

# INTAS POLIVET

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## Guest Editorial

### Field Veterinarians - The back bone of our profession

*"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged  
by the way its animals are treated..."*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

*It is the fundamental duty of every citizen of India  
to have compassion for all living creatures -*

*Article 51A(g)*

The above quotes highlight the importance and role played by field Veterinarians in India, to discharge the fundamental duties for every citizen living in this country, Veterinarians are one of the important ways and means. The significant role of Veterinarians in creating an order and growth for a healthy society is unfortunately not clear to the public. This is a great profession that supports not only animals, but through their services ensures animal proteins for common man. This is one way of supporting food security and ensuring food safety. The Veterinarian has a social role in contributing to food security and technical role in ensuring animal welfare and production of safe wholesome livestock products. Veterinarians play a vital role in safe-guarding both human and animal health, by securing an adequate supply of safe food and protecting humans and animals from spread of zoonotic diseases. They are also vital for improving livestock productivity benefiting the producers in particular and for wider population in general.

Very often, the great services provided by Veterinarians are not duly recognized; mainly because society is not aware of their actual contributions. This has resulted in a 'common people thinking' that Veterinarians have a role, only for people who own farm animals, dogs or poultry. In fact, by serving the clients/ farmers who own them, they are protecting the society and strengthening the health of Nation. Like if we have less disease outbreaks affecting livestock, there is increased milk production. Similarly the lowered incidences of deadly diseases like Bird flu, Swine flu, Rabies, Tuberculosis and other zoonotic diseases should pay credit to Veterinarians.

In India, we have close to 70 thousand Registered Veterinarians connecting and spreading their services to the end users. Field Veterinarians are the only ways and means to deliver desired outcomes to the end users and are the unsung hero of the Animal Husbandry.

During COVID outbreaks, Veterinary Services was declared as essential services and our field Vets rendered services to the animals and their keepers ensuring best treatment even during difficult hours. In our country, Veterinary service literally means the difference between life and death not only for animals but also for humans as majority of our poor population depends on animals for food, income, social status or cultural identification, companionship, security, where there is nothing more important than taking care of animals that allow adults to work, families to earn and children to eat. On a lighter note, we the Vets have been using corona vaccine (Not COVID strain) to protect pets since long and our pets had corona vaccine long before the human counterpart. Risks that a Veterinarian takes in his / her life is a daily affair, such as when they may be called to tackle wild animals and elephants which have gone out of control. We have Veterinarians who have sacrificed their lives doing their job in saving their fellow men. Many are exposed to different degrees of zoonotic infections. In Indian context, the role of Veterinarian is very broad. It includes not only prevention and treatment of diseases or injuries, the best way to understand the significance of Veterinarians is to start thinking of a world without welfare of these animals and birds. Nature has created soil, water, air, plants, animals and humans co-existing. The synergy and symbiosis among these and welfare of animals define a sustainable future for humans.

Animal husbandry is an integral component of Indian agriculture supporting livelihood of more than two-thirds of rural population. Veterinary professionals disseminate their knowledge to the community as a whole to improve the quality of life. Veterinarians intervene in different ways in getting their household improved through technology innovation and intervention in their livestock rearing by providing them technical, financial and moral support. In the mission of doubling

the farmer's income by 2022, the Veterinary fraternity has huge role to play. Without active participation of Veterinarians, India can't think of accomplishing this herculean task.

Important roles a field Veterinarian plays are:

1. Providing basic health care facilities to livestock and pets which includes different camps and door step services.
2. Preventive services like vaccinations (FMD, HS, BQ, Anthrax, PPR, Rabies, DHPPII, Corona, RD, Marek's diseases etc)
3. Emergency services including mammoth task at outbreaks of different diseases.
4. Implementation of different schemes of Central and State Government to increase the income of farmers and livelihood of farmer's related to animal husbandry like NLM etc.
5. Genetic Improvement through Artificial Insemination.
6. Extension activities like camps, TV shows, Talk shows etc.
7. Disease reporting at different platforms both online and offline
8. Animal census, Breed survey
9. One Health, Zoonotic diseases, Disease Surveillance and sampling
10. Animal Welfare, ABC, Post Mortem and
11. Dedicated involvement in any disaster management works.

The list is not exhaustive and conclusive but just to jot down the multifaceted roles a field Vet has to play and he is ultimately responsible for each of these roles. They are also entrusted different administrative roles from time to time.

The important legislation and commitment with major secondary rules are summarized as a field Veterinarian is the custodian of these acts and had to act under accordingly as and when required to perform their constitutional duties.

- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960
- Draught and Pack Animals Rules, 1965
- Licensing of Farriers Rules, 1965
- Performing Animals Rules, 1973
- Registration of Cattle Premises Rules, 1978
- Application of Fines Rules, 1978
- Transport of Animals Rules, 1978 and its Amendment Rules, 2009
- Capture of Animals Rules, 1979
- Breeding and Experiments on Animals (Control and Supervision) Rules, 1998
- Establishment and Regulation of SPCAs Rules, 2001
- Performing Animals (Registration) Rules, 2001 and its Amendment Rules, 2018
- Transport of Animals on Foot Rules, 2001
- Slaughter House Rules, 2001
- Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2001 and its Amendment Rules, 2010
- Dog Breeding and Marketing Rules, 2017
- Care and Maintenance of Case Property Animals Rules, 2017
- Regulation of Livestock Markets Rules, 2017
- Pet Shop Rules, 2018
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Egg Laying Hens) Rules, 2019
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972
- Recognition of Zoo Rules, 2009 and its Amendment Rules, 2013
- Biological Diversity Act, 2002
- Indian Evidence Act, 1872 and Amendment, 2020.

Beside these State Governments are entitled to make its own laws and State Governments has enacted different state laws which the Veterinarians are obliged to follow.

It is beyond any doubt that the field Veterinarians are the backbone of our system and need appreciation for their continuous contribution to animals and society as a whole. However, there is a need to strengthen our field Veterinarians. Minimum standards of Veterinary practice regulation (MSVPR) will provide them a much needed platform to demand for the minimum facilities needed to provide quality services at the field level. Also there is a critical need to involve field Veterinarians in decision or policy making bodies so that their concerns and ideas can be incorporated as they are the component of delivery system of tangible and intangible goods to the end users of the society.



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