Printed from
THE TIMES OF INDIA

Unlikely Heroes: I made it a point to feed 300 dogs a day, says Sai Vignesh

TNN | Jan 16, 2021, 12.00 AM IST



An animal activist from Thiruvallur, Sai Vignesh has been providing shelter and food to strays and rescued cattle.
A lot of strays tend to find shelter in food joints. But ever since the pandemic and the lockdown in March last year, the joints were shut and the number of commuters, too, were less on the road. This is when I began feeding the dogs, because starvation was the biggest problem when the pandemic began. I made it a point to feed around 300 dogs a day in Thiruvallur.

When the lockdown started, a pattern of pet abandonment was observed. Many indie and Labs were constantly being abandoned, and I began giving them up for adoption. I have given around 50 such dogs for adoption during the past year. That said, the pandemic also brought out the goodness in many. While there were people abandoning their dogs over fears of virus transmission, there were also people who were more welcoming to adopt rather than shop.
I have been rescuing animals ever since I was 15 years old. The turning point for me was the Chennai floods in 2015, when many animals were suffering due to lack of shelter and food. That was also what prompted me to start an animal sanctuary.

I have 30 dogs, 44 cattle (cows, calves, bulls and buffaloes), one cat and three goats. Most of them suffer from chronic illnesses and I am housing them till I find a safe home for them. The cattle are all rescued from illegal slaughter houses and transportation. It costs me more than `2 lakh per month to take care of these animals and I am trying to mobilise funds to keep this going.

The pandemic taught all of us that the world heals faster without human intervention. For humans, the environment and ecosystem is important. We should not be greedy and harsh to the earth. If there is one thing 2020 has taught us, it is to be compassionate towards animals. It reiterated the fact that animals have been here long before us.