

SPCA Chandigarh: Detailed Analysis and Background Information

Table of Contents

- [1. Timeline of Events](#)
 - [1.1 December 2023: Initial Complaints](#)
 - [1.2 January 2024: Meeting with Municipal Commissioner](#)
 - [1.3 September 2024: Veterinary Officer Issues](#)
 - [1.4 November 2024: Comprehensive Report](#)
 - [1.5 December 2024 - April 2025: Recent Developments](#)
- [2. Administrative Issues](#)
 - [2.1 Leadership and Accountability Gaps](#)
 - [2.2 Staff Conduct Problems](#)
 - [2.3 Communication Failures](#)
 - [2.4 Operational Inefficiencies](#)
- [3. Infrastructure Issues](#)
 - [3.1 Facility Structure Problems](#)
 - [3.2 Equipment Shortages](#)
 - [3.3 Inadequate Animal Housing](#)
 - [3.4 Administrative Infrastructure](#)
- [4. Medical Care Issues](#)
 - [4.1 Veterinary Staffing Problems](#)
 - [4.2 Animal Care Standards](#)
 - [4.3 Medical Record Keeping](#)
 - [4.4 Disease Management](#)
- [5. Financial Issues](#)
 - [5.1 Budget Allocation Problems](#)
 - [5.2 Payment Delays](#)
 - [5.3 Procurement Challenges](#)
 - [5.4 Transparency Concerns](#)
- [6. Impact on Animal Welfare](#)
 - [6.1 Animal Suffering](#)
 - [6.2 Increased Mortality](#)
 - [6.3 Compromised Emergency Response](#)

- 6.4 Public Trust Erosion
 - 7. Positive Developments
 - 7.1 Improved Cleanliness
 - 7.2 Increased Release Rates
 - 7.3 Infrastructure Improvements
 - 7.4 Social Media Presence
 - 8. Recommended Actions
 - 8.1 Immediate Actions (0-30 days)
 - 8.2 Medium-term Actions (30-90 days)
 - 8.3 Long-term Actions (90+ days)
 - 9. Key People and Departments
 - 9.1 Municipal Corporation Chandigarh
 - 9.2 Other Key Stakeholders
 - 9.3 External Support
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1. Timeline of Events

1.1 December 2023: Initial Complaints

On December 18, 2023, a comprehensive complaint was sent to the Municipal Commissioner of Chandigarh detailing several critical issues at SPCA Chandigarh. The complaint highlighted:

- Absence of a qualified supervisor for the past three months
- Extensive repair needs for the SPCA building including leaking walls and broken sheds
- Need for a dedicated Executive Secretary focused exclusively on SPCA responsibilities
- Exposed animals facing harsh weather conditions due to inadequate shelter

Smt. Maneka Gandhi was copied on this communication and personally intervened, contacting the Municipal Commissioner (Anindita Mitra at that time) to address the concerns. She instructed the volunteers to prepare a comprehensive list of immediate repairs needed.

Key Document Reference: Email titled "Urgent Action Needed: SPCA Chandigarh" dated December 18, 2023

1.2 January 2024: Meeting with Municipal Commissioner

Following Smt. Maneka Gandhi's intervention, a meeting was held with the Municipal Commissioner on January 4, 2024. The meeting resulted in several commitments:

1. Recruitment of Supervisor Saurav Sharma as recommended by volunteers

2. Installation of cameras with feed to the MC commissioner's office
3. Implementation of an automated attendance management system
4. Relocation of bovines to a newly established gaushala in Raipur Kalan
5. Creation of an isolation kennel for aggressive dogs at MC's Animal Birth Control Center
6. Conducting a police sensitization workshop

The Commissioner also agreed to monthly meetings with volunteers to monitor progress and address concerns.

Key Document Reference: Email update to Smt. Maneka Gandhi dated January 4, 2024

1.3 September 2024: Veterinary Officer Issues

By September 2024, despite some improvements, significant issues remained, particularly regarding veterinary oversight. A request was made on September 13, 2024, for increased involvement of the Veterinary Officer, Dr. Munish Sharma, who was stationed just 100 meters from SPCA but rarely visited the facility.

The request highlighted:

- The critical role of the Veterinary Officer as per the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960
- Need for at least twice-weekly visits from the VO
- Importance of regular meetings led by the VO for proper animal healthcare management

Smt. Maneka Gandhi again intervened, personally speaking with Dr. Munish Sharma who agreed to daily visits to SPCA. However, it appears this commitment was not fulfilled.

