

Evaluation of Ethical Awareness among Students to Scrutinize the Intrinsic Relationship between Humans and Animals

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ABSTRACT: *Awareness of ethical values between humans and animals is gaining significant attention in recent years. It is reflecting society's attitude towards animals. This survey-based research aimed to assess the ethical awareness among students and delve into the intricate web of relationships between humans and animals. The study examined the extent to which students were familiar to ethical issues related to animal welfare. This survey study designed with the students from various academic disciplines, age groups, and backgrounds. A mixed-methods approach was used to explore student's awareness, attitudes, and experiences concerning animals. The survey reveal the multifaceted nature of ethical awareness among students and it uncovers various factors influencing students' ethical behaviors towards animals, including cultural and societal norms, personal experiences, and educational exposure. It was concluded that the survey provides valuable insights into the ethical awareness among students concerning the relationship between humans and animals. It emphasized the need for comprehensive educational programs that not only inform students about animal ethics but also encourage empathy, compassion, and responsible stewardship.*

Keyword: Ethics, intrinsic, welfare, moral, attitudes

INTRODUCTION

Animal ethics deals with the human-animal relationships, or the behaviour of humans towards animals while treating them (Singer, 2002). The two most well-known ethical theories

are deontology and consequentialism (Bruckner, 2021). The deontology emphasized the moral rightness of actions, while consequentialism focused on the outcomes or consequences of actions. There are many moral concerns related to animals which are explained

by animal welfare experts. These concerns include that animal should feel well, they should function well, and they should lead natural lives (Heeger and Brom, 2001). Researchers who are working on animal models should be aware of instructions related to acquiring them, their proper care, handling of the species being used, maintenance, and ultimately their proper disposal to the extent that is appropriate to their role (Swart and Keulartz, 2011). Less painful procedures must be administered on animal subjects to minimize the illness, infection, discomfort, and pain of animal subjects. Surgical procedures if necessary, must be carried out under appropriate anesthesia e.g. if the animal's life is threatened then its life must be terminated using less painful procedures (Johansson-Stenman, 2018). These ethical assessments should be made related to use of animals in research for the improvements of animals, people and the environment (Sinclair et al., 2022). At the same time, the general opinion is that animals have moral status and that our treatment of them should be subject to ethical considerations (vanBueren et al., 2003). Animals have an intrinsic value that must be respected. They are sentient creatures with the capacity to feel pain, and the interests of animals must therefore be taken into consideration. Our treatment of animals, including the use of animals in research, is an expression of our attitudes and influences us as moral actors (Vries, 2006). Zoopolis is a political theory regarding animal rights. As most of the theories

talks about animal interests, their intrinsic capabilities, moral rights and moral status, but this theory has shifted the discussion of applied ethics and moral theory to the world of political theory (Anderson, 2004). Thus, this theory has led much emphasis to study the relational obligations and different ways by which animals can relate to human institutions and societies (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011). One must respect all animals either they are domestic or wild along with their basic unchallengeable rights because animals and humans are beautifully bound in a complex web of connections and relationships. Zoopolis makes sure to develop this relationship with animals on the principles of compassion and justice (Donovan and Adams, 2007). Through sympathetic attention, caring attitude and interspecies dialogue with animals, we humans can easily and readily understand the communication of animals (Zhihua, 2012). Feminist animal care theory pays enough emphasis that humans are ethically bound to pay attention to what animals are telling to us and thus act responsively. Animals do not want to be killed, harmed, eaten or tortured by humans, so one must not do so (Bruckner, 2021). The main objective of this study was to get the customary

answers to some of the questions related to animal ethics such as why these concerns are morally congruous; and to check the awareness of the students related to the intrinsic value of animals.

METHODOLOGY

i. Preparation of Questionnaire:

Questionnaire was developed by studying different literature review, articles, theories related to the intrinsic value of animals. Questionnaire was composed of fifty questions to hoard the data in order to know the opinion of different people about the intrinsic value of animals. All the areas of animal exploitation including societal trends towards animals, keeping animals as pets, confining them in zoos, using them for research and gaming, rights of wild and livestock animals and actions needed to be taken at government level. These fields of animal misuse and abuse have been divided into five categories.

