

Mini's care for dogs rewarded with Nari Shakti honour

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Mini Vasudevan couldn't bear the sight of an ailing country dog in her street being consumed live by maggots infested all over its body.



Mini Vasudevan

Coimbatore: Appalled by its pitiful plight, she made up her mind to help out. But Mini Vasudevan never knew how and felt helpless like any others. Indeed, she was an engineer by profession. Also she was new to Coimbatore as she had come down with her husband Madhu Ganesh just then from US way back in 2004.

Yet, she didn't leave any stone unturned to rescue the injured animal. With the assistance of a veterinarian, the dog was treated for a week; until the animal regained its good health.

"I felt so happy, as I could make an impact in the life of a dog, which otherwise could have ended up losing its life," said Mini Vasudevan. Thus the Humane Animal

Society (HAS), a Non Governmental Organisation to work for the welfare of animals was born in 2006.

"Not just that one-off incident, I always remained compassionate towards animals from a young age and would be moved at the plight of suffering animals. As there was no established organisation then to help animals in distress, I decided to pitch in by creating a platform with like-minded people in a small way," she says.

More than a decade after HAS was established, Mini Vasudevan says she could feel the change in attitude among people towards injured and abandoned animals.

"Our awareness programs had brought out profound results. Earlier people wouldn't care to even inform us about injured animals. Now they painstakingly bring the animals with all care and affection for treatment. Recently a Class 8 girl, on her birth day, donated large number of blankets and around 300 kilograms of news papers collected by her," she said. In the last three years, HAS had reached out to around 2000 people with a majority of them being students. "We visit schools, colleges, individual communities and take up door to door campaigns to educate them on being compassionate towards the animals. People are also taught on behavioural management towards animals. To me, rescue and rehabilitation of animals should be a collective effort involving everyone," she said.

Till date, HAS has rescued about 50,000 animals and given more than 2000 dogs in adoption. "Once, people prefer to adopt only male dogs. This bias towards female dogs has now ended with more adopters coming forward to take them home. Also people show interest in adopting country dogs unlike before. These are all significant transition in the mindset of people," she said.

The HAS has also been associated with Corporation in its Animal Birth Control (ABC) program. "We now have a committed team of 17 staff including two doctors, three animal handlers and experts to track the progress of health of an animal undergoing treatment. More than 50 animals, which cannot be rehabilitated and in need of permanent medical care were sheltered at our 'sanctuary' near Pollachi," she said. Three years ago, Mini Vasudevan quit her well paid job with an international company in Coimbatore to go her heart felt way. Her strenuous efforts to save distressed animals have now been recognized by the Government of India, which will honour her with Nari Shakti Puraskar, an award instituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development on International Women's Day on March 8 in Delhi. "I feel proud. But it is not my personal achievement as HAS has now become a movement. My immediate concern is that the district chapter of the SPCA should be revived to curb instances of cruelty against animals. The SPCA remains defunct for over two decades. The society, headed by Collector with representatives of law enforcing agencies and NGO's will be able to act against people harming animals. NGOs can only do the rescue job. Even that becomes difficult when it involves a bigger animal," she said.