STREET DOGS

Issued in Public Interest

Stated below is information that you will find relevant.

Firstly, please remember, harming animals, or treating them with cruelty, is a punishable offence, under the Constitution of India, the Indian Penal Code, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Environment Protection Act.

DOG BITES

1. Dogs do not usually bite without provocation.

2. Dogs may bite when,
   - they perceive aggression on your part, such as a raised stick, or bending to pick a stone,
   - if you try to touch/catch them,
   - in a bid to protect their owner’s, or their own territory, or their food/source of food,
   - mothers may bite to protect their young ones.

Do not run when you see a stray dog, or walk too fast. Do not stare at them. Just let them be – they’ll let you be.

3. Worldwide statistics reveal that pet dogs are far more prone to biting than are strays.

4. Dogs are classified as companion animals. They are usually friendly to humans, and are almost always more scared of you than you are of them.
“QUICK FIX SOLUTION” TO STRAY DOGS

1. There is no “Quick Fix solution” to stray dogs. If there was one, it would have worked hundreds of years ago, and stray dogs would have become extinct.

2. Stray dogs breed and live in and around human habitations – wherever there are people there are dogs.

3. Efforts to completely rid territories of strays, or ‘throwing away’ or otherwise harming their young, does not usually have the desired effect. This is primarily because vacated territories which are vacuums are always taken up by other dogs – there are too many of them. This cycle continues and the only way to stop it to “domesticate” the dogs that are already present in your area and get them sterilized and vaccinated. These dogs will guard your area from other dogs which may be rabid or unsterilised

RATIONAL SCIENTIFIC SOLUTION

1. A rational, scientific, but slower solution to the problem of stray dogs has been recommended by the World Health Organization (W.H.O.), and has been demonstrated to be the only effective solution.

2. The W.H.O. recommends systematic sterilization, vaccination and community level adoption of dogs for effectively reducing dog population and aggression in dogs, and eliminating the risk of rabies.

3. Relocating stray dogs is not recommended. Dogs are released back in the areas they were picked up from, because they guard their territories and prevent other (possibly un-sterilized, un-vaccinated) dogs from coming in. This also serves to keep the dog population in a community in check.

4. Dogs keep areas free of snakes, rodents, particularly sewer rats, that can overrun habitation with fearful diseases like plague. (Example, plague at Surat.)
THE LAW IN THIS REGARD

The ten Fundamental Duties—given in Article 51-A of the constitution—can be classified as either duties towards self, duties concerning the environment, duties towards the State and duties towards the nation. "Directive Principles of State Policy" directs that the government should keep them in mind while framing laws, even though they are non-justifiable in nature.

Directive Principles are classified under the following categories: Gandhi an, social, economic, political, administrative, legal, environmental, protection of monuments, peace and security. After the Stockholm Declaration in 1972 the Indian Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976 inserted for the first time specific provisions to protect & improve the environment.

1. Article 51-A (g) states - " It shall be duty of every citizen of India to protect & improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures."

2. Article 48-A - "The State shall endeavor to protect & improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country."

3. Article 19 deals with the fundamental rights of the citizen. So "Right to Protect the Environment” comes within Article 19.

4. Article 25, 26, 27, 28 provides religious freedom to all citizens and preserves the principle of secularism in India. According to the constitution, all religions are equal before the State. Citizens are free to preach, practice and propagate any religion of their choice in their own way. Feeding animals like dogs is a part of the same in many religions.

5. Section 11 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act makes all animal cruelty a criminal offence. Fines and imprisonment are both provided for. The Indian Penal Code has similar provisions.
6. The Animal Birth Control (Dog) Rules, 2001, enacted under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, provide for sterilization and vaccination as a means of stabilizing/reducing stray dog populations and eliminating the risk of rabies; and prohibits relocation of stray dogs, i.e. throwing, or driving them out of one area, into another. Enclosed copies of an articles referring to an order passed by the Supreme Court of India in this regard, which prohibits removal, dislocation or killing of even nuisance dogs.

7. Under Stray Dog Management Rules 2001, it's illegal for an individual, RWA or estate management to remove or relocate dogs. The dogs have to be sterilized and vaccinated and returned to the same area. Vaccinated and sterilized dogs cannot be removed by the municipality too.

8. Under Section 506 of the IPC, it's a crime to threaten abuse or harass neighbors who feed animals.

9. I.P.C. Section 428 and 429 provides severe punishment (up to 5 years imprisonment) to people resorting to dislocation, abduction and acts of cruelty towards community animals or pets.

10. Delhi Police act 1968, sections 73 to 79, 99 gives special powers to police to take action when an animal offence has been committed.

11. Ministry of Public Grievances notification and a similar notification by Animal Welfare Board of India dated March 2008, provide immunity to animal feeders and restrict government employees or bodies such as Resident Welfare Associations from harassing people who try to feed or help animals.

13. Directive of the Central Mumbai Consumer Disputes Redress Forum, given on 22/11/10 came down strongly against the housing societies who were charging a resident for use of lift since October 2008 for pets.

14. High Court of Delhi in 2011 passed an order asking the police to provide protection to dogs and dog feeders and has made it a punishable offence in case anyone restricts, prohibits or causes inconvenience to any person feeding a street dog or resorts to removal dislocation or killing of a dog.

15. The Supreme Court of India in 2009 gave a similar stay order against removal culling or dislocation of a dog anywhere in India.

FEEDING STRAY DOGS

1. Hungry animals are more likely to fight, and bite, and be diseased (since they forage for food in garbage). Feeding stray dogs renders them docile and friendly, and they do not roam in search of food. It becomes easier to catch them for sterilization and vaccination.

2. Stray dogs are scavengers, and can live on insects, rodents, and garbage. Countries that have tackled garbage, filth, slums, etc. and resorted to large scale sterilization and vaccination, have effectively managed stray animals.

3. If the dogs feed on Garbage then the garbage dump becomes their “primary food source” which they will try to protect from you and in turn may get hostile. But if you feed the dogs at least once days then you become the primary food source which they will protect. High Court of Delhi has hence passed an order asking the police to provide protection to dogs and dog feeders and has made it a punishable offence in case anyone restricts, prohibits or causes inconvenience to any person feeding a street dog.
Hence, “Domestication” of a few dogs, management of “Garbage Dumps”, “Feeding” of stray dogs and finally “Vaccination & Sterilisation” of the same dogs is a FOUR STEP solution to any problem that may arise out of street dogs.

This way the 3 Threats associated with street dogs of –

a) RABIES,
b) OVER POPULATION,
c) DOG BITES and AGGRESSION

can be easily and permanently tackled in each and every area with help from organizations working in the same regard & the Municipal Corporation, under the Animal Birth Control program.

Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi
Chairperson
People For Animals