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**DISTRIBUTION OF STRAY DOGS  
IN THREE SELECTED LOCATIONS IN KANDY:  
POSSIBLE OUTBREAK OF RABIES**

A PROJECT REPORT PRESENTED BY  
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to the Board of Study in Earth Sciences of the  
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POSSIBLE OUTBREAK OF RABIES**

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**Abstract**

Rabies, a lethal, viral infection of any warm blooded animal, is an epidemiological disaster from which approximately 90 humans die annually in Sri Lanka. It is theoretically easy to eradicate such an infectious disease from an island. Kandy city has been identified as a rabies vulnerable area by the Municipality. The dog, is known to be the main reservoir for a potential outbreak of rabies. Statistical information from Public Health Department indicates that 89% of the reported cases of human rabies are directly due to bites by rabid dogs and cats. The Kandy Municipal Council has estimated the dog population within the municipal area to be 13,726. The objective of this brief study was to determine the numbers and distribution of stray dogs in 3 selected locations within Kandy Municipal Limits, to examine perception of people on stray dogs, to determine the exact numbers of stray dogs and whether they are protected against rabies and to determine whether they are surgically operated. Another objective was to comprehend and to document the institutions, individuals and methods of rabies prevention adopted within the city limits of Kandy.

The numbers and the distribution of dogs and cats within the Mulgampola slaughter house, Kandy central market and in Hantana scheme which partly is within the municipal limits were studied. In addition, a questionnaire was administered during a personnel interview with people living in Hantana area. Supplementary information was collected from teaching hospitals in Kandy and Peradeniya, veterinary hospitals in Peradeniya and in the University, Ministry of Health and the Kandy Municipality.

The dogs appear to visit Mulgampola slaughter house daily in the mornings with numbers increasing until the slaughtering and the evisceration is generally over around 11 am. Thereafter the numbers of dogs steadily decrease. Cats appear to restrict their presence only to area in which goat slaughtering is done. The numbers of dogs in the Central market increase when raw meat is brought in around 10 am. During the early morning, the numbers are fairly low. The dogs in the market do not appear to be in the areas where the fish or dried fish are sold. Cats generally inhabit the fish area.

According to the questionnaire study conducted in Hantana scheme, there appear to about 300 dogs altogether. A reasonable proportion of people do not seem to tie or vaccinate their own dogs or cats despite several veterinary camps and clinics being held in the area providing services at no cost. Several stray dogs were seen in close proximity to the garbage bins in Hantana. Many people provide them with food and lodging. They consider increasing numbers of dogs and cats as somebody else's problem.

Teaching hospitals in Kandy and Peradeniya receive several hundreds of cases of dogs bites per month. However, most such dogs appear to be domestic dogs and millions of rupees are spent regularly in vaccinating people. This expenditure can be reduced if proper responsible pet ownership is introduced, if records are kept and if garbage disposal is done properly. It is also evident that the required legal framework to punish people if they do not register or vaccinate their pet against rabies is in existence. However, implementation of such laws appears to have not received adequate attention. There is some evidence to indicate that after "No Kill" policy in 2006, that the numbers of dogs vaccinated, surgically operated and depo provera injected have increased. In addition, expenditure on human anti rabies vaccine has reduced according to data from Peradeniya Teaching Hospital. However, data from Kandy hospital was on the contrary and therefore, a conclusive remark on this aspect cannot be made. It is especially so because the incidence of rabies either in dogs or in man within Kandy city limits have not changed within last 5 years.