The first category was made on societal trends toward animals like general behavior of society towards animal beating, trends of adopting stray animals, taking them to veterinarians if they get injured and the common behavior of the society towards animals in considering them as property of humans. In the second category, questions were asked about human

behavior towards pets for example query related to providing pets their specific food, vaccinations and medication, proper hygiene, balanced diet, clean area and separate living space. Also asked about taking care of pet breeding and availability of a first aid kit at home for pets, further asked the pet owners whether they allow strangers to get at home with their pets or not.

The third category was about zoos' impact on the mental and physical health of animals; related to the results of using sedative drugs on zoo animals and deprivation from their natural habitat. In the fourth category, the main focus was on animal rights at the government level for example punishments if someone violates animal rights, animal feeding strategies, awareness programs and protective measures. Public was asked that whether the government should make a proper burial system and proper way to get rid of mad dogs or not. The fifth category was human behavior towards animals regarding animal selective breeding, use of animals for ploughing, animal import-export and animal hunting. The public was also asked about their stance on overloading the animals for human benefits, use of injections for increasing the milk production and use of animals

for research purposes, whether they are supporting this or against this abuse of animals.

ii. Sample size calculation

Sample size was calculated by using Online Sample Size Calculator. Confidence level of 95% with margin of error of 5% was selected. The population proportion was selected as 50%. By using the sample size calculator, 392 questionnaires were filled in order to get the appropriate result.

iii. Questionnaire administration

Survey was done on the high school, graduate and postgraduate students (>20 years) to check their awareness about intrinsic value of animals and concerns related to animal ethics.

● Exclusion Criteria:

Children under the age of 12 years were not selected for this study

● Inclusion Criteria:

To get the better answers of our questions, high school, graduate and postgraduate students were selected. For that, the questions were uploaded online in Google form and circulated them among students through different social media platforms.

iv. Statistics

SPSS (statistical package for the social sciences) is a statistical software suite used for management of data, multivariate analysis and advanced analytics (Ver: 1.0.0.1406).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Animal ethics is a multifaceted field that addresses questions about the moral status of animals, their treatment, and the ethical considerations surrounding human-animal interactions (Vollum *et al.*, 2004). While animal ethics has traditionally been dominated by male voices, there is a growing recognition that female perspectives bring a unique and valuable dimension to the discourse (Nanthanson, 2009). This note explores why females often possess more comprehensive information about animal ethics and provides references to support this assertion. Numerous studies have shown that women tend to score higher in empathy and emotional intelligence assessments compared to men. These qualities are essential when considering the ethical treatment of animals, as they enable individuals to better understand and connect with the emotional experiences of animals (Arluke *et al.*, 2002). A deep sense of empathy can lead to more compassionate and informed decisions regarding animal welfare. Women have

historically been associated with caregiving roles, both within their families and in society at large. This experience in caregiving often extends to animals, as women are more likely to engage in activities such as pet ownership, animal rescue, and volunteering at animal shelters (Munro and Thrusfield, 2001). This hands-on experience provides women with practical insights into the needs and well-being of animals. Female voices in animal ethics often bring a broader perspective by considering issues of intersectionality (Arkow et al., 2012). Women are more likely to recognize the interconnectedness of social justice, environmental, and animal welfare concerns. This inclusive approach can lead to more holistic and nuanced ethical frameworks. Women have made significant contributions to the philosophical discourse on animal ethics. Philosophers like Naussbaum has offered novel perspectives that challenge traditional, male-centric

ethical theories. Their work has enriched the field by incorporating feminist and care ethics principles (Naussbaum 2006).

According to above mentioned graphical data, when study performed about understanding the animal ethics between males and females it was clarified that female has more information about animal ethics or their intrinsic values in different segments related to animals than males who were less aware in related surveys (Fig. 1). Mostly, people considered that animals and pets were human things while a few denied it. According to this survey, most people think that animals suffer in our society. The rate of animal beating in our society is high. Most people do not like to adopt a street animal or keep them as a pet. On the other hand, most people were interested in keeping them as pets. Also, most people denied giving treatment to injured animals, while a few kind-hearted people agreed with it (Fig. 2).

