
Women & Child Development Department**Chapter 3: Functioning of Working Women's Hostels in the State****3.1 Introduction**

With progressive changes in the socio-economic fabric of the country and enhancement in the ratio of education of the girl child, there has been an increase in the percentage of women seeking employment. This has led to increased mobility of women from rural work force to urban areas and *vice versa*, thus, creating an enhanced need for safe, secure, conveniently located and affordable institutional accommodation for women living away from home. As per the reports of the National Sample Survey on Periodic Labour Force, 2017-18, regular women wage workers in rural Odisha increased from 3.3 *per cent* in 2011-12 to 9.5 *per cent* in 2017-18. In urban areas, the same increased from 27.1 *per cent* in 2011-12 to 46.5 *per cent* in 2017-18.

Government of India (GoI) introduced, the “Scheme for Working Women Hostel” and issued guidelines thereunder in 1972-73 to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women, with day care facility for their children, in urban, semi urban or even rural areas. Under the scheme, GoI provided financial assistance to States for construction of new Working Women's Hostels (WWH) or expansion of existing ones. The revised guidelines for the Scheme were issued by GoI in 2017. As per the Guidelines of 2017, 60 *per cent* of the project cost for construction, are to be borne by GoI, while the State Government and the implementing agencies (*i.e.*, municipality or development authority) will bear 15 and 25 *per cent* of the cost respectively. In addition to this, cost of furniture and furnishings are to be shared by GoI and the State Government in the ratio of 60:40. Further, rent received from the inmates is to be utilised for maintenance of the building, house-keeping, security service, office establishment, expenditure towards water and electricity charges and other support services.

Through Women & Child Development (W&CD) Department, GoO also established WWHs from its own resources from time to time. Audit observed that despite the fact that Government run WWHs were in existence since the 1970s, the W&CD Department issued guidelines for functioning, operation and management of WWHs as late as March 2021.

As of 31 March 2021, there were 36 WWHs in Odisha with a combined bed-strength of 2,622. Of these, only 12 WWHs were operational, as detailed in the **Appendix 3.1**. Status of functioning of WWHs in Odisha is summarised in the **Table 3.1**:

Table 3.1: Status of WWHs in Odisha as of March 2021

Status	No. of WWHs	Bed-strength
Functional	12	859
Non-functional	6	517
Incomplete	7	493
Construction not-started	3	250
Used for other purposes	8	503
Total	36	2,622

(Source: Information furnished by W&CD Department, IDCO/DSWO¹)

As can be seen from the table above, only one third of the 36 WWHs in the State were functional and against a targeted bed strength of 2,622 for accommodation of working women, only 859 (32.76 per cent) were actually available for the intended beneficiaries. The construction of seven WWHs remained incomplete from 1999 to 2021.

Management of WWHs rested with State Government/ its subordinate bodies or NGOs, as decided by the W&CD Department. Management of WWH denotes managing both the accommodation matters as well as upkeep/ repair and maintenance of WWH building/ premises. Thus, both functional and non-functional WWHs require management. Of the 36 WWHs, while 18 WWHs were managed by the State Government or its subordinate bodies², 11 WWHs were managed by NGOs. In respect of remaining seven WWHs³, managing agencies had not been finalised due to these hostels being non-functional, incomplete or being used for other purposes.

As per the scheme for WWH, working women with monthly gross income not exceeding ₹ 35,000 are eligible to stay in WWH. A girl child up to the age of 18 years and a boy up to the age of five years can stay with their working mothers in WWH. No working woman is allowed to stay in a WWH for more than three years.

In order to assess availability and functioning of WWHs and quality of accommodation provided at affordable cost, audit was conducted during July to October 2021 covering the period from 2016-17 to 2020-21. Audit test-checked records at W&CD Department of GoO and at seven sampled districts⁴. Out of 30 districts in the State, sampled districts were drawn on judgmental basis considering existence of functional, non-functional and under-construction WWHs in these areas. Audit also conducted joint physical inspection (JPI) of 34 WWHs⁵. The audit findings have been forwarded (January 2022) to Government; replies are awaited.

Findings based on Audit are discussed in the following paragraphs.

