
CRITICAL STUDY ON ANIMAL CRUELTY IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper comprehensively investigates the phenomenon of animal cruelty in India and explores its various aspects, causes, consequences, and possible solutions. A rapidly evolving socio-economic landscape and diverse cultural practices create a complex context in which animal welfare issues unfold in India. The study draws on a variety of scientific sources, legal frameworks, empirical research, and case studies to uncover the complexities of animal abuse prevalent across the country.

The analysis begins by examining the historical and cultural context that influences attitudes toward animals in India, highlighting the coexistence of respect and exploitation in traditional belief systems. We then explore modern manifestations of animal abuse, including practices such as animal sacrifice, wildlife trafficking, the illegal pet trade, street abuse, and industrial farming practices. Through an interdisciplinary perspective, this research reveals the relationship between animal abuse, human behaviour, and social norms, highlighting the ethical, environmental, and health implications. Additionally, this paper examines the existing legal framework and institutional mechanisms for protecting animal welfare in India, assesses their effectiveness and identifies gaps in enforcement. We also discuss the role of various stakeholders, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, religious organizations, and civil society, in combating animal abuse and promoting compassion for animals. This highlights the need for education, advocacy and grassroots action to promote a culture of empathy and responsibility towards animals.

The paper provides recommendations for policy reforms, public awareness campaigns, and community engagement efforts to curb animal abuse and promote a more humane society. The research highlights the importance of legal reforms, stricter law enforcement, development of veterinary health infrastructure and educational initiatives to address the root causes of animal abuse in India and promote coexistence between humans and animals.

Keywords: Cruelty, Animals, Welfare, Ethical Treatment, Animal Laws

I. Introduction

Animal cruelty is a pressing issue that demands attention and action in India. Although India is known for its diverse and rich culture, it is disheartening to see the disregard for animal welfare that exists within society. This paper aims to critically examine the extent and causes of animal cruelty in India, as well as the implications for both animals and humans. By analysing various sources and conducting research, this study aims to shed light on the factors contributing to animal cruelty in India, including cultural beliefs, socioeconomic factors, lack of enforcement of animal welfare laws, and a lack of education and awareness. Through a critical analysis of existing literature, this study will explore the link between animal cruelty and other forms of violence such as domestic violence. Furthermore, this study will investigate the role of empathy and remorse in perpetuating or preventing animal cruelty, as well as the defence mechanisms that individuals may employ to justify or downplay their actions. The findings of this study will contribute to the ongoing discourse on animal cruelty in India and provide insights for policymakers, activists, and society as a whole. The research sources provided offer valuable insights into the complex nature of animal cruelty and its relationship to other forms of violence. Using these sources, this critical study on animal cruelty in India will delve into the societal, cultural, and psychological factors that contribute to such acts. The research will also examine the effectiveness of current legislation and law enforcement efforts in addressing animal cruelty in India, as well as identify potential strategies for prevention and intervention.

Research on animal cruelty is of utmost importance for several reasons.

1. Firstly, it helps to raise awareness about the prevalence and severity of animal cruelty in society. By shedding light on the extent and causes of animal cruelty, research can help create a sense of urgency and mobilize resources towards addressing the issue effectively.
2. Secondly, understanding the factors that contribute to animal cruelty can provide valuable insights into the broader social and cultural dynamics at play. This can help inform the development of comprehensive strategies and interventions to prevent and address animal cruelty, as well as related forms of violence.

Animal cruelty, defined as any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or harm inflicted upon animals, is a pervasive issue worldwide, including in India. With a rich cultural heritage that often intertwines reverence for certain animal species with widespread exploitation and neglect of others, India presents a complex landscape for understanding and addressing animal welfare concerns. Animal cruelty, a pressing issue that transcends geographical boundaries, is a matter of significant concern in India. Despite the country's rich cultural heritage that often espouses respect for all living beings, instances of mistreatment, abuse, and neglect of animals remain pervasive. From the exploitation of working animals to the rampant cases of cruelty towards strays and wildlife, the spectrum of animal suffering in India is vast and multifaceted.

