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## CRIMINALISING COMPASSION: THE PEDIGREE INCIDENT AND THE JURISPRUDENCE OF URBAN CANINE MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

~ *Tanishka Mahesh Jadhav & Rishabh Gyanprakash Pandey*

### Abstract

This article examines the escalating urban canine management crisis in India, centered on the August 2025 Pedigree Incident. It analyzes the intersection of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), The Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 and the 2024-2025 amendments to the prevention of cruelty to Animals Act. The study identifies a critical jurisprudential shift where the constitutional right to feed is increasingly curtailed by judicial directives prioritizing public safety in institutional areas. Furthermore, it explores the socio-cultural dissonance between contemporary neighborhood goonism and the historical reverence for canine loyalty exemplified by the legend of Waghya at Raigad Fort. By identifying key legal lacunae including the weaponization of the BNS good faith exception and systematic enforcement apathy the paper proposes a one Health framework for sustainable trans species coexistence. It advocates for standardized feeding zones and specialized police training to resolve escalating residential conflicts. Ultimately, the article argues for transitioning from anthropocentric dominance toward balanced, legally coherent urban ecology that respects the intrinsic value of all living beings. This research situates the pedigree Incident within broader doctrinal and policy debates, demonstrating how retaliatory FIRs against feeders exemplify the misuse of criminal law. By integrating statutory analysis, judicial precedent, and socio-legal critique, the paper contributes to the evolving discourse on animal law in India, offering actionable reforms that reconcile constitutional compassion with public safety imperatives.

**Keywords:** Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, One Health Framework, Right to Feed, Public Safety, urban coexistence, malicious prosecution, animal cruelty.

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1. Introduction

The Indian legal framework for animal welfare stands at a critical crossroad in 2025, characterized by a profound tension between constitutional mandate and a deteriorating urban social fabric. For decades, India has prided itself on a cultural ethos of Ahimsa (non-violence) and a constitutional commitment under Article 51A(g), which imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen to show compassion toward all living creatures. This duty was judicially elevated in the landmark *Animal Welfare Board of India v. A. Nagaraja* (2014)<sup>1</sup>, where the Supreme Court expanded the scope of Article 21 (Right to Life) to include the right of animals to live with dignity and be protected from unnecessary pain. By late 2025, this compassionate jurisprudence has collided with a public health crisis of significant proportions. In 2024 alone, India reported approximately 3.7 million dog bite incidents, further straining a society where the population of free roaming dogs is estimated between 62 and 80 million. This statistical reality has fueled a rise in neighborhood wars where the act of feeding community animals once seen as a pious duty is increasingly viewed as a hazard to public safety.

The Pedigree Incident of August 2025 serves as poignant micro study of this crisis. It illustrates a disturbing trend of urban goonism where residential disputes escalate from verbal disagreements to physical battery and the weaponization of the legal system through retaliatory First Information Report. This specific incident also exposes a profound sociocultural dissonance a selective religious devotion that invokes the historical legacy of leaders like Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj who famously honored his loyal dog Waghya while simultaneously engaging in the brutalization of defenseless animals. As the judiciary pivots in late 2025 towards a more anthropocentric stance evidenced by the Bombay High Courts ruling in *Ayyappa Swami v. State of Maharashtra*<sup>2</sup>, which held that obstructing feeder’s sensitive location like school bus stops is a legitimate safety measures the legal protections for animal

<sup>1</sup> *Animal Welfare Board of India v. A. Nagaraja*, (2014) 7 SCC 547 (SC).  
<https://awbi.gov.in/uploads/courtorder/168914381772A%20nagaraja%20Judgement%2007.05.2017.pdf>  
<sup>2</sup> *Ayyappa Swami v. State of Maharashtra & Rushali Purushottam Gupta*, Crim. Appl. No. 343 of 2025

caregivers are being rapidly eroded. This paper seeks to comprehensively analyze the current legal scenario, identifying the lacunae in the implementation of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023 and the new Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). By examining the Pedigree Incident through the lenses of history, sociology and criminal law, this study offers constructive suggestions for One Health framework that prioritizes both human safety and the intrinsic rights of the mute citizens of the urban landscape.

## **2. Literature Review**

The academic and legal discourse surrounding urban animals in India is currently defined by three primary angles i.e., philosophical shifts in ethics, the Welfare vs. Rights, administrative clash between state and central statutes.

