

MITIGATING CANINE THREATS IN CAMPUS

○ PROBLEM STATEMENT

Dog bites on the college campus are rising regardless of friendly human-dog relationships. As dog lovers, we want to understand what is causing the situation like environmental stress, human behaviour and campus hotspots, which are leading towards the aggression. And here the issue is not that the dogs are causing problem but also, it's the misunderstandings that we can easily address and we can prevent.

○ KEY DATA POINTS

- Dog bites are not just minor injuries, but they are the leading cause of rabies over worldwide. More than 95% of rabies cases result from dog bites and the symptoms appear then the disease is almost always fatal (WHO).
- India carries the world's heaviest rabies cases with around 20,000 people dying every year. And most of them are after being bitten by dogs (WHO/ National Rabies Control Programme).
- Students and young adults are often at the risk of dog bites because they spend more time outdoors and move around college campus during early mornings and late evenings (MoHFW).

○ WHY THE ISSUE MATTERS

Stray dogs are common in any college campus, and many students feel a connection with the dogs. But still things like random feeding spots, poor waste management and limited sterilization could be the reasons for increased conflicts and safety concerns. And as we know that dog bite injuries put pressure on college campus health services and can lead people to rabies and other serious diseases. Managing stray dogs responsibly with Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules 2023, can make the campus safer for everyone.

○ STAKEHOLDERS AFFECTED

Many groups across the college campus are impacted.

- Students those who live in hostels encounter stray dogs in their everyday routines.
- Campus ground workers and sanitation workers interact with them while doing their jobs.

- Faculty and staff commuting early or late may feel unsafe during these hours.
- Dog feeders and caregivers.
- College administration and campus security.
- Municipal veterinary teams who support vaccination and sterilization efforts.
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○ **RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES/SCHEMES**

- Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023 – mandates sterilization and vaccination of stray dogs.
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 – governs humane treatment and feeding regulations.
- Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 – relevant due to waste patterns influencing stray dog populations.
- National Rabies Control Programme (NRCP) – guidelines on post-exposure prophylaxis and surveillance.

○ **ANONYMISED FIELD QUOTES**

“When I was walking back from library to hostel, some dogs suddenly started following me and chased me. I was so scared at that moment and didn’t know who to contact for help.” — Student, Year 2

“Around the mess, some dogs are always there. Most days they are fine but when students don’t feed them food, they suddenly turn aggressive.”
— Campus Worker

○ **CALL FOR ACTION**

There are few steps that we can implement to improve safety in the campus for both people and animals. They are-

- Implement ABC (sterilization + vaccination) in partnership with certified animal welfare organizations.
- Introduce designated feeding zones to reduce territorial aggression.
- Install awareness signage and conduct student sessions on animal behaviour and rabies safety.
- Improve waste management to minimize stray dog congregation points.