

Pet Poop, Waste Management, Strays

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ABSTRACT

The Panchatantra by Pandit Vishnu Sharma tells us about living with animals while respecting animals. The current article deals with one such aspect of man & animals. Here the animals refer to the pets that humans keep at home. The pets may be dog, cat, rabbit & not live stocks. Dr. Abdul Kalam, the former president of India use to advocate taxing of pet owners for open defecation of pets by pet owners by the local bodies. One of the key behaviors that people should practice is that pet should also defecate at home & the stool should be disposed in the way human excreta is disposed. This means no defecation at public places.

The article focuses on the management of this pet waste as a part of waste management. It explores the role of local bodies both at rural & urban areas in the nation. The article does not discuss the issue of strays. If included, one can gauge the burden of this waste. Hence, this is an important area of waste management or to say solid & liquid waste management at the village, block, tehsil, district, state & national level.

The article traverses through the efforts of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MOEFCC), Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation (MODWS) & the Animal Welfare Board (AWB) of India. The effort of a private enterprise named Singhal industries is also included in the article.

KEYWORDS

• SBM • AWBI • Pet • Pollution • Waste Management

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INTRODUCTION

The message through the article is that 'Do not allow pets to defecate in the public spaces'. Pet defecation can become a serious public health concern if not checked. Pet waste can contaminate water bodies and can also cause soil pollution. As per the revised guidelines of the Animal Welfare Board (2014), pet owners were instructed to clean up their pets' defecates in public spaces and also find other methods to maintain cleanliness.^{1,4,5,6}

They were also advised to discuss with Resident Welfare Associations (RWA) & Apartment Owners Association (AOA) to discover the ways and means of disposing off their pet's feces. Suggestions were given to assign pet corners for excretion and training the pets for the same. The poop can be taken for composting using sawdust. These behavioral changes were suggested to instill greater acceptance for pets and stray animals in public and residential spaces.^{1,4,5,6}

RWAs were advised not to force the owners for cleaning their pet's excreta in the absence of any central or state laws. Singhal industries private limited suggests using dog poop bags to dispose the fecal matter of pets. If dog poop is thrown out in the open, it harms soil quality. Another option of disposal of dog poop is building a manure heap. The catch is that the heap should surpass 165°F for 5 days to securely neuter the manure. The Eco Friendly Agency suggests that the dog waste should never be used to grow crops meant for human consumption.¹

Various organisms like Round Worm (RW), Ring Worm (RW), Salmonella & Giardiasis can spread infection upon contact with the poop. To avoid contact, another disposal method is the use of compostable dog poop bags. The matter is crucial because pet waste poses a risk to public health. Proper disposal of the poop of the pet by the pet owner is a matter of courtesy.^{1,4,5,6}

The various steps that are in place towards the disposal of the pet waste are the framing of local laws & regulations, fines for defaulters & modalities of obedience, environmental impact of pet waste, proper disposal techniques, at home disposal, public disposal choices, health hazards & hygiene. One can go through the modalities of each of the steps.^{1,4,5,6}

The three critical Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that one should seek for answers regarding proper disposal of pet waste are 'what are the dog poop bags used for?' 'how long do dog poop bags last?' & the final question is 'are dog poop bags water proof?'^{1,4,5,6}

The issues are further addressed by the Animal Welfare Board of India. It is a statutory body under section 4 of the prevention of cruelty of animals act. The advisory of the board is in pursuance of section 9(k) of the animals act. The head office is based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The advisory of the AWB is a 6 page document.^{2,3}

The various headings of the document are 'guidelines with respect to pet, street dogs & their care givers, for RWAs, AOAs. The guidelines also mention that compassion to all living creatures is a fundamental duty cast by Article 51A (g) of the constitution. There are 6 point guidelines for pet owners, 4 points guidelines for care givers of street dogs, 6 points guidelines for RWAs & AOAs.^{2,3}

Under the 6 points guidelines for RWAs & AOAs, the first point is with respect to pet dogs & pet owning residents. Under this section, the first aspect is 'banning pets', the second is 'use of lift by pets', third is 'use of parks by pets', fourth is 'use of leashes/muzzles by pet owners', 'defecation by pets in community premises', 'imposition of fines & other similar measures'. The fifth is about 'intimidation'.^{2,3}

The next part of the guideline is about street dogs. It covers issues like 'feeding of street dogs', 'sterilization of street dogs', vaccination of street dogs', 'animal cruelty', 'intimidation & aggression to dogs' & the final point is about 'counter-productive circumstances'.^{2,3}

REFLECTIONS

The recent guidelines issued by the Supreme Court on the issue of street dogs come to the fore front while writing this article. One group was for & the other against. We do not consider the poop of the strays as eventually they mix with the soil at random places that are spread across an area. This is not the case with pets. These are confined to a small area & hence the poop waste management, role of RWA & AOA comes to play.^{7,8}

More than the adherence to the laws, regulations & rules, it is the behavior of the

people having pets is crucial. The dog poop management is an active part of the solid waste management under the Swacch Bharat Mission (SBM) & it is to be aspired that in SBM 2.0 its implementation will lead to effective waste management.³

CONCLUSION

As pets are now kept at rural, semi urban & urban areas, the role of local bodies at all these levels in the waste management is very important. At the rural level in villages, the Panchyati Raj Institutions (PRI) have to work on this front. Similarly at the block level the block panchayat & at the district level, the district panchayat have to bat on the front foot on the issue of waste management.

In the semi urban areas, the municipal boards, municipalities & in the cities the corporations have to work on these issues. It is critical that all these stakeholders work in tandem with the AWB so that interventions start to percolate from the corporations to the village panchayat.

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Declaration

Both the authors have contributed significantly

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