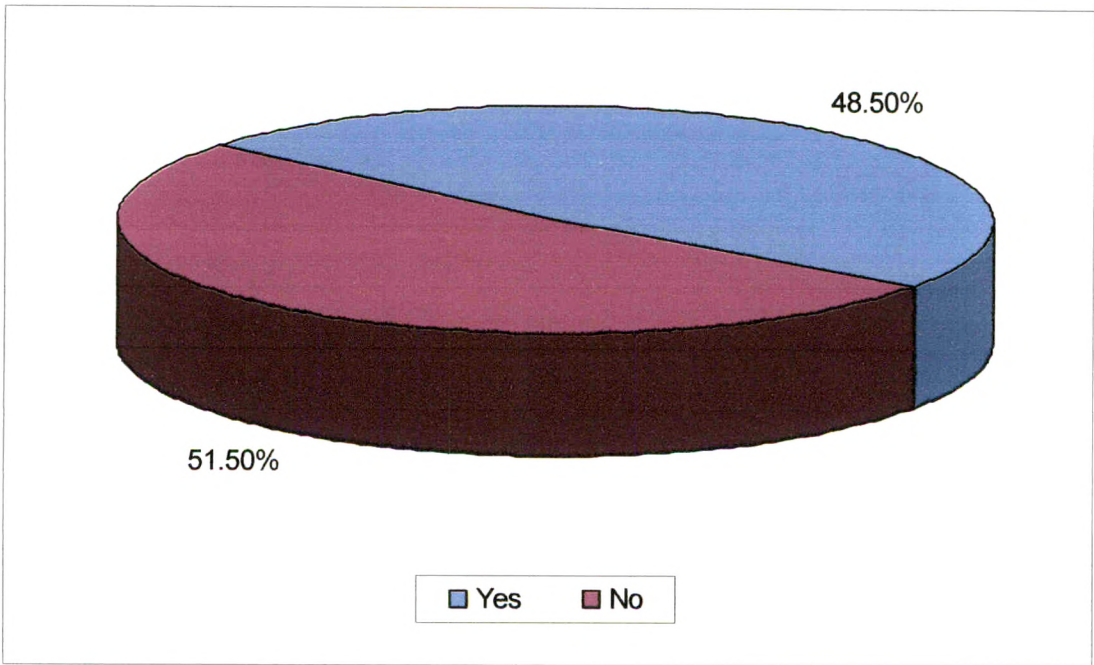
c. House Mother Enquiring about Requirements of Inmates

House mother is also entrusted with the task of enquiring about the requirements of inmates. The information regarding this is given in Table 6.20.

Table 6.20

House Mother Enquiring about Requirements of Inmates

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	97	48.5
No	103	51.5
Total	200	100.0



The responses indicate sharp differences in this context too. 51.5 per cent respondents mentioned that house mother did not enquire about their requirement in the Observation Home, while 48.5 per cent respondents stated that housemother enquired about their requirements.

Summary

Observation Home is set up for the temporary reception of any juvenile in conflict with law during the pendency of any inquiry regarding them.

Majority of the inmates were first time entrants of Observation Home. About meals served, Tiffin provided etc. they were largely favourable. However conditions of living in Observation homes like mess hall, good drinking water, warm bathing water, washing of clothes, bathroom facility, toilet facility and number of inmates in one common room etc. were highly disliked by majority of inmates. The opinion about beds and blankets, cleanliness in living rooms were also adverse. However inmates appreciated facilities like lighting, reading room, Radio and Television, games facility, medical facility and visits of Probation Officer, Supervisors and House mother for enquiring about food and welfare of inmates.