

Coimbatore-based animal activist gets government accolades for her service

Pratiksha Ramkumar | TNN | Feb 28, 2019, 12:56 IST



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Mini Vasudevan

COIMBATORE: When Mini Vasudevan and her husband moved from the US to India in 2004, they were appalled by the condition of street dogs in the city.

"I saw dogs, including a pregnant one, hit by vehicles and suffering in the streets with severe wounds. There was no organized structure to help street dogs," Vasudevan

said. "I took a few injured dogs to veterinarians, but after the treatment, I did not know where to take them to recover. Even many veterinarians would refuse to treat street dogs," she added.

After a lot of thought, amid independently helping street dogs, Mini, an engineer by profession, and her husband decided to establish a trust, Humane Animal Society (HAS), in April 2006. "We just wanted to create a platform where like-minded people who care for animals could join," she said.

As of March 2018, the NGO has positively helped at least 50,000 dogs, including sterilizing 25,000, and getting the rest either adopted or rescued and rehabilitated. Recognizing her contribution, the ministry of women and child development has decided to confer her with Nari Shakti Puraskar Award. She will receive the award from the President on International Women's Day on March 8.

"This award is a recognition of the incredible work done by HAS, which in turn is a result of the hard work put by our staff, volunteers, donors and well-wishers from all over the globe," Vasudevan said.

She also recalled when they started the NGO luck was on their side. "The Coimbatore corporation had started the animal birth control programme the same year and gave us a space at Seeranaickenpalayam to run a birth control centre. I had also spent time with Blue Cross of India in Chennai to learn how to run the

centre and tackle challenges while managing it."

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From one staff, one helper and one veterinarian, the NGO now has more than 70 people involved in it along with two veterinarians. "Besides birth control, we have treated thousands of wounded dogs and abandoned pedigree dogs," she said.

Vasudevan says their aim is to empower more people to do more for animal welfare, rather than their shelter getting more animals. "We want the

platform to attract more animal lovers to come and do their bit to help reduce animal abuse and suffering. We also educate school students about first aid, wound management and behavior management in dogs among others."