

CHAPTER - II

*SSCA on Adequacy & Efficacy
of Infrastructure of Animal
Resource Development
Department*

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ANIMAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

2 Subject Specific Compliance Audit on Adequacy & Efficacy of Infrastructure of Animal Resource Development Department

2.1 Introduction

Animal Husbandry plays a major role in supplementing family income and generating gainful employment in villages, particularly amongst landless labourers, small and marginal farmers and women. The livestock sector contributed 5.50 *per cent* of the gross value added (GVA) of the State of West Bengal for the year 2023-24. As per the 20th Livestock Census 2019¹⁰, the number of livestock¹¹ in the State was 3.75 crore, indicating an increase of 23.76 *per cent* over the last census data (3.03 crore in 2012).

The Animal Resources Development Department, of the Government of West Bengal (GoWB) was responsible for formulation and implementation of Livestock and Poultry policies and programmes in the State. The Department provides assistance to the State Government in controlling animal diseases, scientific management and up-gradation of genetic resources, increasing availability of nutritious feed and fodder, sustainable development of processing and marketing facilities and enhancement of production and profitability of livestock enterprises.

Keeping in view the contribution of this sector to the economy of the State, the Department (along with its field formations), was required to have in place, robust infrastructure that would provide optimum services for animal health care and also allow the farms under the Department's control to function effectively so as to augment meat and egg production in the State.

2.2 Infrastructure of the Department

Infrastructure of the Department comprised primarily of veterinary hospitals, laboratories, farms, Centre for Improvement of Animal Breeds, feed producing plants and meat processing plants. Different infrastructure of the Department *vis-à-vis* their related functions are shown in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Infrastructure of ARD Department

Infrastructure	Number	Functions
Veterinary Hospitals	734	Centres for treatment, vaccination and diseases control
District Investigation Laboratories	66	Centres for investigation of diseases
State Owned Poultry, Composite and Goat Farms	44	Rearing of chicks/ducks/goats to meet increasing demand of eggs and meat

¹⁰ The census is conducted every five years by the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India but after 2012, census was conducted in 2019 only i.e. after lapse of two years. Reasons for such delay was not on records.

¹¹ Livestock includes cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigs, horses and ponies, mules, donkeys, camels, yaks, dogs, rabbits and elephants.

Infrastructure	Number	Functions
Mobile Veterinary Clinics (MVCs) and Mobile Veterinary Units (MVUs)	344	Treatment, vaccination, diseases control activities and dissemination of information of different Government schemes.
Meat Processing Plants (WBLDCL)	2	Processing and sale of meat
Feed Plants (WBLDCL)	6	Production of quality feed and fodder for cattle and poultry
Feed Milling Units (PBGSBS)	2	Production of feed and fodder for cattle and poultry
Bull Mother Farms (BMF) (PBGSBS)	3	Rearing of high-quality bulls for semen production
Frozen Semen Bull Stations (FSBS) (PBGSBS)	3	Production of straws of frozen semen for Artificial Insemination

The Department implements its policies and schemes through various Directorates, Parastatals and Co-operative societies. Three major implementing bodies of the Department are the Directorate of Animal Resources and Animal Health (AR&AH), West Bengal Livestock Development Corporation Limited (WBLDCL) and Paschim Banga Go-Sampad Bikash Sanstha (PBGSBS).

The Directorate of AR & AH looks after the establishment, maintenance and up-gradation of veterinary hospitals of the Department. In addition, the Directorate also operates poultry farms to produce chicks, eggs and meat. The farms supply Day Old Chicks (DOC) for various Government schemes and also sells unhatched eggs and poultry meat.

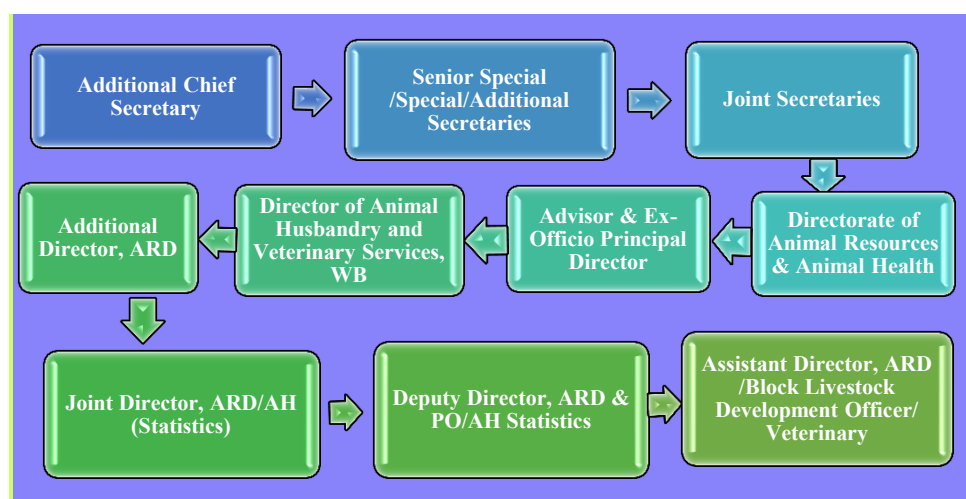
The other implementing agency, *i.e.*, WBLDCL, is a government undertaking under ARDD having its own Poultry and Pigs Farms in addition to Feed and Meat processing plant.

The PBGSBS is a registered society under ARDD which is mainly associated with the promotion of high-quality bovine breed and advocates artificial insemination among the bovine owners.

2.3 Organisational Setup

The following chart presents the organizational hierarchy of the Animal Resources Development Department (ARDD), GoWB. It illustrates the structured flow of authority and responsibilities from senior administrative officers to field-level officials.

Chart 2.1: Hierarchal Chart of the ARDD



Audit Framework

2.4 Audit Objectives

The SSCA was conducted to assess whether:

- *there was adequate infrastructure in the Department i.e. veterinary hospitals, laboratories, poultry and livestock farms, meat processing and feed producing plants;*
- *the infrastructure and facilities created were functioning effectively and utilised efficiently;*
- *the manpower deployed was adequate, and*
- *the internal control system in the Department with respect to medical facilities and operation of farms was efficient.*

2.5 Audit Scope and Methodology

Audit methodology comprised test check of records for the period 2019-2024 of the ARDD, AR&AH Directorate, PBGSBS, WBLDC as well as different field offices in seven selected districts¹² and one Mahakuma parishad (Administrative unit). AR&AH Directorate included the offices of the Deputy Director, ARDD and Parishad Officers (DDARD&PO), as well as the offices of the Block Livestock Development Officers (BLDO).

In West Bengal, out of the 24 offices of DDARD&PO, eight¹³ offices in the districts were selected through stratified random sampling. Further,

- In the test checked districts all the available polyclinics, regional laboratories and feed testing laboratories were taken up for Audit.
- One SAHC, one Disease Investigation Laboratories, were selected in each of the districts.
- 10 out of 16 poultry farms maintained by the Directorate were test-checked in the eight selected Districts.
- Three blocks under each of the eight selected districts were selected for detailed Audit.
- Moreover, all the 24 offices of the BLDO, 23 BAHCs and 19 ABAHCs in the selected blocks were test checked during Audit.

In case of parastatal organizations, infrastructure of the WBLDCL¹⁴ and PBGSBS¹⁵ located in the selected districts were audited.

Audit Methodology included issue of requisitions/ enquiries/ observations, Joint Physical Verification (JPV) and interview of veterinary officers in charge

¹² Birbhum, Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, Nadia, Paschim Medinipur, Paschim Bardhaman and Uttar Dinajpur.

¹³ DDARD&PO Birbhum, Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad, Nadia, Paschim Medinipur, Paschim Bardhaman, Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad & Uttar Dinajpur.

¹⁴ Kalyani Feed Milling Plant, Kalyani Duck Breeding Farm, Kalyani Layer Farm, Haringhata Pig Breeding Farm & Haringhata Meat Plant at Nadia, Salboni Feed Milling Plant at Paschim Medinipur, Jotiyakhali Broiler Farm & Mohitnagar Pig Farm at Jalpaiguri, Lakargram Pig Breeding Farm at Birbhum.

¹⁵ BMF Haringhata & Kalyani, FSBS Haringhata & ET/IVF Laboratory Haringhata at Nadia, SS Beldanga at Murshidabad, BMF, FSBS & ET Laboratory at Salboni, Paschim Medinipur.

of the hospitals and stakeholders *i.e.*, animal owners. An Entry conference was held on 13 June 2024, where the Department was apprised of the scope and methodology of the SSCA. In order to discuss audit findings, an Exit conference was held on 10 February 2025. Replies received from the Department have been suitably included in the Report.

2.6 Audit Criteria

The ARDD does not have a Strategic Plan or Vision Document for the maintenance/upkeep of infrastructure of the Veterinary Units/laboratories/ Poultry and Livestock farms of the State. The Directorate has also not formulated a policy for strengthening the existing veterinary Infrastructure of the State nor does it have any standard or norms for equipping Veterinary Hospitals, Laboratories *etc.*, under its control. In the absence of plans, policy, norms and guidelines of ARDD, documented policies/best practices of other States along with existing guidelines, notifications, orders and Circulars issued by the Government of India (GoI) and GoWB were used as audit criteria. Audit findings were thus based on criteria derived from sources as shown in **Chart-2.2**:

Chart 2.2: Audit Criteria

GoI Acts/Rules/ Guidelines	•Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, GoI •General Guideline for Bio-security at Central Poultry Development Organisation, DAHD&F, GoI •Environmental Guidelines for poultry farms, CPCB, Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF & CC), GoI •Minimum Standard of production of frozen semen, NDDB •Minimum standard for production of Bovine frozen semen, DAHD, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying (MoFAH&D) GoI, 2022 •Bio-security and Bio safety manual for Bovine (For rearing Station) •Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)Guidelines on Waste management and pollution control Technologies in slaughterhouses •Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 Authority of India guidelines •Manual for Nutritive Value of Commonly Available Feeds and Fodders in India, Animal Nutrition Group, NDDB •Implementation guidelines for animal husbandry and Infrastructure Development fund, GoI •Bureau of Indian Standard Codes, 7874, 2052:2009, 1374:2007
GoWB Acts/Rules /Guidelines	•Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures for Mobile Veterinary Clinics (MVC) •Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures for Mobile Veterinary Units (MVU) •Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) for meat plants •Food Safety Management System Manual of meat plants
OTHERS	•Handbook of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Department, Government of Assam, • Manual of Animal Husbandry, Government of Kerala •Chhattisgarh Medical Service Corporation Limited under the Health & Family Welfare Department, Chhattisgarh •Notifications and Circulars issued by the GoI and GoWB

AUDIT FINDINGS

2.7 Financial Outlay on Infrastructure of the Department

For the creation and maintenance of robust Infrastructure, which is essential for operational efficiency, adequate financial outlay by the State is an essential requirement. As noted above, the Department did not have a long term/strategic plan or a vision document for the maintenance/upkeep or development of infrastructure in the State. Analysis of the total funds allotted to the Department and the corresponding expenditure on infrastructure revealed that, during the period 2019-20 to 2023-24, the expenditure on infrastructure ranged between 2.37 per cent and 24.36 per cent only, as shown in **Table 2.2**.

