

Impact of Covid – 19 on Stray Animals

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ABSTRACT

The coronavirus lockdown has not only contrived the billions of individuals round the world, but has put India's four legged strays in extreme distress, scarcity of fodder and veterinary care etc. Unavailability of food and water within the sweltering summer is impacting stray animals throughout the whole country. Strays are struggling to seek out food to kill their hunger thanks to downing shutters of restaurants and eateries. They need nothing to eat, not even leftovers that they always relied on. During this Covid-19 pandemic, animal welfare has become a crucial aspect of our lives, including pets, livestock and laboratory animals and mostly stray animals. There are many sorts of animal cruelty like neglect of animals, misuse of animals, exploitation of animals and testing of animals. The purpose of this review is to describe the impact of COVID-19 on stray animals and to provide practical recommendations for those animals along value chains to reduce this impact and ensure continuity of the food supply chain and animal health.

Keywords: Covid – 19, livestock, strays, hunger, animal welfare

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has had a substantial impact on many sectors at global, regional and national levels, including the livestock sector (FAO, 2020; G20, 2020). This review highlighted the impact of COVID-19 virus on stray animals. The COVID-19 virus (also called SARS-CoV-2) may be a new virus in humans. The SARS-CoV-2 is zoonotic – it affects humans and some animals (1,5). It is not a surprise to find that domestic animals living closely with COVID-19 positive human cases are exposed to the virus, either through environmental contamination, or through human-animal interactions. Positive findings by polymerase chain reaction (PCR) in household animals such as dogs (6, 7,8,9) and cats from households of COVID-19 patients have been reported.

In this CoVID-19 pandemic, our lives, pets, livestock, laboratory animals and mostly stray animals were affected. The risks posed to animals during COVID-19 should be considered a welfare point of view additionally to zoonotic point of view. In this pandemic all the considered vital food sources like Restaurants and most markets are

closed during lockdown, therefore food availability to strays were reduce or blocked. As lockdown and physical distancing measures are enacted, peoples are staying home, causes devastating conditions to strays to seek out food with difficulty.

The intake of animals abandoned at shelters is additionally increasing day by day, either with the mistaken belief that animals can expire COVID-19, or that the virus has left owners unable to worry for them. These challenging times involve urgent measures. FOUR PAWS is giving dogs and cats a lifeline, by feeding stray animals wherever possible, campaigning to finish the dog and cat meat trade and addressing the challenging situations faced by local shelters. (Four paws international)

Dogs have started dying due to starvation in temples as there are no feeders have been able to get there (2).

Other than dogs, another major issue is stray cattle on India's roads. The peoples that offered them food are unable to like the closure of spiritual places and avoiding public places during lockdown period. It's noticeable

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that Food is additionally an important need for several shelters round the world. Scarcity of food could trigger competitiveness resulting in increasing aggression among strays. There are high chances of those animals could change their normal behaviour.

The World Organization for Animal Health has acknowledged that the present spread of COVID-19 may be a result of human to human transmission. To date, there is no proper evidence that companion animals play a role in spreading the disease. Therefore, there is no justification in taking measures against companion animals which may compromise their welfare.

As per The Hindu News the stray are suffering from starvation due to lockdown the persons who were feeding the strays are not venturing out of their homes, Apart from loss of animal life, a situation also will arise where the stray animals, enter into other territories checking out food and display aggressive behaviour towards humans in search of food.

While the availability of food remains difficult, the animals are also further ostracised because of rumours linking them to be carriers of the corona virus. The strays and birds are starving. They will die in such a scenario,” Kapoor told *Mongabay-India*.

With increasing restrictions on the movement of people across India (and a curfew), these animals are in danger of being cut off from their main source of food. The closure of restaurants and the crackdown on roadside stalls have robbed the animals of another fount of food.

It would be noticed that when animals are well looked after, they will stay calm and happy.

Ever wondered how the current lockdown has affected lakhs of stray animals – dogs, cows, cats and even birds? Dependent on human activity, these poor souls are completely stranded without food and any basic care. Most street animals that were dependent on restaurants, hotels and dhabas have nowhere to go now. In fact, with human beings shut in their homes, a lot of charitable activities have also taken a backseat. (timesnownews.com) Reliance Foundation dedicates its efforts towards the cause of animal welfare in times of lock down

Driven by the mission ‘Corona Haarega India Jeetega’, Reliance Foundation is closely

working with the healthcare department, NGOs, and the government to help in every possible way.

Animals in our surroundings and our homes depend upon us for food and shelter. In these tough times, it's our responsibility to continue taking care of them. This has been clarified by the Animal Welfare Board of India, during a letter to Chief Secretaries of all States and UTs on 23 February 2020, and later by the Prime Minister himself, during his message to the state, during the lockdown. When the lockdown was first announced, there was tons a confusion regarding veterinary care facilities and animal feed distribution and shops. However, within the addendum issued to the rules by the Ministry of Home Affairs, on 25 March, and an extra order issued by the MHA on 26 March, it had been clarified that animal feed and fodder is an ‘Essential Item’, and its interstate supply chains are exempt from the lockdown. However, there are challenges and situations being reported, where pet food or animal fodder is briefly supply, or transport of fodder is being prevented across states. Things seem to possess settled down more or less now, but a strict check must be kept on prices to make sure that there's no undue price rise (3).

The lockdown to contain the spread of Covid-19 infection has had an adverse impact on animal life in the city, according to animal lovers and activists.

Members of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and activists say that instances of pets, mainly dogs and cats, being abandoned during the lockdown have gone up significantly, with most winding up at shelter homes. Besides, strays are being subjected to cruelty due to the Covid scare and also being run over by speeding vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION

Important Issues that were Finding Shelter: it is an utmost problem that is encountered by stray animals during this pandemic in addition to finding food.

Stray Animal Care Programmes: it is necessary to us that we will do care and provide food efficiently to stray animals as per our possible sources so the scarcity or least availability of food to be minimized.

Due to increased pressure and stress, physical and mental health issues are one of the main

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concerns for people working in the livestock value chain. Therefore, it is recommended to become familiar with early detection of signs of mental health difficulties and to identify existing mental health services in the community that understand the occupational stressors that farmers (and veterinary personnel) are facing. Early interventions should be made to provide practical and emotional support.

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