



STRAY DOG STERILIZATION UNIT PRAHLADPUR, DELHI



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2004-05



THE YEAR IN A NUTSHELL

The year 2004 – 2005 witnessed Samrakshan humbly but steadfastly continuing in the commitment to the objective with which it was set up in 1999; “*securing the right, of all creatures, to life and dignity, through animal welfare*”. This was a year of diversification and development, of mastering new skills and testing new methods. With its facility at Prahladpur Veterinary Hospital, Delhi, functioning as a node of activity, Samrakshan has achieved new targets as part of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) program, which aims at managing the city’s population of stray canines.

However, Samrakshan believes that Delhi’s population of stray dogs needs not only control, through sterilizations, but also compassionate, community-based welfare outside the space of the veterinary hospital. At the same time, Samrakshan has set itself high standards of shelter management, catching and transporting of dogs for sterilization and vaccination, personnel training and last but not the least, compassion.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Our association with the “The Society for Stray Canine Birth Control”

The Society for Stray Canine Birth Control (SSCBC), formed in 2002 to confront the serious civic challenge posed by the growing population of stray dogs, is a collaborative platform shared by the Animal Husbandry department of the Government of Delhi, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and a number of NGOs working in the field of



Our boys (on the left) in front of the Dog Catching vehicle

animal welfare in Delhi. Samrakshan Trust has been an active, committed member of the SSCBC since the very inception of the society and continues as such. This partnership between governmental bodies and a non-governmental agency like Samrakshan is symbolized (in concrete!!) by the 22-kennel ABC centre attached to the Prahladpur veterinary hospital, which was leased to Samrakshan by the Delhi Government in March 2003 and is maintained by the Animal Husbandry department.

Through the aegis of the SSCBC, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi also allocated to Samrakshan an animal ambulance to catch dogs from the areas allocated to Samrakshan. The receipt of this vehicle has enabled Samrakshan to move towards self reliance vis-à-vis catching dogs for sterilization. This in turn has enabled us to undertake area-wise sterilisation through which we concentrate on specific geographical areas that have been decided in collaboration with the MCD and ensure that a majority of dogs from that area have been sterilised. Area-wise sterilisation requires us to return to each area at ever increasing intervals till the encounter rate of non sterilised dogs precludes dog catching in the area in question.

Our Dog-Catching activities

As soon as we started dog catching on our own the need to adopt effective and humane dog catching methods became apparent. Samrakshan personnel were sent for a



Praveen, our attendant employing the "Sack and Loop" method to catch a street dog

week long training programme to Help In Suffering, Jaipur to help them master the "*sack and loop*" method. This training combined with modifications to the structure of our animal

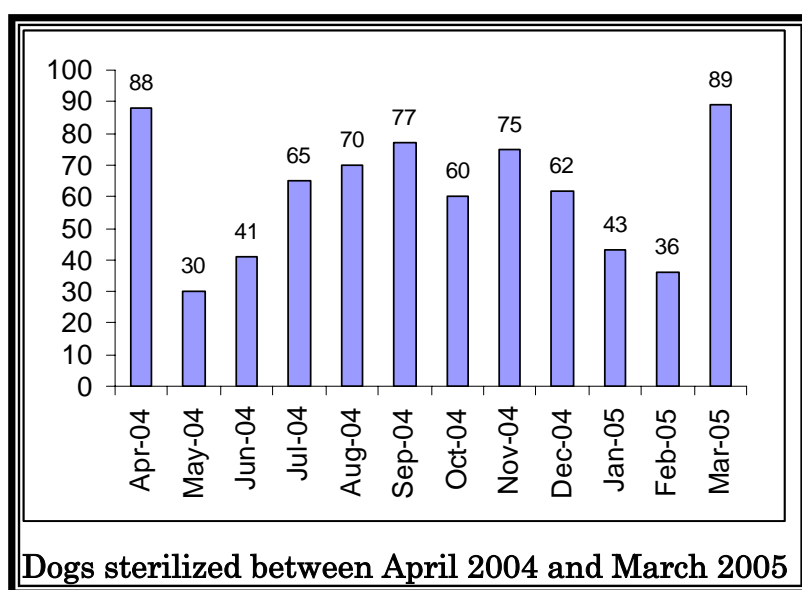
ambulance has lent a high rate of success to our dog catching operations. As a result of this capacity we have also been providing dog catching services to other NGOs in our vicinity who conduct ABC operations.