Table 2.2: Financial outlay *vis-à-vis* Expenditure of the Department on infrastructure

(₹ in crore)

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Total allotment of the Department	758.95	857.25	1,002.38	1,091.95	1,310.38
Total Expenditure Incurred	679.72	724.76	854.28	963.75	1,164.50
Expenditure on Infrastructure	39.24	24.80	23.74	144.25	319.26
Percentage of expenditure on infrastructure over allotment	5.17	2.89	2.37	13.21	24.36

(Source: ARD Department)

Due to such low expenditure on infrastructure development and lack of overall planning, various deficiencies related to basic infrastructure were noticed during Audit, which have been discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

2.8 Veterinary Hospitals

2.8.1 Veterinary Infrastructure

Veterinary Hospitals need to have facilities for day-to-day treatment, immunization, vaccination, artificial insemination, surgical intervention, *etc.*, of livestock, pets, small animals and birds. Further, equipment and medicines required for diagnosis and treatment of sick animals are also vital components of veterinary infrastructure. The Veterinary infrastructure of the Department included the following:

1. Polyclinics
2. State Animal Health Centres (SAHCs)
3. Block Animal Health Centres (BAHCs) & Additional Block Animal Health Centres (ABAHCs)
4. Mobile Veterinary Clinics (MVCs) and Mobile Veterinary Units (MVUs)

To achieve the desired goals of rendering services effectively, the Department was required to provide adequate infrastructure to veterinary hospitals. However, the following deficiencies were noticed during Audit:

2.8.1.1 Lack of building infrastructures and equipment

During the course of audit, three Polyclinics, eight SAHCs, 23 BAHCs and 19 ABAHCs were test checked for adequacy of infrastructure like hospital buildings and equipment. Audit observations in this regard are as follow:

A. Polyclinics

Polyclinics are upgraded animal hospitals, generally located in the district and are to be equipped in terms of infrastructure as well as manpower. For efficient functioning, the polyclinics were required to have adequate examination rooms, dedicated operation theatres, inpatient facilities, functional equipment for diagnosis & surgical procedures, besides toilet facilities, shaded area for ailing animals, seating areas *etc.*

As of September 2023, there were eight polyclinics in the State. In seven test-checked districts, only three districts namely Birbhum, Berhampore and Matigara had Polyclinics *i.e.*, one in each district. During audit following deficiencies were observed:

- The Department did not have any norms or guidelines in place on provision of basic infrastructure in the Polyclinics unlike some States like Kerala, where the Government has issued Manual of Animal Husbandry for infrastructure development in Veterinary institutions. As per this Manual, polyclinics should have large and small animal examination rooms to carry out treatment of animals. It was, however, seen that out of the three Polyclinics, Birbhum did not have separate rooms for treatment of either large (*viz.* cows) or, small animals (*viz.* goat, sheep, poultries). In case of Matigara, the Polyclinic had treatment room for small animals only. Thus, in the absence of separate rooms, treatment in Birbhum and Matigara Polyclinics was being done in the corridors and other undesignated places of the hospital.
- There was no power backup in any of the three polyclinics. Polyclinics staff also stated that they were facing difficulties, especially during surgeries.
- In-patient facilities like preparatory room for surgery, post-surgery room, intensive care unit *etc.* were also not available, although the necessity for the same was expressed by veterinarians of all the three polyclinics.
- The Polyclinics did not have in place a bio-waste disposal system as per norms of the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016. The bio-medical wastes generated was being disposed in open areas around the hospitals or, was being burnt in open air.
- During physical verification by Audit, it was observed that in Birbhum Polyclinic, walls of the Operation Theatre (OT) were damped, windows were broken (as shown in **Figure 2.1**) and air conditioning system was non-functional, creating an unhygienic environment.
- The Department also did not have any norms and guidelines

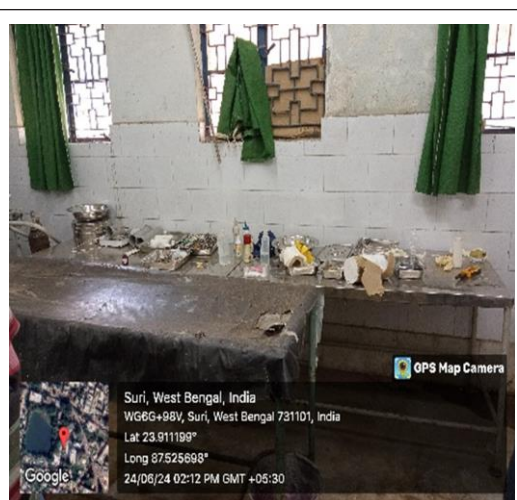


Figure 2.1: Broken windows, Birbhum Polyclinic

in place for equipping the Polyclinics, unlike States like Chhattisgarh¹⁶, where there are list of surgical equipment and instruments to be provided in Polyclinics. During physical verification, Audit observed that essential equipment such as Radiographic Digital System, LED light (Mobile) for Operating Theatre (OT) of large animals, iron trolley, anaesthesia system for large animals, fumigator, centralised oxygen supply system, *etc.*, were absent.

- Further, several equipment had become non-functional in the polyclinics but had not been replaced or repaired as detailed in **Table 2.3**.

Table 2.3: Non-functional Equipment in Polyclinics

Berhampore Polyclinic	Matigara Polyclinic	Birbhum Polyclinic
C- Arm for surgery	Anaesthesia machine for large & small animals	X- Ray Machine
Portable Laparoscope	USG Colour Doppler	USG Machine
USG Machine	Hydraulic large animal OT Table	Vet ECG Machine
	Surgical Suction Machine for large and small animals	LED light for OT
		Autoclave Horizontal
	X- Ray Machine	Laparoscopic Surgery Machine
	Electric Cautery	
	Vet ECG Machine	
	Shadow less OT light system	

- Proposals were initiated by the Matigara Polyclinic for repair of the equipment and renovation of the polyclinic to the DDARD&PO Siliguri, five times between February 2017 and March 2024, however, no action was initiated by DDARD&PO Siliguri (as of September 2024). In case of the other two polyclinics, no documents were available to show whether any such proposals had been submitted to the Department.
- Diseases investigation is also an essential part of the services to be performed by Polyclinics to effectively treat animals. Of the test-checked Polyclinics it was noted that in case of the Birbhum Polyclinic during the period 2019-24, only 1.5 *per cent* of the 1,08,487 treated animal had been referred for diagnostic tests. Similarly, in case of the Berhampore Polyclinic, only 2.29 *per cent* of 3,61,976 treated animals were referred for such tests. Between 2019-24, Matigara Polyclinic treated 76,047 animals but conducted no diagnostic tests in its laboratory due to a lack of manpower. The complete absence as well as low level of referrals for diagnostic tests indicated that the available testing facilities were inadequate and required strengthening. The Department stated that test was not always required in the polyclinics as the vast experience and knowledge of the veterinary

¹⁶ List of Veterinary equipment procured by Medical Service Corporation Limited (CGMSCL) under Health and Family Welfare Department of Chhattisgarh for veterinary referral hospital Raipur.

officers is good enough for *prima facie* diagnosis. The reply is not tenable as these polyclinics were provided with equipment for diagnosis which have not been used.

With regard to overall infrastructure and equipment issues, the Department stated (January 2025) that in the coming years the issues would be resolved. The Department also stated that the equipment in polyclinics was not being used due to shortage of manpower.

B. State Animal Health Centres (SAHCs)

I. Existing infrastructure of the Department also included State Animal Health centres that were set up at the level of Districts and Sub-Divisions. Inadequacy of building infrastructure was noticed by Audit in all the eight-test checked SAHCs. The SAHCs did not have large animal examination and OT rooms and as a

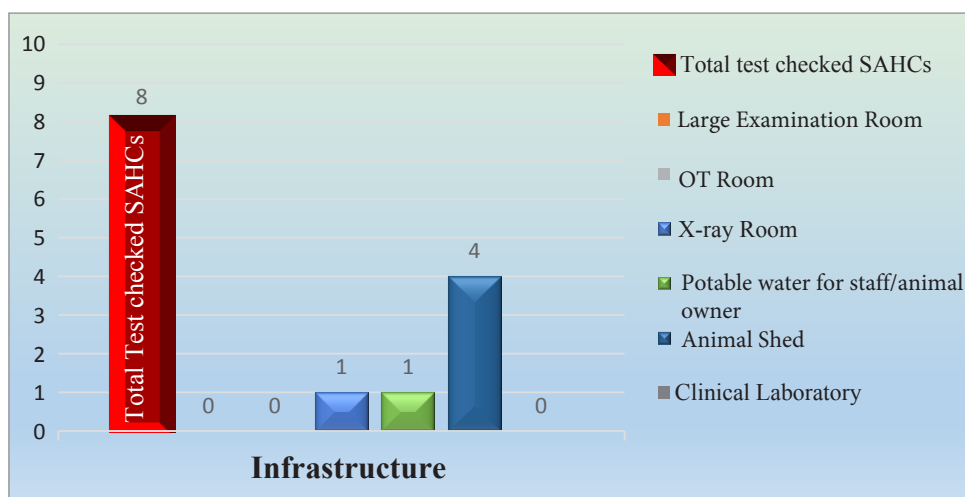


Figure 2.2: Rampurhat SAHC, Seeping walls

result, animals were examined, and surgeries were being carried out in the corridors of the SAHCs.

The SAHCs also had water seepage issues, leading to unhygienic working conditions. In five out of the eight SAHCs, the walls were found to be damped and moisture-laden (**Figure 2.2**). Further, the SAHCs lacked X-ray rooms and clinical laboratories for quick diagnosis. Basic amenities, such as potable water for the staff and animal owners were found to be absent in seven of the SAHCs. Lack of available infrastructure in the test checked SAHCs is shown in the **Chart-2.3** below:

Chart 2.3: Infrastructure available at SAHCs



Further, Audit also noted that a number of required surgical equipment / instruments were absent in these SAHCs. During physical verification of eight tests checked SAHCs, it was noted that equipment such as X ray machine with CR System, Radiographic digital system, Veterinary ECG, Anaesthesia machine for animals, LED operation theatre lights, Hydraulic large animal operation tables, Ultrasonography machine with Doppler, suction machines, electrical cautery, operation theatre fumigator, Binocular ophthalmoscope and constant rate infusion pump for veterinary use, were not available in any of the eight-test checked SAHCs.

Further in four out of eight SAHCs, several equipment such as Autoclave for sterilisation, Microscopes, Ultra Sonography machines were non-functional and in a state of disrepair. The absence of various equipment as well as non-functional equipment, adversely impacted the treatment of animals by the SAHCs. The SAHCs in their reply also agreed that lack of diagnostic facilities and equipment had adversely affected treatment of the animals and lack of basic amenities was causing hardship for employees and animal owners.

The Department stated (January 2025) that the deficiencies in overall infrastructure were due to shortage of space and also that the equipment in SAHCs was not being used due to shortage of manpower. The reply of the Department regarding manpower is not tenable as there was lack of necessary steps on their part to resolve this issue.