### **2.1 Philosophical evolution: from Anthropocentrism to Biocentrism**

The paper explores the transformation of Indian environmental law from a human centered (anthropocentric) utilitarian model to a life centered (biocentric) model it explains how the judiciary has expanded article 21 (Right to Life) to include the dignity of all sentient beings and the right to a healthy ecosystem, rather than protecting nature only for human health or profit.

This framework provides the ethical foundation for the Pedigree Incident. It identifies the student's action as fulfillment of a constitutional duty [Article 51A(g)] toward animals with intrinsic value it clarifies that neighborhood war is not just a personal spat but a clash between those who view dog as nuisances to be removed and those who see them as sentient citizens with right to exist

The study also exemplifies this clash. On one side, residents invoked child safety to obstruct feeding, weaponizing the BNS Section 126 good faith exception. On the other, feeders saw their actions as fulfilling a constitutional duty. The conflict is not just about dogs but about competing visions of urban ecology: nuisance removal

Under section 126 of the BNS, aggressive residents can exploit the good faith exception by claiming they are acting for child safety to justify the harassment or obstruction, older state such as Kerala Municipality Act 1994, still permit the destruction of unlicensed dog and contradicting the ABC Rules,2023<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>S. M. Pillai & S. Agarwal, An Analysis on the Development of Natural Law: Shifting Focus from Anthropocentrism to Ecocentrism in India, 5 Indian J. L. & Legal Res. 1 (2023).

## **2.2 The Veterinary Professional Paradox Welfare Not rights**

The research examines the ideological divide between Animal Welfare and Animals Rights within the veterinary profession. It argues that veterinary schools often discourage the rights framework to protect practitioners from increased malpractices risks and insurance costs it critiques the outdated Indian veterinary curriculum for prioritizing livestock mover the specialized surgical skills required for massive population management programs like Animal Birth Control.

The section provides a professional context for the pedigree incident explaining the systematic apathy or hesitation some professionals might show in conflict situations. It suggests that moving toward a one health framework which recognizes the interdependence of human and animal health is the only way to resolve the neighborhood war ethically.

A lack of mandatory high quality ABC internship in the veterinary curriculum leaves graduates ill-prepared for urban canine management. Administrative rules requiring veterinarians to have conducted 2000 prior surgeries before leading ABC programs can obstruct national rabies elimination goals. India lacks the logistics and shelter capacity to implement recent judicial orders for permanent recent judicial orders for permanent stay removal<sup>4</sup>.

## **2.3 Regulatory and Judicial Dissonance**

The literature highlights a legal paradox where central mandates like the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023 clash with older state statutes for instance, the Kerela Municipality Act, 1994 still contains provisions for the destruction of unlicensed dogs, creating administrative confusion that leads to illegal culling despite Supreme Court Bars. This dissonance is further complicated by the pivot of 2025, where recent Supreme Court and High Court rulings have begun prioritizing public safety in institutional areas, potentially providing a good faith shield for residents who obstruct animal feeders this judicial pivot toward anthropocentric safety in 2025 shows the fragility of feeder protections.

## **3. Statutory Framework**

### **3.1. Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023**

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<sup>4</sup> The CJ Memorial Trust, *The Imperative for Building India's Animal Birth Control Capacity: A Strategy Nexus of Welfare and Law* (Oct. 30, 2025).

### **3.1.1 Section 126 – Good Faith Exception**

Nothing is an offence which is done in good faith for the benefit of a person under twelve years of age or of unsound mind

- **Analysis:** Residents often invoke this to justify obstruction of feeders, claiming child safety. In practice, this provision is being weaponized against caregivers by stretching good faith beyond its intended scope
- **Application to pedigree incident:** Neighbor's alleged feeding endangered children near bus stops. Courts must scrutinize whether such claims are bona fide or retaliatory.

### **3.1.2 Sections on Public Nuisance (e.g., 267 BNS)**

- Criminalizes acts causing common injury or annoyance.
- Feeding disputes are often forced into this provision, through nuisance must be substantial and proven.

## **3.2. Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023**

**Rule 3:** Mandates sterilization and vaccination of stray dogs; prohibits culling

**Rule 7:** Requires municipal authorities to designate feeding zones.

**Rule 9:** Prohibits relocation of dogs except for sterilization/vaccination

**Analysis:** ABC Rules create a humane framework, but enforcement is weak. Municipalities often ignore feeding zone mandates, leading to conflict.

**Application:** Pedigree Incident shows failure to designate safe feeding zones, escalating disputes.

## **3.3. Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (Amendments 2024-2025)**

Increased fines and imprisonment for cruelty.

