Why Dog Pounds as Foster Homes for Dogs Will Not Work

By

Uma Rani,
Secretary, AWBI

When I first heard that, “Dog pounds are to be converted to permanent shelters", only one image and thought came to my mind, “Goodness me, the Board must not let this happen, it sounds like lifetime jails to confine our doggy friends to". The right to life and freedom is a fundamental right that all living beings have. I shudder at the very thought of the idea of dogs being confined, like as if they are in jail. The role of a dog pound is to provide only a temporary sheltering for dogs who need to undergo ABC: surgery and anti-rabies vaccinations and also to provide treatment for sick and injured dogs.

Dogs are strongly territorial animals and animals who are naturally affectionate and caring and thrive in the company of compassionate humans. Having been in the company of human beings, they have learnt to build an excellent rapport and cultivate lifetime bonds of love and friendship with human beings.

The dog-human bond of love and friendship is now over twenty thousand years old. Intelligence, bravery, loyalty, unconditional love, playfulness and joy are the innate virtues of dogs. Innumerable are the anecdotes of dogs who have faithfully stood by their masters’ side rescuing them from dangerous natural disasters and calamities.

To recount a few examples, in 1919, a brave dog named Tang saved 92 people by towing a sinking ship safely to a shore of its own in the teeth and swimming to the shore of Newfoundland, Canada. In 1996, the Press Trust of India carried a report about a pack of street dogs in Calcutta who kept an all night vigil over a new born baby abandoned in the garbage bin. They left their vigil only when the baby was rescued by a lady on a morning walk.

In Indian cities, street dogs play many unique roles, sometimes playing the role of a security guard, sometimes playing the role of a best friend and playmate to children, senior citizens, bakery owners, newspaper boys, auto drivers, cobblers and tea shop owners. The many street dogs that we see in the busy streets and by-lanes of our country have invisible owners. They move in neat packs of street dogs in Calcutta who kept an all night vigil over a new born baby abandoned in the garbage bin. They left their vigil only when the baby was rescued by a lady on a morning walk.

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In every neighbourhood, if a survey were to be conducted, among a population of hundred homes, there would be at least ten homes where people who love street dogs will be found. Most of the apparently ownerless street dogs are actually neighbourhood dogs or community dogs owned by the community.

For the lonely senior citizen going on a morning walk, the sight of his doggy friends rushing to greet him make each one of his mornings special, adding some cheer. So too, with home-makers, struggling through the drudgeries of housework, the colony dog to whom rots are stealthily fed across the window or the gate soon becomes a trusted good friend. Similarly, so often feeding a street dog helps to involve a child emotionally, an emotionally disturbed, introverted child to forming a close friendship. It is a common observation, especially for people living in slums, that street dogs often bravely come forward to protect women and children living in slums from violence and abuse.

To confine a street dog permanently to a dog pound is a basic violation of the PCA Act, 1960. To permanently confine a helpless street dog to a small narrow space inside a pound seems like the beginning of a nightmare of horrendous cruelty. Because, that is what such a programme may turn out to be. To ignore the administrative complexities and logistical difficulties of practically running such a shelter in a humane manner feels like the warning signals and alarm bells regarding the spelling disaster have been switched off or ignored.

The plight of the dogs in the Shimla dog pound and the Hyderabad dog pound already provide a strong background to know that the idea rings the bells of death and suffering for the helpless street dogs. Municipal staff with little inclination to upgrade their skills and interests in learning how to take care of dogs well and overburdened with a heavy work load do not exactly match the profile of personnel to be employed in running this Programme well.

Another point that may be taken note of is that in any ecosystem, all living beings have an essential function and role to play. At this point, two good examples that may be noted are the disastrous consequence of large scale reductions in the population of fishes and frogs. For instance, on this, in 1993, plague hit Surat city as the dog population in the city was drastically reduced. Similarly, the massive decrease of the frog population in ecosystems has led to the emergence of so many vector borne diseases – from epidemics of malaria and dengue fever to chikungunya and encephalitis. In fact, the Government of India is seriously considering a plan to introduce frogs in different natural habitats, both urban and rural, as a way to combat malaria and other insect borne diseases.

Besides, it may be well to remember that dogs are prolific breeders and it is only a well designed, humane Animal Birth Control Programme that can effectively and humanely limit the dog population as well as bring down the incidence of rabies in the country.