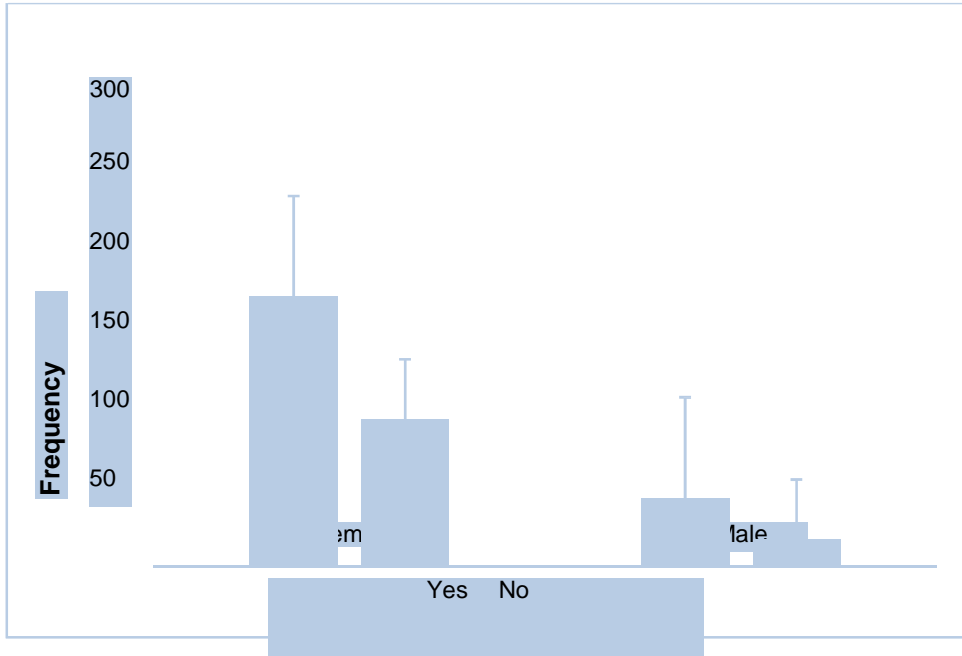


Fig. 1. A frequency of understanding of animal ethics between male and female

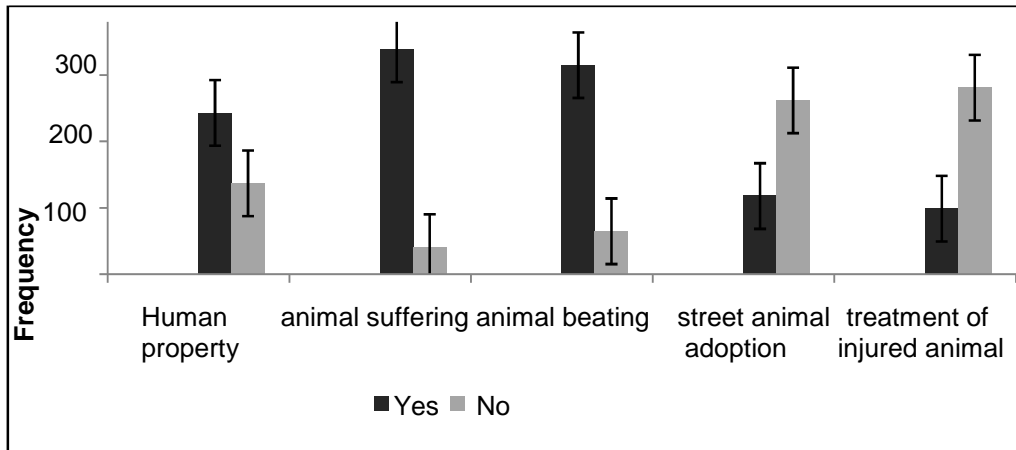


Fig. 2. A frequency of societal trends towards animals

The ethics of keeping animals as pets are subjective and depend on various factors, including the species involved, the quality of care provided, and the motivations of the pet owner (Patterson-Kane and Piper, 2009). Ethical pet