The deficiencies in infrastructure and equipment of SAHCs restricted timely and effective veterinary care, compelling marginal farmers to incur additional costs or forego treatment, thereby adversely affecting livestock health, productivity and their livelihood security.

- II. Diseases investigations is an integral part of the diagnosis and treatment process. In order to ensure effectiveness in diagnostic services, the SAHCs should have had in place dedicated laboratories. However, during test check of eight SAHCs, Audit observed that none of them had dedicated laboratories. Two of the SAHCs¹⁷ stated that they did not conduct any tests themselves, but these were instead done at Disease Investigation Laboratories.. Four SAHCs¹⁸ did not conduct any tests while two¹⁹ of the remaining SAHCs did not provide such information on the issue.

Among the 1,56,871 animals treated in Rampurhat and Paschim Mednipur SAHCs during 2019–24, only 0.75 *per cent* underwent diagnostic tests. While not every case necessitates testing, this remarkably low proportion indicates lack of testing facilities.

¹⁷ SAHC Rampurhat (Birbhum), Paschim Mednipur.

¹⁸ SAHC Bidhannagar (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Jalpaiguri, Lalbag (Murshidabad) and Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman).

¹⁹ SAHC Nabawdip & SAHC Raiganj.

C. Block Animal Health Centres (BAHCs)

Block Animal Health Centre (BAHC) at the block level are engaged in treatment, vaccination, artificial insemination, surgical intervention of livestock and poultry.

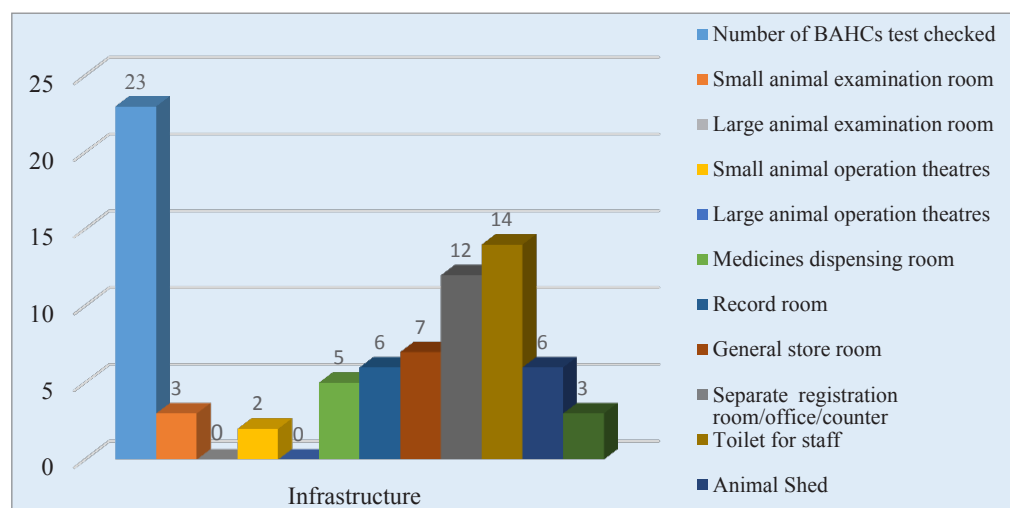
All the 23 test checked BAHCs exhibited inadequacies in building infrastructure, as they lacked examination rooms, operation theatres, storage rooms *etc.* The surgeries were being done in the corridors of the hospitals and open spaces (**Figure 2.3**), due to the absence of operation theatres.



Figure 2.3: Examination and Operation done at corridor at the entrance of the BAHc Debra

The beneficiaries visiting the BAHCs stated during interviews (conducted by Audit), that they were facing hardships in the absence of basic amenities such as potable water, lavatories and shaded waiting places. As per best practice/guidelines issued by other States such as Kerala, the BAHCs were required to have basic infrastructures such as small and large examination room, medicine dispensing rooms and other basic infrastructures. Audit, however, noticed deficiencies in such basic infrastructure in BAHCs as shown in the **Chart-2.4** below:

Chart 2.4: Infrastructure available at BAHCs



Inadequacies were also noticed in availability and maintenance of equipment in the 23 test- checked BAHCs. During physical verifications and interactions with the Veterinary officers of the BAHCs it was noticed that out of 23 test-checked BAHCs, 12 could not carry out pathological tests such as blood tests, faecal tests, due to non-availability of Microscopes or consumables such as anti-coagulants, strains and reagent. Further, in 15 BAHCs, out of 1,473 surgical instruments, 674 (46 *per cent*) were unserviceable and had not been replaced as

of September 2024 which impacted the veterinary treatment being provided in these Centres.

Accepting the audit observation, the Department stated (January 2025) that the deficiencies were due to shortage of space. The reply is not acceptable, as attributing the deficiencies to shortage of space is not correct and does not absolve the Department of its responsibility of ensuring required facilities for proper treatment of animals.

D. Additional Block Animal Health Centres (ABAHCs)

The Additional Block Animal Health Centres (ABAHC) act as an additional veterinary facility in a block, besides the BAHCs.

Physical verification of 19 test checked ABAHCs revealed that the hospitals suffered from various infrastructural deficiencies, such as lack of proper examination rooms, leading to animals being examined in the corridors. The ABAHCs also had seepage in the walls and leaking roofs (**Figure 2.4**). Most ABAHCs also lacked other basic amenities as indicated in **Chart-2.5**.

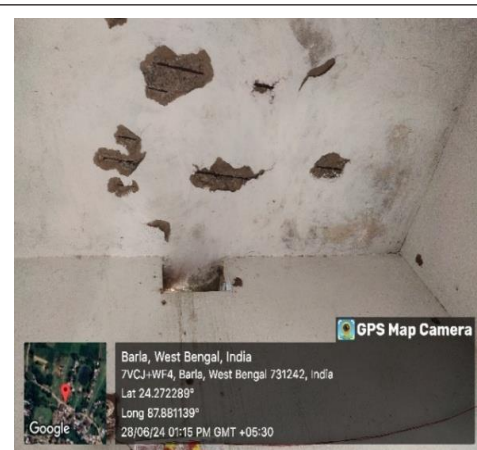
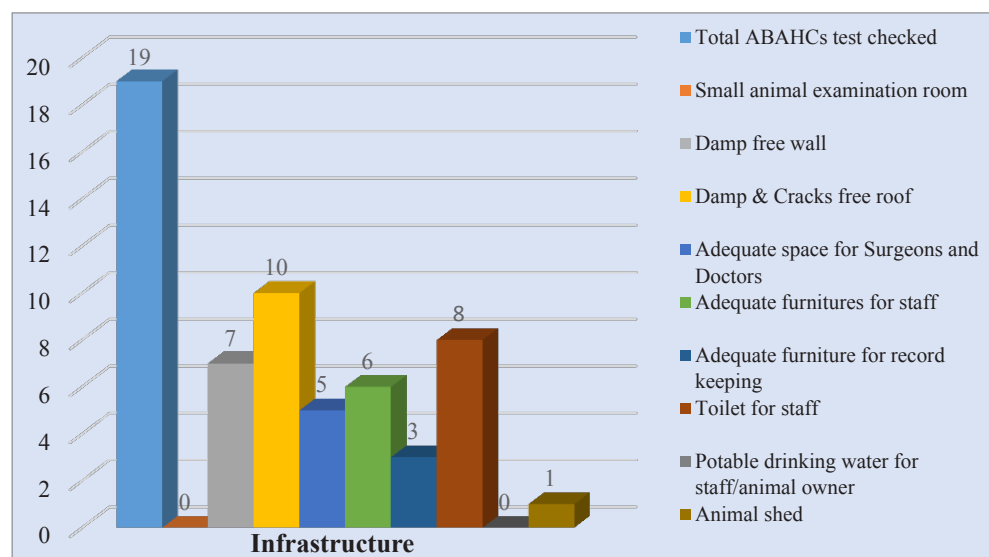


Figure 2.4: Damped and Cracked Roof in ABAHC Barla

Chart 2.5: Infrastructure available at ABAHCs



During test check Audit also noted that out of the 19 test checked ABAHCs 16 ABAHCs lacked required surgical, diagnosis and examination equipment for treatment of animals. Further, scrutiny of asset registers in test-checked ABAHCs revealed that 44 *per cent* of the instruments available had become unserviceable and had not been replaced (September 2024). Out of the 19 ABAHCs, microscopes were provided to 13, of which five²⁰ had become non-

²⁰ ABAHCs Choa & Barala (Murshidabad), Phansidewa & Salbari (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Barla (Birbhum).

functional. Of the eight ABAHCs²¹ that had functional microscopes, five²² were not able to perform blood tests as they were not provided with anti-coagulant required for the tests.

In reply, 11 of the test-checked ABAHCs²³ stated that they did not receive the required surgical and diagnosis equipment despite making requisitions for the same to the DDARD&PO. The inadequacy in treatment due to absence of equipment and instrument was also explicitly stated by eight of the ABAHCs²⁴ in reply to Audit queries.

Thus, inadequate buildings, workspaces, basic amenities and lack of clinical, surgical and diagnostic equipment hampered the treatment and diagnosis of animals.

While accepting the audit observations, the Department stated (January 2025) that the deficiencies in building, workspace and basic amenities were due to shortage of space. However, Audit noted that the Department had not taken any steps to resolve such infrastructural issues in these hospitals & diagnostic centres, nor did they work out any long-term plans or proposals to provide necessary equipment, consumables *etc.*, to these facilities for effective treatment of animals.

Recommendation 1: The Department should work out a detailed plan to create adequate infrastructure and supply essential equipment in veterinary hospitals to provide effective animal care and treatment. Steps should also be taken to make available trained manpower in these hospitals/animal health care centres to plug the gaps in service delivery.

2.8.1.2 Availability of Medicines and Vaccines in Veterinary Hospitals

Medicines constitute an essential input in the treatment of animals. The Department prepares a list of medicines and selects the vendors who would be supplying such medicines when an order is placed. The veterinary hospitals place their requirement of medicines with the DDARD&PO of the concerned district. The DDARD&PO in turn places the order of such medicines to the vendors who have been selected by the Department. The vendors supply such medicines to the DDARD&PO and the same are distributed to the Veterinary hospitals under its control.

Audit observed that all the test checked polyclinics, SAHCs, BAHCs and ABAHCs were not provided with sufficient medicines for adequate treatment. (**Appendix-2.1**). Veterinary Officers of the 49 out of 53 test checked Veterinary Hospitals also confirmed during interviews that the inadequacy of medicines was preventing Veterinary Hospitals in rendering adequate and holistic treatment to the ailing animals.

²¹ Deucha (Birbhum), Gairkata, Matelli & Shikarpur (Jalpaiguri), Rampur & Durgapur (Uttar Dinajpur), and Baraitna & Bamanpukur (Nadia).

²² Gairkata & Shikarpur (Jalpaiguri), Rampur (Uttar Dinajpur), and Baraitna & Bamanpukur (Nadia).