¹ IDCO: Odisha Infrastructure Development Corporation (a State Public Sector Undertaking); DSWO: District Social Welfare Officer

² State Social Welfare Board, Odisha/ Municipal Corporations/ Municipalities

³ Non-functional: 3, Not started: 2, Incomplete: 2

⁴ Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Khurda, Mayurbhanj, Puri and Sundargarh

⁵ GoI funded (26): Functional: 11, Non-functional: 2, Other purpose: 7, Incomplete: 6 and GoO funded (8): Functional: 1, Non-functional: 4, Other purpose: 1 and Incomplete: 2

Audit Findings

3.2 Availability of WWHs

As noted above, there were 12 functional WWHs in the State (January 2022) and GoO further planned construction of eight new WWHs during 2016-21. Audit examined availability of WWHs with reference to the occupancy rate in the functional hostels as well as the status of the newly planned eight WWHs and found the following:

3.2.1 Construction of new WWHs by GoO

In pursuance of the provisions in the Odisha State Policy for Girls and Women, 2014, W&CD Department decided (February 2014 and September 2016) to establish eight new WWHs⁶ which would encourage them to work in the formal sector away from their homes. The areas selected for the hostels were industrialised areas and rapidly urbanising areas where employment opportunities for women were aplenty and safe accommodation for women working away from home was needed. Accordingly, W&CD Department released (between February 2014 and November 2020) ₹ 44.19 crore to the Mahila Vikash Samabaya Nigam (MVSN), a GoO undertaking, to get the works executed. MVSN, in turn, released (between May 2014 and September 2020) ₹ 30.82 crore to the executing agencies⁷. Status of construction of eight WWHs is indicated in the **Table 3.2** below:

Table 3.2: Status of construction of WWHs as of November 2021

Sl. No.	Location of the WWH	Expenditure (₹ in crore)	Schedule date of completion	Status as of November 2021	Period of delay in completion	Remarks
1	Rourkela	3.71	16-02-2019	Completed on 14-11-2019	Seven months	Hostel was not handed over to the district administration and was, being used as COVID centre
2	Jajpur	3.96	30-04-2019	Completed on 30-09-2020	16 months	Not handed over and not made functional
3	Jharsuguda	3.49	09-02-2019	Completed on 06-03-2021	12 months	Handed over to district administration on 03-06-2021. Not yet made functional.
4	Dhenkanal	2.23	03-02-2019	Completed	27 months	Not handed over and not made functional
5	Sambalpur	1.84	11-09-2019	Construction halted midway to land dispute.	--	Completion date extended up to 30-12-2021

⁶ Kalinga Nagar, Ganganagar (Bhubaneswar), Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Berhampur, Rourkela, Dhenkanal and Rayagada

⁷ Works Department in case of WWH, Ganganagar and IDCO in case of the remaining seven WWHs

Sl. No.	Location of the WWH	Expenditure (₹ in crore)	Schedule date of completion	Status as of November 2021	Period of delay in completion	Remarks
6	Rayagada	0	NA	Under process of tender	--	--
7	Berhampur	0	NA	Land allotted in Aug 2021, construction not started	--	--
8	Ganganagar (Bhubaneswar)	4.65	03-06-2019	Completed on 21-06-2021	24 months	Not functional - not yet handed over to the district administration.
Total		19.88				

(Source: Information furnished by Works Department and IDCO, Bhubaneswar)

In context of the above, Audit noted the following:

- Out of the released amount of ₹ 30.82 crore, the executing agencies had utilised ₹ 19.88 crore (64 per cent) only, as of November 2021. Audit noted that constructions of only five out of eight WWHs were completed with delays ranging from seven to 27 months.
- Of the five completed WWHs, only one WWH (Jharsuguda) was handed over to the district administration but the same was not made functional as of November 2021. The other four completed WWHs (Dhenkanal, Rourkela, Jajpur and Ganganagar) were not handed over to the district administrations concerned even after lapse of five to 24 months from the dates of completion.
- The Sambalpur WWH, where the contract was awarded in January 2019 also had a time-overrun and is yet to be completed. The due date of completion was extended for this project from 11 September 2019 to 30 December 2021. The reason for the non-completion of these projects was land dispute.
- In case of the remaining two WWHs (Rayagada and Berhampur), work had not started (November 2021) despite release of ₹4.57 crore by MVSN to the executing agency (IDCO) in March 2020. As the funds remained with IDCO without any utilisation, there is accumulation of interest of ₹ 31.85 lakh (at the rate of 4 per cent per annum) up to November 2021, which resulted in undue favour to the implementing agency. Further, the Department had not taken any concrete steps to expedite the execution of the works.

The above-mentioned cases of delay and non-functioning of hostels indicated the apathetic approach of the Government towards the WWH scheme, resulting in non-achievement of the intended benefits of the scheme.

3.2.2 *Extra burden of ₹3.08 crore for construction of WWHs at Ganganagar*

As per Guidelines of Scheme for WWHs of GoI, construction of hostel building should be completed as soon as possible and in any case, not later than 24 months from the date of receipt of 1st instalment of the grant-in-aid sanctioned unless, extension is granted by Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), GoI.