Key Document Reference: Email titled "Request for Increased Veterinary Officer Involvement at SPCA Chandigarh" dated September 13, 2024

1.4 November 2024: Comprehensive Report

On November 5, 2024, a comprehensive report was submitted detailing persistent issues despite some improvements. While acknowledging positive changes in cleanliness and organization under Supervisor Saurav Sharma, the report highlighted:

1. Failure to protect visitors and volunteers from harassment
2. Gross discipline failure during Diwali night (October 31, 2024) when essential staff were absent
3. Lack of a complaint redressal system
4. Pending structural repairs and ambulance procurement
5. Ongoing issues with essential supplies procurement
6. Lack of supervision during evening shifts

The report included a detailed table categorizing issues, their causes, potential improvements, and current status.

Key Document Reference: Comprehensive report email dated November 5, 2024

1.5 December 2024 - April 2025: Recent Developments

Between December 2024 and April 2025, WhatsApp communications reveal:

- Some repairs to kennels were undertaken in January 2025
- Procurement of jute bori (sacks) for animal protection was delayed
- Issues with landline service disconnection due to non-payment
- Staff salary delays extending beyond two months
- Some donations of heaters and water purifiers from private individuals
- Ongoing concerns about veterinary presence and staff conduct
- Volunteer frustration leading to decreased engagement

By April 2025, significant issues remain unresolved despite repeated communications and commitments from authorities.

Key Document Reference: WhatsApp chat logs from "SPCA shramdaan" group, December 2024 - April 2025

2. Administrative Issues

2.1 Leadership and Accountability Gaps

SPCA Chandigarh has suffered from inconsistent leadership and frequent changes in administration. In August 2024, the term of MC Commissioner Anindita Mitra ended, and responsibility was temporarily assigned to the DC Chandigarh. The Honorary General Secretary (MOH) who was instrumental in planned work also retired.

These transitions have resulted in:

- Lack of continuity in policy implementation
- Stalled progress on approved initiatives
- Confusion regarding responsibility and accountability
- Absence of regular monitoring meetings that were previously agreed upon

The lack of stable leadership has particularly affected the implementation of reforms agreed to in the January 2024 meeting, many of which remain unimplemented more than a year later.

2.2 Staff Conduct Problems

Numerous instances of staff misconduct have been reported, particularly toward visitors and volunteers:

- Harassment of female volunteers and senior citizens
- Verbal targeting of visitors who report issues
- Staff absenteeism during critical times (notably the Diwali incident on October 31, 2024)
- Reports of staff demanding excessive payments for medicines (Rs. 500 for a Rs. 25 injection)
- Doctors socializing with personal acquaintances during duty hours, making patients wait
- Concerning reports of doctors' quarters being used inappropriately for personal activities
- Doctors maintaining private clinical practices while employed at SPCA, creating potential conflicts of interest

An incident on Diwali night 2024 exemplifies these issues: the appointed doctor, medical staff, ambulance driver, and worker on van duty were all absent without notice, leaving only a security guard on site during a high-risk time for animals frightened by fireworks.

Of particular concern are reports from regular volunteers regarding Dr. Vikram's conduct over the past year. Despite repeated complaints, no action has been taken regarding his work ethics. He reportedly arrives at SPCA only at 5:30 PM after working at a private clinic (Dr. Ravinder's), has never performed morning duties, and shows minimal interest in the treatment and well-being of admitted animals.

Despite these serious lapses, there appears to be no formal disciplinary process to address such conduct.

2.3 Communication Failures

SPCA Chandigarh suffers from several communication failures:

- The landline phone is frequently disconnected due to non-payment
- No WhatsApp helpline has been established despite requests
- No publicly visible contact information for complaints
- Limited digital communication channels (no website or official social media)
- Poor internal communication between administrative departments

These communication gaps have severely hampered emergency response and routine operations, making it difficult for the public to report animal emergencies or seek assistance.

2.4 Operational Inefficiencies

Operational inefficiencies persist throughout SPCA's management:

- Delayed implementation of approved plans from the 2024 AGM
- Bottlenecks in procurement processes for essential supplies

- No formal complaint redressal system
- Inadequate documentation of veterinary visits and animal treatments
- Lack of standard operating procedures for shelter operations
- Absence of proper administrative oversight for financial transactions

These inefficiencies have resulted in resource wastage, delayed animal care, and frustrated stakeholders who see little progress despite repeated interventions.