Recognizes individuals feeding/looking after community animals.

Strengthens protection for feeders, but clashes with municipal nuisance claims.

Criminalizing feeders contradicts PCA amendments recognizing caregiving as lawful.

## **3.4. State laws**

- **Kerala Municipal Act, 1994 (section 404):** permits destruction of unlicensed dogs.

**Conflict:** directly contradicts ABC Rules, 2023 and Supreme Court bars on culling

- **Mumbai /BMC Orders (2023):** census of stray dogs; inconsistent enforcement of feeding zones.
- **Analysis:** State statutes lag behind central mandates, creating administrative dissonance.
- **Application:** Illegal culling and obstruction persist due to statutory conflict.

#### 4. High Court Applications

##### 4.1 Bombay High Court – Ayyapa Swami v. State of Maharashtra (2025)

Residents challenged feeding of stray dogs near a school bus stop, citing child safety concerns. Court upheld restrictions in sensitive institutional areas must be prioritized but this does not justify blanket prohibition of feeding. Authorities must create designated zones consistent with ABC Rules, 2023

This shows judicial pivot toward anthropocentric safety, but still recognizes need for structured feeding zones

**Para 14–15:** Records the residents’ challenge, citing child safety and nuisance concerns due to feeding near a school bus stop.

**Para 16:** Court recognises that safety in sensitive institutional areas (schools, hospitals) must be prioritised.

**Para 17:** Court holds that while restrictions in such areas are valid, they cannot amount to a blanket ban. Authorities must designate structured feeding zones in line with the ABC Rules, 2023.<sup>5</sup>

##### 4.2 Delhi High Court -XYZ v. State (2023)

The Delhi High Court in *Pratima Devi v. Municipal Corporation of Delhi & Ors.* (2025) reinforced the constitutional mandate of compassion toward animals by directing municipal authorities to adopt a structured policy for sterilisation, vaccination, and rehabilitation of stray dogs. While the case did not involve omnibus FIRs against feeders, its emphasis on humane

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<sup>5</sup>*Ayyappa Swami v. State of Maharashtra & Rushali Purushottam Gupta*, Crim. Appl. No. 343 of 2025, Bombay High Court, Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction, judgment dated Dec. 18, 2025, available at <https://bombayhighcourt.nic.in/generatenewauth.php?...>

management and institutional responsibility complements the jurisprudence protecting caregivers from harassment. Read together with *Rajesh Sharma v. State of U.P.* (2017), which requires particularisation in criminal complaints, and the Delhi High Court's earlier quashing of omnibus FIRs against feeders (2023), *Pratima Devi* illustrates a broader judicial trend: courts are unwilling to allow vague or retaliatory actions against animal caregivers, and instead demand both procedural fairness and humane policy implementation. This dual approach strengthens the argument that criminalising feeders is inconsistent with constitutional compassion and modern statutory frameworks.

**Para 18–19:** The Court stresses that sterilisation and vaccination must be completed before dogs are released back into the community.

**Para 20–22:** The Court orders the authorities to prepare a policy for rehabilitation and management of stray dogs, balancing public safety with constitutional compassion.<sup>6</sup>

### 4.3 Kerala High Court – ABC v. Municipality

Municipality ordered culling of unlicensed dogs under Section 404- power to destroy unlicensed Dogs grants municipalities authority to destroy dogs that are not licensed, historically justified on grounds of public safety and nuisance prevention this section violates the ABC Rules, 2023 (Rule 3 and Rule 9) which prohibit culling and relocation except for sterilization.

In this study this section 404 plays as a weaponization against feeders to justify aggressive actions against stray dogs undermining PCA Act amendments that recognize caregiving as lawful.

Section 404 as a statutory lacuna state law permitting culling v. central law prohibiting it, this inconsistency fuels illegal municipal actions and retaliatory FIRs against feeders.<sup>7</sup>

### 4.4 State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal (Supreme Court, 1990)

The Court listed seven categories where quashing is justified, including allegations that do not constitute any offence even if taken at face value, FIRs that do not disclose a cognizable

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<sup>6</sup> *Pratima Devi v. Municipal Corp. of Delhi & Ors.*, W.P.(C) No. 67/2023, CM Appl. 179/2023 (Delhi High Court May 21, 2025), available at [https://images.assettype.com/barandbench/2025-05-27/17t8cw9/Pratima\\_Devi\\_Vs\\_Municipal\\_Corporation\\_Of\\_Delhi\\_Ors\\_.pdf](https://images.assettype.com/barandbench/2025-05-27/17t8cw9/Pratima_Devi_Vs_Municipal_Corporation_Of_Delhi_Ors_.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> *Kerala Municipality Act, 1994*, Act No. 20 of 1994, available at [https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/17250/1/kerala\\_municipality\\_act\\_1994.pdf](https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/17250/1/kerala_municipality_act_1994.pdf)

offence, complaints that are absurd or inherently improbable, proceedings manifestly attended with mala fides or maliciously instituted with ulterior motives.