Area Wise Sterilisation Methodology

In the year 2003-04, Samrakshan had used the Prahladpur facility to sterilize 536 dogs, all of which were caught by the MCD dog catching squad. In an attempt to enhance its performance, and to achieve a higher target, Samrakshan has developed the expertise to catch dogs, using the 'sack and loop' method, with the help of its staff and vehicle. This has enabled Samrakshan to conduct the ABC programme in an 'area-wise' manner, complementing the efforts of the MCD dog catching squad. Further, Samrakshan has provided dog catching services to Jeevan Jyoti Trust, handing over to it a total of 896 dogs for sterilization.

Between April 2004 and March 2005, Samrakshan performed sterilization of a total of 736 dogs (nearly 40% more than the preceding year). March 2005 saw 89 dogs being sterilized, the highest in this 12 month period. Having achieved a steady average of about 61 sterilizations per month, our organization has set its eyes, ever more firmly, on raising this to an average of 100 surgeries per month by March 2006.

The graph below details the number of dogs sterilized each month, between April 2004 and March 2005.



Improving Conditions of the Kennels

Each of the 22 kennels at our facility houses a precious, beloved guest, a creature irreducible to figures and statistics. We, at Samrakshan, hold ourselves responsible for our 'in-patients' health, comfort and peace of mind, and are more than willing to enhance the quality of their life at the kennel, particularly during the crucial post-operative phase.

To deal with Delhi's extreme temperatures, we have installed coolers in the kennel unit to bring down the temperature during summer; during winter, the dogs are given coats and disposable hay/husk as insulating bedding. We are also looking for resources to install a run adjoining the kennel that would enable us to let dogs free during a part of their stay with us. This will considerably enhance welfare levels by enabling the dogs to sun themselves during the winter months and would also provide space for exercise.

To protect the dogs from contracting hospital-acquired infections, our vet ensures aseptic conditions in the operation theatre, and the kennels are emptied and fumigated every 2-3 months, with Formaldehyde Solution (LR) 41%.

Personnel @ Samrakshan

Samrakshan has adopted an innovative scheme of personnel management. We are aware that our shelter attendants are the backbone of our in-patient facility, and we seek to elicit rather than demand compassion, alertness, resourcefulness and a readiness to learn, of them. Our vet and volunteers constantly train them in the maintenance of hygiene and alertness to pre-and post operative abnormalities.

Over and above this, we have introduced a unique grading system, whereby each attendant is awarded grade points at the end of each week, on the basis of quality and amount of work done during the week, and the worker's attitude towards that work. These grade points translate directly into monetary bonuses, and, as there is a significant difference between the bonuses corresponding to consecutive grades, this system prompts our personnel to perform better.

Rabies Control Programme

The control of rabies, one of the key aims of the Animal Birth Control Programme, can be achieved not only by controlling the population of stray dogs, but also by making the existing population of dogs immune to the disease itself, protecting the dogs as well as the human community they must co-exist with. Towards this aim, Samrakshan judiciously

provides an anti-rabies vaccine to each and every dog sterilized at its facility in Prahladpur prior to its release.

However, at Samrakshan, we acknowledge that to succeed, the anti-rabies programme must go beyond the veterinary hospital. With this in mind, we conducted an Anti-Rabies Vaccination camp on December 11, 2004 in Rohini, where 100 anti-rabies vaccines were administered to stray dogs. This gave us an opportunity to involve the residents of the area in our work, simultaneously raising their awareness about rabies and its prevention. The camp was conducted in collaboration with the Municipal Corporation and Animal Husbandry Department of the Government of Delhi.

