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## **Isn't a human life more precious than that of a dog?**

Barbara (name changed), the mother of two children came out of her house in astonishment with the same speed she had entered in to it. What a foul smell it is! She wondered. What does a mother do when her child runs away on seeing the food? Like any other woman, she had been searching for her one year old boy when he refused to eat food. Holding the food vessel in her hand, she was moving here and there, singing songs so that the child will develop interest in eating. While doing so, no mother would care about what is happening in her house. She was absent in the house for about two minutes. Taking advantage of this opportunity, a dog entered. Until she spotted the black sheep (thief, i.e., the dog) who conveniently found a place under the cot in the room, she did not know the reason for the smell. She shouted, "patti....patti....." (dog). As it is a normal cry in villages, no one came for help. Within a short span of time, the whole house was polluted. Although this incident appears normal to the readers, it is a matter of serious concern. The pain the woman took to clean the house matters much. Gone are the days when dogs entered into the houses in order to steal food and returned after completing their mission successfully.



The present day's dogs are the carriers of so many diseases as they are poorly cared for. They are street dogs which pose a considerable risk to human health. They are seen lying under the parked vehicles. The drivers and passengers, being unaware of the dogs' presence, unknowingly when touch any part of the dog, are bitten. Do the animal rights activists know about the situation? Very less people, it is understood, have cruelty towards dogs. The dogs compete with other packs, foraging for food in the mountains of garbage that we create. In those days, they were often found on the beaches fighting among themselves for the pieces of fish forage that were lying on the ground. As they find no such forage these days, they seem to be seen in places where humans do their routine work. They are predominantly present not only in secluded area but also on the busy streets. The crowded areas in towns and cities are also

disturbed by the presence of stray dogs. This much dog population has never been seen before in Thoothoor region.

It is reported in the **Hindu** newspaper recently that the domestic dogs are released by the owners to the streets whenever they are affected by any disease. Such dogs, if female especially, will help multiply in number within no time. To such dogs, there will be no owners. These dogs will roam around with such diseases.

Thoothoor region is no exception to this malady. Dogs with scars and wounds all over the body, multi colored skin, ugly appearance, very awkward look and ready to attack the passers, roam around both days and nights in the region.

Where do they come from? People could notice this without much interval. This sorry state of affairs creates unprecedented environment pollution. The mountain like garbage that has been heaped up for days by the side of the two tiny bridges in Thoothoor serves as the battle ground for the dogs. Unbearable smell that comes out of this area



can't be put up with. In this connection, it is pertinent to quote a piece of information reported by the **Hindu** of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2017, that the September 11 terror attack on US twin tower has caused babies in the area to be born prematurely and with low birth weight, a study has found. Experts say that this may have implications for cities such as New Delhi that grapple with polluted air.

Report about dog-bite cases is often seen in many newspapers. This has become a matter of concern especially in the state of Kerala these days. The **Hindu** daily in its publication dated, 21<sup>st</sup> August 2016 reported that a 65 year old woman, Shiluvamma, was mauled to death by a large pack of stray dog on a suburban beach at Pulluvila near Trivandrum. Her son, Selvaraj was also bitten by the pack when he tried to pull his mother to safety. The residents were shocked to hear that a 52 year old Daisy, one of Shiluvamma's neighbour had also been seriously injured in a similar attack. They claimed that about 30 similar incidents had occurred a few months preceding this incident.

Why do animal lovers stand in the way of controlling the stray dogs? They should understand that human life is more precious than that of a dog. There is confrontation with regard to the law that is in vogue in India. It is shocking to read the report that more than 20 million people are bitten by dogs and 20,000 die of rabies, annually. The legislation dealing with this problem is confused, a recent newspaper report reveals. People expect that the apex court passes laws so as to control this perennial problem. The Animal Birth Control Rules or ABC rules under the

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA Act) are very clear when they state that the population of street dogs must be controlled with sterilization surgeries.

**Rabies:** “It is an almost 100 percent fatal disease but also 100 per cent preventable. It is sad that 20000 people still die of it every year”, says Prof. Reeta Subramaniam Mani from the Department of Neurovirology, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore. An immunoglobulin’s test is done to measure the level of immunoglobulin, in blood. A study stipulates that Immunoglobulin neutralizes the virus that is locally deposited in the wound and prevents the virus from getting in to the nerves. Prof. Mani says when the wound is deep, it is difficult to reach all the parts of the wound. Hence vaccination is needed after the patient is treated with immunoglobulin. Further it is advised that if extensive bleeding is there, the bitten area should be immediately washed under running water for about 10-15 minutes before immunoglobulin is administered. The dog bitten patients do not follow such instructions correctly. Majority of the patients do not receive rabies vaccination on time.



The **Hindu** paper, in a recently published article, “**India’s Avoidable Rabies Burden**” reveals that the patients fail to get all five doses. They do not get rabies immunoglobulin administered at the site of the wound immediately after a dog bite and before vaccination due to shortage across India.

### **Worrying Children and helpless Innocent people**



What do the innocent children do? Do they provoke the dogs? To their woe, they are very often chased by the dogs and thus mental agony is created among children. I remember a child, who on seeing the dog, started running for life out of fear. But for the help of an elderly person, the child would have been bitten by the dog.

Dogs dart suddenly from the bushes while the two wheelers ride the motor bikes. The riders don’t really disturb them. Yet, they fall prey to such attacks. Marching like a battalion, they block the paths in the streets, preventing the free movements of the people.

About five years ago, Mr. Wilbert and Mr. S. Josabath, natives of Chinnathurai and Thoothoor respectively died of due to dog bite. They had little knowledge about what they should do when bitten by dog. The serious nature of rabies was unknown to them. On a certain occasion, stray dogs bit off so many people who were sleeping on white sand (manappuram) at Chinnathurai. Incidents of this nature occur periodically in our area. A panic-stricken people are on the verge of danger upon seeing dogs on the streets. This situation necessitates me to raise the question, who can bell the cat?

In the meantime, I had to come across a news item in **Sirubar Malar**, a supplementary of **Thina Malar**, dated, 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 that a mall in Istanbul, the capital of Turkey is giving shelter to street dogs in the nights by opening its door to them. This, they did as a result of the extreme cold the country witnessed recently. On hearing this, the animal rights activists went a step further and provided them with food to free them of hunger and bed sheets to protect them from the attack of cold. Nowadays, it's learnt that Istanbul street dogs sleep peacefully. Is it not a lesson to both the animal right activists and mall owners of India?

That the Municipal and State authorities fail to take stock of what have become perennial issues is shocking. They do not bestow their requisite attention on this aspect. People expect specific and relevant answers to the points raised. Recently, a group of youngsters, who look emotional at times, with the help of local panchayat leaders killed several dogs and strung their carcasses on a pole. When they find that no action is taken by the authorities, they go to the extreme step of killing the dogs mercilessly. Instances about similar incidents are worth to mention at this juncture. In my childhood days, I heard about some youngsters who used to catch street dogs alive and tie them with the ladder of the stay busses so that they would be dragged on to the places the buses went. Although it was a heinous act, it might have been done to reduce the dog population. They may not have aimed at killing the dogs mercilessly. It was because of the danger caused by the street dog.