Audit noted that W&CD Department decided (February 2014) to construct a 100-bedded WWH at Jagamara, Bhubaneswar at an estimated cost of ₹ 4.51 crore. However, due to non-allotment of land at Jagamara, the proposed site was shifted after a delay of 32 months to Ganganagar (October 2016). The W&CD Department took possession of the land on 25 October 2016. The EE (R&B) Division-II prepared (November 2017) a revised estimate of ₹6.55 crore with escalation of ₹2.04 crore (₹ 6.55 crore - ₹ 4.51 crore) and submitted the same to the W&CD Department for administrative approval. The Department accorded the administrative approval (December 2017) for ₹ 5.95 crore with scheduled date of completion as 03 June 2019.

Audit noted that the work on the WWH could not be completed in time due to flaws in the construction site. Work had to be stopped when it was noticed that the upper floors of the proposed building would come in proximity with the passing 33 KV electric cables which could not be shifted. This indicated that before preparation of the estimate, building plans and selection of the site, the feasibility of construction of the building on that site had not been properly assessed by the executing agency. Finally, the EE (R&B)-II submitted (July 2020) a revised estimate of ₹7.59 crore for completion of the hostel. Thus, Government spent an additional amount of ₹3.08 crore (₹7.59 crore - ₹4.51 crore) due to improper site survey before taking up the construction. Further, such lapse in survey led to delay in completing the construction by six years.

On JPI of the WWH, it was noticed that the hostel was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister on 8 March 2021. However, the hostel had not been made functional and admission of working women had not started till February 2022. It is indicative of the fact that W&CD Department or District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) was not closely monitoring the functioning of these WWHs. On this being pointed out, the W&CD Department stated (September 2021) that the required information had been sought for from the R&B Division concerned for compliance.

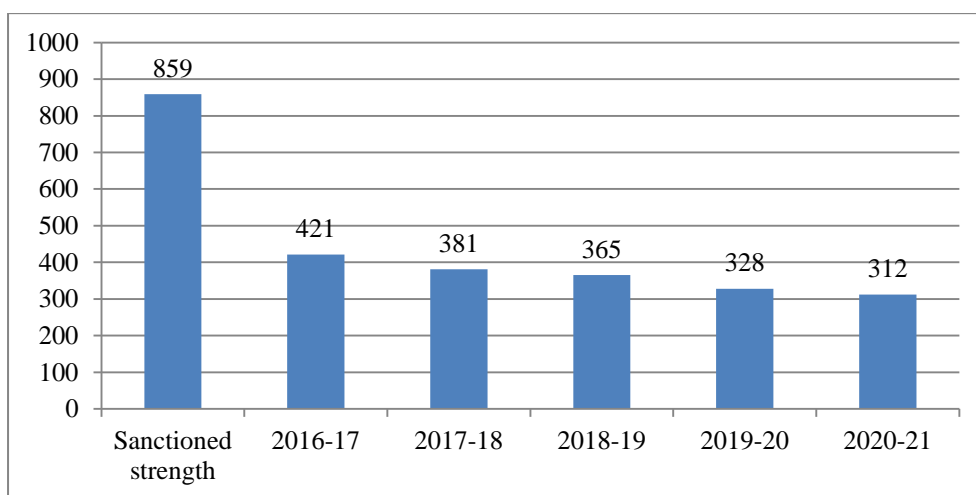
3.2.3 *Low occupancy in WWHs*

Under the WWH scheme, 12 hostels with total bed strength of 859 were constructed to provide residential facilities to working women in cities, smaller towns and also in rural areas where employment opportunities for women exist. Audit examined the year-wise occupancy rate of these 12 functional WWHs during 2016-17 to 2020-21 and found the following:

In three WWHs, average percentage of occupancy during 2016-21 was more

than 70 per cent, while in six⁸ WWHs, the average rate of occupancy remained below 50 per cent. Occupancy data in respect of one WWH at Cuttack run by Utkal Mahila Samiti was not furnished to Audit. Average occupancy in the WWHs during 2016-21 was 42.07 per cent only. While partly the low occupancy can be attributed to low demand, there were other contributing factors also. Most of the WWHs were constructed long back (between 1974 and 2014) and in absence of regular repair and maintenance of these buildings, there were fewer takers for these hostels. Further, low occupancy in WWHs was also attributable to absence of modern amenities/basic facilities and lack of awareness as no public advertisements or awareness campaigns were undertaken by the State to make public, especially women, aware of the existence of such facilities. In spite of low occupancy, the W&CD department was going ahead with construction of new WWHs. The reasons for low occupancy need to be examined to address the issue. The following Chart shows downward trend in occupancy of WWHs during 2016-17 to 2020-21:

Chart 3.2: Occupancy trend in 12 functional WWHs during 2016-17 to 2020-21



3.2.4 Utilisation of WWHs for other purposes

As per Clause-8 (xv) of the Guidelines of Scheme for WWH of GoI, the grantee organisation/ agency/ individual shall, on its application being sanctioned under this scheme, furnish a bond in the approved form, to the effect that the hostel for which assistance is being provided, shall not be used for any other purpose apart from a WWH, without the written permission of the MWCD, GoI.