II. Historical and Cultural Context

India's cultural landscape is deeply intertwined with various religious, spiritual, and cultural practices that influence attitudes and behaviours towards animals. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and other indigenous belief systems advocate for non-violence (ahimsa) and respect towards all living beings, promoting the notion of animals as sacred entities deserving of compassion and protection. The reverence for cows, monkeys, elephants, snakes, and other animals in Hindu mythology exemplifies this sentiment.

However, with the British Colonial Era coming into play in India's history, the cruelty exhibited towards animals increased fourfold since they treated animals as just commodities. In 1860, animal experimentation arrived in India via British Colonials that mainly used them for drug tests and this practice has become a major industry in the contemporary world that sees cruelty inflicted on tens of millions of animals across diverse species that face severe side effects and horrendous instances of such practice have seldom emerged in the limelight despite several efforts by corporations to hide them. British colonialism worsened the position of animals in India. British people built the first slaughterhouse in India in 1760, and by 1910, there were 350 slaughterhouses. The British didn't respect traditional Hindu beliefs about cows. According to the author of this paper, in 1857, they forced Hindus and Muslims to lick cartridges spread with pig and cow fat. They also promoted beef-eating among Muslims and encouraged people to hunt predators, sometimes even paying people for each animal killed. The British disliked Indian dogs because they competed with British dogs, and they killed them

in masse.¹

Despite the Colonial Era bringing in varied practices of cruelty, there are some instances of animal cruelty that were exhibited by Traditional Indian society:

1. **RITUALS AND FESTIVALS:** India's diverse cultural landscape is replete with rituals and festivals that involve animals, sometimes resulting in acts of cruelty. For example, in certain regions, animals are sacrificed as offerings to appease deities or seek blessings during religious ceremonies. While such practices are rooted in ancient traditions and beliefs, they often raise ethical concerns about the treatment of animals involved.
2. **TRADITIONAL PRACTICES:**
 - a. *Animal Husbandry:* Agriculture and animal husbandry have been integral to India's economy and way of life for millennia. While animals like cows and bulls were traditionally revered as providers of milk, labour, and fertilizer, the modernization of agriculture has led to commercialization and industrialization, resulting in practices that compromise animal welfare.
 - b. *Wildlife Exploitation:* India's vast biodiversity has attracted exploitation of its wildlife for various purposes, including hunting, trapping, and trade. Historical accounts depict instances of royal hunts and exploitation of wildlife for sport and entertainment, contributing to population declines and habitat destruction.
3. **STREET ANIMAL CULTURE:** India's streets are populated with a diverse array of animals, including stray dogs, cattle, and monkeys. While some communities view these animals as part of their urban landscape, others regard them as nuisances or threats to public safety. Consequently, street animals often face neglect, abuse, and lack of access to essential resources such as food, water, and shelter.

III. Contemporary Context

Despite cultural and religious obligations against animal cruelty, there are many cases of animal abuse, neglect and exploitation in various settings in India today. Stray animals such as

¹ Frantz, O. (2022) The history of animal rights in India, Faunalytics. Available at: <https://faunalytics.org/the-history-of-animal-rights-in-india/> (Accessed: 21 February 2024).

dogs, cats, and cows are particularly susceptible to abuse and neglect. Incidents range from intentional injury, poisoning, and abandonment to lack of access to food, water, and shelter.

