

## Awareness on Animal Education, Rights and Welfare: Review

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### Introduction

Animal welfare is a multi-faceted issue which implies important scientific, ethical, economic and political dimensions for animal health, their habitat, food availability etc. According to the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC), animal welfare is about the state of physical and mental wellbeing of animals and is also referred to as an animal's "quality of life". In a legal sense, animal welfare is safeguarded by a duty of a person to take responsibility and care for animals. Three main criteria are considered to contribute to an animal's welfare, ability for good feelings, good health and natural behavior.

In most developing countries even today, the commitment towards animal welfare is still not very evident, primarily because of the lack of public awareness and responsibilities toward pet keeping. With the accessibility of mass media and the Internet, information is readily available for unanswered questions about the pet. Hence, the role of a veterinarian is more holistic especially when he not only treats but also educates his clients with the necessary facts to avoid any confusion and misinterpretations during client contact, for the benefit of his patients. With more research and development constantly undertaken in the field of animal behavior, veterinarians are now solving more behavioral problem than previously experienced. This will certainly be the key to carry the veterinary profession into the forefront of animal welfare.

Animal use is common in developing country, where a little priority on animal protection in comparison to economic and social development. There is rampant animal welfare abuse as a result of neglect, malicious physical injury, starvation, confinement, use of inappropriate modes of transportation/transportation facilities,

manhandling during transportation, overcrowding, overloading, overworking, inhumane treatment at slaughter/slaughter facilities, inhumane treatment during capture, branding and inappropriate working tools. Animal welfare abuse has been occasioned by inadequate legal and policy provisions, inadequate capacity to monitor and minimize cruelty to animals, limited animal extension services and inadequate training in animal welfare and supervision of service providers. The attainment of good welfare for animals requires both physical and psychological well-being. An animal is in a good state of welfare if it is healthy, comfortable, well nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior, able to have normal social contact with others of the same species, and if it is not suffering pain, fear and distress, it also requires disease prevention and veterinary treatment, proper housing, management, nutrition, humane handling and humane slaughter/killing.

The suffering of animals is currently a universal problem; it exists in all countries and regions; in spite of the existence of animal welfare organizations and the laws on animal welfare. Large amount of research has been carried out about animal welfare problems involving very specific fields of interest, such as the development of welfare assessment methods in different environments, as well as more fundamental questions relating to the biological bases of welfare and stress [1]. Literature on the effectiveness of animal welfare program remains sparse and disparate. In order to establish an informed position on the effectiveness of animal welfare, this study sought to fill in gaps by exploring factors that influence the effectiveness of animal welfare programs in their various projects of preventing animal suffering. By specifically focusing on the influence of level of training and awareness of animal welfare in the community on the effectiveness of animal welfare programs; the

impact of culture on the effectiveness of animal welfare programs; the influence of level of government support and legislation on animal welfare and effectiveness of animal welfare programs and the effect of rise of demand for animal products on the effectiveness of animal welfare programs. Animal welfare is gaining increased recognition as an important element of commercial livestock operations around the world. Animal welfare reflects the ethical imperative and social expectation that any use of animals for the benefit of humans should minimize suffering of the animals involved. Welfare is related to health and wellbeing. However, it extends beyond survival to also consider the quality of an animal's life.

### Animal welfare board of India (AWBI)

The Animal Welfare Board of India has been constituted vide chapter II, Sections 4 to 10 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. Section 9 narrates the functions of the board, while section 10 gives the powers to make regulations for functioning with approval of the central government. The primary sources of funding of the AWBI are grants from the Government of India.

The Objectives and functions of the Board are:

1. To prevent any action resulting occurrence of pain or cruelty and misuse of animals in the country.
  2. Advise the government with regard to the development of instruments of law that will fulfill this objective.
  3. Focused on commitment to vegetarianism on ethical, moral and medical grounds.
  4. Taking programs for the saving animal life, very extreme pain of killing and slaughter like dog killing and cow slaughter etc.
  5. To achieve the above policy the AWBI shall have to focused on the following:
    - a. To establish State Animal Welfare Boards, define their duties and to ensure that necessary provision of funds are made for the functioning of the state board.
    - b. To establish District Animal Welfare Boards which will monitor the implementation of PCA Act and the rules made there under, and to take action for the welfare of animals in the district.
    - c. To make a database of NGOs in each district to be helped by the State and District Boards and the local administration in their work.
- d. To establish one SPCA in each taluka, which will have a hospital/shelter; attached to it on land given by the local administration and which will have inspectors employed by it to check the abuse/misuse of animals.
  - e. To derecognize SPCAs that is not working or misusing their mandate.
  - f. To encourage the formation of animal welfare organizations and to give financial and other assistance.
  - g. To monitor the activities of such NGOs.
  - h. Make official master trainers/representatives of the Board who will monitor all animal welfare activities and organizations working in the district, allotted to them and to conduct regular programs of training and awareness generation for potential NGOs.
  - i. To conduct awareness programs through various media including pamphlets, TV and radio, workshops for specific issues.
  - j. To conduct training/education programs of specific target groups such as journalists, police, teachers and government officials.
  - k. In order to strengthen the laws and implement the ones already in place, maintain a library of all existing laws which would include Constitutional Law, Central and state Acts, Rules, Regulations and bye-laws, notification and Govt. for their implementation for animal protection, prohibition of slaughter, prohibition of animal sacrifices and prohibition and prosecution etc.
  - l. Formation of a legal wing with a panel of lawyer's city wise that can be called to contest cases.
  - m. Issue a monthly newsletter on legal issues.
  - n. In order to ensure that a network of shelters/hospitals is spread throughout India with financial aid in the running of such shelters. Assist in the augmentation of shelters already in existence and in providing for the construction of water troughs etc. The financial grants would be as far as possible in consonance with the board's decisions fixing the parameters and criteria for such shelters. For this purpose the board will build up an effective system of inspections.
  - o. The board shall take all possible action to enforce the animal birth control program throughout India and will take every step necessary to see that the killing of dogs is stopped by municipalities and replaced with vaccination and sterilization programs. Take steps to stop the sacrifice of animals for religious proposes or dissection of animals in school.

