

# Stories from the districts: Kurnool

1. Kotha Raidu lives in Ramapuram Village, Aavuku Mandal of Kurnool District. A *dhobi* (washerman) by profession, his community lives below the poverty line. One night his donkey had been attacked by dogs and large pieces of flesh had been eaten from its hind flanks. Though Kotha Raidu depended on his donkey for a living, lack of concern and initiative on his part, he left the injured donkey to fend for itself on the road.

Our equine welfare team, passing through the village conducting a survey on working equines, saw the donkey and immediately treated its wounds. After some enquiry they found the house of Kotha Raidu and counseled him and his family on owner responsibility and donkey care. The family accepted their negligence and promised to take help from the local veterinary hospital for any issue concerning the health of their donkey. After a few weeks of follow up care, the donkey recovered nicely and went back to work. The animal owners of Ramapuram were inspired to form a self-help group and learnt first aid for their donkeys. They were given first aid kits for emergencies such as Kotha Raidu's and were taught about the importance of vaccination as a preventive measure for disease.

Though this story went well, sadly, not every story has a happy ending and a number of our rescue stories may contain images and information that some people may find upsetting. The animals used by washer-folk face problems due to over loading, diseases like rabies and tetanus and owner negligence towards their animals lack basic needs.



Our team with Ramapuram animal owners: Earlier negligent, but now committed, Kotha and his donkey after recovery.

2. At Nannur Village, Orvakalu Mandal of Kurnool District lives Nanur Yellappa, a dhobi and agriculture donkey owner who is the bread winner of family. His income comes from carrying clothes for washing and transporting sand and mud for constructing roofs of houses with his donkey. One evening, our team received a call from Yellappa to report a serious injury to his donkey. The donkey had strayed into a neighboring farmers' field and the farmer had hit the donkey with a spade, causing a serious wound to the donkey's head. Though a local vet was available, Yelappa was afraid for some reason and refused to take his animal there for treatment. Our team reached them the next day and treated the poor donkey that was bleeding profusely from a large gaping wound on its ear and forehead. Yellappa was taught how to dress the wound and supported till his donkey recovered.



The issue of cruelty to animals was discussed with local bodies like Grama Panchayat leaders and community heads with the support of equine owners to prevent such brutal attacks on straying donkeys in the future. The owners also promised not to allow their animals to stray looking for food.

Mettupalli is a village known for the dreadful condition of working equines. It is common for equines to have human inflicted injuries due to superstitions, death due to rabies, terrible hoof injuries due to bad road conditions. The equine owners had shown resistance to participate in community meetings and care for their animals initially, until two donkeys died due to rabies. To turn this negative and uninformed attitude, our team resorted to finding an agent of change within the community.

Our hero turned out to be Maddiletti, a donkey owner who had completed his schooling and understood the issues at hand. With a little motivation, he convinced a group of donkey owners to try a new way out and motivated the village to accept the vaccinations provided by our veterinary team. In time, the efforts paid off and rabies was prevented. The owners sat down to discuss animal cruelty and how to prevent it; they learnt first aid and the importance of preventive measures of disease and heat stroke. They have committed to work together to create shade shelters for their donkeys during the summer months.

Maddiletti (Peer Educator) and his donkeys inspire change.