ownership involves responsible care, education, and consideration for the well-being of the animals. It is crucial to balance the benefits of companionship and education with the potential risks of suffering and exploitation. Ethical

considerations should guide regulations and policies related to pet ownership to ensure the welfare of animals (Ryan et al., 2019). According to bar graph information or in this data following people concerns attained such as to keep animals as pets were ethically good. A 75% people were in favor that it is ethical while the rest denied it. A 90% of people thought that in right of that statement that you should feed pet foods to your animal, just 10 % against it. While, a 95% of people in this study favor the vaccination of animals, just 5 % against it. Animal breeding is ethical by 95% of people in this survey. Mostly, people thought it's ethical to keep the attention of pet hygiene, balanced diet, pet first aid kit, and cage cleaning. All related questions given 95% favored data is yes, just a few 1% of people considered it useless. People thought animal gaming and animal abuse as ethical, not ethical so, the strict policy made against them (Fig. 3)

It is not ethical to keep the animals in the zoo; animals should be able to live freely in the forests (Vaca-Guzman and Arluke, 2005). Many people agreed that

the environment of zoos caused depression and other psychological issues in animals. Animal training and using them for people's amusement and robbing their spurs for different purposes is ethically wrong (Gilbreth, 2008). Sedative drugs utilized to calm aggressive animals are not right there, was a conflict because some about 25% opinion is that it is right to give them sedative drugs to relax them. Animal health concerns should be addressed and provided them good health services (Turnbull, 2000). People's view on animal habitats was that there must be preference on safaris (Fig. 4). According to related information, 95% of Government activities should require supplements of animal rights, 40% said that Government takes action against the animal burial system. 90% of people think it is ethical to consider it the measures to protect the animals. Feeding strategies of the animals should be improved by zoos. 60 % of people consider that mad dogs should be killed. 98% people agreed that government should introduce an awareness program related to animal ethics (Fig. 5).

