



An ambassador for adoption

• [SRIYA NARAYANAN](#)

pet pals



Mini Vasudevan works for the telecom equipment major Ericsson, but believes that making a difference is as important as making a living. The founder of Humane Animal Society (www.hasindia.org), a Coimbatore-based animal welfare organisation returned to India from the US after volunteering there with various animal shelters. “I was appalled at the lack of any organised effort in animal welfare” she says. “Along with my husband Madhu, we began in a humble way and have come a long way since.”

Mini's greatest worry is the thriving pedigree dog trade and the large number of unlicensed breeders who manufacture puppies in what she calls puppy mills. “They have no respect for welfare of animals”, she rues. Using her favourite quote “Adopt, don't shop”, she successfully encourages people to pick up homeless pups from the street or shelters instead. Mini spends much of her time advocating the adoption of the Indian mongrel or native breeds (that are not pure-bred) and dispels prejudices against female puppies. “The misconception that female dogs will become a burden eventually by littering is totally baseless”, she says and recommends birth control surgery to solve the problem. Her two female dogs Indumathi and Malavika were abandoned near her home as puppies and she decided to adopt them. While she has succeeded in encouraging several people to adopt and not buy a pup, she feels that there is a long road ahead. “The number of pet abandonments has been growing steadily. The main cause is again the uncontrolled and unethical breeding practices. Lots of inbreeding happens, resulting in poor gene pools amongst pedigrees leading to diseases at a very young age. The moment maintenance becomes an issue; the dog is abandoned. The other trend I've noticed is abandonment of an animal when it has grown old. It shows absolute lack of sympathy”.

“As a society, we need to uphold animal rights — the right for an animal to exist without suffering. As human beings, it is our responsibility to ensure that”, she says.

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(To find out more about safe Animal Birth Control, email Marion Courtine, founder of Dayakara Trust at marioncourtine@gmail.com)