Audit observed that in addition to the low occupancy in 63 per cent of the functional WWHs (12 out of 19 WWHs) in the test checked districts, eight WWHs across the State were being utilised for other purposes without getting permissions from the MWCD (**Appendix 3.2**). Of these, only one WWH at Gajapati was constructed by GoO, while the other seven were constructed from funds provided by GoI under the scheme as shown in **Table 3.3** below.

⁸ Berhampur (Bhanja Vihar: 4 per cent, VIP Colony: 23 per cent); Cuttack (Kala Vikas: 30 per cent, Orissa Women Voluntary Services: 34 per cent); Dhenkanal: 34 per cent; Baripada: 46 per cent

Table 3.3: WWHs used for other purposes as of March 2021

District/ (Year of construction)	No. of WWHs	Used as	Bed- strength
Khurda (1987-88)	2	1. BMC Ward office at Mancheswar WWH 2. Functioning of 10 Government Offices at Khurda WWH	192
Kalahandi (1987-88)	1	The Central Armed Police Force occupied the hostel with a monthly rent of ₹30,000	60
Keonjhar (1989-90)	1	The land site was leased out to Regulated Market Committee, Keonjhar to build a market complex	66
Gajapati (2013-14)	1	The hostel was constructed by Collector, Gajapati from Backward Region Grant Fund of GoI. Now functioning as ANM Centre	100
Phulbani (1989-90)	1	Being utilised as District Human Resources Development Centre as per orders of Collector and District Magistrate, Kandhamal	48
Puri (1988-89)	1	WWH was handed over to the Principal, SCS College Puri to utilise as a Ladies' hostel on monthly rental basis	80
Sambalpur (1985-86)	1	The hostel building is now used by the District Social Security Officer, Sambalpur for District Disability Rehabilitation Centre	57
Total	8		603

(Source: Information furnished by DSWOs/ JPI)

In case of seven WWHs constructed under the Scheme for WWH, approval of the MWCD, GoI had not been obtained to utilise WWH buildings for other purposes, which was irregular. Besides divergence of hostels for other purposes, it denied benefits to the targeted beneficiaries.

In reply, the DSWO, Keonjhar stated that the asset would be taken up for converting into a functional WWH. DSWOs of Kalahandi, Sambalpur, Phulbani and Puri while confirming the facts did not offer any comments.

Photographs showing the hostels being used for purposes other than for WWH

 <p>WWH at Khurda used by District offices of Khurda district</p>	 <p>WWH at Mancheswar is used as BMC Office, Ward No.10, Northern Circle</p>
 <p>WWH site at Keonjhar was leased to Regulated Market Committee for converting into a vending zone</p>	 <p>WWH at Puri was handed over to the Principal SCS College, Puri for utilisation by girl students of the college. Now it was damaged after cyclone 'FANI'</p>

Audit observed that the decision to construct eight new WWHs was not backed by any survey for demand of hostels, as no such documents were found from the records of W&CD Department. It is pertinent to mention that average occupancy in 12 WWHs was only 42.07 *per cent* during 2016-21 (**Paragraph 3.2.3**). Further, due to lack of demand WWHs were being utilised for other purposes as discussed above. Thus, due to non-conduct of survey for demand of WWHs, the construction of new WWHs may result in wasteful expenditure.

3.3 Wasteful Expenditure of ₹ 1.18 crore in construction of WWHs

As per Clause 8 (xvii) of Guidelines of Scheme for WWH of GoI, construction of hostel building should be completed as soon as possible and in any case not later than 24 months from the date of receipt of first instalment of the Grant-in-aid sanctioned unless, extension is granted by GoI. As per Clause 13.1 of the guidelines, the district authorities are responsible for monitoring of the functioning of the hostels constructed under the aforesaid Scheme. Further, the MWCD, GoI had directed (October 2016 and April 2018) the Chief Secretary, GoO to carry out an inspection regarding the status of construction of hostels which were funded under the GoI scheme on recommendation of the State Government. The State Government was also directed to lodge FIRs against defaulting implementing agencies and to recover the Government Grants as arrear of land revenue in cases where the hostels had not been completed.

From the scrutiny of records for construction of WWHs furnished to Audit by W&CD Department, GoO, it was noticed that MWCD had sanctioned funds in favour of six agencies during the period from 1986-87 to 2001-02 to construct WWHs at six places⁹ (which are also included in **Table 3.1**).