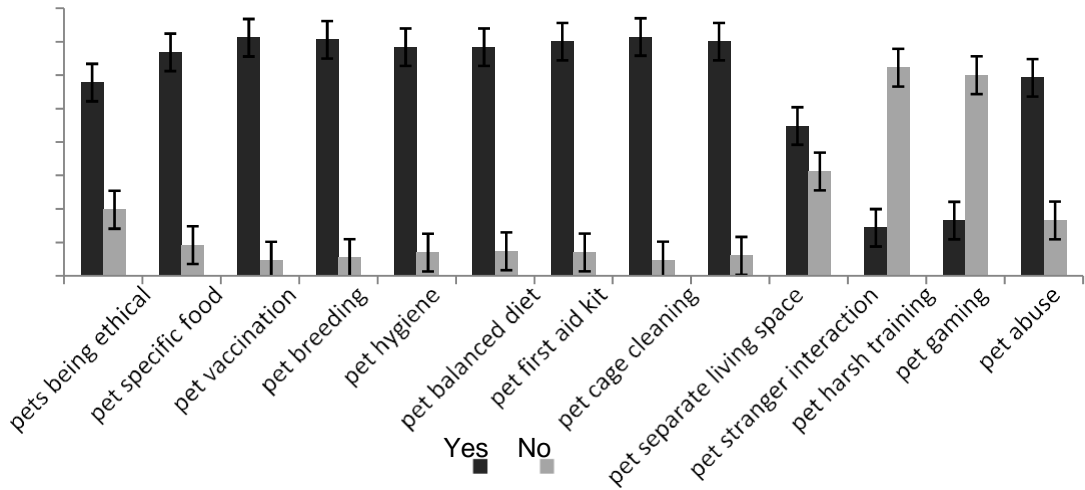


Fig. 3. Human behavior towards pets

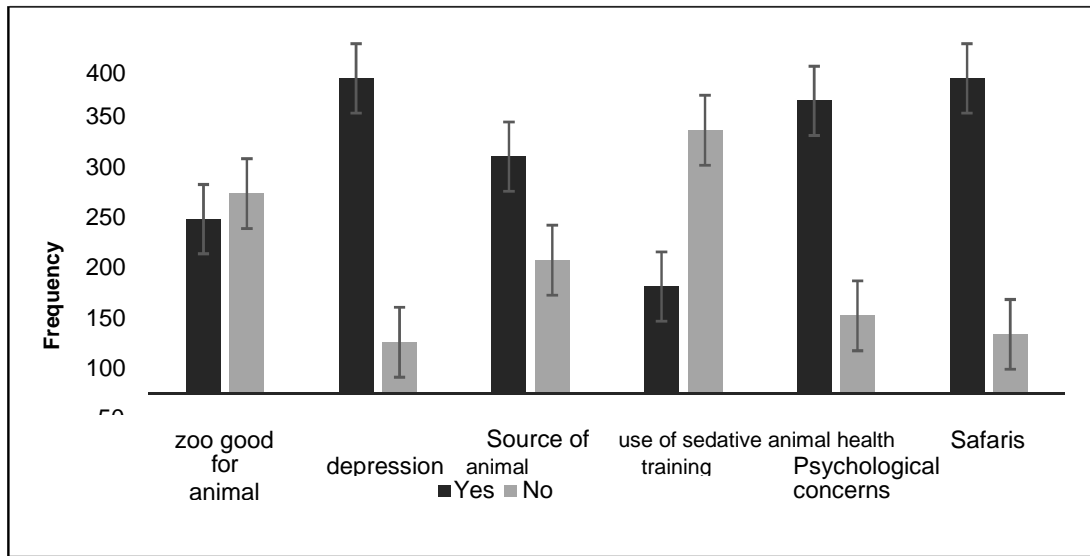


Fig. 4. Animal ethical concerns

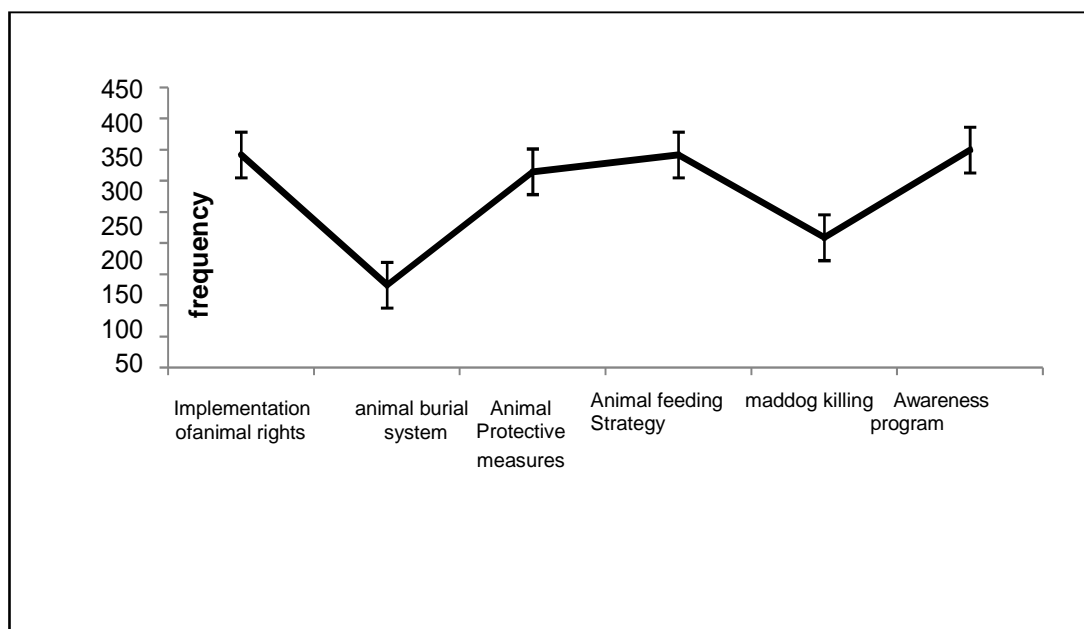


Fig. 5. The Government concerns about animals

Zoos play a vital role in conservation and education, addressing the ethical concerns surrounding their operation is essential (Webbet et al., 2019). Recent research and discussions indicate a growing awareness of these issues, emphasizing the need for ethical standards, transparency, and a balance between conservation goals and the welfare of individual animals (Draper and Mulcahy 2021). It was observed that 14% of the people showed interest in animal selective breeding, 21% of the people interested in livestock care, 11%

of the people used animals for ploughing, 5% of the people were against animal overloading, 7% of the people gave consent that it is wrong to use milking injections for animals, 9% percent of the people think that it is not right to export or import the animals, 8% of the people said that it is bad to enslave the animals for human luxury, 17% percent of the people said that animals should not be used as a research tool, 8% percent of the people said that it is wrong to hunt the animals (Fig. 6).