3. Infrastructure Issues

3.1 Facility Structure Problems

The SPCA facility has numerous structural issues that compromise its functionality:

- Leaking walls allowing water ingress during rain
- Broken sheds exposing animals to extreme weather
- Deteriorated flooring in animal housing areas
- Inadequate drainage systems causing hygiene issues
- Security vulnerabilities including broken gates
- Poor insulation making temperature control difficult in extreme weather

Despite these issues being documented as early as December 2023 and renovation plans being approved in the 2024 AGM, little progress has been made on comprehensive structural repairs.

3.2 Equipment Shortages

Essential equipment shortages severely impact SPCA operations:

- Non-functional ambulance limiting emergency response capabilities
- Insufficient heating equipment for winter months
- Lack of proper medical equipment for basic treatments
- Insufficient isolation equipment for disease control
- Missing or broken animal handling tools

The ambulance issue is particularly critical as it directly impacts the ability to respond to emergency calls and transport injured animals. This has been reported repeatedly since 2023 without resolution.

3.3 Inadequate Animal Housing

Animal housing facilities remain below acceptable standards:

- Cages lacking proper locks, posing safety risks
- Insufficient isolation areas for contagious cases

- Inadequate bedding especially during winter months
- Delayed procurement of bori/tirpal for animal protection
- Poor segregation of animals based on health status, age, or temperament

While some recent improvements to kennels have been made (as documented in January–February 2025 WhatsApp messages), the overall animal housing infrastructure remains inadequate to meet basic animal welfare standards.

3.4 Administrative Infrastructure

The administrative infrastructure is severely lacking:

- No computers for efficient record-keeping
- Absence of digital database for animal records
- Limited office equipment for day-to-day operations
- No proper meeting space for staff and volunteer coordination
- Insufficient storage for supplies and medications
- No functioning security cameras for monitoring facility and ensuring accountability
- Absent or non-functional Wi-Fi limiting digital communication and record-keeping
- Repeatedly disconnected landline due to unpaid bills hampering emergency communications
- Primitive cooking facilities forcing staff to prepare food on firewood

These deficiencies hamper efficient management, record-keeping, and resource tracking, contributing to operational inefficiencies and lack of transparency. The primitive conditions of basic infrastructure are particularly concerning for a facility in Chandigarh, a city otherwise known for its modern development and high standards.

4. Medical Care Issues

4.1 Veterinary Staffing Problems

Veterinary staffing issues represent a critical concern:

- Insufficient veterinary officer presence (Dr. Munish Sharma rarely visits despite being stationed 100m away)
- No in-house doctor available at all times as required
- Staff salary delays affecting morale and retention (2+ months reported)
- Absence of evening medical staff coverage
- Lack of trained paramedics for emergency stabilization

The absence of consistent veterinary supervision directly impacts animal healthcare quality and survival rates. Despite commitments from Dr. Munish Sharma to visit daily following Smt. Maneka Gandhi's intervention, this does not appear to have been consistently implemented.

4.2 Animal Care Standards

Animal care standards fall below acceptable levels:

- Inconsistent feeding schedules affecting animal health
- Inappropriate food provided to animals with specific dietary needs
- Inadequate exercise provisions for long-term residents
- Insufficient enrichment for animals' psychological well-being
- Incomplete implementation of proper sanitation protocols

These deficiencies lead to preventable health issues and psychological stress for sheltered animals, compromising their welfare and adoptability.

4.3 Medical Record Keeping

Medical record keeping is significantly deficient:

- Poor animal tagging and identification system
- Inconsistent documentation of treatments administered
- Inadequate tracking of vaccination and deworming schedules
- No proper intake assessment records
- Limited monitoring of outcomes and mortality causes
- Highly concerning practice of retroactive documentation: doctors treating numerous animals and only later recording the medications administered, raising serious questions about accuracy
- No communication documents between morning and evening shifts, unlike standard hospital practice
- Possible documentation fraud where records are created only to satisfy potential RTI requests rather than for proper medical care

These practices not only prevent effective monitoring of animal health trends and treatment efficacy but also raise serious ethical concerns that should be reported to the Veterinary Council of India. The lack of contemporaneous medical records and shift-to-shift communication could directly harm animals through medication errors, missed treatments, or improper care protocols.

4.4 Disease Management

Disease management protocols are inadequate:

- Insufficient pest control measures leading to tick infestations

- Inadequate quarantine protocols for new arrivals
- Limited disease outbreak response planning
- Poor management of contagious conditions like distemper
- Insufficient preventative healthcare measures

These issues increase the risk of disease transmission within the facility and compromise the recovery of sick animals.