In this regard, Audit found the following:

- In respect of WWH, Bolangir, after initial release of ₹ 3.59 lakh, the work was stopped after construction up to plinth level due to non-release of further funds. Bolangir Municipality decided (March 2007) to construct a community centre (Kalyan Mandap) on the site instead of a hostel. However, no further progress in construction of Kalyan Mandap was made thereafter, as noticed during the JPI (October 2021). Thus, expenditure of ₹3.59 lakh made from GoI and GoO funds, turned wasteful besides needs of intended beneficiaries not being met.
- For the WWH at Jeypore, GoI sanctioned ₹7.86 lakh and the Jeypore Municipality was entrusted with the construction work of the hostel. Jeypore Municipality received a total amount of ₹10.58 lakh¹⁰ out of which an amount of ₹8.21 lakh was utilised till 1998-99. No further funds were released thereafter. During JPI (October 2021), it was observed that there was no sign of any structure at the designated site and the place was also inaccessible as there was no connecting/approach road to the site. Hence, Audit is unable to give any assurance on whether the amount of ₹8.21 lakh was incurred for the construction of the hostel building.

⁹ Kendrapara, Jeypore, Paradeep, Jajpur Road, Koraput and Bolangir

¹⁰ GoI: ₹7.86 lakh, GoO: ₹1.53 lakh and Implementing Agency ₹1.19 lakh

- GoI sanctioned ₹8.13 lakh for construction of WWH at Koraput in 1989-90 and released ₹ 1.83 lakh but the Koraput Municipality, the executant of the project, did not take any step to start the work due to paucity of funds. Ultimately, in November, 2014 the W&CD Department requested the MWCD, GoI to communicate appropriate head of account for refund of the fund. The Executive Officer of Koraput Municipality could not produce any information regarding status of refund of ₹1.83 lakh to Audit (October 2021).
- For construction of the WWH at Gualsingh, Kendrapara, GoI released ₹27.84 lakh in the year 1997-98. The implementing agency (IA) of the project was an NGO, *i.e.*, the Cuttack Zilla Harijan Adivasi Seva Sanskar Yojana. During the period 1997-2000, the IA incurred total expenditure of ₹37.38 lakh¹¹ to complete construction up to the lintel level of the 1st floor. However, during the super cyclone in October 1999, materials of the IA worth ₹6.66 lakh were damaged. Subsequently, for completion of the hostel, a revised estimate for ₹80.39 lakh was submitted by the IA to the MWCD, GoI through DSWO, Kendrapara (2003) with a request to release the additional amount of ₹43.01 lakh¹². However, no additional funds were provided by the GoI. Meanwhile, the IA received ₹5 lakh under MPLAD¹³ fund through the BDO, Kendrapara, the details of which were not made available to Audit. Thus, due to inability of the Government to provide additional funds of ₹43.01 lakh to complete the construction and lack of monitoring by the Department, the hostel could not be finalised and the amount of ₹ 37.38 lakh incurred on construction became wasteful.
- GoI released ₹32.71 lakh during 1998-99 for the construction of a WWH at Chorda, Jajpur. It was noticed during JPI (September 2021) that the building was constructed up to roof level and not completely finished. The hostel building was in a dilapidated condition and the rooms were filled with ant hills. Thus, despite an expenditure of ₹ 32.71 lakh, the intended purpose of the WWH could not be fulfilled and the entire amount became wasteful.
- For construction of the WWH at Udaybata, Paradeep, GoI released ₹23.85 lakh during 2001-02, against estimated cost of ₹ 35.83 lakh. The IA¹⁴, utilised ₹36.52 lakh and constructed the building up to 2nd



Incomplete building filled with ant hill in Jajpur

¹¹ ₹27.84 lakh from GoI and ₹9.54 lakh of IA

¹² ₹80.39 lakh - ₹37.38 lakh = ₹43.01 lakh

¹³ Member of Parliament Local Area Development Fund (MPLAD Fund)

¹⁴ Cuttack Zilla Ambedkar Memorial Organisation is an NGO and the Implementing Agency for construction of the WWH

floor (in 2001-02). To complete the hostel, a revised estimate of ₹47.59 lakh was submitted to the MWCD, GoI by the IA through the W&CD Department, GoO in 2005-06 but no additional funds were sanctioned. Subsequently, in January 2017 the Collector, Jagatsinghpur requested the Indian Oil Corporation Limited to provide ₹7.5 lakh for completion of the building under Corporate Social Responsibility. This amount was released (March 2017) to the BDO, Kujang to complete the left over works of the WWH building. However, the BDO informed DSWO, Jagatsinghpur that they were unable to execute the work as the previous executants occupied the building due to non-payment of their final bill. During JPI (September 2021), it was seen that only the roof casting was done up to the second floor of the hostel building. Doors and windows were not fixed and there were no bathrooms or toilets in the entire building. It was further noticed that two families are staying in the partially completed building for watch and ward as deployed by the IA.

