

## ROLE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING DOG OWNER KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BREEDING PRACTICES IN PUNJAB

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### ABSTRACT

At Teaching Veterinary University Hospital and various districts of Punjab, the dog owners (100 each from urban and rural area) were randomly selected and personally interviewed using pretested interview schedule. Breeding knowledge score of both groups was different ( $p < 0.05$ ), however, the knowledge level of both groups was under low category. A positive correlation ( $p < 0.05$ ) existed between breeding practice knowledge index and their communication profiles. The present study underlines the importance of communication profile in improving the knowledge level of dog owners about correct breeding practices.

**Key words:** Breeding practice, Communication, Dog, Knowledge, Punjab

Breeding, an essential component in canine rearing, is an art as well as science as it needs skill and knowledge. A responsible breeder should take care of dog before pregnancy, during pregnancy and after whelping (Ivanova and Georgiev, 2018). Based on preventive measures, proper managerial practices and knowledge level of dog owner, the outcome of pregnancy depends. The extension machinery serves as a useful media for the dissemination of latest technological knowledge to dog owners via various communication methods. The present study was carried out to assess the knowledge level of dog owners about breeding practices and correlation of these breeding knowledge levels with communication profiles like extension contact, social participation and mass media exposure.

The present study was conducted in Teaching Veterinary Clinical Complex (TVCC) of the University and in different districts of Punjab state. The randomly selected dog owners ( $n=200$ ) were categorized in Group I (Urban dog owners) and Group II (Rural dog owners). The data was collected through pretested

interview schedule by personally interviewing the dog owners. For breeding practice, dog owners were categorised into 3 categories based on the knowledge scores as low, medium and high knowledge with scores  $0 \leq 8$ ,  $>8-16$ , and  $>16$  respectively. The knowledge index was calculated by dividing obtained knowledge score by maximum possible score and multiplying the result with 100.

The extension contacts of dog owners with veterinary officers/ university/ breeders were measured on two-point continuum either as 'No' (score 0) or 'Yes' (score 1). Hence, the maximum score for extension contact could be 6. The social participations of dog owners in dog shows/ Livestock championship/ Pashu Palan or Kisan Melas and Animal welfare camps were measured on two-point continuum either as 'No' (score 0) or 'Yes' (score 1). Hence, the maximum score for social participation could be 8. The mass media exposure of dog owners with television/ radio/ newspaper/ dog magazines/ internet/ mobile phone/ books were measured on two-point continuum either as 'No' (score 0) or 'Yes' (score 1). Hence, the maximum score for mass media exposure could be 14. The collected data was tabulated and analysed with the help of SAS 9.3 system Carry N C, USA.

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**Table 1: Spearman Correlation coefficient of breeding knowledge index of all dog owners with communication profile.**

Spearman correlation coefficient, n=200	Breeding practice knowledge index (BPKI)	Extension contact (EC)	Social participation (SP)	Mass media exposure (MME)
BPKI	1	0.65748*	0.54317*	0.66914*
EC	0.65748*	1	0.56284*	0.31778*
SP	0.54317*	0.56284*	1	0.42269*
MME	0.66914*	0.31778*	0.42269*	1

\*p&lt;0.05

According to communication profile, 50% of urban dog owners and 70-76% of rural dog owners had low extension contact and social participation. Overall, a very few dog owners had high extension contact (10%), social participation (6%) and mass media exposure (22.5%).

Regarding dog breeding practices, 26.4% urban and 14.6% rural dog owners had awareness. In fact, 70% urban and 95% rural dog owners were not aware about breed specific characters of dogs. Only 5% rural dog owners have knowledge about number of times a male dog used for service in a week and knowledge about the day of mating. Very few dog owners had knowledge about vaginal cytology, care during pregnancy, complications during pregnancy and whelping, pseudo pregnancy, sexually transmissible diseases, venereal granuloma, causes of pregnancy loss and new borne pup care. Others suggested that owner knowledge about length of gestation, methods for pregnancy diagnosis, weight management, parturition signs and timings are more important (Fontaine *et al.*, 2007).

The breeding knowledge score was high ( $6.34 \pm 0.37$ ) in urban compared to rural ( $3.51 \pm 0.47$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) dog owners, however both groups had low knowledge score. Furthermore, there was a positive ( $p < 0.05$ ) correlation of breeding knowledge index of dog owners with extension contact, social participation and mass media exposure (Table 1). Others reported that extension contact, exposure to extension mass-media, management orientation and

innovation proneness among dog owners of 3 urban cities of Gujarat state had significant relationship with knowledge of dog owners (Raval *et al.*, 2015). This shows that communication profile plays an important role for improving knowledge level of dog owners relating to dog breeding practices.

In brief, the present study highlights the difference in knowledge level of urban and rural dog owners about breeding practices, thus, suggesting the need of organising extension programmes for enhancing their knowledge. Also, the communication profile of dog owner was correlated ( $p < 0.05$ ) with knowledge level. This indicates that participation of owner in extension drive can enrich their knowledge level.

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