To artificially reduce the dog population in an area by transporting them to a confined space will only create the right circumstances for a large lacunae of dogs to emerge in an area. That is because nature abhors a vacuum. By the laws of nature, any gap in a population will be restored to normalcy very soon, and an equally large number of dogs, equivalent to the number that was removed will emerge in that space, in just six months, creating an even bigger problem than the proposed solution.

The only effective solution is to have a well designed Animal Birth Control Programme functioning in every major city in the country. Since 2009, the Animal Welfare Board of India has been supporting a large number of Training Programmes in different parts of the country. Reputed organizations like Worldwide Veterinary Services, Vets Beyond Borders and Humane Society International have been conducting excellent Training Programmes on Humane Animal Birth Control, Vets Beyond Borders and Humane Society International have been conducting excellent Training Programmes on Humane Animal Birth Control and other activities. This is reflected in the number of dogs being neutered in major cities. Reputed organizations like Worldwide Veterinary Services, Vets Beyond Borders and Humane Society International have been conducting excellent Training Programmes on Humane Animal Birth Control and other activities. This is reflected in the number of dogs being neutered in major cities. Reputed organizations like Worldwide Veterinary Services, Vets Beyond Borders and Humane Society International have been conducting excellent Training Programmes on Humane Animal Birth Control and other activities. This is reflected in the number of dogs being neutered in major cities.

I appeal to the Municipal Commissioners of all civic bodies, Chief Secretaries of all State Animal Husbandry Departments and Heads of Animal Welfare Organizations to send the staff involved in the ABC-AR Programme to participate in the regular training programmes on Animal Birth Control Surgery that are being conducted for Vets, Paracysts and Managers in Goy, Jaipur and Sikkim. If the civic bodies, state Animal Husbandry Departments and State Governments become more actively involved in the ABC-AR Programme, surely, then, the day is not far away when India can become a rabies free country.

Workshop on Captive Elephant Welfare

Thrisur: On June 12th, 2013, KFAPO (Kerala Federation of Animal Protection Organizations) held a workshop on captive elephant welfare in association with The Indian Veterinary Association, Kerala at the Chief Veterinary Hospital campus in Thrisur. Leading the workshop was Dr. Arunkumar K R, President, IVA. Some of the organizations that participated in the workshop included, PAWS Thrisur, Elephant Welfare Association, Thrisur, Friends of Snakes, Palakkad, DAYA, Mavattupuzha and Conservation of Nature Society, Kozhikode.

Animal Activists Save Cattle in Goa from Slaughter

Panjim: Upon receiving a tip off that young cattle were destined for slaughter at the Goa Meat Complex (GMC) - the official Govt slaughter house - animal welfare activists of the Govansh Raksha Abhiyan-Goa rushed to the GMC and discovered that 26 young male calves and heifers, aged between six months to 2 years had been registered for slaughter at the GMC. They contacted AWBI member, Adv. Ms. Norma Alvares, who visited the site and ascertained that the complaint was bonafide. A complaint was filed with the local police who refused to act on the complaint although they registered it, as, according to the police, the law was unclear on the minimum age for slaughter of cattle. According to the Act, the minimum age for slaughter of cattle is four years, but in any case, this was not the first time that young cattle were admitted for slaughter.

A PIL was filed the High Court by the NGO. The Court immediately shut down temporarily all slaughter activity at the GMC and directed a committee to inspect the GMC and file a report within a week. The report has disclosed that the veterinary officer was remiss in his duties and used to issue certificates under pressure from traders and without proper verification. The Committee also reported that although stun gun is available, in the GMC, it is not in proper working condition and was not charged for the past three years.

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I appeal to the Municipal Commissioners of all civic bodies, Chief Secretaries of all State Animal Husbandry Departments and Heads of Animal Welfare Organizations to send the staff involved in the ABC-AR Programme to participate in the regular training programmes on Animal Birth Control Surgery that are being conducted for Vets, Paracysts and Managers in Goy, Jaipur and Sikkim. If the civic bodies, state Animal Husbandry Departments and State Governments become more actively involved in the ABC-AR Programme, surely, then, the day is not far away when India can become a rabies free country.

...continued from page 1 and accurate description of each bird (whether wild or otherwise) and wild ‘animals.’