Hence, the above stated six hostel buildings were not completed even after a period of 20 to 31 years of sanction by GoI. This resulted in wasteful expenditure of ₹1.18 crore.

The above indicates that action of the district authorities in taking remedial measures for early construction of hostel or recovery of the financial assistance given to the implementing agencies was either lacking or delayed. As a result, the hostels remained incomplete even after a period of 20 to 35 years of release of funds by GoI. This resulted in wasteful expenditure of ₹1.18 crore and deprivation of economic and affordable accommodation to working women.

3.4 Quality of accommodation

As per Guidelines of the Scheme for WWH of GoI, there shall be common provisions in hostels for the benefit of the inmates/ staff and to provide quality accommodation to working women using these accommodation facilities. These common provisions include recreation room, dining room/ hall, kitchen and store, toilets and bathrooms, modern installations and amenities. The guidelines further make it mandatory to make the WWH infrastructure disabled friendly.

The shortcomings in infrastructure/ facilities noticed during JPI of WWHs and based on information furnished by 12 functional hostels¹⁵ are summarised below:

Table 3.4: Summary of shortcomings in infrastructures in WWHs

Nature of shortcomings	No. of WWHs
Absence of recreation rooms in the Hostels	3
Absence of dining hall	3
Absence of kitchen store	2
Absence of Warden's quarters	4
Absence of boundary wall	1
Absence of day care centres	3
Absence of CCTV for security	6

¹⁵ 12 include 11 hostels funded by GoI and one (Nivedita-II, Bhubaneswar) funded by GoO

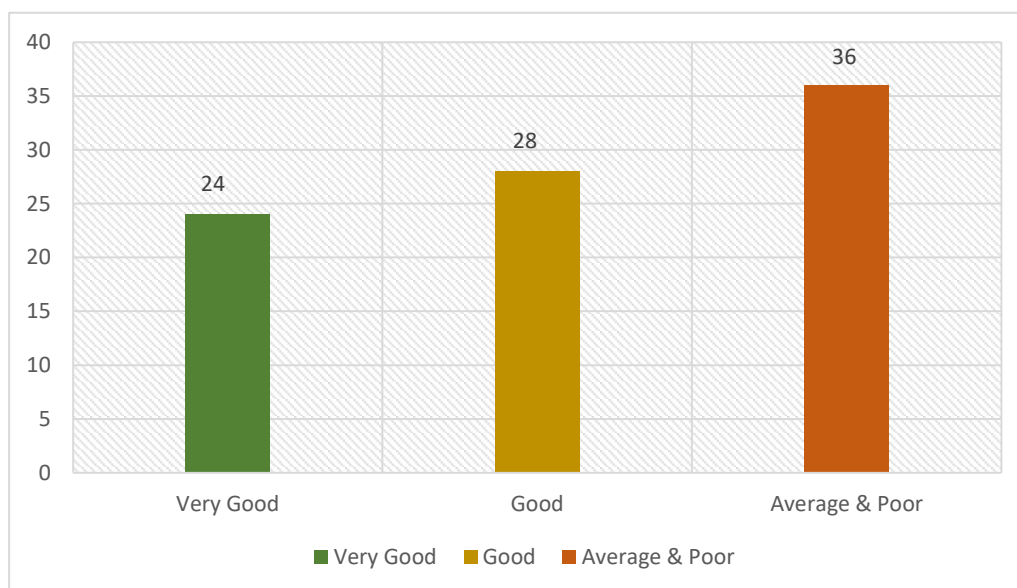
Nature of shortcomings	No. of WWHs
Absence of washing machine	12
Absence of sick rooms	6
Absence of refrigerator	7
Absence of power back up facility	10
Absence of disabled friendly infrastructure	11

(Source: Information furnished by WWHs and feedback given by 88 inmates of functional WWHs)

Despite provisions in the guidelines of GoI, Audit found that only one WWH (Nivedita-II, Bhubaneswar) had disabled friendly infrastructure and the remaining 11 hostel buildings did not have such facilities, *i.e.*, ramp, elevator, wheel chair, *etc.* Further, Odisha is a flood/ cyclone prone area, however, in spite of this, no power backup facility was available in 10 out of 12 inspected WWHs.

In addition to the above, in order to ascertain the quality of accommodation provided, Audit solicited feedback from 88 inmates of 12 WWHs to gauge their level of satisfaction with the available facilities in the WWHs. Findings of the same are reflected in the Chart below:

Chart 3.3: Response of inmates on overall satisfaction (in numbers)



While 27 per cent of the respondents hailed the facilities in WWHs as very good, 41 per cent felt that the facilities were average to poor in quality. The response obtained highlights that, there is wide scope available for improving on the basic facilities provided in the WWHs. As stated earlier, the standard and quality of the facilities provided also has a bearing on the low occupancy noticed in a number of these functional hostels for working women across the State.