²³ ABAHC Rampur (Uttar Dinajpur), Barala & Choa (Murshidabad), Sonapur (Uttar Dinajpur), Bamanpukur (Nadia), Barla (Birbhum), Salbari (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Gairkata, Matelli, Sikharpur (Jalpaiguri) and Dignagar (Nadia).

²⁴ ABAHC Rampur, Sonapur and Durgapur (Uttar Dinajpur), Barla (Birbhum), Choa & Barala (Murshidabad), Kuldiha (Paschim Bardhaman), Salbari (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad).

The DDARD&PO Birbhum who was in charge of the Birbhum Polyclinic stated (July 2024) that inadequacy of medicines was due to non-availability of funds. Other districts in-charge did not furnish any reply in this regard.

As per the Vision statement of the Department, vaccination of animals was an essential function to be performed by Hospitals to prevent diseases. In this context during test-check, it was noted that two polyclinics²⁵ and five SAHCs²⁶ were not provided with adequate vaccines such as anti-rabies vaccines, and vaccines for pet animals like cats and dogs. It was also observed that in 10 test checked BAHCs²⁷ and 10 ABAHCs²⁸, no vaccination had been carried out during the period 2019-20 to 2023-24. The hospitals stated that the vaccination were being done by Private Animal Health Workers such as Pranibandhu or Pranimitra and thus no vaccinations were being done at the hospitals.

Thus, due to the shortage of medicines and vaccines in the animal health care centres and hospitals in the State, adequate treatment for animals could not be ensured.

The Department stated (January 2025) that the said medicines were temporarily out of stock and that the purchase of medicines was at the discretion of the district authorities. However, the fact remains that as noted by Audit during test-check, most of the medicines mentioned were inadequately supplied and the Department did not monitor the purchase of these medicines by the district authorities to ensure adequate availability.

Recommendation 2: The Department should, through regular monitoring and provision of adequate funds, ensure uninterrupted availability of essential medicines at all hospitals and establish timely replenishment of stocks.

2.8.2 Functioning of Veterinary Hospitals

2.8.2.1 Preparedness to deal with Outbreak of diseases

Outbreak of diseases refers to the occurrence of disease in an area, in excess of normal expectancy. Epidemic occurs when the outbreak moves quickly to a larger geographical area than the experts would expect. Thus, it is important that the disease outbreaks should be contained at the earliest, before they turn into epidemics. Audit findings in this regard, based on test-check of animal hospitals have been discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Department had not framed any Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to manage epidemics or outbreaks of contagious and infectious diseases among livestock and poultry, clearly defining the roles of Veterinary Hospitals, District Authorities, and Disease Investigation Laboratories. No such SOPs were also in

²⁵ Polyclinic Suri (Birbhum) and Berhampore.

²⁶ SAHC Rampurhat (Birbhum), Paschim Mednipur, Bidhannagar (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Durgapur, (Paschim Bardhaman), Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

²⁷ BAHC Chopra, Itahar & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur), Beldanga-II & Hariharpara (Murshidabad), Kanksa, Raniganj & Jamuria (Paschim Bardhaman) and Krishnanagar-I & Kaliganj (Nadia).

²⁸ ABAHC Barla (Birbhum), Salbari & Phansidewa (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Dignagar (Nadia), Choa (Murshidabad), Sonapur, Durgapur & Rampur (Uttar Dinajpur), Matelli (Jalpaiguri) and Kuldiha (Paschim Bardhaman).

existence in the test-checked hospitals either at the Block levels or at the District Levels.

In other States like Kerala (Manual of Animal Husbandry Department, Government of Kerala) list of equipment and consumables have been specified to deal with epidemics. However, in West Bengal such a list or a SoP to deal with such epidemics was absent. It was noted that none of the test checked polyclinics and five²⁹ of the SAHCs had even the basic equipment/consumables like sterile containers, glass slides, ice box, anti-coagulants, EDTA for haematological examination and formal saline for tissue preservation *etc.*, required for Histopathological examination in case of outbreaks and epidemics of diseases.

Audit also observed that test checked ten BAHCs³⁰ did not have sample preservation kits³¹ for dealing with the epidemic and outbreaks, while none of the ABAHCs had these kits except Dignagar ABAHC, Nadia.

Thus, in absence of SOPs and basic equipment or consumables, the Department was ill-prepared to effectively respond to disease outbreaks and potential epidemics.

2.8.2.2 Bio waste management

As per the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, issued by GoI, Bio-medical waste³² was to be handled and disposed of without any adverse effect to human health and the environment.

As per these Rules, the hospitals were to have segregated bins and bio waste disposal equipment, but it was observed that there were no such segregated bins to collect different types of wastes and equipment like incinerator, autoclave *etc.* Five³³ out of the eight test checked SAHCs stated that they were not provided with any bio-waste disposal equipment like incinerator or microwaves. Rest of the three SAHCs³⁴ did not provide the required information to Audit. It was also noted during Audit that waste was being collected and dumped in open air only to be burned or, occasionally disposed of through the municipal garbage collector. This unscientific way of disposal had the potential to spread germs and cause diseases in healthy animals, and also humans. Furthermore, there were also no dedicated personnel in any of the test checked hospitals to deal with Bio- waste management as stipulated in the Rule.

²⁹ SAHC Jalpaiguri & Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman), Nabadwip (Nadia), Lalbagh (Murshidabad) and Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

³⁰ Rajganj (Jalpaiguri), Chopra, & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur), Raniganj, (Paschim Bardhaman), Beldanga-II, Hariharpara & Raghunathganj-I (Murshidabad), Matigara (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad) and Krishnanagar-I & Nabadwip (Nadia).

³¹ Sterile containers, Ice Box, Anti-coagulants like sodium citrate, sodium oxalate, EDTA for haematological tests and formol salines for tissue preservation.

³² Waste generated during diagnosis, treatment or immunization of human beings or animals or in research activities pertaining thereto or in the production or testing of biological.

³³ SAHC Rampurhat (Birbhum), Bidhannagar (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Jalpaiguri & Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman) and Paschim Mednipur.

³⁴ SAHC Lalbag (Murshidabad), Nabadwip (Nadia) and Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

The Department stated (January 2025) that a SOP for implementation of bio-medical waste management facility for all animal hospitals and laboratories was being prepared.

Recommendation 3: The Department should devise a necessary SoP and provide basic equipment & consumables to all hospitals to deal with epidemics. The Department should set up bio-waste management infrastructure as per the Bio-Medical Waste Management Rules, 2016 for safe disposal of bio waste.

2.8.3 Mobile Veterinary Dispensaries

Mobile Veterinary Dispensaries are operated in each block under the supervision of the Block Livestock Development Officer (BLDO) and are monitored at the district level by the Deputy Director Animal Resource Development and Parishad Officer (DDARD&PO). There are two types of Mobile Veterinary Dispensaries, namely Mobile Veterinary Units (MVUs) and Mobile Veterinary Clinics (MVCs). Mobile Veterinary Units (MVUs) were launched under the Livestock Health & Disease Control (LH&DC) programme as a centrally sponsored initiative, jointly funded by GoI and the State. As of August 2023 there were 218 MVUs in the State which are jointly funded by the Central and State Government under the LH&DCs³⁵ scheme.

The Mobile Veterinary Clinics (MVCs) that are entirely funded and operated by the State government. As of August 2023, there were 126 MVCs operating in the State.

The Department had issued a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for both types of Mobile clinics although MVU were also operating under the Guidelines issued by the Central Government, under the LH&DC Scheme. The Department operates MVUs and MVCs *inter-alia* with the following functions:

- a. Animal healthcare services including artificial Insemination at farmer's doorstep,
- b. Provide spot diagnostic services,
- c. Organize awareness campaign among farmers to spread scientific animal husbandry,
- d. Publicity of various Government schemes,
- e. Sero-monitoring³⁶,
- f. Disease surveillance and Monitoring of livestock.

Audit observations with regard to MVUs and MCUs were as follow:

2.8.3.1 Availability of Medicines in MVUs and MVCs

The requirement of the medicines in the mobile units (MVUs & MVCs) is forwarded by the Veterinary Officer in charge of the MVU to the office of the DDARD&PO of the District for endorsement and then it is forwarded to the

³⁵ Livestock Health & Disease Control Scheme.

³⁶ In the context of Animal Disease Control (ARD), sero-monitoring refers to the systematic evaluation of immune response following vaccination—specifically, it involves collecting serum samples before and after vaccination to measure antibody levels and assess vaccine effectiveness.

agency operating the MVU. The agency procures the medicines from the list of approved vendors selected by the AR&VH Directorate and supplies them to the mobile unit concerned.

Audit observed that 13 of the 17 test checked MVUs were not supplied with sufficient medicines by the Department during the year 2023-24. LH&DCs guidelines for MVUs, provide an indicative list of equipment and medicines to be provided in each unit. However, it was seen that almost 53 *per cent* of the medicines on an average were not made available to the MVUs. In reply, Veterinary Officers of these 13 MVUs stated that the inadequacy of medicine adversely affected treatment of animals.

Similarly, in case of the test-checked MVCs at the Block level also, Audit noted that adequate medicines were not being supplied. There were shortages of medicines in five MVCs³⁷ out of seven³⁸ test checked MVCs. Unlike the MVUs, the SOP of the MVCs did not have any indicative list of medicines prescribed. However, when the list of medicines prescribed for MVUs was cross checked with MVCs it was observed that out of seven, three of the test checked MVCs³⁹, were functioning without lifesaving medicines like *cortico steroids, anti-haemorrhagic, injectable and oral haematinics for increasing haemoglobin, ascorbic acids, antiemetics, laxatives, anti-venom etc.*

In reply, the Department stated (January 2025) that the purchase of medicines was decided by Block and District level committees. The reply is not tenable as delegation of procurement to Block and District level committees does not absolve the Department of its primary responsibility of ensuring adequate and timely supply of medicines.

2.8.3.2 Lack of Equipment and consumables impacting functioning of Mobile Clinics

- As per the Operational guidelines of LH&DC, GoI, MVUs were required to carry out minor surgeries and for this purpose, adequate equipment was required to be provided in the MVUs. However, when the available equipment in 17 test checked MVUs were compared with the indicative list of equipment for MVUs, it was found that almost 83 *per cent* (24 not available out of total 29) of the equipment and consumables of the list were not available. The severity of the deficiency can be analysed from the fact that four⁴⁰ MVUs were performing minor surgeries on animals without any anaesthesia. Further, seven MVUs⁴¹ did not perform any minor surgeries during the period from 2020-21 to 2024-25 due to lack of equipment.

³⁷ MVCs Md. Bazar (Birbhum), Itahar (Uttar Dinajpur), Beldanga-II (Murshidabad), Kanksa (Paschim Bardhaman) and Kaliganj (Nadia).

³⁸ MVC Beldanga-II (Murshidabad), Itahar (Uttar Dinajpur), Kaliganj (Nadia), Kanksa (Paschim Bardhaman), Md. Bazar (Birbhum), Nabadwip (Nadia), Phansidewa (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad).

³⁹ MVC Phansidewa (Siliguri), Md. Bazar (Birbhum) and Kanksa (Paschim Bardhaman).