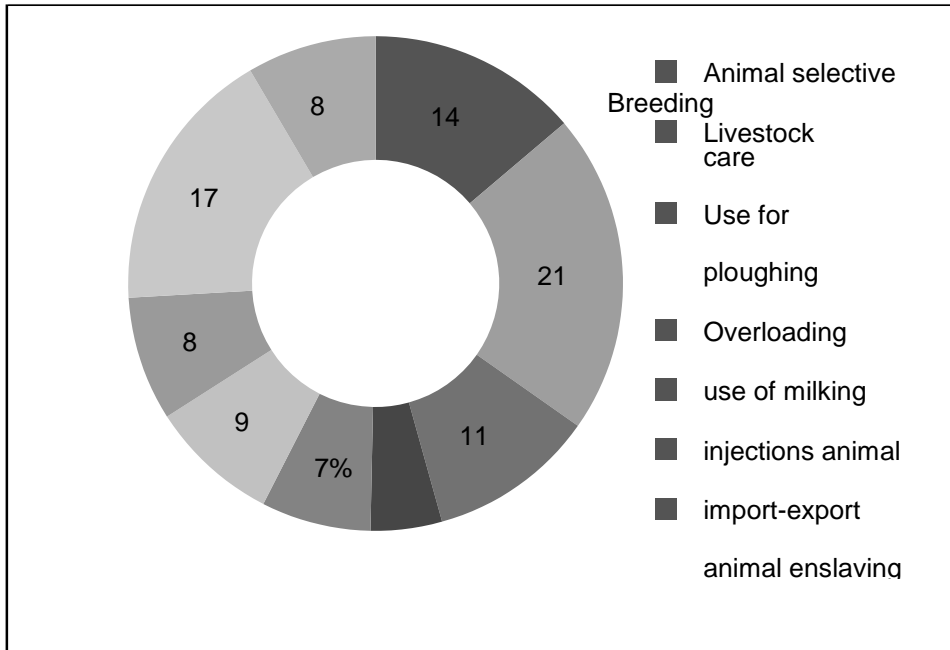


Fig. 6. Human behavior towards animals

In terms of legal and ethical considerations, the argument over animal rights examines whether animals should be treated equally to humans. Animal rights advocates are against using animals for clothing, entertainment, research, or food (Garcia and McGlone, 2022). Some activists believe that keeping animals as pets is a violation of their rights. Those who support the keeping of pets stress the importance of providing proper care for them (Wilcox, 2021). So, it was important to discover these trends and hence this study was conducted. The present study is designed to know the awareness regarding intrinsic value of animals in our society. Among all our

respondents from University of Punjab, almost 33.7% males and 66.2% of females of different ages participated during survey. Chi square test was applied just to know the significant association for awareness about animal ethics in different groups of people.

According to feminist care theory, one must have an ethical obligation to communicate with the people who do not care for their pets. Because animals do not wish to be treated this way, should not be injured, killed, or exploited (Smith and Johnson, 2022). In our study, different responses were gathered about pet vaccination, hygiene, diet and gaming. Majority of the respondents were concerned about their

pet's health and food. Current study also discussed about the government concerns for animal rights like protective measures and awareness program for pets, street animals and animals in zoo. The present data revealed that government should do some intervention for animal protection in our society.