3.4.1 Inadequate maintenance of Hostels

As per Paragraph 8 (xxix) of the guidelines of GoI, regular maintenance, repairs, upkeep, *etc.* of WWHs should be done by the implementing agency (NGO/ Municipality) to ensure that the building/ hostel remains in good condition. Reasonable amount for the purpose should be computed and kept

aside from the receipts/ revenues by the Management Committee of the hostel. Further, as per Paragraph 8 (v) of the guidelines, the rent received from the inmates shall be utilised for maintenance, house-keeping, security service, office establishment, expenditure towards water and electricity charges and any other support services other than mess.

Audit conducted JPI of 13 WWHs (12 functional and one non-functional) and instances of inadequate maintenance of WWHs noticed during JPI are discussed below:

- **WWH at Olatpur (Cuttack district):** The hostel at Olatpur is very old (constructed in 1984-85) and cracks were found in the building. This WWH with a capacity of 49 beds, registered average occupancy rate of 77 per cent only during 2016-21. It was noted that the rent generated was insufficient to carry out repair and maintenance required and the Secretary of the NGO maintaining the WWH, expressed a desire for additional funds for renovating the building.



WWH at Olatpur: Two bedded room. Sidewall is soaking and needed renovation



Water purifier fitted in the courtyard. The window of the kitchen is broken and required immediate repairs

- **WWH, Balasore District Nari Sangh:** During audit, it was seen that rooms of the hostel were in a damaged condition due to which, no women preferred to stay in the hostel. As ascertained from the President of the NGO managing the WWH, modern facilities as per the demand of the working women were not available in the hostel due to lack of Government grants. The last grant was sanctioned for the hostel in 1990 and as a result of subsequent fund crunch, the NGO could not modernise the facilities for the inmates.



WWH, Balasore: Rooms of the first floor in damaged condition



Outer condition of the first floor



Roof of the day care centre at WWH, Balasore damaged

- ***Nivedita WWH, Rourkela:*** The capacity of the WWH was 50 beds. During the period 2016-21, annual average occupancy ranged from 33 to 42 per cent. Despite such occupancy, five rooms and roof of one room of the WWH was in severely damaged condition, as noticed during the JPI. Similarly, kitchen slab of another room was also in damaged condition.



Nivedita WWH, Rourkela Damaged roof slab of a room



Damaged kitchen slab

- ***WWH at Bhanjavihar, Berhampur University:*** The WWH, functioning since November 2000, was being managed by Berhampur University. Audit found the building in dilapidated condition due to lack of repair and maintenance.



Thus, as seen from cases above, most of the WWHs in the State were poorly maintained due to lack of periodical maintenance by the IAs concerned, who attributes the same to lack of adequate funds. Unhygienic and dilapidated conditions of buildings could be one of the major factor for low occupation in the WWHs. The conditions of these WWHs shows the lackadaisical attitude of the Government due to which they were unable to provide a clean, modern and hygienic accommodation facility to the working women. In addition, there was also lack of inspection and monitoring on the part of the DSWOs of the concerned districts. The DSWOs did not participate in the management of the WWHs, although they were one the constituent members of the Hostel Management Committees.

3.5 Inadequate staff in WWHs

As per the Guidelines of Scheme for WWH of GoI, for management of a hostel, adequate manpower like hostel warden, cook, security guard and housekeepers, *etc.*, shall be deployed by the Hostel Management Committee (HMC). Based on information furnished by IAs, Audit noticed absence of key personnel in WWHs as shown in the table below:

Table 3.5: Inadequate staff in WWHs as of March 2021

Sl. No.	Type of staff	No. of WWHs having no staff	Names of WWHs
1	Hostel warden	3	1) Trupti Ghosh WWH, Cuttack. 2) Dipali WWH, Dhenkanal 3) Nivedita, WWH-I, Bhubaneswar.
2	Cook	5	1) Trupti Ghosh WWH, Cuttack. 2) WWH, Olatpur, Cuttack 3) WWH, VIP Colony, Berhampur 4) Nivedita, WWH-II, Bhubaneswar. 5) Nivedita WWH, Udit Nagar, Rourkela.

(Source: Information furnished by WWHs)

W&CD Department may review the quality of accommodation provided and may examine the possibility of a one-time grant to upgrade all the amenities as per the scheme guidelines in order to increase occupancy and ensure decent standards of living for inmates.

3.6 Monitoring

The GoO prepared guidelines for the operation and functioning of WWHs only in March 2021. Till then, the State Government was guided by the

guidelines issued by GoI for these hostels. Guidelines for WWHs of GoI provide for regular monitoring and management mechanism in hostels in order to ensure smooth operations and provision of quality services to intended beneficiaries. Audit found following shortcomings in monitoring of functioning of WWHs.

