

Blue Cross of Hyderabad

Stray Dog solutions - Blue Cross of Hyderabad

What does one say to people who do not want to see street dogs on our streets?

Even if you don't know or see it, stray dogs silently serve the community in several ways protecting our streets, scavenging our waste, patrolling our homes. They come because their food source is our garbage. If you remove them, however noble your intentions, they will simply be replaced by a new pack that could be diseased, aggressive, ready to breed or even Rabid. So please don't try to interfere in a system that has naturally evolved, that is laid down by the Law, the WHO guidelines and AWBI stray dog rules 2001. Have your local dogs sterilized and vaccinated by GHMC and let them live out their lives doing what they do best. Eventually there won't be street dogs as they will not breed.

What does one say to parents of children who are bitten by street dogs?

Words will not do. The trauma and pain cannot be ignored. That's why action is a must, sound action stemming from science and safety. This is the basis of the sterilization and vaccination rules for street dogs, set by the Government of India and proposed by the World Health Organisation, U.N., recommended by the Animal Welfare Board of India. Rabies is a problem. But despite the widespread information available only 4% of pet owners vaccinate their pets! WHO reports that when 70% of the dog population is vaccinated against Rabies the disease is eradicated.

Every summer as the temperatures rise and tempers get quicker, there are a spate of dog bites both on the street and in people's homes. While it is true that dogs can bite and would do so if provoked or threatened, it is also crucial to understand that all dogs do not bite! Hysteria and panic often drives us to do the worst possible things, which does not benefit us at all. In a panic even the simplest of truths are sometimes not visible. Let's look at calming the panic and hysteria before we take safety measures to keep our communities safe from dog bites.

Aggressive dogs and dogs that bite must be removed from where they can cause harm. This is the whole and sole purpose of the Municipal Dog Pound for which we pay taxes. They need to respond immediately and remove the dog for humane destruction. There is no dispute about this and this is specified in the rules as well. This done, the next step to keep our neighbourhoods safe is to ensure the rest of the dogs on the street that are friendly, docile and known to us, are sterilized and vaccinated against Rabies. The sterilisation operation calms the dog aggressive. A sterilized and vaccinated dog will not roam in a pack, will not fight aggressively like males during breeding seasons, nor will it reproduce or carry Rabies. Poisoning dogs has been the cheap and quick option for many authorities and communities, but this is very dangerous and this is why the dog bites have increased in Hyderabad over the past few years and not stopped.

A typical street dog:

Mushroom is a typical street dog, and has lived on Rd.48 Jubilee Hills street for 7 years. He has adopted dozens of families working as labour building homes, and has befriended dozens of children and protected them over the years unconditionally. Alamma, Dhavani and Rekha, children of labourers, play with him every day outside their hut on Rd.48 Jubilee Hills. He has never bitten anyone in his life but loves to chase cars and two

wheelers! Mushroom is a representative of the community dog in all his glory, serving and befriending us because that is their nature. Mushroom would make a devoted and loving pet, but he doesn't have a home. Does that give anyone the right to take his life?

One Rabid dog gives them all a bad reputation:

If a man commits murder, do all men get rounded up and condemned? Similarly, thousands of families and people find comfort and safety from dogs - be they on the street or in their homes. Even our Police stations are guarded by devoted street dogs. Question is that if one dog bites, do we hate all dogs? Do we kill them? That would be foolish and dangerous, hence the Government of India Stray Dog Rules, 2001.

Why would killing them be dangerous, you may ask? This is because within days new dogs enter the vacuum and could attack and bite or carry Rabies, causing worse harm. Remember our garbage attracts them.

So what can we do to prevent dog bites? The safest measure would be to identify the aggressive dogs, ensure they are caught for humane destruction and have the rest sterilized and vaccinated so they protect the neighbourhood. Never try to break up a dog fight. Never try to take a puppy from its mother, or go near a dog while it is eating. Avoid stretching your hand out to a dog as this could be an act of aggression. Be still and avoid running around unknown dogs as they love to chase. If you step on a sleeping dog, it could bite you, so watch where you step. Learn to live in friendship with street dogs as they are territorial and give their life to guard your neighbourhood.

So why don't we simply round them up and solve the problem by shifting them to a dog pound somewhere far away? Won't that solve the problem?

This is not an option! Dogs are territorial. Can you imagine trying to keep 2 different packs of dogs in one area? They will fight and kill each other! It is impossible to keep more than a certain number of dogs in one place. They develop their own territories and guard them on the streets. Being forced into a confined area would be disastrous from any point of view. Within days they would destroy each other or contract disease and die. Besides right now the sterilized vaccinated dogs find their own food. Can you imagine what it would be like to imprison hundreds of thousands of dogs in a small space and feed them? **Within a few months the vacuum on the street will be replaced dog for dog and you will double the population.** A decentralized, localized population control is the only way of tackling the problem. Impounding them should never be considered under any circumstance, legal, humane, animal welfare or any other. **Please see letter from AWBI warning legal action for anyone suggesting or demanding such measures.**

What are the Laws that protect Street Dogs?

The Stray Animal Control Rules, 2001, Government of India, recognizes the role of a sterilized vaccinated street dog as an asset to the community and protects its life. This is a result of decades of study by the WHO, WSPA, RSPCA, HSI and AWBI.

Finally, is Hyderabad doing enough to control the dog problem? Not yet. We are getting there. For the Greater Hyderabad plan the Municipal Corporation need 12 teams working independently in different locations at sterilizing and vaccinating community dogs; removing aggressive dogs and conducting stray animal control. At present there are

only 4 teams, who work as crises control and not population control. They sometimes mix up the dogs and relocate them under public pressure. This causes dog fights and animosity for the community. The Blue Cross is working with a systematic sterilization programme in specific areas. The communities participating in the efforts are very satisfied and have taken responsibility for their local dogs.

What about the financial burden?

Crores of rupees are spent on post bite vaccines instead of bite prevention and population control. We have been surviving on crises management and not encouraging any planned efforts. The financial investment will ensure safe communities and safe homes.

Registration of Pets is a must. Sterilisation and vaccination of street dogs is a must.

Contact GHMC today to do this! Help make Hyderabad Rabies free. **Chennai has achieved Rabies Free status, so can we!**