1. **ILLEGAL WILDLIFE TRADE**, fuelled by demand for exotic pets, traditional medicines and trophies, poses a serious threat to India's rich biodiversity. Poaching, illegal trade and habitat destruction threaten the survival of endangered species such as tigers, elephants, rhinos and pangolins. Compromise conservation efforts and ecological balance.
2. **INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES**: such as intensive animal husbandry, poultry farming, and dairy production raise concerns for animal welfare, environmental degradation, and public health. Many of these farms are characterized by confined spaces, overcrowding, lack of veterinary care, and inhumane slaughter methods, resulting in continued animal abuse while posing risks of zoonotic diseases and antimicrobial resistance.
3. **ENTERTAINMENT AND CEREMONIES**: Certain cultural practices and entertainment in India involve the exploitation and abuse of animals. Traditional performances such as bear dances, snake charms, and street circus performances are often associated with cruelty and exploitation, as animals are trained in forced methods and exposed to harsh living conditions. Similarly, some religious ceremonies and festivals involve animal sacrifice, raising ethical concerns about the treatment of these animals.
4. **ANIMAL CRUELTY TO PETS**: Pet ownership is becoming increasingly common in urban India, but many pet owners lack awareness about responsible pet care and ignore the needs of their animals. Cases of abandonment, neglect, and abuse of pets such as dogs, cats, and birds are not uncommon. Additionally, the illegal breeding and sale of pets in unregulated markets leads to continued animal suffering and contributes to overpopulation.

IV. Legislative Framework governing Animal Laws

India has a strong legal framework to protect animal welfare, including the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 and various state-level regulations. However, enforcement mechanisms are often held back by lack of resources, corruption, lack of awareness, and cultural attitudes that prioritize human interests over animal welfare.

Below is an overview of the key legislative instruments and enforcement mechanisms to

prevent animal cruelty in India.

1. PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS ACT 1960²:

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960 (PCA) is a major part of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA). Indian animal protection laws. This law aims to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering to animals and provides a framework to prevent animal cruelty. The main provisions of the PCA Act are:

- *Prohibition of Cruelty*: This law prohibits the infliction of unnecessary pain and suffering on animals and describes certain acts that are considered cruel, such as: B. Beating, overloading, and amputation.
- *Regulation of animal transport*: The law regulates the transport of animals to prevent overcrowding, overloading, and inhumane conditions during transport.
- *Establishment of Animal Welfare Board*: The PCA Act provides for the establishment of the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), which will be responsible for promoting animal welfare, advising the government on animal-related issues and monitoring implementation of the Act.

2. WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT, 1972³:

The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is a comprehensive law for the protection of wild animals and their habitat in India. The law prohibits the hunting, trapping, and trafficking of certain species of wild animals, both on land and water, unless permitted under certain circumstances. It also regulates activities such as the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries and national parks and the management of protected areas to conserve biodiversity and prevent habitat destruction.

3. THE PERFORMING ANIMALS (REGISTRATION) RULES, 2001⁴:

Under the PCA Act, the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has laid down rules for the registration of performance animals. The purpose of these regulations is to regulate

² The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, (Act No. 59 of 1960), (26th December, 1960)

³ The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, (Act No. 53 of 1972), (9th September, 1972)

⁴ The Performing Animals (Registration) Rules, 2001, Published vide Notification G.S.R. 267(E), dated 26.3.2001, published in the Gazette of India

the use of animals in training, exhibition, and performance to ensure animal welfare and prevent cruelty. Anyone who intends to exhibit or train animals for performance purposes must register with the Animal Welfare Board of India.

4. TRANSPORT OF ANIMALS RULES, 1978⁵:

The Animal Transport Regulations 1978 under the PCA Act regulate the transport of animals to minimize stress and distress during transport. These regulations set standards for the construction and maintenance of vehicles used for transporting animals, as well as provisions for loading, unloading, and feeding animals during transport. The regulations also require the issuance of a certificate of suitability for animals before transport.

5. STATE ANIMAL WELFARE LAWS:

In addition to national laws, several states in India have enacted their own animal welfare laws and regulations to address specific local issues and concerns. These state-level laws may include provisions regarding the protection of stray animals, the regulation of animal markets, and the prevention of abuse of working animals such as cattle and horses.

Effective enforcement of animal welfare laws in India requires cooperation from various stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement agencies, animal welfare organizations, and civil society. The Animal Welfare Board of India plays an important role in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of animal welfare laws at the national level. In addition, state livestock, police, and forestry authorities are responsible for enforcing animal welfare laws within their respective jurisdictions.

