THE COEXISTENCE CONUNDRUM

On the ongoing tussle between humans and their friendly neighbourhood animals -- stray dogs, monkeys and pigeons
Urban Menace?

Dogs
• 1.92 million dog-bites in 2022, or an average of 5,200 incidents a day. Dog bites behind 96% rabies cases.

Monkeys
• 1,000 cases of bites a day in cities; cause rabies and other zoonotic diseases.

Pigeons
• Droppings can cause lung infections like hypersensitivity pneumonitis, cryptococcal meningitis and psittacosis.
Health crisis

• In 2019, 7.8 million dog bite cases or 20,000 cases a day in India.

• One third of global rabies cases from India.

• Public safety concern.
Animal Birth Control Rules timeline

1995-96: Chennai and Jaipur become the first cities to start a sustained Animal Birth Control (ABC)-Anti-Rabies (AR) Programme.

2001: The Centre releases ABC Rules for sterilising dogs; it prohibits euthanisation for birth control.

2007: India identifies rabies as a priority zoonotic disease.

2008: Tamil Nadu is the first state in India to implement a state-wide, multisectoral rabies control initiative.

2008-11: India introduces pilot project on rabies control programme in 5 cities.
ABC: Timeline and trajectory

2009: Animal Welfare Board of India releases standard operating procedures for ABC programmes.


2012: Plans to expand make rabies project pan-India in the 12th Five Year Plan.


2023: India releases new ABC Rules which identifies community dogs and holds residential welfare associations responsible for sterilising, vaccinating them.
Out of control

- ABC rules 2001 - capture, sterilise and return.
- Dog with rabies cannot be euthanised.
- 19 per cent natural survival rate.
- Failed ABC centres, not functioning, profit drive, poor and unhygienic conditions, flouting norms.
- RWAs vs dog lovers vs court
- Euthanise or isolate?
1. India has several species of macaques. But the one that is usually in the news is the Rhesus.
2. The rhesus-human conflict plays out in both India’s cities and villages.
3. Yet, rural areas are where the urban human-monkey conflict begins.
HABITAT LOSS, WASTE MANAGEMENT

1. Loss of forest cover drives macaque troops towards urban areas.
2. There, macaques get a steady supply of food.
3. They sift through garbage dumps, raid houses and are of course, fed by humans.
4. Once a troop gets familiar with humans, they lose their natural fear and do not prefer going back to their natural habitat.
A CIVIC PROBLEM

1. Monkeys are carriers of rabies and Kyasanur Forest Disease.
2. This cannot be taken lightly when zoonoses is making headlines.
3. People can also sustain head injuries while staving off monkeys from their terraces as was the case with SS Bajwa.
MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

1. Himachal Pradesh loses crops worth Rs 500 crore annually to wild animals, including monkeys.

2. Indian states have tried relocation, habitat creation, scare tactics, sterilization, plantation drives, crop changes, rehabilitation, citizen helplines and declaring monkeys as vermin.

3. All these have cost time and resources. But nothing has helped.
POPULATION EXPLOSION

1. Pigeons have exploded in India. There has been a 100% rise in numbers according to *The State of India’s Birds 2018*.

2. Pigeons are ledge nesters. They also have generalist diets.

3. They can nest throughout the year and hardly have any natural predators in cities.

4. Feeding by humans is a major cause.
Pigeons and Public Health

1. Pigeons are known to spread zoonoses through their feathers and droppings.
2. Major diseases caused due to pigeon droppings include hypersensitivity pneumonitis, cryptococcal meningitis and psittacosis.
3. The Pune Municipal Corporation called the ‘unnatural growth’ of pigeons a ‘health hazard’.
MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

1. The Pune and Thane Municipal Corporations have declared a fine of Rs 500 on pigeon feeders.
2. The Bombay High Court in 2016 ruled that pigeon feeding should not be a nuisance to others.
3. In March 2019, the Supreme Court upheld the order.
THANK YOU

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