5. Financial Issues

5.1 Budget Allocation Problems

Budget allocation issues significantly impact SPCA operations:

- Unclear status of budget allocation for SPCA operations
- Insufficient funding for necessary repairs and equipment
- No transparent process for budget decisions
- Apparent administrative bottlenecks preventing fund utilization
- Delays in approving essential expenditures

The inability to access or utilize allocated funds has resulted in critical operations being compromised, from basic supplies to infrastructure repairs.

5.2 Payment Delays

Payment delays affect multiple aspects of SPCA operations:

- Delayed staff salary disbursements (reported 2+ months)
- Unpaid utility bills resulting in service disconnections (e.g., landline)
- Delayed vendor payments affecting supply chains
- Compromised relationships with service providers
- Staff demoralization and increased turnover

These payment issues directly impact operational capacity and staff motivation.

5.3 Procurement Challenges

Procurement processes are riddled with inefficiencies:

- Administrative bottlenecks delaying essential purchases
- Unclear approval chains for purchasing decisions
- Unreasonable delays in procuring basic items (e.g., jute sacks)

- Incomplete implementation of approved procurement plans
- Reliance on donations for items that should be budgeted

Documents reveal that even simple procurements like rice, dalia, and bori/tirpal face months of delays despite being essential for basic animal care.

5.4 Transparency Concerns

Financial transparency is severely lacking:

- Limited public disclosure of budget allocation and expenditure
- Unclear tracking of donations and their utilization
- Absence of regular financial audits or reports
- No clarity on fund allocation for approved projects
- Questions about fee collection and its management

The lack of financial transparency undermines trust in the institution and makes accountability difficult to enforce.

6. Impact on Animal Welfare

6.1 Animal Suffering

The documented issues directly contribute to animal suffering:

- Delayed medical attention due to staffing shortages
- Exposure to extreme weather due to inadequate shelter
- Psychological stress from poor housing conditions
- Pain management failures due to medicine shortages
- Preventable disease progression due to delayed interventions

The Diwali night incident (October 31, 2024) exemplifies this impact: with no staff present, injured animals could not receive timely care, leading to unnecessary suffering.

6.2 Increased Mortality

Higher mortality rates result from systemic failures:

- Preventable deaths due to delayed emergency response
- Disease outbreaks due to poor quarantine and sanitation
- Complications from untreated conditions
- Weather-related deaths during extreme conditions
- Stress-related health deterioration

While exact mortality statistics are not provided in the available documents, multiple communications reference concerns about animal deaths that could have been prevented with proper care systems.

6.3 Compromised Emergency Response

Emergency response capabilities are severely compromised:

- Non-functional ambulance preventing timely transport
- Staff absences during critical hours
- Communication failures hampering emergency reporting
- Insufficient emergency medical supplies
- Lack of emergency protocols and training

These deficiencies mean that animals in distress often cannot receive timely intervention, particularly during evenings, nights, or holiday periods.

6.4 Public Trust Erosion

Public trust in SPCA has been significantly eroded:

- Reduced confidence in SPCA's capacity to handle animal emergencies
- Frustration from repeated unaddressed complaints
- Perception of institutional indifference to animal welfare
- Decreased volunteer engagement due to persistent issues
- Reduced public donations due to transparency concerns

The declining public trust creates a vicious cycle where fewer resources are directed to SPCA, further compromising its effectiveness.

7. Positive Developments

7.1 Improved Cleanliness

Despite numerous challenges, some improvements in cleanliness have been noted:

- Better organization of the facility under Supervisor Saurav Sharma
- Regular cleaning documented in WhatsApp communications
- Tile cleaning in various sections of the facility
- Sewerage cleaning to improve sanitation
- Better waste management practices

These improvements contribute to a healthier environment for animals and staff alike.

7.2 Increased Release Rates

Recent communications indicate some success in animal rehabilitation:

- Increased release rates documented since March 2024
- Notable reduction in death rates
- Successful rehabilitation of several injured animals
- Some adoption success stories documented on Instagram
- Release of rehabilitated birds (15 pigeons in February 2025)

These outcomes reflect dedicated efforts by staff and volunteers despite challenging circumstances.

7.3 Infrastructure Improvements

Some infrastructure improvements have been implemented:

- Repairs to kennels documented in January–February 2025
- Installation of water purifier (donated)
- Some shed repairs to prevent water ingress
- Addition of heaters for animal areas during winter
- Foam pieces procured for animal bedding

While these improvements are incremental rather than comprehensive, they represent positive steps toward better conditions.

7.4 Social Media Presence

Efforts to improve public communication have begun:

- Creation of an Instagram page for SPCA Chandigarh
- Regular updates on animal success stories
- Documentation of improvement efforts
- Public engagement through events like dog shows
- Educational content about animal welfare

This improved communication helps build public awareness and support for SPCA's mission.