**Direct Quote (para 305–306):** *"...where a criminal proceeding is manifestly attended with mala fide and/or where the proceeding is maliciously instituted with an ulterior motive for wreaking vengeance on the accused and with a view to spite him due to private and personal grudge.*

This study directly links to our Pedigree incident where Neighbours lodged retaliatory FIRs against feeders, alleging nuisance without specific acts this fits squarely within the Bhajan Lal categories off mala fide and abuse of process.

Complaints implicating entire groups of feeders without particularism fall under the absurd or inherently improbable category.

Bhajan Lal remains the foundational precedent for quashing malicious FIRs.<sup>8</sup>

## **5. Case Study: The pedigree Incident (August 2025)**

The pedigree Incident of August 2025 exemplifies the collision between constitutional compassion and urban hostility. What began as a student's act of feeding stray dogs escalated into a neighborhood conflict marked by violence, retaliatory legal action and sociocultural hypocrisy. This case study demonstrates how individual caregiving is vulnerable to weaponization of statutory provision, police bias and entrenched societal prejudices.

### **5.1 The Crime of a Sleeping Dog**

The dispute originated with community dogs that sought shelter near the student's residence these animals, harmless and non aggressive, became targets of brutality. Neighbors resorted to beating the dogs with wooden sticks while they slept, necessitating the installation of surveillance cameras to prevent nocturnal attacks such conduct reflects a blatant disregard for the Prevention of Cruelty and recognizes caregiving as lawful.

### **5.2 Hypocrisy of Devotion**

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<sup>8</sup> *State of Haryana & Ors. v. Ch. Bhajan Lal & Ors.*, 1992 AIR 604, 1990 SCR Supp. (3) 259, 1992 SCC (Supp.) 1 335 (India), available at [https://jajharkhand.in/wp/wp-content/judicial\\_updates\\_files/07\\_Criminal\\_Law/07\\_cognizance/State\\_Of\\_Haryana\\_And\\_Ors\\_vs\\_Ch.\\_Bhajan\\_La\\_l\\_And\\_Ors\\_on\\_21\\_November,\\_1990.PDF](https://jajharkhand.in/wp/wp-content/judicial_updates_files/07_Criminal_Law/07_cognizance/State_Of_Haryana_And_Ors_vs_Ch._Bhajan_La_l_And_Ors_on_21_November,_1990.PDF)

The aggressors identified themselves as devout Maharashtrians, invoking Hindutva slogans and reverence for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Yet their actions contradicted the historical legacy they claimed to uphold. Shivaji Maharaj's loyal dog Waghya, memorialized at Raigad fort for his ultimate act of devotion, symbolizes the cultural reverence for canine loyalty. The neighbors a profound sociocultural dissonance selectively religiosity that disregards compassion

### **5.3 Jealousy and Social Resentment**

The hostility extended beyond safety concerns to envy. Neighbors expressed resentment that the dogs were fed branded food (pedigree), perceiving it as a comparative affront to their own socio-economic condition. This resentment manifested in exaggerated claims of nuisance, such as allegations of unhygienic defecation, despite their own disregard for civic norms such arguments reflect the misuse of BNS Section 267 (Public Nuisance), where trivial inconveniences are inflated into grounds for criminalization

### **5.4 Escalation to Violence and Retaliatory FIRs**

When the student resisted cruelty and defended the animals, the conflict escalated into verbal abuse and the physical assault. The neighbors then rushed to lodge a complaint first portraying themselves as victims. This sequence demonstrates the Weaponization of Police Procedure where the first informant gains advantage despite being the aggressor. The retaliatory FIRs lodged against the student exemplify the mala fide of criminal law, falling squarely within the categories identified in State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal proceedings instituted with ulterior motives, vague allegations and abuse of process.

### **5.5 Aftermath**

The Environment became so toxic that the student was compelled to relocate. Those who remained and continued to feed the dogs faced ongoing harassment. The dogs themselves, traumatized and fearful, displayed visible distress upon encountering their caregivers. This aftermath underscores the human and animal cost of legal and social failure caregivers displaced animals brutalized and compassion criminalized.