In the study population, male respondents about 13.67% were unaware while 86.36% have general awareness of animal ethics. On the other hand, females had awareness level of 86.92%. Distribution according to age showed that persons under age range from 18-30 have more awareness (83.34%). Education plays important role to promote awareness among people. This shows that educated people are aware of ethical concerns of animals. Responses of participants to different questions were collected and their chi-square value (χ^2) or p value (P) was calculated when the significant level was 0.05. The P value regarding the general understanding of animal ethics in society was 0.093 that is greater than the significant values of both men and women equally believe on idea of animal ethics. Various previous studies also support this idea (Villka, 2021). Awareness of participants is influenced by their age and education as

$p=0.005$ and 0.034 respectively, is smaller than our significant value. Other studies also have examined the society awareness about animal rights (Rojahn and Hawley, 2021).

Previous studies also suggested the interventions to control suffering animals in the society (Mohr, 2013). This study results relates the idea of animal ethics with zoopolis theory, the argument in Zoopolis switches from moral theory and practical ethics to political theory, concentrating on the relational duties that result from the many ways that animals interact with human cultures and institutions (Kleszcz, 2018). Majority of respondents in the present study has a perception that animals are suffering in our society. About 91.66% participants agreed that animals are suffering. Social trends towards animals like animal's beating, treating as human property and treating any injured animals has shown $p=0.891$ and 0.479 , greater than the range of significant level 0.05 which describe that it is independent of association with gender and age. On the other hand, chi-square tests results ($p=0.033$) revealed significant difference in levels of education among those who has an idea that animal are suffering in our society and their rights are not protected (Table 1 and 2).

Table 1: General characteristics of participants according to awareness

Variable & level	Aware (%)	Unaware (%)	Total	Chi-square	P value
Gender				2.817	0.093
Male	114 (86.36)	18 (13.63)	132 (33.67)		
Female	226 (86.92)	34 (13.07)	260 (66.32)		
Age				10.679	0.005*
<18	11 (73.33)	4 (26.66)	15 (3.82)		
>20	301 (83.84)	58 (16.15)	359 (91.58)		
≥30	13 (72.22)	5 (27.77)	18 (4.59)		
Education				4.464	0.034*
High School	51 (76.11)	16 (23.88)	67 (17.09)		
Graduation	196 (89.49)	23 (10.50)	219 (55.86)		
Post-graduation	99 (93.39)	7 (6.60)	106 (27.04)		

*Significant association; P < 0.05

Table 2: Peoples' Perception about animal suffering in our society

Variable & level	Animal Suffering or not		Total	Chi-square	P value
	Yes	No			
Gender				0.017	0.891
Male	121 (91.66)	11 (8.33)	132 (33.67)		
Female	237 (91.15)	23 (8.84)	260 (66.32)		
Age				1.473	0.479
<18	9 (60)	6 (40)	15 (3.82)		
18-30	320 (89.13)	39 (10.86)	359 (91.58)		
≥30	15 (83.33)	3 (16.66)	18 (4.59)		
Education				4.515	0.033*
High School	61 (91.04)	6 (8.95)	67 (17.09)		
Graduation	202 (92.23)	17 (7.76)	219 (55.86)		
Post-graduation	100 (94.33)	6 (5.66)	106 (27.04)		

*Significant association; P<0.05

CONCLUSION

Animals are suffering of their basic rights due to human beings are mostly the main cause behind this disastrous situation. Female perspectives in animal ethics offer a wealth of valuable insights, stemming from empathy, care giving experience, an inclusive worldview, and philosophical contributions. Recognizing and amplifying these voices is essential for the development of more comprehensive and compassionate approaches to animal ethics. Overloading of animals and they are being abused, are the normal activities in our society; moreover; most of the people who are dealing with the innocent animals are not aware of their rights. During the survey, even some of the people have met who think that animals are their personal properties and they are free to do whatever they want and due to this irresponsible behavior of humans these animals are being harmed which is not morally correct. As being researchers and educators, we are fully aware that animals are one of the most beautiful creatures of God, so this is our responsibility to help and guide the people with these types of mind-sets about the animals. One can accomplish this by organizing seminars, conducting surveys, by displaying advertisement on social media on animal ethics and by

arranging training workshops for volunteers or by introducing courses related to animal ethics in education. In this way one can be able to change people's understanding about the intrinsic value of animals.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors have no conflict of interest

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