Animal welfare organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also play an important role in supporting enforcement efforts through animal welfare promotion, advocacy, awareness campaigns, rescue operations, and animal rehabilitation. Public participation and reporting of animal abuse incidents is essential to ensure accountability and improve enforcement mechanisms.

⁵ Transport of Animals, Rules, 1978, In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (h) of sub-section (2) of section 38 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (59 of 1960)

Despite the existence of a strong legal framework, enforcement issues such as inadequate resources and lack of animal awareness and cultural attitudes hinder the effective implementation of animal welfare laws in India. is common. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement, civil society organizations, and the general public.

V. Causes of Animal Cruelty

The causes of animal abuse in India are diverse and often deeply rooted in cultural, socio-economic and institutional factors. Understanding these underlying causes is critical to developing effective strategies to address this pervasive problem. Some important factors that contribute to animal cruelty in India are listed below.

Cultural and Traditional Practices: India's diverse cultural range includes a wide range of traditions and beliefs, including practices that may harm or exploit animals. I am. For example, certain religious festivals include rituals that involve animal abuse or sacrifice.

Traditional beliefs about the medicinal and magical properties of animal parts encourage illegal wildlife trade and poaching. Despite legal prohibitions, there is still demand for products such as tiger bones, rhino horns and elephant tusks due to deep-rooted cultural beliefs.

Lack of awareness and education: Many communities in India lack access to adequate education and information regarding animal welfare. As a result, harmful practices such as overwork of working animals, neglect of pets, and cruel treatment of stray dogs can be perpetuated out of ignorance rather than malice. Educational efforts to promote compassion and empathy for animals are often limited, especially in rural areas where access to resources and awareness programs is lacking.

Poverty and Economic Exploitation: Economic hardship leads individuals to lose their means through the illegal trade in wild animals, the use of animals for entertainment in circuses and street performances, or participation in activities such as dog and cockfighting. Animals may be exploited for profit. In rural areas where agriculture is the main source of livelihood, animals are often seen as commodities rather than sentient beings, with practices such as overworking cattle and neglecting livestock due to lack of resources.

Weak enforcement of animal welfare laws: Despite laws such as the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960, enforcement mechanisms are inadequate due to corruption, resource constraints, and lack of prioritization by law enforcement agencies. There is inconsistent enforcement of animal welfare laws in different states and territories further exacerbates the problem, creating loopholes that allow perpetrators to escape accountability.

Urbanization and Habitat Loss: Rapid urbanization and encroachment on natural habitats not only threaten wildlife populations but also exacerbate human-animal conflicts. In response, authorities may resort to culling and other inhumane methods to address perceived threats, exacerbating animal suffering. The influx of people into cities has also led to an increase in the number of stray animals, which are often neglected and abused and lack adequate access to food, water and veterinary care.

VI. Case Studies: Cases across the country

India, like many other countries, has faced numerous cases of animal cruelty over the years. These incidents highlight the many forms of abuse and neglect that animals face and the efforts being made to address it. Here are some notable cases related to animal cruelty in India.

ELEPHANT DEATH IN KERALA: The elephant death in Kerala in 2020 attracted wide national and international attention due to its tragic nature and the public outrage it caused. In this incident, a pregnant wild elephant died in the southern Indian state of Kerala after eating a pineapple containing fireworks. Here is a detailed synopsis of the event:

The death of a pregnant elephant in Kerala has triggered nationwide outrage. A wild elephant left Silent Valley Forest and wandered into a nearby village in search of food. She ate a pineapple filled with powerful crackers, which was allegedly offered by a man. The fruit exploded in her mouth when she chomped on it, breaking her jaw. She then entered the Velliyar river in Malappuram, standing in the water for hours. The elephant then died several hours later, despite efforts to rescue her. Forest officers said the cracker-filled fruit was set as bait to kill wild animals. The incident shocked and outraged the nation, with many people expressing anger and sadness at the senseless cruelty inflicted on innocent animals.⁶