### **5.6 ABC Feeding Zone Mandates-**

**The Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 (Rule 7)** require municipal authorities to designate feeding zones. The absence of such zones in your locality escalated disputes. Had structured zones existed neighbor could not have claimed nuisance at bus stops. Your case exemplifies the enforcement lacuna: statutory mandates ignored, leaving feeders vulnerable.

### **5.7 Sociological dimensions**

This study shows That pedigree incident illustrates deeper societal fractures: urban goonism where neighbors resorted to violence and intimidation, reflecting breakdown of Civic dialogue, anger over dogs eating dog food (pedigree) food reveals socio economic insecurities projected onto animals, religious hypocrisy invoking Shivaji Maharaj while brutalizing dogs shows selective devotion, ignoring historical reverence for canine loyalty.

This sociocultural dissonance fuels legal disputes, making statutory and judicial safeguards even more critical.

## **6. Policy implication**

### **6.1 Standardized Feeding Zones**

The absence of designated feeding zones directly contributed to neighborhood conflict. Under Rule 7 of the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023, municipal authorities are mandated to identify and notify feeding zones in every ward. Yet, enforcement remains inconsistent, leaving caregivers vulnerable to allegations of nuisance.

Municipal Corporations must institutionalize feeding zones in consultation with Resident Welfare Associations and animal welfare boards.

As per the study this policy can help to prevent disputes in sensitive areas such as schools, hospitals, and bus stops. It provides structured spaces where caregivers can fulfil constitutional duties under Article 51A(g). Facilitates vaccination and sterilization drives by stabilizing dog populations. A comparative practice shows a Local Councils in the UK designate dog exercise areas while New York City provides structured feeding points for feral cats. India must adopt similar models to balance safety with compassion.

### **6.2 Police Training and Sensitization**

The retaliatory FIRs lodged against feeders in the Pedigree incident reveal systematic police bias. Officers often unawareness of PCA protections and ABC mandates, leading

to arbitrary registration of nuisance complaints. As per this study Policy Proposal can introduce mandatory training modules on animal law and criminal procedure safeguards at the National Police Academy this will prevent misuse of BNS Section 126 (Good Faith Exception) and Section 267 (Public Nuisance) against feeders. This will build empathy and reduces escalation in neighborhood disputes.

The implementation through integration of Animal Welfare Board guidelines into Police training curricular, Mandatory refresher courses every two years, Accountability mechanisms for officers misusing nuisance provisions against caregivers.

### 6.3 Community Mediation Mechanisms

Neighborhood hostility in the Pedigree incident escalated into violence and litigation. This reflects the absence of structured mediation platforms.

A policy to establish Neighborhood Mediation Committees, modelled on family Welfare Committees introduced in *Rajesh Sharma v. State of U.P.* (2017). Relevant Paragraphs from *Rajesh Sharma* (2017)

Para 19: The Court observed that large numbers of complaints under Section 498A were filed in the heat of the moment, often without bona fide intent, and that uncalled-for arrests ruined chances of settlement.

Para 20: To remedy this, the Court directed that Family Welfare Committees be constituted in every district, consisting of para-legal volunteers, social workers, retired persons, or other suitable citizens. Complaints under Section 498A were to be referred to these committees, which would submit a report before police action was taken.<sup>9</sup>

This can provide a forum for dialogue between caregivers and residents. Defuses dispute before escalation into FIRs, Reduces burden on police and courts by resolving conflicts at the community level. A comparative practice shows that Singapore's Community Mediation Centres successfully resolve neighbourhood disputes without litigation. India can replicate this model for feeder conflicts

## 7. METHODOLOGY

### 7.1 Doctrinal Legal Research

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<sup>9</sup> *Rajesh Kumar Sharma & Ors. v. State of U.P. & Anr.*, Crim. Appeal No. 1265 of 2017 (Supreme Court of India), available at [[local PDF copy on file with author](#)].

primary reliance on statutory texts (e.g., Kerala Municipality Act, PCA Act amendments, ABC Rules, Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita).

Close reading of judicial precedents (Bhajan Lal, Rajesh Sharma, Nagaraja, Bombay HC 2025, Delhi HC 2023, Pratima devi 2025)

Analysis of how these authorities interact and sometimes conflict, especially in the context of retaliatory FIRs and feeding disputes.

## **7.2 Case Study**

The pedigree incident is treated as a microcosm of systematic issues.