2. Besides, other necessary documents required, no consignment of birds (whether wild or otherwise) or any wild animals including rabbits should be accepted unless a certificate is issued from the, authorized officer i.e. Chief Wildlife Wardens or District Animal Husbandry officers, or as per designated Officer/office of the, concerned state furnished vide this office letter no. TC-11/2080112/Livestock dated 02.04.2013, is submitted.

3. The consigner of such birds (Wild or otherwise) and wild animals including rabbits will present all the relevant documents as mentioned in (ii) above to the Assistant Commercial Manager of the concerned Division.

5. Each case of such booking authorized by Assistant Commercial Manager will be serially documented and records in respect thereof maintained by the office of Assistant Commercial Manager as also the Chief Parcel Clerk/Chief.

Minit Mandaps: Tips for bookings for receiving, forwarding, carrying or delivering for carriage of birds (whether wild or otherwise) and wild animals including rabbits should be passed and published at all Railway stations and other places where consignments are received for carriage.

7. The above will not apply for pet animals accompanied by their owners, on train. 

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GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
DIRECTORATE OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY:
AP, HYDERABAD

Memo Rcv No. 0453-D-D1-2013
Dated: 10-05-2013


Ref: Lr. No. Nil. Dt: 04.04.2012 of Chairman of AWBL.

All the Joint Directors (AH)/Ic District Administration with reference to the subject cited above are informed that the Chairman, Animal Welfare Board of India, Chennai has requested the Director of Animal Husbandry, AP, Hyderabad to direct the Veterinarians working in Government Veterinary Institutions to ensure to perform the castration of cattle (particularly male calves) with anaesthetics and anesthetics before using Burdizzo castration method to alleviate the unnecessary pain to the animals to prevent the attraction of punishable provisions under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

It is informed that the Chairman, AWBL has stated that statistics indicated the castration of bull calves using Burdizzo castrator is one of the most commonly practiced method in India, in which animals exhibit acute pain, leads to abnormal standing posture and reduced grazing.

It is to inform that Section 11 (1) (a) of PCA Act, 1960 states that, “If any person: beats, kicks, over-rides, over-drives, over-loads, tortures or otherwise treats any animal so as to subject it to unnecessary pain or suffering or causes, or being the owner permits any animal to be so treated”. He or she shall be punishable in the case of a first offence, with fine which shall not be less than ten rupees but which may extend to fifty rupees and in the case of a second or subsequent offence committed within three years of the previous offence, with fine which shall not be less than twenty five rupees but which may extend to, to three months, or with both.

Therefore, all the Joint Directors (AH)/Ic District Administration is informed to make arrangements to ensure that all castrations are performed by a registered Veterinary practitioner using anaesthetics / sedations and anesthetics to reduce the pain and cruelty caused to the cattle (particularly male calves) during castration and to avoid attraction of penal provisions of the PCA Act, 1960.

Encl: 1. List of Anesthetics
2. Article on “Alleviating the pain caused by the castration procedure on cattle”

To All the Joint Directors (AH)/Ic District Administration in the state
Copy to the Registrar, AP Veterinary Council, Hyderabad, with a request to devise a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for field castrations in large animals with the use of anaesthetics / sedations and anesthetics suited to our conditions and circulate it to all the Registered Veterinarians in our state.

Copy submitted to the Chairman, AWBL, Post Box No 8672, 13/1, Third Seaward Road, Valmikinagar, Thiruvanmiyur, Chennai – 600 041

Copy submitted to the Principal Secretary to Govt, AH, DD & F Dept, AP Secretariat, Hyderabad for favour of information.

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The Animal Welfare Board of India is an umbrella of the SPCAs/AWOs and Animal Welfare Workers. The Board encourages Animal Welfare activities, advises the Central and State Governments on issues relating to Animal Welfare, particularly the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and also helps to formulate Animal Welfare Policies / Legislations.

**AWBI NEWSLETTER**
(Monthly)

Official Publication of the Animal Welfare Board of India

To

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- Dolphins Saved! MoEF Bans Dolphinariums
- Why Dog Pounds as Foster Homes for Dogs Will Not Work
- Revised Guidelines - Transportation of Wild Animals & Birds
- Secretary, MoEF Visits AWBI
- Workshop on Captive Elephant Welfare
- Animal Activists Save Cattle in Goan from Slaughter
- AP Govt – 1st in Country to Introduce Humane Castration for Bulls
- Supreme Court Stays shimla High Court Directive
- “Living Free” Portal Launched
- Animal Rights Fund derecognized by Board

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