- **Shortfall in Hostel Management Committee (HMC) meetings:** As per Clause 13.1 of Guidelines of Scheme for WWH of GoI, the HMC shall comprise Residence Superintendent, official from the district administration/ DSWO, Probation Officer, Protection Officer/ Rehabilitation Officer of that area, two senior residents and prominent social worker/ representative from prominent organisation in that area. The HMC should meet once on a fortnightly basis or in case an issue arises for immediate resolution.

Scrutiny of records in 12 WWHs highlighted that out of 1,440 meetings¹⁶, only 305 meetings were conducted in these hostels during the period 2016-21. It was also observed that four hostels¹⁷ did not hold any such meetings in the last five years. Not holding of regular meetings, impacted the efficient, smooth functioning of these WWH besides leading to poor quality of facilities and infrastructure, as discussed in paragraphs above. Further, as HMC were not being regularly convened, grievances of inmates were not being timely addressed. Further, HMCs were also not sending their recommendations and quarterly reports to the District Administration/ DSWO due to which lack of monitoring on the part of district authorities was exacerbated.

- **Non-inspection of WWHs by DSWO:** As per Clause 8(xxviii) of Guidelines of Scheme for WWH of GoI, inspection of the hostel premises should be done by the District Administration as and when it was felt necessary. However, as per information made available to Audit, none of the DSWOs carried out any inspections in the 12 functional WWHs during 2016-17 to 2020-21. Due to non-inspection of the WWHs, the DSWOs were unaware of their present status as well as lacunae in their operations and management.
- **Non-submission of Reports to GoI:** As per Clause 13.1 of Guidelines of Scheme for WWH of GoI, regular monitoring of the functioning of the hostels under this scheme shall be the responsibility of the District Administration. Half-Yearly report on the implementation of the scheme as prescribed in the scheme shall be sent to the MWCD, GoI by the District Administration, with a copy to the State Government. However, as per the information made available to audit, no such half-yearly report was submitted by the seven DSWOs in respect of 12 sample WWHs to Government during audit coverage period on implementation of the scheme. Further, there was no action by either the GoI or the State Government with regard to the non-submission of these returns by WWHs, highlighting their apathy towards the functioning of this scheme.

¹⁶ Two meetings per month

¹⁷ Two WWH in Khurda, one WWH in Ganjam district and one in Sundargarh districts

- **Non-submission of quarterly reports by Hostel Management Committee:** Clause 13 of the Guidelines of Scheme for WWH of GoI stipulates that monitoring hostels on a day-to-day basis, shall be done by the HMCs, which shall send its recommendations and quarterly reports to the District Administration. Officials from the district administration/ DSWO would also be members¹⁸ of the HMC. In this regard Audit scrutiny revealed that no DSWOs/ District administration were members of any HMC in the WWHs highlighting poor monitoring on their part of the functions and activities of these hostels.

3.7 Conclusion and Recommendations

3.7.1 Conclusion

As of March 2021, there were only 12 WWHs with a total bed strength of 859 *i.e.*, 33 *per cent* of the targeted bed strength of 2,622, functional in Odisha. Besides eight WWHs (22 *per cent*) were found to have been used for purposes other than intended use by working women. Average occupancy in the WWHs during 2016-21 was 42.07 *per cent* only. The reason for low occupancy were inadequate maintenance of hostel buildings, infrastructural shortcomings as well as inadequate service staff. Critical infrastructure/ facilities like perimeter wall, dining hall, washing machine, refrigerator, power backup, disabled friendly facilities were found to be absent in one to 12 WWHs test checked. Besides, essential service staff in WWHs were found missing in three to five WWHs. Construction of six WWHs taken up during 1986-87 to 2001-02 were not completed as of March 2021 and there was no sign of resumption of work also. Thus, an amount of ₹ 1.18 crore spent for construction turned out to be wasteful. Inspection and monitoring of WWHs by the Department as well as the district authorities, to assess the shortcomings for taking remedial measures were found inadequate.

3.7.2 Recommendations

The Government may consider to:

- carry out regular repair and maintenance of the WWHs and provide basic facilities not only for optimal utilisation of hostel capacities but also to assure quality accommodation for working women.
- examine the need for construction of new WWHs especially in view of the existing low occupancy.
- take steps to complete construction of WWHs funded by GoI that have remained incomplete for a prolonged period and also take punitive measures against agencies who have failed to construct WWHs despite receiving government grant.
- ensure adequate staff in WWHs and regular monitoring for proper maintenances and management of WWHs.

¹⁸ Other members are Resident Superintendent, Probation Officer, Protection Officer/ Rehabilitation Officer of the area and two of the Senior Residents