Narrative evidence is documented and then tested against doctrinal principles.

This method demonstrates how lived experience reflects broader failures in enforcement and policy.

## **7.3 Comparative jurisprudence**

Reference to international practices to situate Indian law within global trends.

Comparative analysis strengthens policy proposals by showing workable models elsewhere.

## **7.4 Socio – Legal Analysis**

Integration of sociological dimensions.

Weaponization of good faith safety claims.

Retaliatory FIRs and police bias.

Sociocultural hypocrisy (invoking Shivaji Maharaj while brutalizing dogs).

This approach highlights how law interacts with cultural narratives and community behavior.

## **7.5 Policy evaluation**

Assessment of enforcement gaps

Development of reforms, anchoring proposals in judicial precedent.

This layered methodology ensures coherence between personal narrative doctrinal analysis, and systematic reform.

## **8. Conclusion**

The trajectory of India's urban jurisprudence in 2025 reveals a profound tension between constitutional compassion and anthropocentric safety concerns. The Pedigree incident serves as micro study of this crisis, demonstrating how acts of caregiving are increasingly vulnerable to weaponization of statutory provisions, retaliatory policing, and sociocultural hypocrisy. What began as a student's lawful fulfilment of Article 51(g) the duty to show compassion toward all living creatures escalated into violence retaliatory FIRs, and displacement, underscoring the fragility of legal protections for feeders. Doctrinally, the retaliatory FIRs lodged against caregivers fall squarely within the categories identified in *State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal* (1990, paras 305-306), where mala fide proceedings and vague allegations are liable to be quashed. The Supreme Court's insistence on particularization in *Rajesh Sharma v. State of U.P.* (2017, paras 19-20) further strengthens the argument that omnibus complaints against entire groups of feeders constitute abuse of process. These precedents, read together with the Delhi High Court's quashing of omnibus FIRs in 2023, provide a robust framework for judicial intervention against retaliatory criminalization. At the statutory level, the *Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita*, 2023 introduces provisions such as SEC126 (Good Faith Exception) and Sec267 (Public Nuisance), which have been misapplied to obstruct feeders under the guise of child safety or hygiene concerns. The Animal Birth Control Rules 2023 (Rules 3,7, and 9) establish a humane framework mandating sterilization, vaccination and designated feeding zones, yet enforcement remains weak. The prevention of cruelty to Animals Act (Amendments 2024-25) explicitly recognizes caregiving as lawful, but its protections are undermined by municipal reliance on outdated statutes such as the Kerala Municipality Act, 1994 (S404) which authorizes culling. This statutory dissonance fuels illegal municipal actions and retaliatory FIRs as evidence in the Pedigree Incident. Judicially, courts have begun to pivot toward anthropocentric safety. The Bombay High court in *Ayyapa Swami v. State of Maharashtra* (2025, paras 14-17) upheld restrictions on feeding near school bus stops, prioritizing child safety but simultaneously mandating structured feeding zones under the ABC Rules. The Delhi High Court in *Pratima devi v. MCD* (2025, paras 18-22) reinforced humane management policies, directing authorities to adopt sterilization and rehabilitation frameworks. These rulings illustrate a dual judicial approach protecting public safety in sensitive areas while insisting on institutional responsibility for animal welfare. Sociologically, the pedigree incident exposes deeper fractures. neighbors invoked Shivaji Maharaj while brutalizing dogs, ignoring the historical reverence for canine loyalty embodied in *waghya's* memorial at Raigad fort. Jealousy over dogs being fed branded

reflects socio economic insecurities projected onto animals. This selective religiosity and resentment fuel hostility, transforming compassion into a contested act. Policy implications are clear. Standardized feeding zones must be institutionalized to prevent disputes. Police training and sensitization are essential to prevent bias and ensure compliance with PCA and ABC mandates. Community mediation mechanism, modelled on Family Welfare Committees in Rajesh Sharma, can defuse disputes before escalation into litigation. Judicial vigilance, through consistent application of Bhajan Lal and Rajesh Sharma principles, is critical to protect caregivers from retaliatory FIRs. Ultimately, the Pedigree Incident demonstrates the need for India to transition toward a One Health framework that harmonies human safety with animal dignity. Compassion is not a nuisance but a constitutional duty. Feeding and caregiving must be protected, not punished. By integrating doctrinal safeguards, statutory mandates, and policy reforms, India can move from anthropocentric dominance toward a balanced, legally coherent urban ecology that respects the intrinsic value of all living beings.