⁴⁰ MVU- Rajganj (Jalpaiguri), Jamuria (Paschim Bardhaman), Raniganj (Paschim Bardhaman) and Hariharpara (Murshidabad).

⁴¹ MVU Nalhati & Suri-II (Birbhum), Daspur-II & Keshpur (Paschim Medinipur), Kharibari (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Raghunathganj-I (Murshidabad) and Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

- Similarly, shortage of equipment was also noticed in case of all the seven test-checked MVCs. The VOs of the test checked MVCs stated that surgical equipment *viz.* mayo scissors, BP handle and blade, artery forceps, curved and straight needle, handle holder, surgical gloves, vaginal speculum, stethoscope, thermometer, cannula and aprons were not available. Test checked MVCs at Phansidewa revealed that no minor surgeries were performed by the unit during the year 2023-24. The Department stated (January 2025) that 323 minor surgeries were done by the MVC during 2023-24, however, the BLDO/ VO of the concerned MVC stated that no such surgeries were done due to shortage of surgical equipment.
- As per the LH&DC guidelines, the MVUs were to diagnose diseases and carry out disease surveillance for which they were to be equipped with necessary equipment and instruments like microscope and rapid diagnostic kits⁴². However, it was observed that basic/ essential equipment for disease surveillance like microscope and complete set of rapid diagnostic kits were absent in all the 17 test-checked MVUs. None of the MVUs had carried out any disease surveillance work in 2023-24.
- The MVUs were to collect samples such as blood, stool, urine for on spot diagnosis and treatment, however, none of the test checked MVUs conducted any such tests⁴³ during 2023-24 due to lack of instruments such as microscope, X-ray machine *etc.* The Department accepting the Audit observation stated (January 2025) that spot diagnosis could not be done due to absence of microscopes.
- Similarly, the MVCs also required equipment for on-the-spot disease diagnosis of animals as per the functional roles assigned to them, however, it was noted that equipment like microscopes and sample collection boxes for collecting samples to conduct disease investigation were missing in two out of the seven test-checked MVCs. Furthermore, any system of periodic zoonotic diseases⁴⁴ surveillance was practically absent in these test-checked MVCs except for MVC Itahar (Uttar Dinajpur).
- Guidelines of LH&DC scheme for MVUs provided for audio visual equipment to impart training to farmers on scientific animal husbandry. Although audio equipment was provided in MVUs but no visual equipment was provided to any of the 17 test-checked MVU. MVUs were also to hold awareness camps with the aid of audio-visual equipment, however, nine⁴⁵ of the test checked MVUs had not held any awareness camp since March 2023.

The Department stated (January 2025) that purchase of equipment was decided by the District level committees in case of MVCs. In case of the MVUs, the Department stated that there was no provision of fund for procurement of equipment as per the guidelines of LH&DCs. The reply is not tenable as

⁴² Syringes, Blood collection Tubes, Faecal Sample collection container and slides.

⁴³ except Matiali (Jalpaiguri).

⁴⁴ Those diseases that are transmissible from vertebrate animals to human (WHO).

⁴⁵ MVU Kharibari and Matigara (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Dhupguri, Matiali and Rajganj (Jalpaiguri), Daspur-II & Keshpur (Paschim Mednipu) and Chopra & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

Department was required to ensure availability of equipment in the MVCs and MVUs and provide adequate funds for their purchase.

Recommendation 4: The Department should make fund provision and ensure adequate supply of medicines and equipment required by mobile clinics to make them fully functional.

2.9 Veterinary Laboratories

The Department has set up 66 Veterinary Disease Investigation Laboratories (VDIL) and five Veterinary Regional Laboratories (VRL) for supporting the veterinary hospitals by conducting investigations of diseases. Two Feed testing laboratories (one at Jalpaiguri and other at Paschim Midnapur district) had also been set up to conduct tests to determine the quality of the feed used in the Departmental farms. Test check of nine (DILs), two Regional labs and two Feed testing labs revealed various deficiencies which are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

2.9.1 Veterinary Diseases Investigation Laboratories

The Veterinary Diseases Investigation Laboratories included the Disease Investigation Laboratories (DIL), Veterinary Research and Investigation Laboratory (VRIL) and the Poultry Disease Investigation Laboratory (PDIL), all of which were engaged in Disease investigation of animals through testing of blood, stool, and serum samples. Thus, in order to effectively conduct various tests, these laboratories were required to have the necessary infrastructure in place, besides having equipment and reagents. However, during test check of nine⁴⁶ DIL/ VRIL/ PDIL, it was noted that four of them lacked adequate building infrastructure, seven of them suffered from issues related to seepage, while four did not have high capacity electric wiring. Besides these, it was also noted that none of the test-checked laboratories had power back up facility.

Only three⁴⁷ laboratories, had initiated proposals (during December 2020 to February 2024) to renovate the buildings for rectification of issues like damped and cracked walls, broken windows, replacement of water pipelines *etc.* However, these proposals were not addressed by DDARD&PO and the situation continued to remain the same, impacting the functioning of the laboratories. Besides infrastructure, deficiencies were also observed with regard to equipment in these test checked laboratories, as discussed below:

- In six⁴⁸, out of test checked nine laboratories, equipment like semi auto analysers, hot air ovens and autoclave machines, water distillation plant, deep refrigerators, microscopes and centrifuge machine for serum analysis were non-functional. As a result, the laboratories were unable to perform diagnostic testing, sterilize instruments, store specimens, or dispatch

⁴⁶ Disease Investigation (DI) Laboratory Birbhum, Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman), Paschim Medinipur, Krishnanagar (Nadia) & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur), District Pathological (DP) Lab Jalpaiguri & Berhampore, Veterinary Research & Investigation (VR&I) Siliguri (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad) and Poultry Disease Investigation Lab (PDIL) Paschim Medinipur.

⁴⁷ PDIL Garbeta, DI Laboratory Jalpaiguri and DI Laboratory Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

⁴⁸ VRI Lab Siliguri (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad,) DI Lab Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur), DP Lab Jalpaiguri, PDIL Garbeta (Paschim Medinipur) DP Lab Berhampore (Murshidabad) and DI Lab Paschim Medinipur.

samples to other laboratories. Only two laboratories⁴⁹ initiated proposals for repair of such unusable equipment in December 2023 but no rectification was done till date (September 2024).

- The VRIL, Siliguri under DDARD&PO was non-functional since 2014 due to lack of manpower. Expensive equipment like microscopes, freezers and autoclaves remained unused and the building was also in dilapidated condition as seen during the physical verification of the laboratory in August 2024.

2.9.2 Regional Laboratories

Five Regional Laboratories were established by the Department to serve their respective districts as also to cater to adjoining districts where advanced testing was required or where District Laboratories were not available. During Audit, two⁵⁰ Regional Laboratories were selected for detailed scrutiny and observations in this regard are as follows:

- The Regional Laboratory Bethuadahari was established in 1987 and was functioning in a dilapidated building. The electrical wiring in the laboratory was old, due to which it was unable to carry electrical load required to operate equipment and installations. Power back up was also not available in the Laboratory. The storage facility of the laboratory was not adequate, and records and documents were destroyed due to pest infestation. Proposals were sent to DDARD&PO Nadia for repair and renovation in September 2023, but no steps had been taken till date (August 2024). The condition of existing equipment in the Bethuadahari laboratory was also poor. The laboratory had Ultra-Low Temperature Deep freezer, two Clinical Centrifuge Machines, two Autoclave machines, Hot Air Oven, Water Distillation plant and incubator, all of which were found to be non-functional. Required equipment like computer assisted microscope, binocular microscope, Bio-chemical analyser, Westergren ESR tube were also not provided to the laboratory. Adequate reagents required for blood testing such as RBC diluting fluid, WBC diluting fluid, Thrombo count reagent, slides, test tubes, collection box, beaker and other glass wares were also not available despite request being made by the laboratory to the concerned DDARD&PO on July 2024.

In the absence of above equipment and testing consumables, important tests such as haemogram, haemoprotozoa and bacteria detection, blood and serum for biochemical analysis, Milk, Urine, Skin Scrapping and Tuberculin tests could not be carried out.

- The Regional Laboratory in Jalpaiguri, under DDARD&PO was upgraded to a Bio Security Level-III facility in 2010 for diagnosis of Avian Influenza along with other diseases. However, it was observed that the laboratory had not conducted any tests since April 2010 due to absence of manpower and lack of functional equipment. During joint physical verification by Audit in September 2024, it was observed that out of 181 laboratory equipment present, only 63 were serviceable.

⁴⁹ DP Lab Jalpaiguri and DP Lab Berhampore.

⁵⁰ Regional Laboratory Bethuadahari (Nadia) and Regional Lab (Jalpaiguri).

The Department stated (January 2025) that the Audit observations were viewed with utmost importance and infrastructure would be upgraded in future.

2.9.3 Feed testing laboratories

Two Feed testing laboratories were set up by the Department to determine the quality of feed being produced by the Departmental feed plants and also to test the feed being used in the Departmental farms. Out of the two⁵¹ test checked Feed Testing Laboratories, Audit observed that Jalpaiguri Feed Testing Laboratory was constructed under the National Livestock Mission in 2019 at a cost of ₹ 50.27 lakh but has never been used for feed testing due to shortage of manpower, rendering the expenditure wasteful as of September 2024.

Recommendation 5: Necessary steps should be taken by the Department to renovate laboratory buildings and ensure provision of required equipment and manpower to them. The Department may also take steps to ensure that the Regional Laboratory and the Feed Testing Laboratory at Jalpaiguri are made functional immediately for treatment of animals and testing of feed.

2.10 Poultry Farms of Directorate of ARD

The Animal Resources & Animal Health Directorate of the ARD Department operates various poultry farms across districts. These farms produce day old chicks and ducklings to be distributed amongst individual beneficiaries to augment egg production in the State and provide additional sources of livelihood. Further, the farms also sell non hatchable eggs and culled poultry birds.

As of October 2023, there were 29 poultry farms operating in the State. As the Department does not have its own guidelines in place, these farms have adopted the General Guideline for Bio-security issued by the Central Poultry Development Organisation⁵², Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, GoI. These General Guideline for Bio-Security stipulates requirement for a farm to be bio-secure. The poultry farms are also required to follow the Environmental guidelines issued by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

2.10.1 Lack of infrastructure and manpower in Poultry Farms

Test check of 10 farms⁵³, out of 37 farms revealed that adequate infrastructure to ensure effective bio security operating in these farms such as foot bath⁵⁴, wheel dips⁵⁵, changing rooms, quarantine rooms, post mortem facilities etc.,

⁵¹ Mednipur Feed Testing Laboratory and Jalpaiguri Feed Testing laboratory.

⁵² Biosecurity means a set of preventive measures adopted to protect livestock and poultry from infectious diseases and to stop their spread within farms, blocks or districts.

⁵³ District Composite Farm Baramahalla (Birbhum) & Domkal (Murshidabad), State Duck Breeding Farm Sekhampur (Birbhum) & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur), State Poultry Farm Mohitnagar (Jalpaiguri), Krishnanagar (Nadia), Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman), Berhampore (Murshidabad), State Duck Poultry Farm (Paschim Mednipur) and Duck Breeding Farm (Kalyani).

