

## Animals have the right to live and die with dignity

P Sangeetha | TNN | Jul 27, 2015, 01.10 PM IST

*The Kerala government's recent move to cull stray dogs in a bid to make the state more 'tourist-friendly' has not gone down well with animal lovers and activists across the city. Mini Vasudevan, managing trustee of an animal welfare organization in the city, says that by taking the decision to kill stray dogs, the state has taken several steps backward.*

"The state should first understand this action is not going to provide them the end result, of keeping the population of stray dogs in check. Stray dogs breed at an exponential rate and all they need is a resourceful place where they can survive, which is why you see them around mounds of garbage. The elimination process is only a temporary solution and dogs from neighbouring cities and states will tend to migrate as long as you do not have a proper waste disposal management system. Why not sterilize them instead and keep the population in check? Dogs are the most aggressive when they are mating or having litter. Sterilized dogs, on the other hand, are much calmer in behaviour. It's time we stopped thinking emotionally and got up and educate people about animals and animal welfare," she says.

Keeping in lines with animal welfare is a cattle welfare meet that is all set to happen today in the city. A member from the cattle welfare care trust tells us, "The meeting is to educate people about the need to treat cattle and other animals in a dignified manner. Though the rule is that only 6 animals should be taken on a truck during transportation, the rule is defied most of the times. We see as many as 20- 50 animals stocked up on a truck, without an inch for them to move. Through the meet, we want to reach out to the younger generation and educate them about the fact that animals do not deserve such a treatment. We want to state that animals have the right to live and die with dignity. At the same time, are not against eating or selling beef."

Actor Vishal, who will be part of the cattle welfare meet, today in the city, will be stressing upon the need to let animals be treated with the respect they deserve. "I took part in the hunger strike against Kerala's move to kill stray dogs, in Chennai yesterday. Through the protest, we tried to stress upon the fact that killing of dogs is not the solution to the problem. I will be talking about a similar issue in Coimbatore, with more statistics about how we mete out atrocities on cattle and the way they are slaughtered. I am not doing this because I am a celebrity and I have to up take an issue, but I would like to reach out to the public as and when issues crop up."

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Vijay Anand TR, who recently made a film titled 'Prayer of Stray', which delves into the ill-treatment of stray dogs, says, "Even in Coimbatore, stray dogs are killed on a regular basis, albeit not on a massive scale. When a speeding vehicle hits a stray on the road, he or she doesn't even bother to put the dead body aside. The carcass remains lying on the road and vehicles keep plying over it until it dries out in the sun. And when they are alive, we pelt stones at them or hit them, sometimes for our own safety. All this has to stop and we have to come up with an effective solution to control their breeding. Culling them is definitely not the solution."

According to Mini Vasudevan, Kerala must learn a lesson or two from Jaipur regarding animal birth control. "Jaipur is a model for stray population dog control. The city has been running a successful vaccination and Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme, thus keeping the population in check. This along with a proper waste disposal management system is the only long-term solution for the issue."