- p. Regulate any form of the use of animals in sports through racing, rides. Bullock cart races and fights are stopped.
- q. Inspect slaughterhouses, both municipal and private, to ensure that the - BSI rules, the PCA Act and the Rules made there under and other relevant Acts are being followed.
- r. Prohibit the use of animals such as birds, monkeys, mongooses, snakes, bears etc for street entertainment. All such animals will be rescued and rehabilitated.
- s. The licensing and taxation of all dog and cat sellers should be done.
- t. Ensure that there should not be any violations of the BSI and Prevention of Food Adulteration Act specifications
- u. The Board would ensure participation of its representatives in the various committees and activities of the Planning Commission, Ministry of Agriculture Animal Husbandry, Ministry of Commerce and other Ministers including Animal Welfare for effectively co-ordination in suggesting and advising methodology for implementation of the above objectives.

### Animal welfare education

Animal welfare education promotes knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values related to human involvement in the lives of animals. It includes the effects on animals' abilities to satisfy their needs, and human responsibilities as a result. It can bring about beneficial changes in the treatment of animals at the hands of humans, but can stop short of bringing about lasting attitudinal change especially if carried out in an instructional or piecemeal way.

The primary goal of humane education is to manipulate human perceptions of animals so as to improve their attitudes and behavior towards animals. Giving these kind of educational interventions have been employed for well over a century, there have been surprisingly few successful attempts to evaluate their outcomes in terms of sustained improvements in animal-related attitudes and behavior [2,3] As suggested by Ascione [4,5] there is a considerable need to develop reliable and valid methods for evaluating humane education programs by measuring short- and long-term changes in attitudes and behavior toward animals. Ideally such methods would be designed to generalize across different species and different animal-related issues, and be readily adaptable to different cultural contexts. It also explains the difference between animal welfare education and humane education.

Animal welfare education can also be targeted to audiences other than school children, and some of these are very important for the future development of animal welfare in industry, government and higher education. For example:

- Tertiary education, especially veterinary and agricultural training.
- Agricultural and veterinary extension and advisory services.
- Enforcement officers.
- Industry training.

It is important that animal welfare training becomes an essential part of the professional development of any person planning to work with animals or in animal policy including: policy and enforcement officials, animal wardens, veterinarians, stockmen/women, slaughter-men/women and all other animal industries and researchers.

Animal welfare training for veterinarians is especially important for spreading the welfare message and promoting good practice. This is clearly an area for animal protection lobbying and influence, and for well-resourced animal groups to play an active educational role.

There are also many online courses available on animal welfare. Education provides opportunities to challenge values, perspectives and behaviors in order to develop a positive attitude towards animals, people and the environment. Effective animal welfare education can create a sense of compassion, justice and a respect for the value of life. Animal welfare education is important for people of all ages and particularly those training for an animal-related profession. This page provides educators and professionals with the tools, resources and facts they need to integrate the teaching of animal welfare into their work.

### Animal action education (AAE)

AAE is an international education initiative started by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and conducted in India by WTI, which aims to educate, sensitize, raise awareness and generate interest in animal welfare and conservation issues, particularly amongst young people. AAE is the largest animal-focused educational activity in the world and draws the participation of millions of children worldwide. This includes number of activities with awards and prizes like:

1. The Annual Painting Competition.
2. Animal Welfare Education Packs.
3. Animal Action Week in schools with different activities like essay writing, drama, debate, quizzes etc.
4. Films on different pets, domestic and wild animal lives.
5. Various awareness programs to be conducted in school, colleges, in corporate sectors.
6. Community programs shall be conducted for the generation of awareness for bridging the gap between human and animals. Animal lovers are educated on responsible animal feeding, vaccination, and animal birth control topics. Anti rabies vaccination drives are also conducted in societies as well as awareness and education camps should also be conducted regarding the prevention and control of dog bite and animal bites. These all efforts will help to spread awareness regarding stray and all other types of animals.

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