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Popular Article

## Animal Welfare: Five Freedom and Five Domains

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### Abstract

Welfare of animals is ethical responsibility of human who are rearing the animals on farms, captivity, wild etc. Many welfare studies were carried out to determine the level of comfort being provided in the animal farms and captivity. Five freedom of animal welfare have served as a cornerstone for evaluating animal welfare standards. Meanwhile another concept of “Five Domains of Animal Welfare” also signifies the role of all essential requirements of animals.

**Keywords:** Animal welfare, freedoms, domain, ethical and distress

### Introduction

Animal welfare is a concept that reflects our ethical responsibility to ensure the well-being of animals under our care, whether they are domesticated, wild, or living in captivity. Mahatma Gandhi provides a clear ethical explanation of animal compassion by quoting “The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated”. It encompasses the physical, mental, and emotional health of animals and considers their natural behaviors and needs. Ensuring good animal welfare involves providing appropriate nutrition, housing, medical care, and opportunities for social interaction and mental stimulation. Asking animals what matters to them and how much has proven to be one of the most effective ways to perform animal welfare science (Dawkins, 1993).

Animal welfare is a critical aspect of our relationship with the animal kingdom, emphasizing our moral obligation to ensure their well-being and dignity. It encompasses a broad spectrum of

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concerns, from providing adequate nutrition and shelter to addressing emotional and psychological needs. Therefore, our treatment of animals should prioritize minimizing suffering and promoting positive experiences. Achieving optimal animal welfare requires a multifaceted approach involving education, legislation, and ethical considerations. It is about striking a balance between human needs and the welfare of animals, acknowledging that our actions have profound effects on their lives. Furthermore, ensuring good animal welfare is not just a moral imperative; it also has practical implications for society. Healthy, well-cared-for animals are more productive, whether in agricultural settings, research laboratories, or as companions.

The welfare of animals raised in intensive farming conditions has been under scrutiny ever since the findings of a committee led by Brambell *et al.* (1965), over fifty years ago. This research laid the groundwork for the development of the Five Freedoms by the United Kingdom's Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) in 1979. These freedoms serve as a framework for assessing and ensuring the welfare of animals under human care. These are given below:

1. **Freedom from Hunger and Thirst:** Animals should have access to fresh water and a diet that meets their nutritional needs, allowing them to maintain good health and vigor.
2. **Freedom from Discomfort:** Animals should have an appropriate environment with shelter and a comfortable resting area that protects them from adverse weather conditions and allows them to express normal behaviors.
3. **Freedom from Pain, Injury, or Disease:** Animals should be provided with medical attention when necessary to prevent or treat illness, injury, or pain promptly. This includes appropriate prevention and control of diseases.
4. **Freedom to Express Normal Behavior:** Animals should be given sufficient space, proper facilities, and the opportunity to engage in natural behaviors that are important for their physical and psychological well-being.
5. **Freedom from Fear and Distress:** Animals should not be subjected to conditions or treatment that cause them mental suffering or distress. This includes ensuring that handling, transport, and slaughter procedures are carried out in a manner that minimizes fear and stress.

### **The Five Domains concept of animal welfare**

The Five Domains concept, introduced in 1994 by Mellor and Reid, aimed to evaluate the welfare impact of experimental procedures on animals. It reframed the Five Freedoms as Five Domains: 1) nutritional adequacy, 2) environmental conditions, 3) health status, 4) behavioral expression, and 5) mental state. These domains were designed to assist individuals responsible for



ensuring animal welfare, including owners, caregivers, and wildlife managers.

1. **Nutrition:** Ensuring animals receive a balanced diet appropriate for their species, age, and individual needs is crucial for their health and welfare. Proper nutrition supports growth, reproduction, immune function, and overall vitality. The animals must be free from thirst hunger and malnutrition.
2. **Environment:** Providing suitable living conditions is essential for promoting good animal welfare. This includes adequate shelter from weather extremes, proper sanitation, space to move and exercise, and environmental enrichment to encourage natural behaviors and mental stimulation.
3. **Health:** The animal's health must be ensured during any disease, injury or functional impairment. Preventive healthcare measures, such as vaccinations and parasite control, as well as prompt diagnosis and treatment of illnesses or injuries, are essential for maintaining animal welfare. Regular veterinary care and monitoring contribute to the overall health and well-being of animals.
4. **Behavior:** Recognizing and facilitating natural behaviors is integral to promoting animal welfare. Environments that allow animals to express their species-specific behaviors, such as foraging, socializing, and exploring, help prevent boredom, frustration, and behavioral problems.
5. **Mental State:** Considering the emotional well-being of animals is increasingly recognized as a critical component of animal welfare. Minimizing stress, fear, and anxiety through positive handling, socialization, and appropriate management practices contributes to a positive mental state and overall welfare.

The Five Domains concept extends beyond the realm of experimental animals and applies to animals in various settings. It undergoes ongoing refinement, as evidenced by updates provided by Mellor (2016). Emphasizing the significance of positive emotional experiences, as highlighted by Mellor (2015), the concept underscores the importance of considering human-animal interactions, as discussed by Mellor et al. (2020).

## Conclusion

It is humankind's moral duty and obligation to ensure the physical, emotional, and social needs and enrichments of animals are met. The animals in wild, farm or captivity should be provided the five freedoms or domains so that all animals get good health, vigor and socialization.

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