⁵⁴ Wide shallow pits at the entrance filled with sanitizers to cleanse the shoes of germs when stepped into it.

⁵⁵ Wide shallow pits at the entrance filled with sanitizers to cleanse the tyres of germs when the tyres are passed through it.

were lacking. Further, these test-checked farms had uncovered drains raising chances of contamination of live birds. Besides the above, the following other bio security related deficiencies were noticed in these farms:

- As per the General Guidelines for Bio-Security, the farms were required to have their hatcheries separated by boundary walls, however five⁵⁶ of the farms did not have such boundary walls. The hatcheries were also to be located 500 metres away from other shed, however nine⁵⁷ of the farms did not meet this criteria.
- The guidelines also mention that the farms should be free of dense foliage and the vegetation is to be kept to minimum so as to avoid the entry of wild birds into the farms which carries germs which could affect the mortality of the poultries. However, it was seen that six⁵⁸ of the farms were covered with dense foilage and five⁵⁹ farms had vegetation not kept to minimum.

All the above deficiencies raised the risk of influx of germs into the Farms and consequent adverse effect on the mortality of birds.

Further, as per the Environmental Guidelines for Poultry Farms issued by the Central Pollution Control Board, MOEFCC, GoI, and endorsed by the West Bengal Pollution Control Board, the farms should store manure and litter⁶⁰ in covered storage pits to avoid spread of dust and odour. However, it was observed that such facilities were absent in three⁶¹ out of 10 test checked farms.

The farms were also required to make adequate provisions for disposing off dead birds in burial pits of minimum three to four meters' depth and three meters above ground water level. Audit observed that in the test checked State Poultry Farm (SPF) Berhampur, Murshidabad and Durgapur facilities for disposing dead birds were not available.

The farms were required to have holding tanks for storing wastewater from cleaning operations, but as noted by Audit during joint physical verification (July 2023), three⁶² of the farms did not have any such holding tanks, raising the risk of environmental pollution.

In addition to adequate infrastructure as mentioned, adequate deployment of manpower at poultry farms was also required for general upkeep and maintenance of hygiene as poultry are highly susceptible to diseases occurring

⁵⁶ DCF Baramahalla (Birbhum), SPF Mohitnagar (Jalpaiguri), SPF Krishnanagar (Nadia), SPF Berhampore (Murshidabad) and SDBF Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

⁵⁷ DCF Baramahalla & SDBF Sekhampur (Birbhum), SPF Mohitnagar (Jalpaiguri), SPF Krishnanagar & DBF SLF Kalyani (Nadia), SDBF Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur), SDPF (Paschim Mednipur), SPF Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman) and DCF Domkal (Murshidabad).

⁵⁸ DCF Baramahalla, (Birbhum), SPF Mohitnagar (Jalpaiguri), SDBF Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur), SDPF (Paschim Mednipur), SPF Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman) and SPF Berhampore (Murshidabad).

⁵⁹ DCF Baramahalla, (Birbhum), SDPF (Paschim Mednipur), SPF Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman), SPF Berhampore (Murshidabad) and SPF Krishnanagar (Nadia).

⁶⁰ The saw dust or similar, which forms the poultry bed inside the sheds which are required to be periodically cleaned.

⁶¹ SDPF Raiganj, DCF Domkal and DBF SLF Kalyani.

⁶² DCF Baramahalla (Birbhum), SDBF Shekhampur (Birbhum) and SDPF Paschim Mednipur.

due to inadequate hygiene and lack of bio security measures. In six⁶³ out of 10 test checked poultry farms, against sanctioned strength of 169, men in position were only 56. The remaining four⁶⁴ test checked farms had not furnished the manpower position to Audit.

The Farm in-charges stated that the shortage of manpower had adversely affected the production and operations of the farms.

Thus, due to the lack of adequate infrastructure in the farms, especially bio security measures, also due to the shortage of manpower, the poultries were exposed to the risk of bird mortality as well as being a cause of environmental pollution.

The Department stated (January 2025) that deficiencies in infrastructure noticed by Audit were temporary in nature. The Department also stated that 139 VOs have been recruited, and 217 Livestock Development Assistants (LDAs) are in the process of being recruited to address the issue of manpower shortage.

The reply is not acceptable, as most of the deficiencies observed were not temporary but pertained to permanent infrastructure gaps that were essential, enduring requirements under biosecurity norms.

Recommendation 6: The Department should strengthen farm-level bio-security by establishing clear protocols and filling in infrastructural gaps to ensure protection of poultry from related hazards.

2.11 Poultry Farms of WBLDCL

The WBLDCL operates four Poultry farms (as of 2023) in the State with the aim of augmenting egg and meat production. Audit test checked all the four⁶⁵ Poultry farms set up by WBLDCL, of which Kalyani Layer Farm was engaged in production of eggs and the remaining farms were producing poultry chicks for use in various Government scheme.

During audit, similar deficiencies as in case of poultry farms of the Directorate of ARDAs were noticed with respect to bio security and environmental norms. It was noticed that in contravention of applicable guidelines, two⁶⁶ of the four farms did not have any composting facilities for the disposal of the bio- waste. It was also observed that waste-water drains were not covered in two of the test checked farms⁶⁷, thereby exposing the farm to contamination by germs. Besides the above, in two farms⁶⁸ it was observed that there were no basic bio security measures like foot dips at the entrance of the farms thereby raising chances of influx of germs into the farms.

The Department in reply stated that the deficiencies would be rectified soon.

⁶³ SPF Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman), Mohitnagar (Jalpaiguri), SPF Krishnanagar (Nadia), DCF Baramahalla (Birbhum), SDBF Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur) and SDPF (Paschim Mednipur).

⁶⁴ DBF Kalyani SLF (Nadia), SDBF Sekhampur (Birbhum), SPF Berhampore & DCF Domkal (Murshidabad).

⁶⁵ Broiler Breeding Farm Jotiyakhali (Jalpaiguri), Kalyani Duck Breeding Farm, Haringhata Poultry Farm and Kalyani EC Layer Farm (Nadia).

⁶⁶ KDBF Kalyani SLF and Haringhata Poultry Farm (Nadia).

⁶⁷ Broiler Breeding Farm Jotiyakhali and KDBF Kalyani (SLF).

⁶⁸ KDBF Kalyani (SLF) & Haringhata Poultry Farm.

2.11.1 Low-capacity utilisation of Broiler Breeding Poultry Farm

Out of four test-checked farms, only one Broiler Breeding Farm (BBF), Jotiyakali was engaged in the rearing of broiler breeder birds (Parent Birds). It was observed that the farm despite having a capacity of 30,000 layer birds at a time, had much lower number of birds, affecting egg production and Day Old Chicks (DOC) production. Analysis of the birds reared between April 2023, and March 2024 showed that the farm on an average had reared 20,757 birds, per month.

The Department stated (January 2025) that parent broiler chicks were not easily available in the markets, and the supplier takes four to five months to supply chicks after receiving the purchase order. The reply of the Department is not tenable as the situation should have been rectified for ensuring adequate supply of parent broiler chicks for optimum utilisation of the farm capacity.

These delays highlight structural bottlenecks that impair timely operations at broiler breeder facilities and undermine capacity utilization.

2.12 Bull Mother Farms of Paschim Banga Go-Sampad Bikash Sanstha

The Bull Mother Farms (BMF) maintained by PBGSBS produce high quality bulls which are sent to a Frozen Semen Bull Station (FSBS), where semen is harvested from the bulls for producing Semen Straw, used in Artificial Insemination. Minimum essential protocols required for production of quality semen are described in the manual of “Minimum Standard for production of Bovine Frozen Semen”⁶⁹. Further, Bio-security and Bio-safety Manual for Bovines⁷⁰ outlines procedures to prevent introduction, establishment and spread of diseases in cattle while also protecting the safety of personnel and the environment.

During audit, all the three Bull Mother Farms⁷¹ of PBGSBS were checked and various deficiencies, as against applicable provisions were observed, as detailed below:

- The farms were required to have a sprinkler system to keep the bulls cool, however, such sprinkler system was absent in two of the test checked BMFs⁷².
- The farms were also required to have high temperature and pressure water systems, so as to clean farm installations, utensils *etc.*, but the same was not present in any of the test checked farms.
- Further, the farms were to have isolation units to house sick bulls and prevent spreading of infection, however, it was seen that such a facility was non-existent in BMF Kalyani while in BMF Haringhata, it was found to be non-functional.

⁶⁹ Issued by Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Fishery, Ministry of Fishery, Animal Husbandry & Dairy, GoI, 2022.

⁷⁰ Issued by Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Fishery, Ministry of Fishery, Animal Husbandry & Dairy, GoI.

⁷¹ BMF Salboni (Paschim Mednipur), Haringhata & Kalyani (Nadia).

⁷² BMF Haringhata & Kalyani (Nadia).

- The farms should have effluent treatment system to treat waste water, however, none of the test checked farms had such a system in place.
- Compost pit or Bio methanation plant to decompose farm waste was not available in any of the test checked farms.
- Tyre dips at entry points of the farm were required to be set up to sanitise tyres of vehicles entering the farms. However, it was seen that this was absent in BMF Kalyani.
- The animals on the farms were required to have their hooves cleaned of pathogens. For this, foot bath for animals were required but two⁷³ farms did not have such facilities,

The farms are also required to have adequate infrastructure to safely dispose bio-medical waste. During joint physical verification by Audit done in June 2024, it was observed that in BMF Haringhata, bio-medical waste was disposed of in an open pit which was kept uncovered raising the chances of spread of germs.

The Department stated that the deficiencies as pointed out would be rectified soon.

2.13 Meat processing plants

The WBLDCL operates two Meat Processing plants namely the Haringhata Meat Plant and the Phansidewa Meat Processing Plant. These plants produce and sell items made of chicken, lamb, mutton, pork, duck and turkey. Both the meat plants are the Licensee of Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI). In addition, the Plants have their own “Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point” (HACCP)⁷⁴ and “Food Safety Management System” (FSMS)⁷⁵ to regulate their operation and ensure quality control. The HACCP is a system of Food safety which provides a systematic approach for identifying biological, chemical and physical hazard and establishing controls. The FSMS is used to guide the company employees through various requirements of the standard that must be met and maintained.

Phansidewa Meat Processing Plant:

The Phansidewa Meat Processing Plant (PMP) was established by WBLDC during 2019-20. It is a modern pork and chicken processing unit. The following infrastructural and operational deficiencies were observed during the Audit of the plant:

- As per, the Food Safety and Standard Regulation, 2011 of FSSAI, the Plant was required to conduct chemical and microbiological contaminants tests of the meat products being produced. Test check of records for such tests during the period 2022-24 revealed that in 2022-23, only one out of

⁷³ BMF Kalyani & Haringhata.

⁷⁴ HACCP is a management system in which food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards from raw material production, procurement and handling, to manufacturing, distribution and consumption of the finished product.

⁷⁵ FSMS is a structured, proactive framework comprising policies, procedures, and controls that organizations implement to ensure food remains safe throughout its lifecycle, from production to consumption.