⁶ Desk, T.H.N. (2020) Pregnant elephant dies after eating cracker-filled fruit, The Hindu. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/pregnant-elephant-dies-after-eating-cracker-filled->

News of elephant's death quickly spread on social media, prompting condemnation from people across India and the world. Celebrities, politicians and animal rights groups expressed outrage and demanded justice for the elephants. The Kerala Forest Department launched an investigation into the incident and several suspects were identified and arrested in connection with the incident. The Kerala government has promised to take strict action against those responsible for the elephant's death. The charges have been filed under various sections of the Wildlife Protection Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and Explosives Act. The suspects, including farmers and local residents, were charged with crimes related to animal cruelty and illegal possession of explosives.

The tragic death of a pregnant elephant has sparked debate about human-animal conflict, animal welfare, and the need for stricter laws to protect animals from abuse. The report highlighted the urgent need for greater awareness and compassion for wildlife and emphasized the importance of human-animal coexistence. The incident also highlighted the need for stricter enforcement of existing laws to prevent such incidents from happening again in the future.

TEMPLE ELEPHANT ABUSE: Elephants are revered in Indian culture and are often kept in temples for religious ceremonies and processions. However, many temple elephants suffer from neglect, abuse, and exploitation. In 2018, a video went viral showing a temple elephant being mercilessly beaten by mahouts (handlers) in Kerala. PETA India had submitted a veterinary inspection report to forest department officials in Tamil Nadu and Assam showing the continued abuse of captive female elephant. The elephant has been kept in the illegal custody of the Srivilliputhur Nachiyar Thirukovil Temple in Tamil Nadu.⁷ The incident highlighted the harsh treatment of many captive elephants and sparked calls for stricter regulations to protect their welfare. Temple elephants are usually wild-caught or kept in captivity when young and trained to perform specific tasks for religious ceremonies. However, the conditions in which these elephants are kept often do not meet basic animal welfare standards. Many of the temple elephants are kept in small cages, chained for long periods of time, and undergo rigorous training to become obedient and docile.

fruit/article31746611.ece (Accessed: 21 February 2024).

⁷ TNN / Aug 26, 2022 (2022) PETA submits report on abuse of Elephant in TN temple: Chennai news - times of India, The Times of India. Available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/peta-submits-report-on-abuse-of-elephant-in-tn-temple/articleshow/93800660.cms> (Accessed: 22 February 2024).

VII. Impact of Animal Cruelty on Society and Ecology

Animal abuse has serious consequences for both society and the ecosystem. Animal cruelty and mistreatment not only causes physical and emotional pain to innocent creatures, but also has far-reaching effects on humans and the environment.

First, animal abuse affects society by undermining our moral values and ethical standards. When individuals and communities commit animal abuse, it shows a disregard for compassion and empathy, which are essential elements of a civilized society. Observing or perceiving such acts desensitizes people to violence and can lead to indifference and even violence towards people in the culture. Many studies have shown that there is a link between animal abuse and an increased likelihood of engaging in criminal acts such as domestic violence and child abuse. By condoning or ignoring animal abuse, societies risk undermining fundamental principles of justice, compassion and respect for life.

Additionally, animal abuse has economic consequences for society. Animal abuse frequently occurs in industries such as factory farming, fur farming, and animal testing, which contribute significantly to the global economy. However, the methods used in these industries often prioritize profit over animal welfare, resulting in countless animals being caged, abused, and neglected. These practices not only prolong animal suffering, but also jeopardize the quality and safety of animal-derived products, such as meat, dairy, and cosmetics. As a result, consumers may experience health risks, increased medical costs, and decreased general well-being.