THE SAMRAKSHAN TEAM

This year saw a number of additions to Samrakshan's Animal Welfare Team. Dr. S. Chinny Krishna, the doyen of the Animal Welfare movement in India joined our advisory board. One of the early champions of mass sterilization and vaccination of street dogs, Dr. Krishna heads the well known animal welfare charity Blue Cross of India based in Chennai. He has been a source of guidance, encouragement and inspiration for Samrakshan's work and we look forward to his continued involvement with our work.

A full time veterinary surgeon, Dr. Meghna Pandey also joined our team in February 2005. As part of Dr. Pandey's capacity enhancement exercise that would enable her to attend effectively to ABC work, she spent a week at the Sanjay Gandhi Animal Care



Centre to gain an insight into surgical and post operative procedures performed on a large scale. Dr. Pandey also attended a workshop on “Advanced Surgical Techniques in Spay and Neuter Operations” organized by the Blue Cross of India in Chennai in April 2005.

Dr. Pandey has brought new versatility to our team; her presence has enabled us to increase the number of sterilisation operations we perform and also improve welfare standards at our kennel.

Vikas Vishwakarma and Deepti Sharma continue to be regular and indispensable volunteers who shoulder a large part of the responsibility of operating the kennel and the ABC programme in general.



Deepti, a volunteer at Samrakshan's Prahladpur Unit feeding the dogs



Joginder (standing), an attendant at Samrakshan with a sterilized dog about to be released in the area from where he was picked up. Sitting on the vehicle is Praveen (in the back)

The backbone of our team is of course the animal care attendants Praveen, Joginder and Kale, who continue to perform yeoman service to the animals that pass through our doors.

As a result of our work with strays, we have built an enviable menagerie at Prahladpur, the inmates of which add considerable colour to our work. Ghatotkachh, the most senior dog in age, also remains the craziest. The highlight of his life in the last few months was a (mis)adventure where he nearly drowned in a drain when he was cornered by other neighbourhood dogs. Ghatotkachh was unceremoniously pulled out by the ear, by

the ever-vigilant Bhupendra, and now thinks twice before 'straying' outdoors. The two new additions to our menagerie are Manna, now the beauty of Prahladpur, who was found as a moribund, skinny pup with weak legs and was nursed back to health and beauty, and Jojo, a pedigreed Doberman with a spinal defect, who was abandoned on our doorstep.

Jojo used to be the Most Terrified Dog in History, screaming each time he was approached by mankind (or womankind!). But he has now recovered much of his health,



Jojo, our resident companion

thanks to the care of Dr. Chahal, the local vet; though his growth remains stunted. More importantly, though, we at Samrakshan have helped him recover his faith in humanity.

SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

The past year has been witness to a growth in Samrakshan's network of support, with old relationships having grown stronger, and some new bonds forged. We wish to thank these organizations and individuals, for helping Samrakshan towards its goals in Animal Birth Control. Government of Delhi's animal husbandry department has been a constant source of support through vital assistance it has made available to the animal birth control programme, including the kennels and operating theatre at Prahladpur.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi through the Society for Stray Canine Birth Control has demonstrated remarkable will and pro activeness in tackling the issue of street dogs. These support that Samrakshan received from these agencies has enabled us sterilise and vaccinate a large number of street dogs in Rohini and Pitampura – two areas that the Prahladpur facility services.

In the spirit of working in collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders, Samrakshan established and strengthened its linkages with like minded organisations over 2004-05. In August 2004, Samrakshan was granted affiliation to the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), UK. We continue to enjoy the co-operation and goodwill of our fellow NGOs involved in animal welfare in Delhi. Our special thanks to Help in Suffering, Jaipur, for sharing invaluable skills with us. Our particularly productive collaboration with Jeevan Jyoti, Delhi, deserves special mention. Samrakshan provided dog catching services to Jeevan Jyoti; over a period of nine months, dogs were delivered to its facility in Rohini, where they were sterilized before release.



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