19 chicken products were tested and in 2023-24, three out of 31 chicken products were tested, indicating lack of compliance with applicable standards leading to poor quality control. In reply, the Department stated (January 2025) that as the main ingredient of the meat and meat product was raw chicken, therefore test of only one raw chicken boneless meat and another for the whole lot of cooked meat products was done. The reply was not tenable as in the Haringhata meat plant of WBLDCL, internal test schedule recommends testing of each type of meat product indicating deficiencies in testing at Phansidewa.

- Audit observed that the pork processing unit of the plant, with an annual processing capacity of 240 MT, operated at only 1.21 *per cent* capacity during 2020-2024. The shortfall was primarily due to inadequate supply of live pigs to the plant. The Department confirmed this constraint and stated that, to address the issue, a Pig Integration Project was launched in North Bengal in January 2023 to ensure regular supply of pigs. However, Audit analysis revealed that the project was ineffective, as it could supply only 30 pigs to the Phansidewa plant despite an expenditure of ₹ 6.67 crore.
- An internal audit of the Plant was carried out by WBLDC in December 2020. Audit noted that despite 39 months since the Internal Audit Report was shared with the Plant, shortcomings pointed out such as lack of hot water facility for personal hygiene, for cleaning slaughter hall and implements used in meat processing, and non-functional existing laboratory still persisted.

Haringhata Meat Plant:

The Haringhata Meat Plant (HMP) was established in 1964 by the Department and handed over to the WBLDCL for operation since 2006. The plant is engaged in processing chicken, goat, sheep, and pigs as well as producing processed products from these livestock. The HMP has separate processing units for each of this livestock. During audit, the following deficiencies were observed:

- In contravention of the FSSAI guidelines, a well-equipped laboratory with qualified personnel was not in place at the Plant. A Chemist or Veterinary Microbiologist to carry out critical tests of meat and meat products was absent (as of June 2024), raising concerns about the reliability of tests and product quality. Furthermore, as per the FSSAI Manual and HACCP's own manual prepared by WBLDCL, the Plant was required to conduct tests like *E coli*, *Salmonella* and *Listeria* every six months to test for contaminants. Further, HACCP Manual recommended that while doing such tests, five samples of each product were to be checked. However, Audit observed that during the year 2023-24, the samples were tested only once a year, and one sample of each product was tested against the requirement of five. In reply, the Department stated (January 2025) that the tests are now being done twice a year. However, no related document was produced to Audit in support of the same.
- As per Food Safety Management System of the Plant, the meat products of the processing plants were required to be inspected under the supervision of a Process Manager to ensure quality of its product. However, the plant

did not have a Process Manager in place to oversee the quality of the final product. This led to customer complaints about the presence of foreign objects like feathers, hair and nylon threads in finished products. While the Department stated (January 2025) that the task of Process Manager was being done by a Food Technologist, but from the complaints received it was evident that the quality control in the Plant was not adequate.

- The plant has an internal testing schedule where the test frequency for various meat products being produced in the plant has been defined. As per the schedule, samples from all the pork, chicken and sheep products were to be tested twice in a month. However, during the Audit of the plant it was observed that the plant had not complied with its internal testing schedule and conducted only 22 out of 528 required tests on meat products in 2023-24.
- As per the FSMS, the plant was required to constitute a product recall team to address situations involving defective products that needed to be withdrawn from the market. However, complaints from a purchaser (Big Basket) were received (April & May 2024) about the meat products that were supplied to it. The consignment of meat was short by 664 Kg against the invoiced amount. The HMP provided Big Basket a credit-note of ₹ 2.25 lakh (June 2024) for the short supply of product without carrying out necessary verification of the claim made against it.

Thus, in absence of proper cleaning facility, the quality of the products being made at HMP was at risk of being compromised. In addition, the lack of qualified laboratory personnel to perform microbiological tests and personnel to supervise final goods, raised doubts about the quality of products.

Recommendation 7: The Department should develop adequate infrastructure to maintain hygienic plant environment, establish facilities to ensure quality control of both raw materials and finished products and strengthen the supply chain to ensure efficient utilisation of plant capacity.

2.14 Feed Plants

There were six⁷⁶ feed plants of WBLDCL in operation in the State (as of October 2023) to manufacture quality feeds for the livestock and ensure uninterrupted supply. The produce of these plants was to be used in the poultry and cattle farms maintained by the WBLDCL, PBGBS and the Directorate of ARD Department. WBLDCL was also permitted to sell these products to private buyers under the brand name of EPIC.

2.14.1 Functioning of Feed Plants

Low Production: Audit noted that the functioning of these feed plants was sub-optimal as they were not utilising their entire installed capacity. Of the two⁷⁷ test-checked feed plants of WBLDCL, it was observed that in case of one of the Plants (Salboni Feed Plant), against an annual capacity of 13,545 MT per annum, the production during the period 2019-24 ranged from 42 per cent

⁷⁶ Feed Plant Kalyani (Nadia), Salboni (Paschim Medinipur), Siliguri, Gazole (Malda), Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman) and Mosagram.

⁷⁷ Salboni and Kalyani Feed Plant.

to 72 per cent⁷⁸. Similarly, Kalyani Feed Milling Plant produced feed ranged between 58 per cent to 68 per cent⁷⁹ of its annual capacity of 9,000 MT during the period 2020-24. The reason for such low utilisation of the production capacity was attributed to low market demand for feed. However, WBLDCL did not make any efforts to analyse the reasons for such poor demand or take necessary remedial measures.

Accepting the Audit observation, the Department stated (January 2025) that a marketing team has been formed to increase the sale of feed, which would then help in increasing production.

Fixation of inflated production target: The Siliguri Feed Plant entered (August 2022) an agreement with a private agency who would supply labour for production of feed. As per the agreement the agency was to be paid at a fixed rate of ₹ 0.67 per kg of feed (revised to ₹ 0.59 per kg from September 2023) for a minimum production of 18,000 kg per day. In case of excess production beyond 18,000 kg per day, the cost of labour supply would be paid as per actual production.

Audit analysis revealed that the average production of the plant during April 2019 to October 2022 was only 2,732.11 Kg per day. During November 2022 to February 2024, the daily production crossed 18,000 kg on only four occasions. On all other days, the average daily production was 2,228.95 kg. Consequently, fixation of an inflated minimum target of 18,000 kg per day led to payment of labour charges for unproduced quantities, resulting in avoidable excess expenditure of ₹ 37.40 lakh (*Appendix –2.2*). Thus, WBLDCL erred in fixing the Minimum Production Target of 18,000 Kg per day leading to undue financial benefit to the agency of ₹ 37.40 lakh.

The Department stated (January 2025) that target was set at higher side due to improper market survey.

Quality Control: As per Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) 1374:2007 Guideline, the poultry plants were required to check the minimum amount of Macro and Micro⁸⁰ minerals in each batch of raw material and also to check for hazardous chemicals⁸¹ in each batch of the finished products. However, Audit observed that no such tests were conducted by the Siliguri Feed Plant raising the risk of presence of hazardous materials and the possibility of the feed being deficient of essential minerals, required for the health of animals.

Further, as per BIS Guideline 2052:2009, cattle feed was to be tested for sodium, calcium, phosphorous, urea, alfa toxins, vitamin D3, moisture, crude protein, ether extract *etc.*, for each batch as per sampling method prescribed. Moreover, metallic material and adulterant content was also to be checked in the finished product by the plant. Audit, however, observed that none of the said tests except those for moisture, crude protein and ether extract were conducted by the Salboni Feed Plant. It was noted that the tests were not being conducted due to the absence of required equipment in the laboratories of the plant.

⁷⁸ Production ranged between 5,709 MT to 9,764 MT.

⁷⁹ 5,237.825 MT to 6,132.777 MT.

⁸⁰ Calcium, sodium, chlorite, copper, iron and zinc *etc.*

⁸¹ Arsenic, Fluorine, Mercury, Nitrite and Aflatoxin.

In reply, the Department stated (January 2025) that plant metallic arrester⁸² would be introduced at the feed ingredient charging point.

Recommendation 8: The Department should make efforts to utilise the existing plant capacity more effectively by analysing market demand and developing improved marketing strategies to increase product demand.

2.15 Non-utilisation of Infrastructure

The Department had created various infrastructure for rendering better services related to animal husbandry. This infrastructure included quarantine centres for quarantining animals coming from other states and Bio-Methanation Plant to dispose farm wastes in an environment friendly manner. During audit it was observed that various such infrastructure created by the Department, was lying defunct, thereby leading to non-fulfilment of the objectives for which they had been set up.

2.15.1 Bio-methanation Plants

The Bio-security and Bio-safety Manual for Bovine, issued by Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, GoI recommended composting or biogas generation from bovine manure to reduce pathogen load.

Audit observed that a bio-methanation plant was set up at Frozen Semen Bull Station (FSBS), Salboni, in November 2017 at a cost of ₹ 24.98 lakh by the PBGSBS. However, Audit noted that the plant had never been made operational (**Figure 2.5**). The Station Director, FSBS Salboni stated that the reason for non-operation of the plant was not known. As a result, the objective of safe disposal of bovine manure at the FSBS was not realised.



Figure 2.5: Bio-methanation plant, Salboni

Similarly, a Bio-methanation plant was constructed in September 2015 at a cost of ₹ 24.95 lakh at FSBS, Haringhata, but this was also not functioning from August 2019 onwards due to a damaged gas pipe. Despite the Station Director sending a proposal to PBGSBS in August 2019, no action had been taken as of June 2024.

Thus, expenditure of ₹ 49.93 lakh incurred on both the bio-methanation plants was wasteful, highlighting departmental apathy.

In reply the Department stated (January 2025) that the plants were 15 years old and have served their peak time and now were non-functional following the depreciation rule. The reply is not acceptable as the plants at Salboni and Haringhata are not 15 years old. The Salboni plant had never become operational and the Haringhata plant was defunct since 2019 due to poor maintenance and inaction and not due to depreciation.

⁸² Device to trap the metal content if any in the feeds or in the raw material of the feeds.

2.15.2 Quarantine Centre

The Quarantine station at Hatighisha, Naxalbari was constructed by the Department to prevent the spread of dangerous diseases through imported livestock and to certify animals fit for slaughter. However, the centre remained closed since mid-2020 due to shortage of manpower. The DDARD&PO Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad, who was in charge of the station had requested the Department



Figure-2.6 Quarantine station

for manpower in February 2024 for making it operational again but no such manpower had been provided till date (August 2024) (Figure-2.6).

Thus, the assets created were not properly managed and remained unutilized for prolonged periods, leading to their deterioration and dilapidation. Further, non-utilisation of assets also impacted flow of envisaged benefits to stakeholders.

Recommendation 9: The Department should revive and maintain created infrastructure through timely repair, adequate manpower deployment and regular monitoring to ensure the intended benefits are realized.