From an ecological perspective, animal abuse disrupts the delicate balance of ecosystems and has various effects on the environment. The destruction of natural habitats for commercial purposes, such as deforestation for livestock and the fur industry, not only displaces and endangers countless animal species, but also contributes to climate change and biodiversity loss. Additionally, the overuse of pesticides, antibiotics, and hormones in livestock production pollutes waterways, soil, and air, further harming ecosystems and human health. The depletion of natural resources such as land and water to meet the growing demand for livestock products is also exacerbating problems such as food and water scarcity, impacting vulnerable populations around the world.

Additionally, animal abuse poses a public health risk. The inhumane conditions of factory

farms and live animal markets create breeding grounds for disease, as closed spaces and unsanitary conditions encourage the spread of pathogens. Zoonoses originate in animals but can be transmitted to humans, and have caused numerous pandemics throughout history, including HIV, Ebola, and COVID-19. By not prioritizing animal welfare, society is putting its own health and well-being at risk.

VIII. Measures taken to prevent Animal Cruelty

Several NGOs and grassroots movements have emerged in India to combat animal abuse and promote animal welfare. These organizations work tirelessly to raise awareness, save animals, advocate for stricter laws, and provide care and assistance to animals in need. Some of the steps these organizations have taken are listed below.

Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation: Many NGOs in India focus on the rescue and rehabilitation of abused and distressed animals. They work with local communities, law enforcement, and animal control agencies to respond to abuse incidents, provide medical care, and find suitable homes for animals in need.

Spay and Vaccination Programs: NGOs often implement sterilization and vaccination programs to address the problem of stray animals. These efforts help control stray dog and cat populations, reduce the spread of disease and prevent further suffering.

Advocacy and awareness campaigns: NGOs play an important role in raising awareness of animal welfare issues through education and advocacy campaigns. They hold workshops, seminars, and public events to promote compassion for animals, encourage adoption, and eliminate practices such as animal sacrifice and illegal wildlife trade.

Legal Advocacy and Lobbying: Animal rights organizations actively engage in legal advocacy and lobbying to strengthen animal welfare laws and policies. They advocate for stricter regulation, stiffer penalties for animal cruelty crimes, and enshrining animal rights in the law.

Animal Rights Litigation: Nongovernmental organizations often take legal action against animal abusers and pursue justice for animals through public interest litigation. They bring cases to court to ensure that animal rights violations are punished and that the law is effectively applied to protect animals.

Collaboration with government agencies: Many NGOs collaborate with government agencies such as the Animal Welfare Board of India to implement and enforce animal welfare laws. They work closely with authorities to improve animal welfare standards, develop policies and ensure proper implementation of animal welfare measures.

Apart from NGO's and Grassroot movements, measures can be taken by individuals as well on the ground level to prevent animal cruelty in India. There are several effective ways individuals can combat animal abuse in their daily lives. Here are some actions that can make a difference.

Adopt or rescue an animal: Instead of purchasing an animal from a pet store or breeder, consider adopting from an animal shelter or rescue group. This reduces the demand for animals kept in inhumane conditions and provides loving homes for people in need.

Support products that are not tested on animals: Look for products with a cruelty-free label, which means they were not tested on animals. Choose cosmetics, household cleaners, and personal care products certified by organizations like Leaping Bunny and PETA's Beauty Without Bunnies program.

Reduce meat consumption: Consider reducing or eliminating meat consumption from your diet. Factory farming is often associated with animal cruelty, so adopting a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle can go a long way in reducing animal suffering.

Reporting Animal Cruelty: If you witness any form of animal cruelty, report it to the police or other authorities. Act immediately to prevent further cruelty.⁸

Volunteer or donate to an animal charity: Support your local animal shelter, rescue group, or advocacy group by volunteering your time or donating money, food, or supplies. These organizations often rely on the support of volunteers and donors to carry out their important work.

Choose responsible tourism: When you travel, be mindful of activities and attractions that support you. Avoid participating in activities that exploit animals, such as elephant rides and

⁸ VetriMark (no date) 10 tips to prevent cruelty to animals, VetriMark. Available at: <https://www.vetrimark.com/Landing-pages/10-Tips-to-Prevent-Cruelty-to-Animals.html> (Accessed: 22 February 2024).

dolphin shows, or visiting areas where animals are kept for recreational purposes.