8. Recommended Actions

8.1 Immediate Actions (0-30 days)

Critical issues requiring immediate intervention:

- **Staff Salary Disbursement:** Clear all pending staff salaries to address morale issues and prevent further staff absenteeism
- **Emergency Equipment Repair:** Repair or replace the ambulance to restore emergency response capabilities
- **Veterinary Oversight:** Enforce mandatory twice-weekly documented visits by Dr. Munish Sharma to SPCA
- **Essential Supply Procurement:** Expedite procurement of essential supplies including food, medicine, and winter protection materials
- **Communication Restoration:** Restore landline service and establish a WhatsApp helpline for emergencies
- **Disciplinary Review:** Conduct an immediate review of the Diwali incident and implement accountability measures

These actions would address the most critical issues threatening animal welfare and operational continuity.

8.2 Medium-term Actions (30-90 days)

Important improvements to be implemented within three months:

- **Complaint System:** Establish a formal complaint redressal system with visible contact information at the facility
- **Structural Repairs:** Commence implementation of the approved structural repairs, prioritizing animal protection areas
- **CCTV Installation:** Install CCTV cameras with access for senior officials to ensure safety and accountability
- **Medical Protocols:** Develop and implement standardized protocols for animal intake, treatment, and record-keeping
- **Staff Training:** Conduct training for all staff on animal handling, basic treatment, and emergency procedures
- **Administrative Infrastructure:** Procure computers and establish a digital record-keeping system

These actions would address systemic issues and build a foundation for sustainable improvements.

8.3 Long-term Actions (90+ days)

Structural changes for sustainable improvement:

- **NGO Partnership Model:** Consider adopting the Noida SPCA partnership model with a reputable animal welfare NGO

- **Digital Presence:** Develop an official SPCA website and social media strategy for public engagement
- **Comprehensive Renovation:** Implement a phased complete renovation of the facility based on modern animal shelter standards
- **Community Programs:** Establish community engagement programs including education, adoption events, and volunteer coordination
- **Sustainable Funding:** Develop diverse funding streams to reduce dependency on single government sources
- **Monitoring System:** Implement a transparent monitoring system for tracking animal welfare outcomes and facility performance

These long-term actions would transform SPCA Chandigarh into a model animal welfare facility capable of fulfilling its mandate effectively.

9. Key People and Departments

9.1 Municipal Corporation Chandigarh

Key Municipal Corporation officials with responsibility for SPCA oversight:

- **Amit Kumar, IAS:** Current Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Chandigarh (2008 Punjab cadre). As head of the Municipal Corporation, has ultimate oversight responsibility for SPCA operations.
- **Dr. Inderdeep Kaur:** Medical Officer Health, MC Chandigarh. Directly responsible for health-related aspects of SPCA operations and staff oversight.
- **Previous Leadership:** Anindita Mitra (former MC Commissioner) was actively involved in improvement plans during her tenure, which ended in August 2024.

The Municipal Corporation's leadership is critical for policy implementation, budget allocation, and administrative oversight of SPCA.

9.2 Other Key Stakeholders

Additional departments and roles with significant involvement:

- **Department of Animal Husbandry:** Responsible for veterinary services and certain aspects of SPCA management. The Joint Director of Animal Husbandry (Dr. Bhangoo) has oversight of veterinary services.
- **SPCA Management Committee:** The formal governance body for SPCA Chandigarh, including representatives from various government departments and appointed members.
- **Veterinary Officer:** Dr. Munish Sharma, appointed in 2024, stationed at the nearby dispensary and responsible for veterinary oversight of SPCA.

- **Supervisor:** Saurav Sharma, appointed following volunteer recommendations in January 2024, handles day-to-day operations and has been credited with some improvements.

Coordination between these stakeholders is essential for effective SPCA operations.

9.3 External Support

External supporters who have contributed to improvement efforts:

- **Smt. Maneka Gandhi:** Animal welfare advocate who has personally intervened multiple times to address SPCA issues, including direct communication with officials.
- **Volunteer Group:** A dedicated group of volunteers including Kashish Kumar, Ishwita, and others who have consistently reported issues, provided donations, and assisted with operations.
- **Public Donors:** Various individuals who have contributed supplies, equipment, and funds to supplement official resources.

The continued engagement of these external supporters provides both accountability and supplementary resources that have been crucial during periods of official neglect.

This document was compiled based on email correspondence, WhatsApp communications, and formal complaints from December 2023 to April 2025 regarding SPCA Chandigarh.