2.16 Manpower

As per the recommendation of the National Commission on Agriculture, one Veterinary Doctor was required against 5,000 cattle head. As of February 2024, the State occupied the 33rd position among 36 States and Union Territories⁸³ in animal to veterinary doctor ratio which stood at 1: 14,086 animals. This clearly underscored the fact that the State needs more veterinary doctors to manage its livestock population. Audit findings with regard to deficiency of manpower are detailed in the following paragraphs.

2.16.1 Shortages of manpower at the Directorate of Animal Resource and Animal Health under the ARD Department, GoWB

The Directorate of Animal Resource and Animal Health under the ARD Department, GoWB functions through officers of the rank of Deputy Directors (DDs), Assistant Directors, Block Livestock Development Officers and Veterinary Officers to carry out supervision, administration, management of farms and provide veterinary services to stakeholders. Audit observed that there was acute scarcity of manpower in different cadres for management of livestock. This vacancy ranged from 15 per cent to 100 per cent across various positions (as of August 2024) as detailed in Table 2.4.

⁸³ As per the answer to the unstarred question no- 535 of Lok Sabha of 06 February 2024.

Table 2.4: Position of the Manpower of the AR&AH Directorate of the ARDD as on August 2024

Sl. No	Designation	No of sanctioned Posts	Men-in Position	Vacancy Percentage (%)
1.	Advisor and Ex-officio Principal Director	1	0	100
2.	Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services	1	0	100
3.	Additional Director, ARD	5	2	60
4.	Joint Director, ARD	12	3	75
5.	Deputy Director, ARD	50	12	76
6.	District Veterinary Officer/Assistant Director/Block Livestock Development Officer/Veterinary Officer	1,454	1,236	15
7	Veterinary Pharmacist	493	262	47
8	Livestock Development Assistant	3,358	487	85
	Total	5,374	2,002	62.74

In reply, the Department stated (January 2025) that filling up of vacancies is a continuous process and would take its own time. The reply was not tenable as the Department should have pre-empted the situation and dealt with the issue for smooth and effective functioning of hospitals, laboratories, quarantine centres etc.

2.16.2 Shortages of manpower at the district level offices of the Department

At the District level, the functions of the Department are carried out by the DDARD&PO, who is the administrative head. The DDARD&PO of the districts are assisted by Assistant Directors who are responsible for administration and management of fodder production, disease investigation, medicine procurement and distribution welfare of the animals, and other veterinary research and investigation activities.

In eight test checked districts it was observed that the posts of DDARD&PO were vacant for one to six years (except in the case of Birbhum). These offices were instead being run by Assistant Directors holding the post of DDARD&PO as additional charge. Further, 17 posts of Assistant Directors (out of 92 posts) were lying vacant in all eight test-checked districts. The shortage of required personnel at these levels impacted the functioning of the office at the District levels resulting in poor monitoring of field activities and ineffective implementation of schemes, ultimately impairing delivery of veterinary services.

The Department replied (January 2025) that recruitment process has already commenced to rectify the situation.

2.16.3 Shortages of manpower in Veterinary hospitals

Audit observed that two out three test checked polyclinics⁸⁴ in the State were functioning with 9 employees against a sanctioned strength of 22. As a result, the polyclinics were not in a position to perform various disease investigation tests or

⁸⁴ Polyclinic Suri (Birbhum) and Berhampore (Murshidabad).

utilise all available high end equipment as discussed in **paragraph 2.8.1.1 (A)**. In the other polyclinics at Matigara, no details regarding sanctioned strength and manpower available were provided to Audit.

In addition, the Department had 2,054 Animal Development Aid Centres (ADACs) located in Gram Panchayats to provide preliminary veterinary aid and primary treatment to animals. These centres were to be manned by Livestock Development Assistant (LDA). However, audit observed that out of these 2,054 ADACs, only 176 ADACs were in operation, due to availability of just 176 LDAs in the Department, and the rest of the ADACs were not functioning due to the vacancy in the post of LDA.

Thus, due to lack of manpower, veterinary hospitals were not in position to provide adequate treatment and were facing problems in carrying out surgeries, disease investigation, maintaining hygiene *etc.*

2.16.4 Shortages of manpower in Disease Investigation Laboratories

In nine test checked Disease Investigation Laboratories (DILs), it was observed that none of the laboratories had the required manpower in place for their day-to-day functioning. In seven DILs⁸⁵, against sanctioned strength of 31, only 13 personnel⁸⁶ were found to be posted. Due to deficient manpower, DILs were facing problem with sample collection, performing tests, disposal of bio wastes, maintenance of equipment *etc.* Two of the DILs⁸⁷ did not provide the required information regarding manpower to Audit.

In case of the Regional Laboratory at Bethuadahari (Nadia district), required personnel *i.e.* one Deputy Director (Micro), four Assistant Directors and four Laboratory technicians, needed to operate the facility, were not found posted. One Veterinary Officer of the nearby SAHC Bethuadahari was entrusted with the additional charge of the laboratory, impacting its overall functioning. The laboratory was also not able to collect the required number of samples or conduct adequate tests due to shortages of manpower.

The Regional Laboratory at Jalpaiguri was also non-functional since 2015 due to lack of manpower. The officers⁸⁸ of the laboratory had been posted to WBLDCL and PBGSBS establishments, leaving the regional laboratory without any manpower to function.

2.17 Internal Control

Internal control is an integral component of an organisation's management process which is established to provide reasonable assurance through proper supervision and monitoring so that the organisation's operations are carried out effectively. Audit observed several deficiencies in the internal control mechanism as discussed below:

⁸⁵ DI Birbhum, Paschim Mednipur & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur), DI Krishnanagar (Nadia), VRI Laboratory Siliguri (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), District Pathological Laboratory (Jalpaiguri) and Poultry Disease Investigation Laboratory Garbeta (Paschim Mednipur).

⁸⁶ Asst. Director ARD (DI), lab Technician, Lab Attendant, Peon *etc.*

⁸⁷ DI Berhampore (Murshidabad) and DI Durgapur (Paschim Bardhaman).

⁸⁸ Deputy Director Micro, AD(VR&I), AD Micro and Lab technicians.

Lack of Internal control in Veterinary Hospitals:

- The Department had not prescribed any guidelines for maintenance of essential registers (register of diseases outbreak, livestock register, register of specimen and post-mortem register *etc*). As a result, important records like the Outbreak register was not maintained in any of the Polyclinics to track epidemic history. These were also not being maintained by the four SAHCs⁸⁹, 14 BAHCs⁹⁰, and 14 ABAHCs⁹¹ of the test checked hospitals. Maintenance of such records would have been an effective tool in devising strategies to deal with the epidemics by referring to past strategies.
- Livestock profile data, vital for vaccination planning and disease control, was not maintained in 19 BAHCs⁹² and 11 ABAHCs⁹³ of the test checked hospitals.
- Further, test checked two⁹⁴ BAHCs and three⁹⁵ ABAHCs did not have any Register of Specimen examined or sent to external laboratories for advanced investigations. 21 of the test checked BAHCs⁹⁶ did not maintain Post-mortem Register to note down the findings while none of the ABAHCs had any Post-Mortem Registers in place. Lack of such records limited the hospitals' ability to track disease investigations.

Mobile Veterinary Clinic:

- As per the SOP of MVCs, the BLDO is to ensure the smooth running of the MVC by monitoring the activities of the MVC. Audit, however, observed that monitoring was not done by the BLDO in two⁹⁷ of the seven test checked MVCs.
- Moreover, as per SOP, a Departmental and District team was to conduct surprise and routine visit for on spot performance of the MVCs, but no such

⁸⁹ SAHC Jalpaguri, Durgapur, Lalbagh, and Raiganj.

⁹⁰ BAHC Suri-II & Nalhati-I (Birbhum), Rajganj (Jalpaiguri), Kanksa, Jamuria & Raniganj (Paschim Bardhaman), Kaliganj & Nabadwip (Nadia), Raghunathganj-I, Beldanga-II & Hariharpara (Murshidabad), Chopra, Itahar & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

⁹¹ ABAHC Barla & Deucha (Birbhum), Phansidewa (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Gairkata & Shikarpur (Jalpaiguri), Kuldih (Paschim Bardhaman), Bamanpukur, Baraitna & Dignagar (Nadia), Barala & Choa (Murshidabad), Sonapur, Durgapur & Rampur (Uttar Dinajpur).

⁹² BAHC Keshpur & Debra (Paschim Mednipur), Suri-II (Birbhum), Dhupguri, Rajganj & Matiali (Jalpaiguri), Kharibari & Matigara (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Kanksa, Jamuria & Raniganj (Paschim Bardhaman), Krishnagar-I & Nabadwip (Nadia), Raghunathganj-I, Beldanga-II & Hariharpara (Murshidabad), Chopra, Itahar & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

⁹³ ABAHC Barla (Birbhum), Gairkata, Matelli & Shikarpur (Jalpaiguri), Kuldih (Paschim Bardhaman), Bamanpukur (Nadia), Barala & Choa (Murshidabad), Sonapur, Durgapur & Rampur (Uttar Dinajpur).

⁹⁴ BAHC Debra (Paschim Mednipur) and Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

⁹⁵ ABAHC Barala (Murshidabad), Dignagar & Baraitna (Nadia).

⁹⁶ BAHC Daspur-II & Debra (Paschim Mednipur), Suri-II, Md. Bazar & Nalhati-I (Birbhum), Dhupguri, Rajganj & Matiali (Jalpaiguri), Kharibari & Matigara (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad), Kanksa, Jamuria & Raniganj (Paschim Bardhaman), Kaliganj, Krishnagar-I & Nabadwip (Nadia), Raghunathganj-I & Hariharpara (Murshidabad), Chopra, Itahar & Raiganj (Uttar Dinajpur).

⁹⁷ MVC Kanksa (Paschim Bardhaman) and Phansidewa (Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad).

teams ever visited the MVCs between 2022-23 and 2023-24, in two⁹⁸ of the test checked MVCs.

In absence of such internal controls mechanism, monitoring and supervision of the MVCs as stipulated in the guidelines could not be carried out and it was seen that the MVCs lacked equipment and medicines which was affecting the quality of treatment being rendered by these clinics.

2.18 Conclusion

There were serious gaps in the adequacy and functioning of infrastructure, manpower, equipment, and internal controls within the Animal Resources Development Department and its allied agencies. Veterinary hospitals, polyclinics and health centres were found to be operating with inadequate facilities, shortages of medicines, and non-functional diagnostic equipment, which severely restricted their ability to deliver effective animal healthcare.

Disease investigation and regional laboratories remained largely underutilised or non-functional due to manpower shortages, poor maintenance and lack of equipment which weakened disease surveillance and diagnosis.

Poultry and livestock farms lacked basic bio-security infrastructure, exposing animal populations to frequent disease outbreaks and mortality. Similarly, feed plants and meat processing units were operating at low capacity, with weak quality control systems, poor utilisation of resources and lapses in hygiene and safety standards.

In addition, bio-medical waste was not being managed in line with prescribed norms, and the Department had no effective preparedness measures to handle disease outbreaks. Absence of strategic planning, weak monitoring, and non-compliance with regulatory requirements reflected systemic shortcomings across the Department.

⁹⁸ MVC Nabadwip (Nadia) and Itahar (Uttar Dinajpur).