IX. Recommended Policy Changes to prevent Animal Cruelty

Preventing animal cruelty requires a comprehensive approach that includes not only individual actions but also policy changes at multiple levels. Here are some recommended policy changes that can help prevent animal cruelty:

Prohibiting Cruel Practices: Policies should be implemented to prohibit certain practices that are inherently cruel to animals, such as: B. Puppy mills, fur farming and cosmetic testing animals and the use of animals in circuses and other entertainment industries. Banning this practice sends a clear signal that animal cruelty will not be tolerated.

Implement animal welfare education programs: Governments should include animal welfare education programs in school curricula to instil compassion and empathy for animals from an early age. These programs can raise awareness about animal rights, responsible pet ownership, and the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect.

Mandatory Animal Welfare Training for Law Enforcement and Justice Systems: Police officers, animal control officers, and judicial officers must complete mandatory training on animal welfare laws and their enforcement. Such training will help ensure cases of animal cruelty are properly investigated, perpetrators are held accountable and appropriate punishments are imposed.

Promoting Spay and Neuter: Governments may have policies in place to promote and subsidize spay and neuter programs for pets. These programs help control the stray population and reduce the number of animals that end up in shelters or suffering on the streets.

Livestock Regulation: Regulations need to be issued to improve animal welfare in the agricultural sector. Standards for housing, transport and slaughter methods must be established to ensure animals are treated humanely throughout their lives. Regular inspections and monitoring are required to ensure compliance.

Ban on Owning Exotic Pets: There should be a policy prohibiting the ownership of exotic animals as pets unless people can provide appropriate care and meet strict animal welfare

requirements. The trade and ownership of exotic animals often results in cruelty and can pose a threat to public safety.

X. Case Laws

The judicial body of India has time and again sought to hear the plea of speechless animals in dismay and passed judgements that pave way for future generations to raise their voice against animal cruelty. One such landmark judgement was given by the supreme court in a 2014 case.

ANIMAL WELFARE BOARD OF INDIA VS A. NAGARAJA 2014.⁹ The AWBI is a statutory body created under PCA that brings forward and challenges any act or practice of cruelty currently happening in the country. In this case, the concern was raised regarding Bull-taming and Bull-racing practice that was prevalent in Tamil Nadu and parts of Maharashtra. The AWBI argued that such practice violated the provisions of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. The Supreme Court in a landmark judgement in 2014 upheld the constitutional validity of the ban on such practices and submitted that such cultural practices cannot be carried on at the expense of animal welfare.

XI. Conclusion

The issue of animal cruelty in India is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires urgent attention and action from various stakeholders including policy makers, law enforcement agencies, animal welfare organizations and society at large. Despite existing laws and regulations to protect animals, cruelty continues to occur across the country, ranging from neglect and abuse to illegal wildlife trade and exploitation in various industries. Effectively combating animal cruelty in India requires a holistic approach that includes both legal reform and social awareness. Strengthening existing animal welfare laws, improving enforcement mechanisms and imposing tougher penalties on offenders are essential measures to deter perpetrators and ensure accountability. Additionally, by promoting compassion and empathy for animals through education and advocacy, we can foster a culture of respect and empathy for all living things.

Furthermore, the cooperation of government authorities, non-governmental organizations and

⁹ Animal Welfare Board of India vs A. Nagaraja & Ors. Vol 7 SCC 547 (2014).

grassroots activists is essential to implement comprehensive strategies and interventions to effectively combat animal cruelty. By working together and prioritizing animal welfare, India can contribute to building a society where animal abuse is not tolerated and all living beings are treated with dignity and compassion. After all, combating animal abuse is not just a legal or moral obligation, but also an expression of our commitment to building a more caring and just society for everyone.

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